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This report was written and submitted by the Faculty and Staff of the
High Tech High Graduate School of Education
for the Western Association of Schools and Colleges.
A Reader’s Guide to this Report

This document is organized by Standard, ensuring that each CFR is addressed. Within each standard, the three specific purposes of the Educational Effectiveness Review are explored: *Optimal Teaching and Learning, Capacity, and Learning Organization.* The CFRs for each standard are addressed, not in numerical order, but rather by these topics. Data and findings are to be found here and, where appropriate, in the Appendices. (Please note that in order to facilitate document navigation, page numbers referenced in the Self Study reports refer to the page number in the PDF document, not the page number of the report.)

A Glossary of Acronyms

<table>
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<th>Acronym</th>
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| PLP     | Personal Learning Plan  
A living document that guides candidates through the process of setting goals, taking opportunities to meet those goals, and reflecting on progress. |
| WALO    | Wicked Awesome Learning Opportunities  
Opportunities to pursue their professional goals identified by students in the PLP |
| PLO     | Program Learning Outcomes |
| SLO     | Student Learning Outcomes |
| POL     | Presentation of Learning  
An end of year panel presentation of candidates’ learning and their learning process. |
| DP      | Digital Portfolio  
An online, open resource repository of student work that serves as a toolbox for the candidate and a resource for the broader educational community. |
| SL      | School Leadership |
| TL      | Teacher Leadership |
| GSE     | Graduate School of Education |
Introduction: Our Approach

During the academic year 2009-10, and following upon the visit of the WASC team in March 2009, all constituents of the High Tech High Graduate School of Education—faculty, staff, students, Board—engaged in a comprehensive Program Review. In a myriad of committees and task forces (see Appendix FF), we gathered and analyzed data on every aspect of the institution, including mission, curriculum, staffing, admissions, finances, student resources and student achievement. We shared the results with an external reviewer, Amy Driscoll, Ph.D., who had served as our team mentor at a WASC Assessment Workshop in Fall 2009. We made program improvements based on the recommendations of the WASC CPR team, the external reviewer, and our own analysis of direct and indirect evidence of program effectiveness. In this report, we document these processes, present our findings, and propose next steps for program improvement.

We have approached the Education Effectiveness Review by addressing the recommendations from the WASC CPR visit, and by focusing our analysis on the following questions, first articulated in our CPR report:

- To what degree are students achieving the goals and learning outcomes reflected in our conceptual framework, and how do we know?
- How are our inquiries into teaching and learning informing our ongoing decision-making at the course, program, and institutional levels?

Throughout the EER process, we have stayed focused on our Conceptual Framework, examining all aspects of the programs through the lenses of Inquiry & Design, Leadership, and Reflection. We have been mindful of our students, placing their voices and their achievement at the center of all our deliberations. Finally, keeping in mind our strengths as articulated in the WASC team’s CPR Review, we have attended to the emerging needs of the institution as it pursues its mission of preparing reflective practitioners to work in innovative educational settings.

The process of preparing this EER report, spanning the CPR report, the WASC team visit in 2009, and the external review, has strengthened us as an institution in three important respects:

- **Increased program coherence**
  - The GSE faculty have refined the Student Learning Objectives and Program Learning Objectives and aligned these with syllabi and assessment rubrics for all courses.
  - The EER process helped us to focus our faculty deliberations, in regular meetings and GSE retreats, on the ways we assure quality in teaching and learning: by modeling pedagogical practices and dispositions, engaging in cycles of inquiry and feedback with our students, and aligning our assessments with desired outcomes.

- **Increased focus on direct evidence** at course, program, and institutional levels
  - GSE faculty have revised course learning outcomes, redesigned tools for assessment, collected achievement data, analyzed it, and made changes accordingly to instruction, programs and the institution as a whole.
  - Looking deeply at student work has always been at the heart of assessment at the GSE. Thinking of that process as data collection on student achievement, and quantifying it, added a new dimension for us. We have come to see that such evidence, triangulated with the survey data and other indirect measures described in detail in this report, increases the range of evidence of learning we collect and enhances our capacity to understand our strengths and needs.

- **Development of shared purpose**
  - Our discussions of purpose and practice, linked with data analysis, have helped us see and attend to the needs of all GSE students, including those external to High Tech High schools.

**Looking ahead**

As a small, developing institution committed to innovation, reflection, and communities of practice (see Appendix GG for a full program description), we emerge from this phase of the accreditation process with a continuing commitment to program improvement, and a renewed eagerness to share our work in dialogue with colleagues in schools and universities. We will continue to use the evidence described herein to support further inquiry and improvement. In the short term, we will continue to gather data, refine our programs and develop our institutional research capacity. Longer range, we remain mindful of the need to attend to faculty development, appropriately managed growth, and sustainability. We look forward to continuing, under the guidance of WASC, this process of reflection, dialogue, and program improvement.
Standard I—Defining Institutional Purpose and Ensuring Educational Objectives

Optimal Teaching and Learning

1.1 The institution’s formally approved statements of purpose and operational practices are appropriate for an institution of higher education and clearly define its essential values and character.

The mission of the HTH Graduate School of Education (GSE) is to prepare reflective practitioner leaders to work with colleagues and communities to develop innovative, authentic, and rigorous learning environments. As noted in the WASC CPR visiting team’s report, this mission is “appropriate, aligned to its conceptual framework, and parallels the mission of the HTH K-12 schools” (2009, p. 10): to provide all students with an extraordinary project-based education and to graduate students who will succeed in post-secondary education and be thoughtful, engaged citizens.

The GSE mission has guided the design and development of the M.Ed. programs’ structure, content, and conceptual framework (Appendix L). It serves as a reference for program directors and faculty in ongoing conversations about program, pedagogy, and institutional purpose. The faculty regularly collect evidence of progress toward the mission via analysis of student work products and end-of-year Presentations of Learning (POLs) (Appendix AO), course completion and graduation rates (Appendix AN), and student and alumni surveys, in which we investigate the frequency with which students and alumni engage in practices linked to our program learning objectives (Appendix O).

As preparation for the EER, the GSE embarked on a Program Review process (discussed in Standard 4; Appendix C) where we completed program self studies (Appendices D and E) and engaged Dr. Amy Driscoll to serve as an External Reviewer. GSE faculty met Dr. Driscoll at a WASC Assessment Workshop in Fall 2009, where she served as our team mentor. Dr. Driscoll has worked closely with WASC for years to support the accreditation process by offering workshops on assessment and program review. In our program reviews, we found close alignment between our mission, program learning outcomes and practices. Moreover, our conceptual framework (i.e., Program Learning Outcomes) aligns with national standards pertaining to our respective M.Ed. programs (Appendices MM and NN). These findings were confirmed emphatically in Dr. Driscoll’s report, which further cited a match between the GSE conceptual framework and current thinking in teacher education:

The conceptual framework…reflects current thinking in teacher education especially once teachers complete an induction phase of their career. The 3 dimensions of the framework—Inquiry & Design, Leadership, and Reflection—represent priorities of education in general, but specifically relevant to teacher education at a graduate level. The component of reflection with its PLO’s echoes the urgings of Donald Schon (1983, 1995) for “reflective practitioners” and the realignment of theory, research and practice. The inquiry and design component embodies much of the thinking behind the scholar-practitioner model of assessment (Banta & Associates, 2002) for both the GSE faculty and their teaching population of graduate students. And finally, the leadership component is one that meets the needs of outstanding practitioners who are ready to address challenges and roles within and outside the classroom, challenges such as common goals of addressing unequal access to education. The leadership component is especially focused on the collaboration and sharing of expertise that is often missing in school cultures. Focus groups with alumnae of both programs affirm that those components are “actualized” into the learning of the GSE graduates. When describing the programs, alumnae used the terms of “scholarly,” “empowered,” and “reflective” repeatedly in both groups; when asked about the outcomes of their graduate work, alumnae responded with “I’ve become a data collector in my own classroom,” and “I now think like a researcher as I make decisions,” and “I have become an agent of change in my school.” (2010, p. 3)

1.2 Educational objectives are clearly recognized throughout the institution and are consistent with stated purposes. The institution has developed indicators and evidence to ascertain the level of achievement of its purposes and educational objectives.

The GSE conceptual framework (Appendix L) incorporates the dimensions of Inquiry & Design, Leadership, and Reflection, with specific PLOs articulated for each dimension. This conceptual framework drives the work of GSE program directors, faculty and students. Program directors and faculty use it to inform the guiding questions, learning goals, and activities for courses, and to design and assess the work products required for graduation (Appendix LL). It is published on the GSE website and in course syllabi (Appendices T and Z for Teacher Leadership (TL) and School Leadership (SL), respectively).
Per the suggestion of the WASC CPR visiting team, PLOs are clearly listed on each syllabus, and those addressed by the course are highlighted. Each syllabus also includes a table clearly describing the course-level student learning outcomes (SLOs), how these connect to the PLOs, how they will be supported within the course, and how they will be assessed. (See appendices T and Z for TL and SL, respectively). As a result of this embedded approach to assessment, faculty are careful to address the PLOs, and students are consistently reminded of program goals and priorities.

**Assessment & Evidence of Achievement of Purpose and Objectives**

In the WASC CPR visiting team’s report, they called on the GSE to report the type and results of assessments used for program, course, and faculty evaluations.

**Program Evaluation**

As described in the Program Review Guide (Appendix C), in addition to the Program Self Studies completed every fifth year, faculty conduct annual reviews of student learning focused on a specific dimension of the Conceptual Framework. These involve a collaborative analysis of randomly selected work samples to assess student achievement of PLOs. Further indicators of student learning are collected and analyzed each year via rubrics (Appendix AO), faculty and student surveys (Appendix O), and program alignment matrices (Appendix LL). Direct analysis of student work, as well as student surveys, verify that students grow in their capacity to conduct inquiries, design equitable and engaging learning environments, take on leadership roles in their own settings, and reflect on their practice (discussed in Standard 4 and in Program Self Study Reports; See p. 19-23 in TL Appendix D, and p. 15-21 in SL Appendix E).

**Course Evaluation**

GSE faculty use a common course evaluation template (Appendix P) to collect quantitative and qualitative feedback from students about the quality of course content and instruction. In bi-weekly meetings, faculty look at student work, tune syllabi and assignments, review course evaluations, and revisit their courses in the context of the larger program. This has led faculty members to amend syllabi, assignments and rubrics to better address PLOs and SLOs, and to provide more opportunities to connect relevant literature to course activities.

For example, in feedback from the 2009 action research course (Appendix P1) students expressed the desire to arrive at a research question earlier in the program. This led to several adjustments: greater focus in the Inquiry Journal on possible research questions, greater attention to connecting with the literature in all courses, and faculty agreement to have students annotate and post online at least one article/book relevant to their fierce wonderings for each course, creating a database (Annotopia: http://gseannotopia.blogspot.com) of students’ interactions with the literature. This has contributed to improved literature reviews and students' perceptions of support; the effectiveness of these changes and others are discussed in greater detail in Standards 2 and 4.

**Faculty Evaluation**

The Faculty Evaluation process, devised in response to the WASC CPR visiting team’s recommendations, is described in detail in CFR 1.3, along with results of its implementation.

As proposed in the GSE Capacity and Preparatory Review Report, GSE program directors have developed an academic freedom policy that articulates a commitment to providing GSE students and faculty with the freedom to pursue their passions, and to design inquiries relevant to their practice and intellectual growth. It also outlines the responsibilities of all members of the GSE community to engage in thoughtful, reflective behavior befitting our learning community and our work as scholars, educators and citizens. This policy is published in the GSE Faculty Handbook (Appendix G) and distributed to all faculty. In the 2009/10 faculty survey, 80% "strongly agree" and 20% "agree" that there is an atmosphere of academic freedom at the GSE; 100% "strongly
agree" that they have autonomy in designing their courses. Moreover, 80% "strongly agree" and 20% "agree" that the GSE encourages innovations in structures and strategies for teaching, research, and dissemination. GSE program directors also created a formal Human Subjects Review process (Appendix AD) to ensure that all faculty and student research upholds the principles of dignity, justice and beneficence (discussed in CFR 1.7).

1.6 Even when supported by or affiliated with political, corporate, or religious organizations, the institution has education as its primary purpose and operates as an academic institution with appropriate autonomy.

The GSE is a non-profit entity that holds the professional development of its students as the ultimate purpose of its work. The institution brooks no interference from the political, corporate or religious agendas from any of its contributors. We receive no financial support from any political or religious organizations. Philanthropic support has come from family foundations and the California Department of Education.

Capacity: Leadership and Accountability through Collaboration

1.3 The institution's leadership creates and sustains a leadership system at all levels that is marked by high performance, appropriate responsibility, and accountability.

Program directors teach courses and work closely with faculty to design and implement all aspects of the program, including goal setting, syllabus design, project tuning, looking at student work, and reviewing course evaluations. GSE program directors and faculty meet bi-monthly to monitor the alignment of content and goals within and across both M.Ed. programs. Faculty routinely observe each other, team teach courses, seek peer input on curriculum design, and engage in conversations about practice. They also identify and discuss models of “beautiful work” to identify qualities that make the work successful and generate/refine rubrics aligned with program learning outcomes (Appendices S and Y). These collaborations focus both on program quality and professional growth for faculty, fostering a shared sense of responsibility, accountability and high expectations for faculty and students. In the 2009/10 faculty survey, 100% "strongly agree" or "agree" that faculty work together towards a shared mission, that they feel appreciated as a team member, and that they align course activities to learning outcomes.

Like the HTH K-12 schools, the GSE strives to be student-centered, continually seeking feedback from students, inviting them to work with faculty as partners through study groups, and making adjustments to better meet their needs. On the 2009/10 Annual Survey, the majority of students rate the opportunities to be involved in shaping the program's design and vision as "good" or "excellent" (p 6 of Appendices O1B and O3B).

Student Voice at the GSE

In the annual survey and in course evaluations, students indicate that faculty members are responsive to their needs:

● "It is clear that our voices matter. Our feedback is elicited continuously and each staff member listens."

● "Students have many opportunities to provide feedback and shape the direction of the program."

● "I really loved every part of the program and I feel like any issues or changes that we suggested were instantly responded to and made better with thoughtful conversation and working together."

Shared Leadership in Faculty Meetings

Program directors and faculty propose agenda items that have included looking at samples of student work, tracking PLOs throughout the courses, refining course reading lists, and involving K-12 students as consultants in courses. These discussions often result in changes in the courses and pedagogy; for example, the Building Positive School Culture class in the School Leadership (SL) program now includes student faculty and revised course reading lists, and “Put-it-to-practice” assignments have been designed as final assessments for each of the SL courses. In the 2009/10 faculty survey, 100% of respondents rated the activities at faculty meetings as "helpful" or "very helpful," particularly tuning projects and syllabi together (for faculty ratings of various support efforts for improving practice, see Q2 in Appendix O5).

Expectations for Faculty Performance

Expectations for faculty performance are clearly stated in the Faculty Handbook (Appendix G). The GSE is selective in its faculty hiring and does not offer tenure. GSE students are involved in the hiring of faculty and provide feedback on the quality of their instruction and advising via exit cards (Appendix AK), course
evaluations and the annual survey evaluating the programs and institution. Student feedback from course evaluations has led to substantive changes. For example, in response to SL students' desire for more feedback on their work, the program implemented a process for student-led comments along with more peer feedback opportunities and scaffolding for the leadership project (Appendix P).

Faculty routinely solicit student feedback through “exit cards” at each class session to inform their instruction. In HTH 200, when students asked for more discussion time in pairs and small groups, the agenda for the next week was revised to devote ample time for such discussions, using protocols that the students could then carry into their own practice. Some instructors also post the exit card feedback data with their own reflections on their course webpage (see Appendix OO). At the end of the academic year, course evaluation data are aggregated and trends are identified for response. For example, in 2009-10, 77% of TL students rated the course readings as "excellent" or "very good" (Appendix P3). A closer look revealed that less favorable responses were clustered in one course. In response, the instructor altered the course to offer a collection of readings rather than a single text, and is integrating the readings more thoughtfully into the course activities each week.

Faculty Evaluation
In 2010 several faculty expressed a desire to be more intentional about setting professional goals and developing action plans with the support of colleagues. To this end, as recommended in the CPR visiting team's report, GSE Program Directors and faculty designed a GSE self-evaluation process, which is published in the GSE Faculty Handbook (p. 7 of Appendix G). This process includes self-evaluation, meeting with a review committee, and an annual review. After completing the self-evaluation and meeting with the review committee, faculty determine concrete action steps in the Closing the Loop section of their self-evaluation form. The review committee consists of critical friends (faculty peers) that review course evaluations and discuss issues of practice, scholarly contributions and service. Self-evaluations are submitted to the Dean and the President for reference and response. In the annual survey (Appendix O5), 100% of faculty "strongly agreed" or "agreed" that the faculty self-evaluation process was fair and helpful.

Grading Policy
The grading policy is published in the GSE Catalog, the Student Handbook and course syllabi (Appendices T and Z for TL and SL, respectively). All GSE courses/seminars are assessed on a pass/fail basis, on the premise that this allows for more meaningful dialogue between students and instructors about course content and work products—evidenced by faculty responses to student-led comments for courses (Appendix AJ) and faculty feedback provided through rubrics (Appendices S3 and Y2 for TL and SL, respectively). Faculty assessments of pass/fail are based on achievement of the student learning outcomes (SLOs) in assignments, as well as engagement in the course (attendance, timely submission of work, and participation).

Graduation & Course Completion
Each TL student in the first two cohorts to complete the first year graduated on schedule, except for one who was granted an extension for personal reasons and one who was required to submit additional work following his Presentation of Learning (POL) and prior to receiving his degree. All members of the third cohort are on track for graduation, with the exception of two who left the program in the first month and one who deferred a year for personal reasons. The SL program has a similarly strong graduation rate. Of the six students that began the program during first year (2008/09), five graduated on schedule. One student requested a deferral during the second year and returned the following fall. The one student in the one-year residency program graduated on time in the spring of 2010. Those who have left either program have all done so for personal reasons. Furthermore, 100% of students who remain enrolled in the programs meet the learning outcomes and pass each course (see Appendix AN for course completion/graduation figures).

We attribute these high graduation and completion rates to personalization, feedback from advisors/mentors and the supportive environment of the cohort. Multiple structures and practices help candidates stay on
track and complete their program on time (Appendix K). These include inquiry journals, academic advising, and targeted support for the culminating Action Research or Leadership Projects in the second year—via a bi-weekly seminar in the TL program and a Leadership and Design Practicum in the SL program.

**Graduate Credit**
The GSE offers credit toward the M.Ed. degree and does not accept transfer credits from other institutions due to our clinical approach and cohort model. Semester credit hours are calculated to recognize that GSE students use their settings as clinical laboratories: 1 semester unit = 6 hours coursework + 12 hours outside work (reading, writing, practicum, participating in on-line forum) = 18 total hours. Grades and credit hours are represented on student transcripts, which are recorded in Powerschool. Students receive their course grades and comments in person or via email. In the past, all GSE students had a Powerschool username and password, but students didn’t use the system. As the program grows we may reinstitute it.

Because courses for the TL program are sequential, a student who needs to repeat a course can take it the following year. Students on leave of absence can resume where they left off with the next year’s cohort, with approval from their GSE advisor and the Dean. SL coursework occurs in an A/B sequence, so adjustments for a leave of absence must be made on a case-by-case basis, based on the student’s Personal Learning Plan.

The rate at which students are earning graduate credits is examined systematically during each Program Review Cycle. In the short term, cases of failure to complete a course or earn credit are brought to the immediate attention of the Dean and the Program Directors. With the exception of students who requested personal leave or a deferral, all students have completed and passed each course.

**Student Grievances**
Anonymous course evaluations and Annual Survey results (Appendix P3) indicate that students feel they can approach faculty with issues and concerns. In the CPR Report, the GSE proposed to vet a Student Grievance Policy with faculty and students and ensure all current and new students were aware of this policy. The finalized policy is in the Student Handbook, available on the program websites. No grievances have been filed to date.

**Student Conduct**
All policies pertaining to student conduct are stated in the Student Handbook. These include the GSE code of academic integrity and policies on harassment, intellectual property, internet and electronic mail usage, and student grievances. Policy infractions are to be immediately addressed by the GSE Faculty and resolved in a timely manner. There have been no infractions to date. These policies are addressed systematically every five years during the Institutional Assessment (Appendix H).

**Review Process for Research with Human Subjects**
GSE students are required to engage in course-related research that involves gathering data from human subjects. All research activities (data collection, analysis, and dissemination) must comply with the GSE Human Subjects Research Process (Appendix AD), which follows guiding ethical principles to ensure informed consent, the minimization of harm, and the maximization of benefit for all research subjects. These policies are discussed with GSE students, published on the program websites, and clearly stated in the Student Handbook (Appendix H).

We formalized this process to ensure that students have permission from administrators and that the GSE is exercising sufficient oversight in ensuring ethical research. To that end, and consistent with the WASC team’s CPR report recommendation, the Dean and Program Directors formed a Human Subjects Review (HSR) Committee that reviews all research proposals, consent letters and supplementary materials at the end of the first year. By situating this responsibility within one committee, we aim to ensure consistent adherence to guidelines for research. This committee also designed: 1) a document describing the committee’s review process, 2) a rubric used to assess all research proposals, permission letters and relevant documents for HSR purposes, and 3) a set of questions, where students describe how they will uphold ethical principles throughout their research.

Because students work closely with Faculty Advisors, any potential violation of the Human Subjects Policy is likely identified before it happens. Actual violations will be immediately and individually addressed by the relevant faculty advisor and Program Director. Every five years, during the Institutional Assessment, Human Subjects policy adherence will be examined and any problematic issues addressed. Of the students who submitted HSR documents in Spring 2010, three (25%) were approved to begin their research, while nine (75%) were required make revisions and resubmit. All did and were approved to conduct their research by mid-
September 2010. That 75% had to resubmit has led faculty to provide more time in the Action Research and Leadership courses for students to work on these documents before submission. In the External Review, Dr. Driscoll cited our HSR process as one of several “exemplary practices as indicators of program quality”:

… the faculty use their Institutional Research Board [HSR Committee] as a “teaching tool” in their courses that address research, so that every graduate is familiar with and has used the board to review and approve their work. These experiences and expertise contribute to the potential for graduates as scholars (p. 8).

**Refunds**

The refund policy is stated in the GSE Student Handbook (p. 6 of Appendix H). Students are entitled to a refund for any portion of the program for which they have paid, but opted not to complete. To date, the few students who have left for personal reasons have been fellowship students, requiring no refund. The Institutional Assessment Plan (Appendix B) includes the examination of “non-completers” and the processes by which they exit the program and close their GSE accounts.

1.8 The institution exhibits integrity in its operations as demonstrated by the implementation of appropriate policies, sound business practices, timely and fair responses to complaints and grievances, and regular evaluation of its performance in these areas.

As recommended by the WASC CPR visiting team, we have created handbooks for both students and faculty (Appendices H and G) that describe relevant GSE policies—including formal grievance policies—as well as rights and responsibilities. We encourage faculty members and students to bring concerns or complaints to their instructor, program director or any member of the institution. In the fall of 2010, for example, two TL students requested and received approval shift advisors. One second-year student in the program was granted family leave in the spring of 2010. In the 2009/10 annual survey, the vast majority of GSE students (96% in TL and 86% in SL) rate the support by their faculty advisor as “good” or “excellent.” Furthermore, 100% of GSE faculty "strongly agree" or "agree" that they feel comfortable raising issues that are important to them, and that there is an atmosphere of trust and respect within the GSE (for faculty ratings on other aspects of the GSE community, see Q3 in Appendix O5). While there have been no grievances to date, we recognize the importance of having policies in place and intend to assess their effectiveness as the organization grows.

The CPR visiting team's report commended the GSE for "establishing a graduate school that optimizes the existing resources of a set of schools" and "using the culture of innovative planning and assessment that evolved in the development of successful charter schools in the planning and assessment of the graduate school" (p. 33). GSE leadership and faculty assess the integrity of our operations every five years as part of our Institutional Assessment plan (Appendix B). Moreover, the application of sound business practices is evident in our strategic plan (Appendix A) and budget process, discussed in detail in Standard 3.

**Learning Organization**

1.5 Consistent with its purposes and character, the institution demonstrates an appropriate response to the increasing diversity in society through its policies, its educational and co-curricular programs, and its administrative and organizational practices.

**Curriculum & Co-Curricular Activities**

As an institution committed to creating equitable learning environments for youth and adults, GSE programs address issues of equity and diversity through program learning outcomes ID-1 and ID-2 (see Appendix L), most notably in HTH 200: Equity, Diversity & Design Principles and in the culminating projects for each program (Action Research in TL and the Leadership Project in SL). In the Program Review process, faculty examine the degree to which students are achieving these PLOs every three years, by reviewing course syllabi and conducting annual reviews of student work products (Appendix C). Particular attention is paid to the analysis of final projects in HTH 200, using the rubric designed for that course (see Appendix S1), along with students’ action research reports and leadership projects.

The GSE’s commitment to both diversity and integration is further reflected in our **UnBoxed Speaker Series** (http://www.hightechhigh.org/unboxed/previousEvents.php), where speakers like Howard Fuller, Gary Orfield, Michael Horn, James Gee and Geoffrey Cohen have engaged educators and community members in discussions related to desegregation, the achievement gap, stereotype threat, and innovative uses of technology to build communities that traverse race, class and gender boundaries (Appendix EE6).
Focus on Equity & Diversity

All GSE students take a course on Equity, Diversity and Design Principles in the first year. Here, participants consider their own backgrounds as well as the background experiences, values and languages of diverse student groups, to address two essential questions: (1) How can we draw upon our understanding of diversity to make our classroom practice more equitable? and (2) How can we work together with colleagues to create equitable learning environments?

Admissions & Outreach

As a Graduate School of Education, the diversity of our students is limited by the demographics of the teaching profession. As recommended in our CPR Report, the GSE engages in extensive outreach efforts to attract educators of color to our programs. We send fliers advertising the program to schools in the San Diego area and reach out to schools serving disadvantaged populations through calls and personalized e-mails to administrators.

In the fall of 2008, by increasing the numbers and opening the program to local educators beyond HTH, the number of M.Ed. candidates identifying as "white" decreased from 88% to 71%. The 2009-10 cohort is even more diverse. The percentage of GSE students who identify as Hispanic/Latino (14%) is greater than in the teaching force statewide (12.5%), and the percentage of white teachers in the GSE TL program (64%) is less than that of teachers in the state (74%) (California Department of Education Basic Education Data System, 2000). While less than 7% of San Diego Unified School District’s teachers identify as Asian, Filipino or Pacific Islander according to the CBEDS Certified Staff Profile for 2008-09, 18% of the GSE TL 2009-10 cohort identify as such. There are no African American candidates at present. Appendix AM compares the demographics of San Diego at large and the pool of California teachers to GSE admissions by ethnic group.

As recommended by the WASC team in the CPR report, the GSE Strategic Plan addresses goals and action steps to increase diversity in both the faculty and student body. Diversity is analyzed annually through the lenses of admissions, outreach, and curriculum; this analysis has driven adjustments to our outreach strategies, which have been effective in increasing our diversity to date.

1.9 Honest, open communication with WASC; inform WASC of material matters; follow WASC policies

The GSE aims to provide a rigorous program that meets the needs of educators and equips them to work for equitable, progressive learning environments. Knowing the resources and guidance that WASC offers toward this end, GSE leadership, faculty, and staff are committed to ensuring that all WASC policies are faithfully observed. Faculty and staff have attended WASC conferences, actively sought feedback, and communicated with WASC team members. Dr. Driscoll, in her External Review offered evidence of this commitment:

My experience with the initial self-study conducted prior to my visit was that it contained very few gaps of information, raised important questions for my study, and was true to the “transparency” value of the institution. The visit schedule for each program was carefully arranged to provide multiple sources of data while being flexible enough to respond to my inquiry and additional data sources. I experienced consistent openness to my concerns, to my analysis and summary, and to my recommendations (p. 6).
Optimal Teaching and Learning

2.1 The institution’s educational programs are appropriate in content, standards, and nomenclature for the degree level awarded, regardless of mode of delivery, and are staffed by sufficient numbers of faculty qualified for the type and level of curriculum offered.

The GSE’s M.Ed. programs in TL and SL are designed to equip professional educators to assume leadership roles in developing innovative, authentic, and rigorous learning environments. Through coursework and clinical applications, students “put theory to practice” in their own contexts, supported by a strong culture of peer critique and personalized faculty advising. The WASC CPR visiting team’s report concluded, “Instructional programs are appropriate in content, standards, and nomenclature and there is much evidence of alignment to the three guiding design principles in the curriculum (2.1)” (p. 16).

Program Alignment to Professional Standards

Faculty in both programs have systematically aligned their programs with professional standards. The Teacher Leadership Program PLO’s have been aligned with the Five Core Propositions of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards and the Draft Model Teacher Leader Standards developed by the Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium. The School Leadership Program PLO’s have been aligned with the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium for School Leaders Professional Standards. –Dr. Amy Driscoll, 2010 External Review Report

The 2010 program self studies (p 13 in Appendix D and p10 in E) and external review verified that GSE M.Ed. programs are aligned to professional standards in education and similar in content, standards, and nomenclature to those offered by other universities. Candidates engage in a program of study, clinical practice, and educational research that prepares them for educational leadership and continuing postgraduate work in Education (see Appendices W and CC for the course of study for TL and SL). GSE M.Ed. programs require 32 semester credit hours, comparable to accredited M.Ed. programs from institutions such as Stanford, Harvard, and Columbia.

The situated approach of the GSE is aligned with innovative M.Ed. programs across the country that place students in clinical settings where they can apply theoretical constructs immediately, with the assistance of expert mentors. Dr. Amy Driscoll noted, “In addition to aligning the curricular framework and PLO’s with the literature base in teacher education, the developers of the GSE programs studied successful models of school leadership for insights and guidance for their program design.” Furthermore, Dr. Driscoll writes, “The developers were…especially mindful of the adult learner who would engage in those programs as courses and pedagogy were planned.” Appendix TT discusses GSE alignment with adult learning theory.

In our learner-centered approach, emphasis on action-reflection and close links between theory and practice, GSE programs’ roots lie in the seminal work of Paulo Freire and John Dewey. Action research—a central feature of both programs involving on-going cycles of inquiry, action, and reflection—has been described as “a natural extension of good teaching” (Hubbard and Power, 1999, p. 3), a tool for improving schooling for students and their families (Noffke & Stevenson, 1995), a venue for professionalizing teaching by promoting a teacher-generated knowledge base (Grossman, 2003), and a vehicle for critiquing, challenging, and ultimately altering elements of schooling that perpetuate inequities (Kincheloe, 1991).

Faculty Qualifications

All GSE faculty have a Master’s degree or higher in Education or other relevant fields. All faculty members have experience as K-12 teachers and/or school leaders, are masters in the craft of teaching and working with colleagues, and demonstrate a strong commitment to the application of theoretical frameworks to practice. (See Appendices R2 and R3 for faculty resumes.) Evidence of the capacity and effectiveness of the faculty members is collected from four sources:

Standard II

- Course Evaluations (see Appendix P for sample course evaluations)
- Annual Surveys (see Appendix O for survey results from Annual Survey)
- Faculty Self Evaluations (described in CFR 3.4)
- Faculty Profiles (Appendix UU)

These sources are reviewed annually as described in the Faculty Support and Evaluation process in the Faculty Handbook (Appendix G), and systematically every five years as part of the Institutional Assessment (Appendix B). Student course evaluations and annual survey results indicate that candidates are well satisfied with the quality of instruction in the GSE, with 100% of students rating the quality of instruction as "good" or "excellent" (see Appendices D and E). The 2010 Faculty Evaluation process confirmed that faculty are appropriately engaged in teaching, scholarly work and service, as noted by Dr. Driscoll in her external review as well:

"Both full-time and part-time faculty interviewees are engaged in impressive scholarly activities during the summer or in connection with their GSE teaching. Examples of such scholarship include participation in a NSF grant, publication in Journal of Teacher Education, workshops at Harvard and the MacArthur Digital Media and Learning Conference. On-site scholarship takes the form of a HTH GSE journal and Collegial Conversations both on-line and in person for educators in K-12 and university levels." (p. 7)

Moreover, with five core faculty and eight lecturers, the institution provides opportunities for expert teachers and school leaders from HTH K-12 schools to teach or co-teach courses, a benefit of the GSE’s embeddedness.

2.2 All degrees—undergraduate and graduate—awarded by the institution are clearly defined in terms of entry-level requirements and in terms of levels of student achievement necessary for graduation that represent more than simply an accumulation of courses or credits.

Entry Level Requirements for GSE Admission

I waited twenty years to find a program that would be meaningful to my practice and have a direct effect on my instruction. So many teachers get masters degrees because they want to further their education and earn a pay increase. Sadly, many of the master’s programs don’t directly affect instruction, yet teachers end up earning more. – TL student, 2010 annual survey

Admission requirements for the GSE—published in the student handbook and on the website—include holding a BA/BS from a regionally accredited university, a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.75 and three years experience working in schools. Upon the recommendation of the WASC team, admissions criteria were revisited. After much deliberation, the GSE Leadership Team opted to adhere to the same requirements, as they are not the sole criteria for admission. Candidates also submit two reflective writing pieces with their application, two references from colleagues (one of which must be a former or current employer in education) and are interviewed by a team of GSE faculty. Candidates are selected based upon “goodness of fit,” meaning that the GSE only admits students who are passionate about their work with students and colleagues and want to push themselves in both regards. The ideal GSE candidate is committed to:

- refining his/her own practice, so as to lead with practice;
- designing learning environments that address issue of equity and access;
- engaging in, and learning to facilitate, collegial conversations about practice; and
- sharing one’s thoughts, practice and research with colleagues and the broader community.

The high rates of completion among accepted students in both GSE programs, discussed in CFR 1.7, indicate that the admissions requirements are appropriate and the selection process results in a diverse and well-prepared cohort (see discussion in CFR 1.5 and Appendices AR and AN)

Student Achievement Necessary for Graduation

In addition to achieving passing grades in all courses, students must satisfactorily complete a series of culminating projects and demonstrate mastery of the PLOs outlined in the GSE conceptual framework. Graduation requirements for each program are described on the GSE website (see Appendices X and DD for TL and SL graduation requirements). Both programs require students to pursue inquiry through a year-long Action Research Project (TL) or Leadership Project (SL) in their own setting (for handouts and rubrics, see Appendix V for Action Research and AA for Leadership Project). Students document this project in their digital portfolio and present it to the graduate committee and community members in a formal Presentation of Learning (POL); see Appendices V and BB for TL and SL POL handouts and rubrics. SL students also develop a
Leadership Philosophy Statement and School Design Plan. GSE faculty and committee members assess these culminating projects using co-constructed rubrics (Appendix J); these data were aggregated and discussed in the Program Self Study Reports (Appendices D and E). In general, faculty are highly satisfied with the degree to which students are meeting our program learning outcomes and with the quality of the products they are creating (discussed in Standard 4 and Self Study Reports, see p 13-19 in Appendix E for SL and 15-21 in D for TL).

Curricular Alignment of Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) to Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)

The GSE’s mission is articulated through the three dimensions of our conceptual framework, the PLOs within each dimension, and the SLOs associated with each course. As recommended in the WASC CPR visiting team's report, GSE faculty revisited the educational goals of the programs, refined the language of the PLOs and course-level SLOs, and designed/refined assignments and rubrics to more clearly delineate the criteria for student learning (Appendices LL3 and LL6). This process of backwards design to ensure curricular alignment is depicted below; students experience the system in reverse, participating in a set of scaffolded experiences to develop the desired knowledge and skills and demonstrating increased levels of sophistication and integration as they progress through the programs.²

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examined a random sample of student work focused on Reflection from both programs. As a result, instructors clarified expectations for course assignments and revised rubrics to better reflect the PLOs and SLOs; this and further examples of how assessment results are used to inform program decisions are discussed in Standard 4 and in the Program Self Study Reports (See Chapter 5 in both Appendices D and E).

Engaging Students with Literature and Research
The GSE approach is **100% theory embedded in practice**, as evidenced in the “Put it to Practice” assignments for each course, as well as the cycle of inquiry pursued through the Action Research and Leadership Projects. Students develop essential questions to guide their work, gain deeper understanding of the issue by collecting data and analyzing scholarly literature, design an authentic response to the issue at their school site, and collect on-going data to inform the implementation of their project, making responsive changes to the work as necessary. They develop the habit of looking to the literature and conducting research in their own classroom and schools as they pursue fierce wonderings about their practice.

An analysis of annual survey results reveals that students feel well supported to engage with scholarly literature and conduct inquiries into their practice. Furthermore, an analysis of completed rubrics assessing the literature review section (called "Understandings") of the action research proposals and final theses demonstrate that the majority of students meet or exceed program expectations for scholarly work. These findings were confirmed through faculty analysis of syllabi and the program alignment matrices (Appendix LL), which revealed adequate scaffolding of relevant PLOs. Further discussion of this evidence, and related actions, are provided in the TL Self Study Report (p 45 in Appendix D) and in Standard 4. This attention to preparing **students as scholars** was echoed in Dr. Driscoll's findings during her external review:

> When describing the program, alumnae used the terms “scholarly,” “empowered,” and “reflective” repeatedly in both groups; when asked about the outcomes of their graduate work, alumnae responded with “I've become a data collector in my own classroom,” and “I now think like a researcher as I make decisions,” and “I have become an agent of change in my school.”

2.3 The institutional expectations for learning and student attainment are clearly reflected in its academic programs and policies. These include the organization and content of the institution’s curricula; admissions and graduation policies; the organization and delivery of advisement; the use of its library and information resources; and (where applicable) experience in the wider learning environment provided by the campus and/or co-curriculum.

The GSE communicates expectations for learning and student attainment in various ways: course syllabi, project handouts/rubrics, program websites, the Student Handbook, and discussions with GSE faculty. The 2009/10 annual survey revealed 92% of TL students and 67% of SL students feel the clarity of program expectations is "good" or "excellent (See Standard 4 and Self Studies, p. 46 in TL Appendix D and p. 37 in SL Appendix E).

Curriculum Organization and Content: Course Syllabi, Project Designs and Rubrics
All GSE syllabi follow a consistent format to ensure clarity and curriculum alignment (Appendices T and Z). In her external review, Dr. Driscoll discussed GSE syllabi as "exemplary practices" that indicate program quality:

> All syllabi are excellent communications between faculty and students. They begin with a major question(s) as an inquiry frame for the course, contain SLO's and related PLO’s, assignments for demonstrating achievement of SLO’s, schedule for courses with information about pedagogy, resources, and preparation; and course expectations.

Flexible assignments allow students to differentiate their work based on authentic issues in their practice. For a "Put it to Practice" assignment, SL students were asked to "design a meaningful way to incorporate student voice into their classroom or school.” Students took different approaches, from including students in staff professional development to creating a student action group to respond to bullying, **but still achieved the same desired student learning outcomes** (see Appendix Y3 for assignment and rubric; see samples of student work in their digital portfolios: [https://sites.google.com/a/hightechhigh.org/sl/dps-blogs](https://sites.google.com/a/hightechhigh.org/sl/dps-blogs)).

Finally, faculty provide students with rubrics for all course projects and culminating projects (Appendices S and Y). These rubrics are developed/refined with students (Appendix J) to ensure ownership of the criteria for the work. Students use these rubrics to self-assess and provide peer feedback that guides later revisions, and faculty use them to provide quantitative and narrative feedback to students about their work.
Program Websites
The GSE website, and the accompanying TL and SL websites, clearly articulate the program requirements for graduation, including the roster of courses and the necessary documents for completing major work products. Each course has links to syllabi, calendars, course materials, and on-line forums.

- Teacher Leadership Website: https://sites.google.com/a/hightechhigh.org/tl/
- School Leadership Website: https://sites.google.com/a/hightechhigh.org/sl/

Admissions and Graduation Policies
These are clearly stated in the GSE Student Handbook, available on both program websites under Program Resources. See CFR 1.5 (admissions) and CFR 1.7 (course completion and graduation) for further discussion.

Advising
In response to the CPR visiting team's recommendations, the GSE has formalized advising structures, especially in the SL program (Appendix I). All GSE students are assigned a faculty advisor, who they meet with several times a year to discuss their Personal Learning Plan (Appendix AE), projects, and progress towards graduation. The PLP is available on both program websites and guides candidates through the process of setting goals, taking opportunities to meet those goals, and reflecting on progress. The core faculty are the main advisors in the GSE and have an average advising load of fewer than 10 students. The 2009/10 Survey showed that most students felt the Support to Meet Program Requirements was Good or Excellent (78% in SL, 100% in TL), and the Support from Faculty Advisor was Good or Excellent (86% in SL, 96% in TL); see Appendix O3B. While this represents an improvement from 2008-09 survey data, we aim for all students to feel completely supported in our programs.

In response to these data and the WASC team's recommendation, GSE faculty combined new SL and TL students in August 2010 for an orientation to learn about program requirements, program websites (how to access course syllabi, calendars, materials and forums), the advising structure and graduate committee composition, and to begin their PLPs. Within the first month of school, all students were assigned an advisor and met with him/her to discuss their learning goals for the program and clarify expectations. Future surveys will reveal the degree to which these efforts have impacted students' perceptions of support.

Information and Library Resources
Information and Library Resources are communicated to candidates during the Orientation, on the Program websites, and through coursework. As local educators, all students receive a UCSD community library card (Appendix AI) and both programs take field trips to the UCSD library to learn to search databases and find resources relevant to their work. Furthermore, all students contribute to Annotopia, a searchable database of annotations created by GSE students (http://gseannotopia.blogspot.com). In response to students' feedback about access to scholarly resources, the GSE is exploring options for online access to relevant journals/databases. These resources are further discussed in CFR 3.6.

Experience in the Wider Learning Environment
The GSE is rooted in ongoing inquiry, data collection, analysis and reflection. Apart from courses, the bulk of this work takes place in students’ professional settings, and the GSE-sponsored contexts where students share their work with authentic audiences (discussed more in CFR 2.6). These include residencies/institutes, UnBoxed Speaker Series events, face-to-face and online collegial conversations, and as contributors and members of the editorial board of the Unboxed Journal. All of these opportunities are marketed through the GSE website and students receive invitations to participate, with encouragement to bring colleagues and K-12 students. The purposes and perceived value of these opportunities are discussed in CFRs 2.11, 4.1 and 4.6.

2.4 The institution’s expectations for learning and student attainment are developed and widely shared among its members (including faculty, students, staff, and where appropriate, external stakeholders). The institution’s faculty takes collective responsibility for establishing, reviewing, fostering, and demonstrating the attainment of these expectations.

GSE faculty are committed to shaping a cohesive vision of expectations for learning and student attainment, while also creating dynamic learning environments that are responsive to the needs and interests of students. In the WASC CPR visiting team’s report, they recognized "...the strong collaborative efforts among HTH GSE stakeholders to support the institution’s expectations for student learning and attainment" (p. 19). As described in CFRs 2.2, 2.3, and 4.4 faculty collaboratively developed course-level learning outcomes (SLOs) and
refined course assignments and rubrics to align to our PLOs (Appendices LL3 and LL6). Faculty communicate these expectations to students through syllabi, project descriptions, program websites, and advising. They also involve GSE students in developing shared expectations for their learning by co-constructing rubrics (Appendix J) and by working together in study groups at the annual retreat (Appendix XX1). As evidence of the quality of faculty/student collaboration, in the 2009/10 annual survey, 96% of TL students and 89% of SL students rated the opportunities to be involved in shaping program design and vision as "good" or "excellent."

In addition to bi-monthly meetings, faculty meet as needed to discuss course content and alignment, design rubrics for assessing student work, and collaboratively review student work samples, modifying the programs as needed to better support students. Dr. Driscoll noted the high level of "faculty commitment to the GSE model" (p. 7) and faculty's focus on student learning:

*I observed the use of a protocol for “Looking at Student Work” at a faculty meeting to help one faculty member process the current use of a digital portfolio for her students. Consequently, the faculty meeting was reflective and educationally focused, an example of authentic faculty development. I was informed that the protocols are used consistently in the GSE courses and in the schools.* – p. 4

She also went on to note that,

*Full-time faculty engage in a number of exemplary and unique practices that inform their courses and their teaching: advising of approximately 12-15 high school students in the HTH K-12 schools to stay current in terms of designing learning environments for specific ages...faculty meetings with minimal logistical discussions and with focused use of protocols for processing important issues and decisions for courses and program; faculty study groups that often include K-12 students; retreats; faculty analysis of student work and reflection on related course and program improvements...* – p. 7

Faculty monitor the attainment of program and course expectations through various types of direct evidence:

- **assessments of student work** via rubrics designed to address relevant SLOs and PLOs (Appendices S and Y)
- **aggregated results of assessment data** from course assignments and culminating projects like the Action Research Project (TL) and Leadership Project (SL); discussed in the Self Study Reports.
- **course completion data** (Appendix AN)
- **annual reviews of student achievement** focused on the PLOs in one dimension of the conceptual framework; this process and the results are discussed in detail in CFR 4.4.

These processes ensure that student learning is being assessed throughout the program, and that students are consistently provided with feedback to improve their work. As noted by Dr. Driscoll, our "direct assessment of student achievement of the PLO's has affirmed that students are achieving the PLO's in both programs at an exemplary level in most cases" (See Self Study, p. 19-23 in TL Appendix D, and p. 15-21 in SL Appendix E).

2.5 The institution’s academic programs actively involve students in learning, challenge them to achieve high expectations, and provide them with appropriate and ongoing feedback about their performance and how it can be improved.
**Collaboration and Critique at the GSE**

Through norm setting, analysis of models, Structured protocols, and group critique, GSE students engage in critical dialogue about their work, as reflected in these quotes from the 2009/10 survey:

*Having a critical friend has proven to be the most valuable asset to me as we move through the various phases of writing our Action Research Proposals. The feedback from my advisor has been helpful, and the conversations with Stacey have been invaluable! Posting assignments on WARP has also been great; it is really helpful to be able to read through everyone’s work to make sure I’m on the right track. (Not to mention, everyone’s work is so interesting!) I have felt very supported and encouraged this year. This has been a wonderful experience for me!*

*Stacey did a lot of activities and structuring of the class to ensure we were able to create lasting and meaningful connections in our cohort. This then created an atmosphere of trust and collaboration like none I have experienced in my academic or professional life. I have worked very hard to simulate her strategies for grouping, pairing, collaborating and sharing ideas in my own classroom. I have seen shy and apathetic students turn into friends this year. I know that Stacey’s instruction and course design helped me do this. In our own cohort, we offer critique and feedback ALL the time and we have all come to a point where we crave and seek out critique.*

**High Expectations with Appropriate and Ongoing Feedback**

High expectations for the quality of course work are developed with students by looking at exemplary models and developing rubrics together (Appendix J). By identifying criteria for what makes particular pieces of work powerful, students develop a shared sense of purpose and are better able to apply those criteria to their own work and that of their peers to guide future revisions. Within the GSE and HTH schools, there is an ethos of critique and revision—that creating "beautiful work" takes time and involves feedback from others. To that end, GSE faculty employ multi-tiered feedback structures to support the critique and revision of course assignments and graduation requirements through peer, faculty and advisor feedback (Appendix K).

As noted in the WASC CPR visiting team’s report, "Active involvement of students, faculty, and staff (CFR 2.5) is further evidenced in the multi-tiered feedback structure for both first and second year students; this includes feedback from peers, critical friends, course instructors, and advisors" (p. 20). Based on their recommendations, we continued to gather data through the Annual Survey as to the quality of instructor feedback and advising, adding questions about the quality of feedback and collaboration from peers. In the 2009/10 survey, 100% of GSE students rated the opportunities to collaborate with peers, encouragement to push each other’s thinking, and value of peer feedback as "good" or "excellent." However, survey data also revealed that faculty feedback and the use of forums could be improved, especially in the SL program. The following changes (See Self Study Reports, p 47 in Appendix D for TL and p 26 in E for SL) have been made accordingly:

- Forums were moved from WARP to Moodle, a more manageable platform (Appendix AG).
- Faculty have made an effort to respond to individual posts on the forum, so that students’ weekly work receives direct feedback from instructors (see Appendix AL for a sample of the forum).
- Students in the SL program are no longer required to keep an individual blog of QQC annotations, but now use the forum to respond to each others’ work
- Faculty respond to co-constructed rubrics students use to self-assess major projects
- Faculty respond to student-led comments completed at the end of each course
- Advisors visit advisees’ school sites to better understand their work context and use the Personal Learning Plans as a springboard for one-on-one conversations

Initial responses to the changes in technology and faculty feedback structures have been positive and faculty plan to continue to refine both as the year progresses in response to on-going feedback. While there is always room for improvement, faculty analysis of direct measures of student achievement confirmed that the majority of GSE students are meeting or exceeding program learning outcomes, and that there are adequate supports in place to scaffold the completion of graduation requirements. (Annual reviews of student work are discussed in 4.4 and the analysis of the culminating projects from each program is discussed in Self Study Reports; p. 15-21 in SL Appendix E and 19-23 in TL Appendix D.) As noted in the TL Self Study Report:
While these percentages [meeting or exceeding the standards] almost seem suspiciously high, as one student commented in her POL, "The way this process was scaffolded and as many revisions and feedback cycles we did, I don’t know how anyone couldn’t produce something beautiful." - p. 20

2.6 The institution demonstrates that its graduates consistently achieve its stated levels of attainment and ensures that its expectations for student learning are embedded in the standards faculty use to evaluate student work.

As the WASC CPR visiting team concluded, "Expectations for students (CFR 2.6) are clearly defined and stated in several documents (course syllabi, rubrics, conceptual framework, SLOs, final projects)" (p. 21). To determine the extent to which students are achieving PLOs, we drew upon a variety of direct and indirect evidence of student learning (discussed in 4.3 & 4.4, and Appendices B and C).

In response to the CPR team’s concerns about the emphasis on indirect evidence, we refined our Program Review process. In 2010, faculty conducted program self studies that involved an analysis of direct measures of student achievement including assessments of course/program projects, course completion and graduation rates, as well as indirect measures such as course evaluations, student-led comments, and the Annual Student Survey. The Self Study Reports provide an in-depth analysis of these achievement data (p. 15-21 in Appendix E for SL and; p. 19-23 in D for TL). As noted above, GSE faculty were satisfied with the level at which students are attaining our PLOs. Dr. Driscoll, in her external review, found further evidence that students are meeting and in many cases, exceeding our expectations for student learning:

**It must be noted that their direct assessment of student achievement of the PLO’s has affirmed that students are achieving the PLO’s in both programs at an exemplary level in most cases. The data displays in the Appendices of the self-studies of both programs illustrate the qualities of excellence. Major student assignments are reviewed by faculty panels as well as being assessed by individual faculty evaluations. Student evidence examples such as the action research projects or the leadership projects do reflect the “theory into practice” intentions of the programs, the relevance of GSE’s curriculum, and the qualities of scholarship and leadership in both programs. Those integrated projects also promote and demonstrate students’ capacity to synthesize their learning from the complete graduate program. The element of student choice must also be acknowledged for its importance to these adult learners and the quality of the rigor and commitment evident in their work. Completed rubrics for these major PLO assignments will yield more detailed direct assessment in the near future.**

Our analysis of student achievement data (discussed in 4.4), triangulated with an analysis of data related to the student experience, helped us identify and enact a variety of changes to the programs:

**School Leadership - Leadership Projects**
- Clearer expectations for Leadership Project proposal, including the use of exemplary models earlier in the year to develop criteria for a rubric co-constructed with students
- “Spotlight” tuning protocols to support Leadership Projects throughout the year (Appendix AC7)
- Greater use of class time to critique and revise drafts of authentic products
- More support for how to collect both preliminary and on-going data to assess project effectiveness
- Better scaffolding to support a cycle of inquiry that is responsive to on-going data collection

**Teacher Leadership – Action Research & Digital Portfolios**
- Supporting students through the research seminar to produce their theses in innovative formats that highlight GSE student and K-12 student work (self-published books, interactive website, documentaries)
- Further use of co-constructed standards/rubrics for self-assessment throughout the research seminar
- Create study group to discuss the purpose, expectations, and content of the Digital Portfolio

As Dr. Driscoll noted in her report, both direct and indirect measures of student learning inform our work:

**Initially, I was concerned about the enormity of indirect assessment used initially in the assessment of program quality and to identify areas needing change or improvement. The source of such indirect information was and is primarily student surveys, but it was considered along with sources of direct assessment, student work. My experience with the GSE during my visit has minimized the concern about the abundance of indirect evidence. When I heard the thinking and critique articulated by current students and alumnae, and when I considered the knowledge base about adult learners and realized that the student body is**
composed of practicing professionals who pursue the GSE programs, I can support the use of extensive surveys of students to be used just as they are currently used.

Refining Rubrics to Yield More Useful Data & Drive Program Improvement
The GSE recognizes that our rubrics must be well designed to accurately assess student learning and drive program improvement efforts. To that end, since the CPR visit, GSE faculty formed a study group to develop rubrics for final course projects (See an example in Appendix S4) and to refine the rubrics used to assess culminating projects in the two programs (Appendices V and AA). Previous iterations of the rubrics used for culminating projects had included clear criteria, but it was less clear what it meant to exceed, meet, or approach the standard. Faculty analyzed examples of student work at various levels to develop more specific language for the levels, while retaining space in the rubric for more narrative, personalized comments. Faculty also added a feedback sheet for committee members and POL panelists to provide feedback on the general strengths of the work, areas for future thought/action, and any lingering questions. In debriefs at the end of the 2010 POLs, committee members said the rubrics were clear and easy to use, and students raved about the quality of the feedback and support. POL Panelists found the feedback sheets clear and easy to use. Faculty who had used the previous year's rubrics found the new ones to be an improvement in assessing the PLOs, project quality and presentation values. Faculty will continue to refine these tools, and in the future would like to solicit more systematic feedback from committee members, POL panelists, and students as to their usefulness.

2.8 The institution actively values and promotes scholarship, curricular and instructional innovations, and creative activity, as well as their dissemination at levels and of the kinds appropriate to the institution's purposes and character.

The GSE is a natural outgrowth of adult learning structures and activities at HTH, where practitioners share and disseminate their work as a matter of course. In the WASC CPR visiting team's report, they wrote "HTH GSE has demonstrated that it is committed to scholarship, curricular and instruction innovations and the creativity of its faculty and students" (p. 22). GSE students and faculty disseminate their learning in a variety of contexts—including public Digital Portfolios, face-to-face and on-line Collegial Conversations, print and digital publications (including the GSE Journal, UnBoxed), presentations at HTH Residencies/Institutes and other conferences—all in the interest of creating and supporting communities of innovative practice. GSE-sponsored venues for disseminating student and faculty work are described in Appendix M; the effectiveness of these efforts, and their alignment with our strategic plan and goals for students, are discussed in CFRs 4.1 and 4.6.

GSE students and faculty are also encouraged to share their research, curricular designs, pedagogical innovations and professional musings through non-GSE venues. In the 2009/10 survey, 96% of TL students and 67% of SL students rated the opportunities to share work with authentic audiences as "good" or "excellent." Further, students and alumni reported the number of times in the past year they had engaged in behaviors related to collaborating with colleagues and sharing their work with broader audiences; these data, and the next steps they suggested, are described in the TL Self Study Report (p. 24-27, 30-33). In general, we found that alumni continue to engage in behaviors we care about post graduation, and that most current students are similarly engaged in sharing their work with colleagues and with broader audiences, often for the first time in their careers.

While faculty were excited by GSE student engagement with the education community, scaffolding opportunities for students and faculty to share their work with authentic audiences is one of the GSE's top priorities. At the 2009/10 Annual Retreat, a study group suggested ways for further increasing these opportunities, which have all been enacted this year. These include:

- creating a "Sharing our Work" page on the program websites listing presenting/publishing opportunities
- support in courses to produce self-published books (action research in TL and a compilation of "Musings on Leadership" in SL)
- identifying authentic audiences for course projects (including UnBoxed, EdWeek, or other publications)
- GSE faculty co-presenting with students at conferences
- a study group to redesign the GSE website to highlight student research and publications

Next year, we will have data to assess the effectiveness of these efforts and to compare across years.

Finally, as part of the annual faculty self-evaluation process, and the Program Review completed every five years, faculty update their Record of Service for collective review to determine whether GSE faculty are sufficiently engaged in the broader adult learning community (see Appendix VV). The Self Studies, as well as the external review, concluded that the level of scholarship among GSE faculty is both adequate and appropriate:
Both full-time and part-time faculty interviewees are engaged in impressive scholarly activities during the summer or in connection with their GSE teaching. Examples of such scholarship include participation in a NSF grant, publication in Journal of Teacher Education, workshops at Harvard and the MacArthur Digital Media and Learning Conference. On-site scholarship takes the form of a GSE journal and GSE Collegial Conversations both on-line and in person for educators in K-12 and university levels. –External Review Report, p. 7

Faculty have acknowledged a desire to continue and extend their dissemination efforts through submissions to peer-reviewed journals and presentations at professional conferences.

2.9 The institution recognizes and promotes appropriate linkages among scholarship, teaching, student learning and service.

As an institution focused on transforming schools and on modeling and cultivating educational leadership, faculty and students are encouraged to share reflections on practice and pedagogy, discussions of their research, and other scholarly work with authentic audiences of educators, academics, policy makers, and school reformers. As noted in CFR 2.8, GSE faculty and students have published their work in a variety of venues and presented at a range of conferences/workshops geared toward academic audiences.

The GSE’s commitment to faculty scholarship, service, and excellence in teaching/advising is articulated in the policies for Faculty Evaluation and Support outlined in the Faculty Handbook (Appendix G). Faculty are hired based on their content expertise, their experience in schools, and their commitment to reflective practice, social justice, and school reform. Their continued employment depends on the quality of their teaching, advising, collaborations with colleagues on curricular/program design, and scholarly contributions to the knowledge base on teaching and learning. The evolution and effectiveness of the faculty evaluation process and faculty development structures are described further in Standard 3.

Like GSE faculty, students participate in service-oriented activities within their own schools, as outlined in their PLPs and evidenced in the leadership activities built into their coursework. They participate in or lead study groups, facilitate staff meetings and workshops, share work with colleagues, initiate collegial conversations, and mentor fellow educators. Upon the WASC CPR team's recommendation, faculty assessed the PLPs as part of the 2010 Program Review process. They also solicited feedback from alumni and students, who desired greater support in articulating professional goals at the beginning of the programs, and taking implementation steps throughout. As a result, faculty have taken steps to enhance the PLP’s effectiveness by using it as a touchstone for beginning and mid-year conferences with advisees. Starting in Fall 2010, students created a PLP as a shared Google doc to chronicle goals, action plans, and reflections for discussion with their Advisor and Critical Friend. Furthermore, as part of the PLP, students now complete a series of WALO activities (Wicked Awesome Learning Opportunities) to pursue their professional goals throughout the programs (Appendix AE).

2.11 Consistent with its purposes, the institution develops and implements co-curricular programs that are integrated with its academic goals and programs, and supports student professional and personal development.

The GSE provides a range of co-curricular programs to its current students and faculty, as well as to educators within HTH and beyond:

- **The GSE journal, UnBoxed**, serves as a resource to GSE students, but also as an opportunity to publish reflections on practice and research (Appendix EE1).
- **The UnBoxed Speaker Series** hosts experts in educational policy, research and practice (Appendix EE6).
- **High Tech High Residencies** are 2-3 day conferences addressing specific professional development areas, such as project-based learning, exhibitions of student work, and internships and real-world connection. These events are open to the public, draw participants from around the world, and supplement the professional resources available to students through their GSE programs (Appendix EE2).
- **The HTH Summer Institute** welcomes educators from around the world and offers a venue for GSE students to present their action research and other work (Appendix EE7).
- **HTH Exhibitions of K-12 Student Learning** occur throughout the year and provide GSE students with opportunities to see the theory underlying GSE programs in practice through tangible examples of teacher and student work.
- **Monthly Collegial Conversations** where educators meet in-person and on-line to discuss issues of teaching and learning (Appendix EE5).
As part of the 2010 Program Review, the GSE collected data as to the value, success and sustainability of co-curricular programs (discussed in CFR 4.1 and 4.6). Data were also collected to assess the degree to which students felt supported professionally and personally (discussed in CFR 4.4 and 4.5). In the 2009/10 annual survey, students were asked to rate and comment on aspects of the learning community; the majority of students felt highly supported to take risks, push each other's thinking and practice, personalize their learning, and collaborate with peers (Appendix O3B).

2.12. The institution ensures that all students understand the requirements of their academic programs and receive timely, useful, and regular information and advising about relevant academic requirements.

**Program Academic Requirements and Advising**

All academic requirements for GSE programs are clearly stated on the website and syllabi, and scaffolded through the design of coursework and frequent communication with faculty and advisors. At the orientation, program directors review the academic requirements for each program and the academic calendar, which notes deadlines for students. Program directors maintain close communication with students throughout their program by teaching courses and through cohort e-mail groups. Advisors play a central role in ensuring that students have the information they need through regular face-to-face meetings and e-mail correspondence. Program web pages provide candidates with additional course information, program resources, and calendars. As discussed in CFR 2.3, most GSE students rate the quality of advising and support for meeting program requirements as “good” or “excellent,” and faculty have taken steps this year to further improve the clarity of program expectations and advisor support. Beyond that, the high course completion and graduation rates (Appendix AN) indicate that the vast majority of students understand what is required of them.

2.13. Student support services—including financial aid, registration, advising, career counseling, computer labs, and library and information services—are designed to meet the needs of the specific types of students the institution serves and the curricula it offers.

Because of the situated nature and the cohort model of our programs, support services differ from those of a more comprehensive university. With intentionally small programs personalized to meet the needs of students, faculty and advisors work together to scaffold and support students’ completion of coursework and graduation requirements. Students progress through the course sequence as a cohort, so there is no choice in the courses they take. If a student were to miss or fail a course, they would take it the following year. All students who have requested a leave from either program have done so for personal reasons. In these cases, Program directors and advisors have met with the student to discuss the leave and to document what the student would need to do in order to rejoin the cohort and graduate from the program. Course and program completion rate provide perspective on how well students are supported and are discussed in CFR 1.7 and Appendix AN.

**Advising and Career Support**

Advisors counsel students as to their professional goals and career trajectories using PLPs. While the 2010 Survey indicated that the majority of students are satisfied with the quality of advising (discussed in CFR 2.3) and program resources/services, 67% of students felt the support for career development was "good" or "excellent, 15% felt it was "fair," 6% rated it "poor" and 12% selected "N/A." It is notable that these ratings were significantly higher in the TL program, where students have less desire/expectation of transitioning to a new career role. In contrast, the SL program attracts people who aim to become administrators, but who are often not when they enter the program. Faculty in the SL program have taken steps to formalize the advising structure to provide greater support for students who aspire to create/lead schools (See SL Self Study Report, p 25 Appendix E).

**Tuition and Financial Aid**

At the time of the CPR report, the GSE had not begun to charge tuition (full fellowships were provided to all students in the first year of the GSE). The WASC CPR visiting team recommended that the GSE design and implement a tuition payment process, continue to pursue grants and philanthropic support to provide student fellowships, and investigate federal and state financial aid and loan programs for the future. A payment process has since been established, where students can pay through the GSE website or by personal check. The 2009/10 annual surveys revealed that the clarity of this tuition process could be improved (discussed in CFR 4.5). As a result, this fall the process and payment schedule were published in the GSE Student Handbook (Appendix H) and
communicated to students through personalized e-mails, including reminders before each payment deadline. Since then, no payments have been late, indicating that the information has been communicated clearly.

Upon GSE completion of the Candidacy Cycle of the WASC accreditation process, GSE candidates will be eligible to apply for federal financial aid. However, to provide this aid, the GSE needs to have an acceptable index within the Federal Responsibility Standards. We work continually to secure philanthropic support, not only for tuition fellowships in the short term, but also to cushion our reserves. This results in a higher index for the coming years, insuring that our students are eligible for federal financial aid and that we can continue to attract and support highly qualified candidates.

Academic Resources: Computers, Library and Information Services

As noted in CFRs 2.3 and 3.6, GSE students have access to a range of library and information services at our Point Loma campus and in the San Diego area. Faculty scaffold the use of library/information resources through the program orientation and coursework (Appendix S1). As indicated by student ratings on the annual survey, most students feel well supported to engage with scholarly literature, but some would like increased/remote access to scholarly resources (data and related actions discussed in CFR 4.5). The program websites created for Fall 2010 serve as the primary archives for program-related information. Thus far student and faculty feedback has been overwhelmingly positive; future surveys will verify the degree to which the websites have supported student learning and progress through the programs.

GSE students also have access to a range of technologies and computer resources on our campus and online. In response to the CPR visiting team’s concerns that we do not have computer labs, GSE solicited feedback from students about their computer needs/access. The majority of students own laptops, which they prefer to use in class. Since GSE classes take place in HTH classrooms, all students have access to laptops (20 per classroom) and the internet. In addition, GSE students and faculty have access (via password) to Elluminate, Moodle, and the Google suite—all on-line platforms for sharing information, resources, and videos of teaching and learning. Like the HTH schools, the GSE takes an integrated approach to technology. There are no computer labs or de-contextualized technology lessons; instead faculty infuse technology throughout the courses and provide scaffolding to students in using these technologies through the program orientation, course activities, and workshops focused on specific work products like the digital portfolio. Each year, we adapt our technology resources to better meet students' needs; these efforts, and the data on which they are based, are discussed in CFRs 4.2, 4.5 and in the Self Study Reports (p. 29 in SI. Appendix E and p. 42 in TL Appendix D.)

2.14. Institutions that serve transfer students assume an obligation to provide clear and accurate information about transfer requirements, ensure equitable treatment for such students with respect to academic policies, and ensure that such students are not unduly disadvantaged by transfer requirements.

Our programs are built around a cohort model of sequential courses unique in design and content. As a result, we do not accept transfer credits from other institutions.

Learning Organization

2.7 In order to improve currency and effectiveness, all programs offered by the institution are subject to review, including analyses of the achievement of the program’s learning objectives and outcomes. Where appropriate, evidence from external constituencies such as employers and professional societies is included in such review.

As described in Standard 4, the GSE has made great strides since the CPR in formalizing our quality assurance processes and the ways we use data, particularly direct evidence of student learning, to inform decision-making and continually improve our programs. Central to these efforts was the creation of a Program Review process (Appendix C) aligned to the WASC Program Review Guide, and a complementary Institutional Assessment plan (Appendix B) that takes place on a 5-year cycle.

Consistent with the WASC CPR team’s recommendations, the GSE conducted program self-studies in 2009-10 (Appendices D and E), followed by an External Review in Fall 2010 (Appendix F). As a result of these processes, and in preparation for them, GSE faculty intensified their focus on direct evidence of student achievement related to our PLOs and SLOs via the use of refined rubrics. These efforts build on a history of collaborative and careful analysis of student work. Since the GSE’s creation in 2007, faculty have engaged in annual reviews of student work samples and achievement data related to the PLOs in one dimension of the
conceptual framework (at this point, we have assessed the PLOs in all three dimensions; this process and findings are described in CFR 4.4). These efforts, coupled with the collection of additional quantitative and qualitative data (see CFR 4.3) offer a **more nuanced, systematic and evidence-based program improvement process** than our original School Quality Review (SQR) process.

As a graduate school of education embedded within K-12 schools, we engage alumni, current students, their colleagues/employers, community leaders, professors from other universities, and K-12 students in our processes for assessing our educational effectiveness. The participation of these different stakeholders, and our plans for strengthening their involvement are described in CFR 4.8. These efforts are particularly important in light of GSE faculty members' and Dr. Driscoll's observations of struggles "returning to reality" experienced by GSE students who teach in more traditional contexts, where there is less support for educators to innovate, collaborate, and generally integrate ideas from the programs into their daily work. In her report, Dr. Driscoll recommended "...sensitivity and attention to those challenges within the graduate curriculum, including strategizing, analyzing situations, developing approaches to make small changes to name a few" (p. 8). To this end, faculty redesigned the HTH 212: Leadership for School Change course and formalized the PLP to explicitly address these issues (discussed in CFR 4.4). Faculty have also visited the school sites where our students work to better understand their professional contexts and to build administrator support.

Future data will reveal if these actions have led to even greater support for GSE students to enact change in their schools. For now, the 2009/10 annual survey shows that 100% of GSE students "agree" or "strongly agree" that the program has positively impacted their work with students and colleagues, has supported them in making a difference in their setting, and helped them to develop as a leader at their school.

2.10. Regardless of mode of program delivery, the institution regularly identifies the characteristics of its students and assesses their needs, experiences and levels of satisfaction. This information is used to help shape a learning-centered environment and to actively promote student success.

**Student Needs, Experiences and Levels of Satisfaction**

GSE programs are designed for experienced educators who want to deepen their practice or create/lead a small innovative school. All of our current students work full-time or part-time in educational contexts. Upon admission to either program, students attend an orientation where they meet faculty, students and alumni (Appendix WW). At the beginning of the program, students complete a PLP, describing their personal and professional goals, steps they will take to achieve those, and supports they would like from faculty and peers. These provide a foundation for ongoing conversations between the students and advisors. (Appendix AE)

Throughout the program, faculty assess students’ needs and experiences through frequent contact, reflective writings assignments and discussions, and several formal feedback structures. At the program level, students complete an annual survey and participate in study groups at the annual retreat, where faculty and students work together to redesign and improve aspects of the programs. At the course level, students complete course evaluations, rating the effectiveness of different aspects of the course and the instructor (Appendix P). In addition, most HTH GSE faculty solicit student feedback after each class session in the form of exit cards, asking students to describe what worked, what could have been better, and what questions/concerns they have.

Furthermore, as recommended by the WASC CPR visiting team, the GSE has gone beyond the use of student survey data to assess the alignment between our mission and our programs, and students’ experience of completing the graduation requirements. As evidenced in Chapter 2 of the Self Study Reports (Appendices D and E) and described in CFRs 4.4, 4.1, 4.3, and 4.5, GSE faculty have drawn on an analysis of direct and indirect measures of student achievement and experiences to continually improve the quality of teaching and learning in both programs. Dr. Driscoll confirmed our commitment to our students’ success,

> Overall, I conclude that the High Tech High Graduate School of Education is an innovative, educationally effective and exemplary model of graduate teacher education with a focus on professional leadership. I will recommend it to colleagues interested in visiting such a model, confident that they will experience the same reflection, inquiry and student-centered practices that I reviewed as the external reviewer. - External Review Report, p 9

Examples of programmatic changes made as a result of triangulating quantitative and qualitative data, and discussions between students and faculty at the 2010 retreat can be found in Appendix XX3.
Optimal Teaching and Learning

3.4. The institution maintains appropriate and sufficiently supported faculty development activities designed to improve teaching and learning consistent with its educational objectives and institutional purposes.

Faculty meetings and retreats
In addition to daily informal conversations, GSE faculty meet formally twice a month, focusing on improving teaching and learning, consistent both with GSE purposes and the WASC CPR visiting team’s recommendations. Faculty regularly employ discussion protocols to address topics such as equitable learning, alignment of course syllabi with learning outcomes, and student learning as evidenced in samples of student work (see Appendix ZZ for sample meeting agendas). In the Annual Survey for 2010, 100% of faculty found these meetings to be “helpful” or “very helpful.”

GSE faculty engage in full-day retreats each year to analyze student learning (e.g., review syllabi, analyze student work samples for achievement of course SLOs as aligned with the PLOs; see Appendix YY1). In the Annual Survey, 100% of faculty rated the June 2009 retreat as “helpful” or “very helpful.”

One development strategy at the GSE is to model effective teaching practices in faculty meetings and retreats. Practicing these activities helps us to work together better and equips faculty to model effective strategies in their classes. See Appendix AC for sample strategies and handouts. Dr. Driscoll refers to this strategy of modeling, as evidenced in GSE courses, in the External Reviewer Report (p. 4):

Both programs have been designed to model the philosophy and practices of inclusive education, to connect theory and practice, and develop thinking and strategies that can be immediately implemented in classrooms to improve teaching and learning and shared with colleagues. My observation of one of the classes in each of the programs, review of the syllabi, interviews with faculty, and group sessions with alumnae and current students all affirmed that the programs have both integrated theory with practice, provide “meaningful and relevant” information for classroom and school application, and consistently model the kind of pedagogy and relationship practices that would make a difference in school environments and cultures.

A faculty evaluation process that supports professional development
As recommended in the WASC team’s CPR report, the Leadership Team created a Faculty Review Process to track and guide professional growth. The Faculty Personal Learning Plan, introduced in 2009, led to a more holistic Faculty Evaluation process (described in CFR 1.3 and Appendix Q), first employed in 2009-10. In the annual survey (Appendix O5), 100% of faculty "strongly agreed" or "agreed" that the faculty evaluation process was fair and helpful.

GSE faculty regularly access outside resources, courses and conferences (see Appendix VV), as documented in the faculty evaluation process. Professional development is also monitored in the Program Review every five years. Upon review of the faculty evaluation process, faculty set a goal to increase their presentations and publications. Meanwhile, Dr. Driscoll found that a high level of faculty development already existed:

Full-time faculty engage in a number of exemplary and unique practices that inform their courses and their teaching: advising approximately 12-15 high school students in the HTH K-12 schools to stay current in terms of designing learning environments for specific ages; “home visits” of the advises to maintain sensitivity to family issues and the importance of communication with family and community; faculty meetings with minimal logistical discussions and with focused use of protocols for processing important issues and decisions for courses and programs; faculty study groups that often include K-12 students; retreats; faculty analysis of student work and reflection on related course and program improvements; and attendance at educational conferences. Interviews with faculty were compelling in terms of faculty commitments to the GSE model. Faculty expressed satisfaction with their roles and responsibilities, and agreed that they were supported in those two areas.

Faculty development for part-time faculty will increase in importance as the GSE grows, but currently those few part-time faculty expressed being part of a community and able to attend appropriate meetings and seminars. The part-time faculty (2 of the three part-time faculty) who were interviewed described the GSE administration as sensitive to their time commitments, flexible and accommodating in decisions, and providing a voice for them in course and program changes.
Standard III

3.1 The institution employs personnel sufficient in number and professional qualifications to maintain its operations and to support its academic programs, consistent with its institutional and educational objectives.

As noted in the WASC team’s CPR report, “HTH has appropriate personnel in number and professional qualifications to support the academic programs of HTH GSE consistent with its institutional and educational objectives. At present size of HTH GSE dual roles is not a problem” (p. 24). Support services are provided by a number of key personnel in dual roles, including the CFO, Chief of Staff, Director of Information Technology, Web Developer, Director of Policy and Research, and Program Coordinator/Credential Analyst. (See Appendix R1 for staff biographies and job descriptions).

3.2 The institution demonstrates that it employs a faculty with substantial and continuing commitment to the institution sufficient in number, professional qualifications, and diversity to achieve its educational objectives, to establish and oversee academic policies, and to ensure the integrity and continuity of its academic programs wherever and however delivered.

The GSE currently employs five core faculty and eight lecturers. Faculty have substantial experience working in K-12 schools, core faculty for an average of 15 years and lecturers for an average of ten. The GSE welcomes faculty with a doctorate in education or a related field, but the degree is not a requirement. All faculty are familiar with the GSE mission through their own teaching and/or research. While most have worked in HTH schools, all have worked in a range of universities and schools nationally and abroad. Their varied experiences, coupled with the collaborative nature of the GSE, ensure that multiple perspectives and concerns are brought to bear on decisions about the program and instruction.

Faculty quality is assessed indirectly through student feedback on the annual survey and course evaluations, as well as through an annual Self-Evaluation process described in the Faculty Handbook (Appendix G). Every five years, via the Program Review, faculty quality is examined in the Self-Studies. On course evaluations and annual surveys, candidates give high ratings to the quality of instruction and feedback. In the 2009/10 Annual Survey (Appendix O3B), 92% of students rated the quality of instruction as “excellent,” while the remaining 8% rated it “good.” As for faculty feedback, 74% rated it “excellent,” and 26% “good.”

As recommended in the WASC CPR visiting team’s report, the Leadership Team has continued to discuss staffing needs. The Strategic Plan describes three possible scenarios for the next five years: best case, mid-range, and worst case (Appendix A).

Diversity

Of the thirteen faculty members, three self-identify as persons of color (23%). While this percentage is lower than we would like, it is reflective of the teaching profession as a whole (see Appendix UU). An Equal Opportunity Employer (Appendix G, p. 5), the GSE seeks diversity through various channels when filling faculty and staff positions, sending core faculty position announcements to organizations and journals serving a diverse constituency. Diversity of faculty is a vital issue for us, as the K-12 students our GSE students serve are highly diverse by socioeconomic status and race/ethnicity.

Advising

Core faculty members are the main GSE advisors, with an average advising load of fewer than 10 students. Advisors meet with students individually, providing guidance and support on their action research and leadership projects and their matriculation through the program. In the 2009/10 Annual Survey, 65% of students rated “support from faculty advisor” as “excellent,” 30% as “good,” and 4% as “fair.” While only one student gave a rating of “fair,” we continue to discuss ways to improve the quality of advising.

The WASC CPR team’s report recommended that we plan to increase capacity to provide advisors for the TL program and mentors for SL program. With a larger cohort in the TL program in 09-10, and with available grant funding, we hired an adjunct professor from a local university as a part-time advisor. There were benefits to this arrangement, and the GSE is interested in learning how to integrate part time faculty from other institutions. With a smaller cohort in TL in 2010-11 and the end of that grant, the GSE decided not to re-employ that advisor. In any case, we have learned that advisors must be well integrated into the program, for example by teaching a course.
The GSE has increased efforts to engage master K-12 teachers and school leaders as guest lecturers and co-teachers for adult learning programs within the HTH organization. As these persons gain experience in working with adult learners in programs, there will be a pool of potential advisors when the programs grow to scale. For further support in the SL Program, students will be paired with a current HTH school director.

3.3. Faculty and staff recruitment, workload, incentive, and evaluation practices are aligned with institutional purposes and educational objectives. Evaluation processes are systematic, include appropriate peer review, and, for instructional faculty and other teaching staff, involve consideration of evidence of teaching effectiveness, including student evaluations of instruction.

In response to the WASC CPR team's report, the GSE Faculty Handbook (Appendix G) was created in 2010, stating specific policies developed as recommended by WASC, including the GSE Academic Freedom Policy. In writing the Faculty Handbook, the results from the Faculty Survey were considered. Because 100% faculty reported strong agreement with the comment that their “colleagues push their thinking,” the Faculty Evaluation process included the input and collaboration of colleagues.

Faculty and staff recruitment
The GSE is committed to develop a diverse faculty and staff with broad experience. GSE faculty represent a broad range of experiences as teachers and leaders both nationally and internationally. When openings for core faculty arise, the GSE is committed to a national job search, seeking a diverse pool of applicants. Staffing needs are a continuing topic of discussion for the Leadership Team and are addressed in the Strategic Plan (Appendix A, p. 14).

Faculty Workload
Full time faculty at GSE typically teach one night per week, in addition to their advising load of 8 to 10 candidates per faculty member. This workload appears comparable to similar institutions.

Incentive and Evaluation
As recommended in the WASC CPR team's report, GSE faculty designed and implemented an annual Faculty Evaluation process to assess and support instructors in improving their practice. This collaborative review is more fully described under CFR 1.3 and in the Faculty Handbook (Appendix G). Course evaluations are tabulated and sent to both the course instructor and the program director. Directors meet with faculty to review syllabi and evaluations, set goals and next steps, and address issues of performance that may arise.

At the GSE there is no tenure and no requirement to publish. Still, we see publishing and otherwise engaging with university peers as valuable professional development that also advances the mission of improving teaching and learning around the world (see Appendix VV). In lieu of tenure, faculty find great incentive in being part of an innovative approach to education reform through the preparation of teachers and school leaders. In the past year, education faculty from local and distant institutions have inquired about joining the GSE, citing specifically a desire to work in an innovative, collaborative institution.

3.5 Fiscal and physical resources are effectively aligned with institutional purposes and educational objectives, and are sufficiently developed to support and maintain the level and kinds of educational programs offered both now and for the foreseeable future.

Physical Resources
Our physical resources meet the current needs of GSE staff and students. GSE classes meet during the evenings in HTH K-12 classrooms fully equipped with projection capacity, wireless internet access, and supplies. Situating faculty offices throughout HTH schools ensures a connection to the daily lives of teachers and students. Still, anticipating a need for our own space as we grow, we are exploring the acquisition of a building dedicated to the GSE. The Strategic plan (Appendix A) offers a discussion and draft design for one potential site.

Fiscal Resources
The GSE Strategic Plan outlines strategies to support the institution’s growth in uncertain times. The plan describes the relationship between enrollment and finances, and projects three possible scenarios (Best Case, Mid Range and Worst Case) along with goals and action steps in each case.

In one step to increase revenues, the GSE unveiled a new non-degree Leading Schools Certificate (LSC) program in 2010-2011. The program responds to the many requests for partnership and professional development from educators external to HTH. A hybrid that builds on the existing Institutes and Residencies facilitated by GSE faculty, the LSC program blends face-to-face with online support, including partnership with a
HTH critical friend over a one-year period. The LSC pilot program currently serves two teams of educators, seven in all, from Hawaii and Toronto (see Appendix EE4 for LSC program description).

Program directors meet twice yearly with the CFO to review the budget, with monthly check-ins as needed. More broadly, the institution’s sustainability is examined every five years in the Institutional Assessment.

3.6 The institution holds, or provides access to, information resources sufficient in scope, quality, currency, and kind to support its academic offerings and the scholarship of its members. For on-campus students and students enrolled at a distance, physical and information resources, services, and information technology facilities are sufficient in scope and kinds to support and maintain the level and kind of education offered. These resources, services and facilities are consistent with the institution’s purposes, and are appropriate, sufficient, and sustainable.

As recommended in the WASC team’s CPR report, a study group reviewed the GSE’s provision of information resources. As a result, the GSE purchased more books and journal subscriptions, and the faculty plans to augment GSE resources by focusing on those relevant to current student research. Over time, as more GSE students pose new research questions, the library of resources will expand in a fiscally sustainable manner.

GSE information resources, including books and institutional subscriptions, are described in the TL Self Study, p. 55. On the 2009/10 Annual Survey, 67% of students rated access to scholarly resources as good or excellent, 22% rated it poor, and 11% rated it fair. Next steps include exploring ways to improve access. For example, we are exploring options for online access to an array of education and other journals. Further, faculty have agreed to have students post an annotation for one article/book relevant to their fierce wonderings for each course, thereby building a collective resource/record of how students are interacting with the literature.

3.7. The institution’s information technology resources are sufficiently coordinated and supported to fulfill its educational purposes and to provide key academic and administrative functions.

In the 2009/10 annual survey, many students found it confusing that so many technology tools were available (discussed in 4.2 and in Self Study Reports). As a result, a study group of faculty and students from the annual retreat pared down the array of technology tools (now primarily Moodle and Google apps), designing program websites that serve as ”one stop sites” for all technology, program, and course resources (for an example, see: https://sites.google.com/a/hightechhigh.org/tl/)

Support
GSE IT support comprises an IT director and a web master. One great strength of the IT department is the way IT staff talk with faculty about what they are trying to do and then find tools that enable that. IT staff are versed in both finding free open source tools and designing applications from scratch where needed. In the past year, the I.T. director implemented Moodle, apps for education, Powerschool, digital portfolios, and HTH blogs. The web-master has worked with GSE faculty to revamp and reorganize the GSE website via Google docs so that faculty can make changes to the website’s content themselves (visit http://gse.hightechhigh.org/).

3.9. The institution has an independent governing board or similar authority that, consistent with its legal and fiduciary authority, exercises appropriate oversight over institutional integrity, policies, and ongoing operations, including hiring and evaluating the chief executive officer.

In response to the CPR report, an independent board overseeing the GSE was incorporated on July 1, 2009. The transfer of assets and appointment of the Board took place at the High Tech High Learning meeting on September 29, 2009. A list of the board and their biographies can be found in Appendix R1. According to the bylaws, “the activities and affairs of the [GSE] shall be managed and all corporate powers shall be exercised by or under the direction of the Board of Directors,” including appointment of the officers of the board.

3.10. The institution has a chief executive whose full-time responsibility is to the institution, together with a cadre of administrators qualified and able to provide effective educational leadership and management at all levels.

The GSE is designed to operate within a community of schools, so that the research and learning from the graduate school benefits the K-12 classrooms, and the experiences in K-12 classrooms informs the M.Ed. programs. All faculty are intentionally situated in both environments, since the K-12 schools are the clinical context in which many of their students work. For Larry Rosenstock, the President of the GSE and CEO of HTH, this dual role fits his career-long commitment to linking school reform with teacher education. This
integrated model aligns with our mission and strategic priorities, as well as the size and scope of our organization.

A similar model can be found at the Bank Street College of Education (founded in 1916), a graduate school of education operating within a K-5 learning environment. The president of Bank Street College oversees the entire organization, while a dean for the division of children’s programs reports to the president and has more direct responsibility for the K-5 program (http://www.bankstreet.edu/aboutbsc/administration.html). Similarly, each HTH school and each GSE program has a director who reports to Larry Rosenstock, who has broad responsibility for the entire HTH organization, from K-12 through Graduate School. Dr. Driscoll took note of the close partnership between the GSE and the HTH schools in her external review:

*The HTH GSE partnership goes beyond most school/higher education partnerships that I have participated in or observed in terms of its reciprocity and attention to mutual benefits. With more time, I would have liked to explore this aspect of the GSE further, but my observations and conversations affirmed the authenticity and mutual commitments of this partnership. Ultimately, the constituencies of both partners—K-12 students, HTH teachers, GSE graduate students, and GSE faculty gain from this relationship.*

3.11. The institution’s faculty exercises effective academic leadership and acts consistently to ensure both academic quality and the appropriate maintenance of the institution’s educational purposes and character.

The GSE aims to prepare reflective practitioner leaders who work with colleagues and communities to develop innovative, authentic and rigorous learning environments. In that vein, faculty join in at the course, program and institutional levels to seek feedback, analyze data, and take appropriate action. These processes include course evaluations, leadership meetings, analysis of POLs and student projects, the annual survey, and review of program content vis-à-vis the three dimensions of the conceptual framework.

For example, faculty use a tuning protocol to review and offer feedback on each other’s syllabi and project designs. Revisions emanating from this process include amended essential questions, changes in course reading lists, and refinement of student learning outcomes and assessment rubrics. This evidence-based process ensures alignment of courses with the GSE conceptual framework, while mitigating redundancy of content.

Faculty also examine direct evidence of student achievement to make program adjustments. They jointly analyze student work samples to measure achievement of program learning outcomes and adjust course content and processes accordingly. For a full discussion, see CFR 4.4. In her external review, Dr. Driscoll commented on the authenticity of faculty dialogue about practice and program:

*Faculty consistently raised questions about their practices and the programs. They truly model the culture of inquiry that they expect for their students, and the culture of learning that informs their programs. Maki (2004) describes the kind of conversations about teaching and learning I observed and heard as “compatible with assessment practices” and a “building process toward a collective commitment to assessing student learning.” I also witnessed the kind of collegial relationships that Maki indicates are “supportive of a culture of inquiry that relies on evidence of student learning to inform institutional actions, decisions, and long and short term planning focused on improving student achievement.”*

In the 2010 Annual Faculty and Staff Survey, 100% of faculty indicated that they “agree” or “strongly agree” with a host of statements pertaining to their involvement in setting academic standards and defining the purposes and character of the institution (Appendix O5, HTH GSE Faculty and Staff Survey 2010, Question 8).

Learning Organization

3.8. The institution’s organizational structures and decision-making processes are clear, consistent with its purposes, and sufficient to support effective decision making.

Decisions about GSE programs are made collaboratively by the Leadership Team, which meets regularly throughout the year. Issues for the agenda are submitted to Program Directors in advance of the meetings; the agendas serve to document the discussions. HTH learned early on that large groups are inefficient at decision making. Instead, small groups of people who are passionate about an issue develop action proposals to bring to the large group. Similarly, the GSE Leadership Team establishes study groups, or task forces, to propose solutions for issues that can’t be readily solved in the bi-monthly meetings. This process will serve us well as the GSE grows in size, ensuring faculty voice in decision making even as more formal processes are implemented.
Decisions to change GSE program elements are based on artifacts and evidence—student work, student feedback, or the budget—and tied to the conceptual framework. Processes that inform such decisions include collegial coaching discussions and structured conversations using protocols. Several faculty have made adjustments to their planning and teaching based on feedback from collegial coaches. Course syllabi have gone through multiple revisions as a result of syllabus “tuning” sessions.
Standard IV—Creating an Organization Committed to Learning and Improvement

Optimal Teaching and Learning

Overall, I conclude that the High Tech High Graduate School of Education is an innovative, educationally effective and exemplary model of graduate teacher education with a focus on professional leadership. I will recommend it to colleagues interested in visiting such a model, confident that they will experience the same reflection, inquiry and student-centered practices that I reviewed as the external reviewer. I further recommend it as a model of the kind of collaboration between schools and higher education that best serves all constituencies. —Amy Driscoll, External Reviewer Report

4.4 The institution employs a deliberate set of quality assurance processes at each level of institutional functioning, including new curriculum and program approval processes, periodic program review, ongoing evaluation, and data collection. These processes involve assessments of effectiveness, track results over time, and use the results of these assessments to revise and improve structures, and processes, curricula, and pedagogy.

In their 2009 report, the CPR visiting team expressed concerns about the lack of a distinct quality assurance committee tasked with initiating an institutional research process, and the absence of formal policies for approving new programs. The High Tech High Graduate School of Education (GSE) has taken these concerns to heart and made great strides over the past two years in formalizing its quality assurance processes and using data (including direct assessments of student learning) to guide decision-making. The first step was to create a quality assurance committee, which includes the program directors, dean, and core faculty. This group was tasked with developing and facilitating a formal Program Review process (Appendix C), a complementary Institutional Assessment Plan (Appendix B), and a Faculty Handbook (Appendix G) that describes hiring and evaluation policies, as well as policies for approving new curricula and programs.

**GSE Program Review: Affirming a Culture of Inquiry, Assessment, Reflection and Collaboration**

The GSE grew out of a culture of adult learning in HTH schools. Like those schools, GSE is committed to the continual improvement of our programs and of teaching and learning. To ensure this goal, and as recommended by the WASC CPR visitation team, GSE has established a Program Review process (Appendix C) for conducting a thorough, evidence-based analysis of each program to:

- assess its effectiveness in achieving the program learning outcomes
- understand its strengths
- identify keys areas of improvement
- create a workable plan for achieving the desired program goals and learning outcomes.

The program review process incorporates a combination of direct and indirect evidence of student learning and program effectiveness, involving participation and feedback from all members of the GSE community (GSE leadership, faculty, current students and alumni) to continually improve the quality of teaching and learning, and to ensure that each program's functions and outcomes support the institutional mission. This emphasis on reflection and inclusiveness is aligned to our institutional mission and tailored to the population of students—working adults—that we serve.

The Program Review is conducted every 5 years, following a sequence of annual reviews of student achievement in relation to the program learning outcomes (PLOs) and course-level student learning outcomes (SLOs) associated with one dimension of the conceptual framework. For example:

- Year 1 focuses on the 3 PLOs associated with Reflection
- Year 2 focuses on the 3 PLOs associated with Leadership
- Year 3 focuses on the 3 PLOs associated with Inquiry & Design

Each annual review involves:

- **A random sampling of student work** (50% of student enrollment)
- **A collaborative analysis** of the student work samples using the associated rubrics to determine the degree to which students have or have not achieved the PLOs and SLOs
- **An action plan** that includes an interpretation/analysis of next steps for purposes of:
  - clarifying and revising PLOs and SLOs
  - refining assignments and rubrics used to assess student learning
  - revising the program or courses to support student learning per the PLOs & SLOs
In addition to these reviews of direct evidence of student learning, we have conducted an annual survey each year to elicit feedback from students about their experiences and learning in the program. We also host an annual retreat at the end of each year, where faculty and students form action groups to work on program-related issues identified by faculty and students—through analysis of direct measures of student learning and indirect measures such as course evaluations and survey results. The action groups make recommendations and propose next steps to improve teaching and learning, most of which are enacted the following year. Such recommendations and next steps are discussed further in CFR 4.7.

The program review cycle culminates in the fourth year with a self-study, external review, and quality improvement plan, as recommended in the WASC Program Review Guide. In the self-study each program examines quantitative and qualitative indicators about the educational effectiveness of the program and engages in a synthesis of the annual reviews to achieve a holistic picture of program quality. This analysis, along with the external reviewer’s recommendations, is then used to "close the loop" by making evidence-based decisions to improve teaching and learning. As preparation for the EER, the GSE completed the self-study process in 2009/10 (see Appendices D and E) and engaged Dr. Amy Driscoll to serve as our External Reviewer in September 2010 (Appendix F). In her report, she states, "My experience with the initial self-study conducted prior to my visit was that it contained very few gaps of information, raised important questions for my study, and was true to the ‘transparency’ value of the institution." GSE faculty are now finalizing their program quality improvement plans but have already taken significant steps as described below.

Snapshots of Program Review Processes Leading to Improved Structures, Curricula and Pedagogies

Each year, our program review process becomes more systematic in its approach to direct evidence of student learning, particularly as our rubrics to assess student achievement related to our PLOs and SLOs have evolved. We have always compiled data from the rubrics used to assess the culminating projects and Presentations of Learning in each program and reviewed student work together as a faculty—analyzing examples of work that meets, exceeds and approaches our standards—to understand the degree to which students are meeting our PLOs. We’ve also triangulated this data with qualitative data from our annual student survey and annual retreat to identify areas of strength as well as growth for each program, and to make informed decisions to guide program improvement efforts.

For the 2007/08 year, we focused on the Reflection PLOs and made significant changes as described in our CPR report (Appendix HH), including the introduction of an Inquiry Journal, where students record “fierce wonderings” and questions emerging from their practice, helping them to hone in on topics for their action research (TL) or leadership project (SL). We also took steps to ensure that students were critically engaging with course readings and texts relevant to their research questions—connecting texts to other texts, to their practice, and to the broader world (R1: Connect theory and practice so that each informs the other)—by adopting a weekly response format called “QQC” (Quote, Question, Comment), which students post on the GSE forum.

For the 2008/09 year, in preparation for the program self-study in 2009/10, we focused on the PLOs for both Inquiry & Design and Leadership. Brief descriptions of our findings/actions are discussed below, with more detailed discussion in Standard 2 and the Self Study Reports (p 13 in Appendix E and p 15-16 in D).

Inquiry & Design: An analysis of curriculum alignment matrices, student work products, survey results and conversations at the annual retreat revealed that both programs provided students with multiple scaffolded opportunities to practice and demonstrate mastery of ID1 (developing learning environments based on HTH principles) and ID2 (designing approaches to learning that offer access and challenge to all learners). However, as evidenced by the variation in the quality of students’ work, some students required greater support in relation to ID3 (designing and conducting scholarly inquiry), particularly in developing literature reviews for their action research proposals (TL) and leadership projects (SL), and in designing their research/project. To that end, GSE faculty:

- Created Annotopia (http://gseannotopia.blogspot.com), an on-line blog of students’ annotations and reflections on articles, books, and other resources relevant to their research and practice.
- Had students choose and annotate one book or article of interest during each course, and post the annotation to Annotopia, creating a shared resource of student interactions with the literature. The aim is to support students as they identify areas of research interest and begin their literature reviews.
- Integrated a "put it to practice" approach in all courses, supporting students in conducting smaller inquiries into their practice, as a lead up to their larger action research or leadership projects.
• Built more explicit instruction around the literature review and research design into courses by engaging in collaborative analyses of models and providing more scaffolded workshop/revision time.

An analysis of action research and leadership projects for 2009/10 (discussed in Standard 2 and the Self Study Reports) shows that student work is improving as a result of these continuing efforts. However, student's reviews of Annotopia (via the 2009/10 annual survey) were lukewarm. In response, faculty formed a study group to discuss ways to support deeper student interaction with educational research and literature across the programs.

2008/09 was the first year of the SL program. While some of the products produced by this first class of SL students were exceptional, the 2009/10 SL Self Study concluded that the program could do more to support all students in producing exceptional work. This year and last, the SL Program Director and GSE faculty have redesigned the SL curricula to support students in conducting cycles of inquiry, similar to those in the TL program's action research projects. Faculty have also designed rubrics to gather achievement data that can be systematically compared across years and can help measure the impact of these efforts on student learning.

Leadership: Our Leadership PLOs have undergone more transformation than any others. Each year, we have modified the language of these PLOs to better match our evolving sense of the leadership skills and behaviors we want students to develop. In recent conversations with students and faculty, we have arrived at a shared definition of leadership as facilitating and engaging in collegial conversations, making our work public (teaching out and inviting others in), and forming collaborations that support teaching and learning (for both teachers and k-12 students). This shared definition is reflected in the PLOs and in the SLOs for individual courses (Appendices II1 and II4).

An analysis of curriculum alignment matrices, student work (action research, leadership projects, course projects), survey results and conversations at the annual retreat revealed that while students are encouraged to produce beautiful work, share this work (L2), and collaborate with colleagues (L1, L3), we could improve our support of students in disseminating their work to broader audiences (L2) and practicing leadership within their own contexts (L1, L3). To this end, we created a Leadership Seminar for all second-year TL students that met four times during the 2009/10 year. While students appreciated some aspects of the seminar, many reported in the 2009/10 course evaluation and annual survey that it felt forced and did not meet often enough to fully support their development as leaders. Further, first year students wanted more opportunities to consider and practice leadership within their schools.

This led to a study group at the 2009/10 retreat focused on the questions: Where is the leadership in Teacher and School Leadership? And where/what should it be? Many students commented that HTH 212 (School Reform from the Classroom) was less relevant to their ongoing practice than other courses and that they would prefer a course focused on developing personal approaches to leadership. By the retreat's end, the group announced the rebirth of HTH 212 as Leadership for School Change, where students would explore approaches to leadership, develop their own, and identify ways to practice leadership at their sites. We believe this course will address a need expressed by students working in more traditional, less collaborative environments for greater support in applying learnings from the program to their schools and enacting change. Meanwhile, the study group continues to meet to discuss issues of leadership and how alumni can remain involved in GSE programs as co-teachers and facilitators. The group proposed several other improvements, which have all been put into place this year:

• A more integrated approach to practicing and reflecting on leadership: Instead of a separate Leadership Seminar, students develop Personal Learning Plans (PLPs), identifying professional goals and developing "Put it to Practice" activities. Further, the Research Seminar now focuses more on research as leadership and how students can practice leadership by sharing what they are learning.

• Emphasize Facilitation in Theory & Practice: We are providing opportunities (in coursework and Saturday events) and tools, including rubrics, for students to hone their facilitations skills for collegial conversations.

• Build Awareness of Opportunities for Sharing Work with Authentic Audiences: Mechanisms for this are discussed below in the section on curriculum alignment; changes made to our annual survey in 2009/10 will allow us to track these efforts for increased frequency of publication and presentation.

Finally, for the 2009/10 year, we started our annual review cycle over, revisiting our Reflection PLOs, with the more formal process described in our Program Review Guide. This fall faculty gathered for a full-day review of a random sample of student work (50% from each program) addressing the Reflection PLOs (see Appendix YY). The samples included the Final Reflection in the Action Research thesis for the TL program, and the final
project for the Building Positive School Culture course in the SL program. The rubrics for each assignment stated criteria for reflection. We reviewed all work samples to determine if they had exceeded, met, or approached the standards. For TL, 33% exceeded, 50% met, and 17% approached the standard. For SL, on average, 24% exceeded, 58% met, and 18% approached the standard. One challenge was that, for TL, we looked at a section of a thesis, whereas many students addressed the Reflection PLOs throughout. In the future, we may choose more contained samples of student work targeted to the PLOs.

Despite this limitation, our analysis indicated that most of our students are meeting or exceeding our learning outcomes for Reflection, while a few could use additional support, particularly in the SL program, to move beyond descriptive to reflective writing. Action steps generated by faculty from this discussion included:

- **Revise rubrics addressing reflection to highlight the use of concrete examples and narrative** to convey moments of insight/learning. For faculty, this was the distinction between meeting and exceeding the standard for reflective writing and demonstrating mastery of the Reflection PLOs.

- **Provide models of exemplary reflective writing and analyze these with students to develop shared standards for beautiful work**. This analysis informs revisions of the rubric. Contrary to fears that using models encourages students to simply copy, a joint analysis of models (exemplary and non-exemplary) helps students understand and internalize shared standards to incorporate into their work.

- **Revise PLO R3 (Develop and articulate a personal philosophy grounded in the HTH design principles)** to be less HTH-centric and more aimed at developing an approach to teaching, learning and leading grounded in commitments to social justice, equity, and inclusiveness. Faculty have felt ambivalent about PLO R3 for some time, and our review of student work affirmed that it is put too narrowly, failing to capture our goals for students adequately.

- **Increase self-assessment opportunities.** Employ self-assessment via rubrics to guide revisions, student-led comments in courses about areas of strength and need, and regular review of PLPs with advisors and critical friends. These practices complement current reflective practices in the PLP, creating digital portfolios, and year-end POLs.

In general, our program review process—including collaborative faculty analysis of program data and evidence of student learning outcomes, student/alumni survey results, and ongoing conversations with all stakeholders in the GSE community—is serving us well and has led to significant programmatic changes, described in our Self Study Reports. As part of the self studies this past year, faculty designed a more thoughtful, informative annual survey to strategically gather data on desired behaviors/outcomes and to inform program improvement efforts (Appendix O); refined the SLOs for each course (Appendices LL2 and LL5); recrafted course syllabi to clearly state these SLOs and how they would be practiced and assessed (Appendices T and Z); designed/revised rubrics to assess student achievement (Appendices S and Y), and analyzed random samples of student work using these rubrics (Appendix YY). Our external reviewer wrote that our program review guide "is an excellent and comprehensive plan that represents well the professional approach of the GSE to its commitment to learning" and concluded, "It was a difficult search to find substantive changes or processes I could recommend to the faculty and administration of High Tech High Graduate School of Education."

However, she also encouraged us "to continue [our] expansion of direct assessment using [our] excellent integrated student evidence examples and the series of collaborative analysis processes as described in [our] Program Review Guide. From there, I urge more triangulation with the extensive indirect evidence." Dr. Driscoll notes that we are already engaged in triangulation of direct and indirect data and that our "triangulation potential will be expanded and enhanced with [our] assessment developments currently being completed and with a growing student population." Since her visit we have continued to refine the rubrics we use to assess student achievement. As our programs grow, this process will provide us with longitudinal data on student achievement and program effectiveness.

As we increase our focus on direct evidence of student learning in our courses and our programs, we have a continuing commitment to indirect evidence such as survey data and course evaluations due to the adult population we serve and the high levels of student involvement in our program improvement efforts. In her report, Dr. Driscoll writes:

> Initially, I was concerned about the enormity of indirect assessment used initially in the assessment of program quality and to identify areas needing change or improvement. The source of such indirect information was and is primarily student surveys, but it was considered along with sources of direct assessment, student work. My experience with the GSE during my visit has
minimized the concern about the abundance of indirect evidence. When I heard the thinking and critique articulated by current students and alumnae, and when I considered the knowledge base about adult learners and realized that the student body is composed of practicing professionals who pursue the GSE programs, I can support the use of extensive surveys of students to be used just as they are currently used.

**Institutional Research and Assessment**

Our commitment to direct and indirect evidence, and to enriching our capacity to make data-informed decisions, is also reflected in our Institutional Assessment plan (Appendix B). Institutional assessment takes place on a 5-year cycle, occurring the year after the program reviews. It emphasizes the collection and analysis of multiple quantitative and qualitative indicators of student learning and satisfaction (assessments of student work, course evaluations, etc.), as well as indicators of program demand and enrollment, institutional capacity, resource allocation, and financial viability (these include an assessment of outreach efforts, teaching effectiveness, support services, use of technology, and multi-year budget models). The GSE Dean, Program Directors, and invited faculty and staff collaboratively analyze these indicators and synthesize the program reviews to propose specific recommendations, goals, and actions to guide institutional improvement. Our discussions are informed by the Strategic Plan (Appendix A), and may lead to revisions in the plan as well as to GSE policies and programs.

Currently in our fourth year, we have not completed a full Institutional Assessment. However, we have already gathered significant data that address the above indicators, most notably those related to student achievement, satisfaction and support (see Standard 2), teaching effectiveness (see Standards 2 & 3), and the use of technology (see Standard 2). We have used this data to inform our institutional priorities and action plans.

**Our approach to institutional research has been proactive and recursive** in that we gather data not only about what we are currently doing, but data that addresses key strategic needs and that can be used to support our institutional viability and broaden our future impact. The role and functionality of institutional research is discussed in more detail under CFR 4.1, 4.3 and 4.5. Finally, because these formal Program Review and Institutional Assessment processes are new and each phase informs the next, we are committed to systematically analyzing and refining these processes as we move forward to ensure that they effectively inform our work with students and ultimately, help us to achieve our institutional mission.

**Quality Assurance through Ongoing Data Collection & Evaluation**

In addition to the formal program review and institutional assessment processes, GSE leadership and faculty continually evaluate student learning and the program effectiveness through data collection and triangulation, often discussed in bimonthly faculty meetings (described in Standard 3). Data sources include direct assessments of student learning as measured by rubrics for course projects and culminating projects (the action research thesis in the TL program and the four work products in the SL program; for rubrics see appendices S and Y) as well as indirect assessments of student learning and satisfaction with the program (via review of course evaluations, annual survey results, discussions at the annual retreat, student feedback to advisors, and informal course feedback to instructors via exit cards after each class).

**Quality Assurance through Curriculum Alignment & Review**

To ensure program quality and coherence, each year faculty engage in an annual curriculum alignment process where they review and refine course syllabi and rubrics to ensure that the course of study supports students in achieving the program learning outcomes (Appendices LL2 and LL5). This process ensures that all faculty incorporate core programmatic activities in their courses such as: the use of inquiry journals; posting to on-line forums to support community dialogue outside of class; the annotation of student-selected readings to support students in analyzing key texts and preparing for their literature review; and the design of final course projects that emphasize a "put it to practice" approach, applicable to each student's context. All syllabi are approved by the program director prior to distribution.

Moreover, program directors often meet with faculty to refine syllabi and rubrics so they align with course student learning outcomes (SLOs), discuss student work, and reflect on course evaluation data. For example, one faculty member in the TL program received very positive reviews from students on his course, except for the course readings. In course evaluations, students wrote that the readings were not integrated well into the course and seemed too theoretical; they requested more of a balance between theory and applications and better integration of the readings with each week's content. After conversation with the program director, the faculty member chose a different text, which he will supplement with relevant articles. He intends to link readings to
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each week's topic and integrate discussions of the reading into class time. It will be interesting to see how students respond to these changes in course evaluations.

Evidence confirms that these processes support student learning. In the 2009/10 annual student survey, 92% rated the quality of instruction as "excellent" (8% as "very good"), and 96% reported that the sequence of courses supported their learning. In past years these numbers have been lower, and faculty have responded to student feedback by altering the course sequence and content to better support student learning, as discussed in the CPR report, CFR 2.2.

Finally, each year faculty revisit and refine their program's Alignment Matrix (appendices LL.2 and LL.5) to identify where each PLO is introduced (I), practiced with feedback (P), or demonstrated at the mastery level (M) across the program. This process has helped us identify possible gaps and lack of scaffolding for each PLO, to prioritize when we think students should have mastered a particular PLO, and to adjust our curricula accordingly. For example, in our analysis of the 2009/10 alignment matrix for the TL program, we noticed that L2, Create and disseminate work to colleagues and other authentic audiences, was introduced in the first course, but not revisited until the action research course in the spring. This finding was echoed in the annual survey and annual retreat discussions, where students in both programs requested more opportunities to share their work with a broader audience throughout the program. As a result of these findings several changes have been made:

- the final project in the HTH 240 course has been redesigned to be an article submitted for publication in UnBowed, the GSE Journal
- all students in the TL program will be supported to produce their action research thesis as a self-published book or interactive website (see https://sites.google.com/a/hightechhigh.org/tl/ for examples of books and websites produced by past graduates of the program)
- students in the SL program will publish a compilation of their thinking about leadership each year; support for this process will be built into the SL coursework
- a section on "Sharing Our Work" has been added to program websites to highlight opportunities for students to present, publish, and share their work with the world beyond the GSE

Process for Approving New Curricula and Programs

As discussed above, the development of new curricula is supported through bimonthly faculty meetings, meetings between program directors and faculty, and the program review process. As such, it occurs collaboratively, fluidly and emerges out of a sense of shared purpose reflected in the GSE conceptual framework (for more discussion of how faculty use tuning protocols to design and discuss curricula, see Standards 2 & 3). To date, there has not been an occasion to approve any new degree programs at the GSE. However, as a growing institution, it is important that we have such processes in place. To that end, the quality assurance committee has developed a Program Development and Approval Process, which is described in the GSE Faculty Handbook (Appendix G) and discussed with all faculty.

This process proved valuable when, in response to interest from external parties seeking sustained partnership with GSE and HTH schools, GSE faculty designed the Leading Schools Certificate Program (see Appendix EE4 for a program description). This non-degree program was approved by GSE Leadership following the proposal process, which examined the capacity of GSE faculty and HTH staff to operate the program, and the potential benefits to the GSE and the HTH community in terms of sustainability and broader impact. This experience has persuaded us that our program approval process is consistent with our values of collaboration and consensus, and supports important dialogue about our institutional mission and desired impact.

Capacity

4.2 Planning processes at the institution define and, to the extent possible, align academic, personnel, fiscal, physical, and technological needs with the strategic objectives and priorities of the institution.

As an institution situated in an innovative charter school system, we recognize the importance of strategic planning, and that personnel, fiscal, physical and technological limitations can hinder the academic experience of students. Mindful of this, we completed a business plan (Appendix N) prior to opening in 2007 that outlined our academic programs, desired enrollment and policy impact, and organizational needs (financial, personnel, technological and physical). GSE faculty helped craft this plan to ensure that proposed activities and ideas for growth were aligned with our educational mission and resources. In our early years, we were also fortunate to
receive generous foundation support that has enabled us to run our programs and offer fellowships to students, while we pursue accreditation and move towards a more tuition-based financial model.

This year, as part of our program review process and in response to recommendations from our CPR visiting team, GSE faculty revisited our business plan and developed a Strategic Plan (Appendix A) that serves as a complement to our Program Review process and our Institutional Assessment plan. This plan articulates our strategic priorities and draws upon institutional data to align our academic, personnel, fiscal, physical, and technological needs with these priorities.

For example, one of the priorities of the GSE is to "be a beacon of thoughtful and forward thinking teaching and practice." Central to this priority is using technology to enable distance, hybrid, online learning that builds communities of learners and supports collegial conversations focused on teaching and learning. Each year, the GSE has gathered data to improve our technology systems to support GSE students' learning and to broaden our impact; this data has taken the form of annual student surveys, analysis of students' digital portfolios, and study group discussions at the annual retreat. Each year we make significant improvements to the ways we use technology as a learning community and how we support students in developing the necessary skills to participate in that community. Based on study group recommendations at the 2009/10 annual retreat, GSE faculty made the following changes:

- Designed an engaging website for each program as an integrated communications hub. Each site houses all course materials, forums, calendars, program resources, opportunities for sharing work, and models of beautiful work (books, websites) created by GSE students and alumni.
- Worked with the HTH IT Director to design a Moodle platform for discussion forums that is more user-friendly (student feedback tagged the old system as confusing and clunky).
- Provided each GSE student an HTH Gmail account for access to the Google Suite including gmail (for easier program-related communication), google docs (for archiving drafts and giving feedback on each other's work), and google sites (as an option for creating the digital portfolio).
- Will provide two Digital Portfolio workshops to support students in creating their digital portfolios. GSE alumni are brought in to serve as consultants and work with students.
- Will continue to host monthly on-line collegial conversations on Elluminate as part of its co-curricular effort to support GSE students and build a learning community beyond the GSE.
- Worked with the HTH Web Designer to create a more interactive GSE website, where many of the pages are shared with GSE faculty and staff as Google Docs, so that those closest to the programs can easily make edits/additions to the web content as they see fit.

In the CPR visiting team's report, they expressed a concern that "GSE's strategic planning had not yet involved higher level IT planning" (p. 29). They advised that "GSE's long-range planning and follow-up would be strengthened by the use of technology to systematically construct linkages among students' projects (for example, the DP), assessments of student learning, and faculty effectiveness" (p. 29). The GSE Leadership team took this advice to heart, including an analysis of technology systems and supports in the Self Study Reports, the Program Review, and the Strategic Plan. The above actions demonstrate the degree to which GSE faculty are currently working with the HTH IT Director and Web Designer to maximize the GSE's effective use of technology to serve our learning community and ultimately bring others into it. The Strategic Plan and further examples of how it has guided planning processes are discussed in more detail in CFR 4.1.

It is important to note that our early institutional model was that the GSE be situated, operationally and pedagogically, within our K-12 schools to the greatest extent possible. This was appropriate to our mission, our strategic priorities and our small size. Since that time, per the CPR visiting team's recommendations, we have made significant changes to ensure greater institutional autonomy in terms of finances and operations (discussed in Standard 3), while retaining the integrations that serve our desires for broader impact and contribute to adult learning in the GSE and in HTH K-12 schools. The relationship between our two institutions is symbiotic, with each bringing innovations, opportunities and supports to the other. In all of our planning processes, a key priority is to make decisions that will ultimately benefit both entities. Dr. Driscoll, commended this arrangement in her report:

The GSE partnership goes beyond most school/higher education partnerships that I have participated in or observed in terms of its reciprocity and attention to mutual benefits. With more time, I would have liked to explore this aspect of the GSE.
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4.1. The institution periodically engages its multiple constituencies in institutional reflection and planning processes which assess its strategic position; articulate priorities; examine the alignment of its purposes, core functions and resources; and define the future direction of the institution. The institution monitors the effectiveness of the implementation of its plans and revises them as appropriate.

Faculty consistently raised questions about their practices and the programs. They truly model the culture of inquiry that they expect for their students, and the culture of learning that informs their programs. Maki (2004) describes the kind of conversations about teaching and learning I observed and heard as “compatible with assessment practices” and a “building process toward a collective commitment to assessing student learning.” I also witnessed the kind of collegial relationships that Maki indicates are “supportive of a culture of inquiry that relies on evidence of student learning to inform institutional actions, decisions, and long and short term planning focused on improving student achievement.” — Amy Driscoll, External Review

Engaging Multiple Constituencies in Reflection & Planning

As an institution that is passionate about developing reflective educational leaders, GSE faculty and leadership are constantly reflecting on our practice/programs and soliciting feedback from colleagues and students to help us improve. Through frequent informal conversations, collegial coaching structures, and bimonthly faculty meetings, faculty discuss dilemmas/challenges, share best practices, and analyze student work. In the 2009/10 annual faculty survey, all faculty reported that they found these meetings to be helpful, particularly those where they tuned syllabi/projects (Appendix AC9) or looked at student work (Appendix AC3). Furthermore, faculty engage in annual reviews of their program’s effectiveness (drawing on quantitative and qualitative evidence of student achievement and satisfaction, described in CFR 4.4) and participate in the annual student-faculty retreat, which ensures that all members of the GSE community have an opportunity to reflect on the program and submit ideas for improvement and refinement.

Finally, GSE faculty and leadership analyze both quantitative and qualitative data related to program effectiveness through the Self Study and Program Review process (discussed in more detail in CFR 4.3), and participate in institutional planning processes to ensure that strategic priorities are aligned with the institution's core academic mission. The latter takes place throughout the year as needed, but most notably at the Annual Faculty Planning Retreat each fall, where the GSE CEO, Dean, Program Directors and faculty come together to reflect on highlights and challenges of the past year, identify goals for the future, and share their dreams for the institution in 5-10 years. These discussions have helped GSE faculty articulate key priorities, stay focused on shared institutional goals and move forward with coherence.

For example, one of the issues discussed at the 2008/09 faculty planning retreat was the importance of leveraging co-curricular programs to support the GSE's viability as we pursue accreditation. That particular year, we received a generous grant from the CA Department of Education, which allowed us to provide full fellowships to middle school educators in our programs. We recognized that it would be increasingly difficult in our current economy to draw excellent candidates to our degree programs if we were not accredited and able to offer such sizable financial assistance (most of our applicants work in public schools, which will not honor degrees/units from non-accredited institutions for salary purposes). However, the GSE brings in significant revenue by hosting several multi-day residencies and institutes that draw educators from around the world (Appendix EE2) to learn about HTH practices and project-based learning. In addition, schools/organizations from around the world contact us on a regular basis, desiring more prolonged arrangements with HTH and the GSE to support adult learning in their schools. From these conversations of mission, strategic priorities, and capacity emerged the Leading School Certificate (LSC) Program, a one-year hybrid program blending residencies at HTH, partnerships with HTH teachers/critical friends, and participation in on-line collegial conversations (Appendix EE4). Both the Residencies/Institutes and the LSC program are aligned with the HTH mission of integrating teacher professional development with school reform, and ultimately serving as a “change incubator” working with teams of educators to transform schools. The LSC program has the following goals:
• Explore and share collaborative, student-centered, project-based pedagogies.
• Build strong collegial culture in school faculties through collegial coaching, reflection on videos of teaching, and the use of protocols to engage in authentic, purposeful conversations about student work, curricula design, and shared purpose.
• Establish a “community of practice”—a critical mass of educators who are working toward common goals, deepening their practice, and learning strategies for sharing their work with colleagues within and beyond their own schools.

This is the program’s pilot year, with 7 people enrolled (3 from Hawaii, 4 from Toronto). We are in the process of developing a tool to collect data related to student satisfaction, employer satisfaction, and the impact of the program on student’s practice and their school to guide program improvement for next year. Both the residencies and the LSC program serve important functions for our institution—in terms of our strategic priorities and financial viability—and their effectiveness is being tracked carefully so that we can maximize their benefit to the GSE and participants. We already have sufficient data to show that Residencies/Institutes are an effective means of accomplishing our strategic priorities; participation has grown consistently over the years, despite increased participation fees. We have also seen a rise in repeated attendance and referrals from past attendees to colleagues.

Articulating Priorities and the Future of GSE

As noted in CFR 4.2, the development of the Business Plan with the assistance of the Bridgespan group in 2006 was the institution’s first attempt at making projections for the future of the GSE: finances, enrollment, programs, and policy impact. Per the recommendations of the CPR visiting team, the GSE leadership revisited this business plan and in 2010, produced the Strategic Plan (Appendix A) as a more focused attempt to articulate strategic priorities and describe corresponding goals, action steps and possible scenarios. The goals outlined in the plan were looked at alongside data collected from the GSE program reviews to ensure that they were at once ambitious and reasonable. The Strategic Plan itself provides an examination of three potential scenarios (Best Case, Mid Range and Worst Case) for Finances and Enrollment, Diversity, Graduation Rates, Staffing and Facilities with clear goals and steps to meet those goals, as well as remediation plans to maintain sustainability in the failure to meet them. This Strategic Plan, written by GSE staff, has served as a touchstone document and vehicle for discussion about the institution’s priorities and future as discussed above, particularly at the annual GSE Faculty Planning Retreat.

Assessing Our Strategic Position

The diverse range of experiences represented by the GSE Board members lends itself to thoughtful discussion about the strategic position of the institution. The GSE thinks of itself as a dissemination engine of ideas and strategies to develop communities of practice. Faculty are always thinking of how to expand our impact, while remaining true to our institutional mission. The residencies/institutes and LSC program described above are two examples of these efforts, which also bring in significant revenue for our institution.

The GSE also aims to serve the local community as a gathering place for ideas to be shared and for professionals to work together. It is this spirit that led to the creation of the journal Unboxed, the Unboxed Speaker Series and monthly on-line and face-to-face Collegial Conversations (see Appendix EE; further discussion in CFR 4.6). The GSE has been able to offer professional development to educators interested in learning more about project-based learning and leadership through the Institutes and Residencies for years (before GSE existed, these events were hosted by HTH schools). However, to increase our marketing of these newer offerings, we’ve been reaching out to schools through personal contact with teachers and principals, using Facebook and creating a master GSE email/mailing list where we send announcements about upcoming GSE events. We hope that the use of this master list will increase submissions to Unboxed and attendance at the Unboxed Speaker Series and monthly Collegial Conversations. We are tracking the number of people who request to be on the list, as well as those who choose to remove themselves. Since 2008, we have seen growth in the numbers of educators who participate in these co-curricular events:

• Unboxed Journal (http://www.hightechhigh.org/unboxed): The Unboxed mailing list has grown from 220 to 800 people who have requested subscriptions. This year the Unboxed Editorial Team decided to offer the journal for purchase on line directly from the publisher's website (www.Lulu.com), which will reduce our
production/mailing costs significantly (from $50,000 per year) and allow us to better track purchases and visits to the *UnBoxed* website, where all of the content is available for free.

- **UnBoxed Speaker Series** ([http://www.hightechhigh.org/unboxed/events.php](http://www.hightechhigh.org/unboxed/events.php)): Over the past three years we have averaged about 50 participants per Speaker Series event. This seems low, given the caliber of the speakers and the expense of the events, particularly when we offer an honorarium or pay travel expenses. To offset costs and increase attendance, this year we began to schedule these events during Residencies/Institutes so that those participants can attend. We also began tying the talks to particular topics relevant to practitioners: equitable learning, stereotype threat, motivating middle schoolers, etc.

- **Monthly Collegial Conversations** ([http://www.hightechhigh.org/programs/professional_development.php](http://www.hightechhigh.org/programs/professional_development.php)): These events began in Fall 2009 with an average of 20 people from across Southern California gathering on our Point Loma campus to discuss student work and tune project designs. Last spring, we introduced on-line versions of these conversations as well. Currently, we average 40 educators participating in person and online from all over the world each month. We have created an on-line RSVP system that will allow us to continue collecting participation data, including location of participants and how they learned about the event, to better assess our impact and target future partnerships.

Once the GSE is accredited, we will be able to offer yet another option to California educators: a full time one year residency where teachers can simultaneously earn a M.Ed. and their Preliminary Teaching Credential while apprenticing as a teacher in HTH schools. Such a program would embody three critical components Linda Darling Hammond\(^3\) argues need to be in place to create stronger, more effective teacher education programs:

- tight coherence and integration among courses and between course work and clinical work in schools,
- extensive and intensely supervised clinical work integrated with course work using pedagogies linking theory and practice, and
- closer, proactive relationships with schools that serve diverse learners effectively and develop and model good teaching.

High Tech High has been approved by the California Commission on Teaching Credentialing to offer preliminary teaching credentials through a district intern program, and has been offering this program for the past seven years. The GSE would be well positioned to build off this program and reach more beginning teachers through a university-based credential program.

**Examining Alignment of Purposes, Core Functions and Resources**

The GSE’s first Program Reviews included an analysis of quantitative and qualitative indicators of program performance including data on admissions, enrollment, curricular alignment, academic performance, support services, co-curricular activities, post-graduate outcomes, faculty quality and capacity, and fundraising. The process also incorporated course evaluations and student survey results to ensure that student perceptions of the programs were included in the overall assessment of the programs. The Self Studies (Appendices D & E) for both programs concluded that there was a high degree of alignment between program purposes, core functions and resources, while identifying areas for growth and further consideration. In their report, the CPR visiting team highlighted the alignment between our purpose and our processes, "The faculty and administration understand the workings of the institution and involve its mission in their planning. They have created programs that meet student needs, honor student voices and help students connect their research to practice" (p. 32).

Since the CPR, we have also initiated a formal Institutional Assessment plan to help us synthesize findings from the program reviews and achieve a holistic picture of institutional quality and alignment (See Appendix B). Even before this formal plan was in place, the GSE Annual Retreat—where all stakeholders, including students and board members have an opportunity to reflect and provide feedback on the programs and institution—was central to our institutional improvement efforts. The retreat has been an effective process not only in producing feedback and solutions in a way that is collaborative and efficient, but in reinforcing a culture of thoughtful feedback and collective problem solving. This process is echoed in our annual Faculty Planning Retreats focused on broader issues of institutional priorities, impact, and sustainability, and informed by our Strategic Plan. As described above, during this retreat, GSE leadership and faculty analyze sources of data related to finances/resources, perceived demand, and desired impact to drive decision-making at the institutional level.

4.3. Planning processes are informed by appropriately defined and analyzed quantitative and qualitative data, and include consideration of evidence of educational effectiveness, including student learning.

To ensure that GSE programs are meeting the needs of all students, and that GSE leadership and faculty have the data they need to maximize the effectiveness of the GSE as an institution, a wide range of qualitative and quantitative evidence is collected and examined each year, to inform planning processes at the course, program and institutional levels (Appendix AP).

As noted in CFR 4.4 and 4.1, the measures by which we analyze student learning and students' experiences in our programs—and the processes by which we assess our program and institutional effectiveness—have become more sophisticated and well-rounded each year. This past year, faculty spent considerable energy refining student learning outcomes for courses and ensuring that course level outcomes, assignments, and assessments were aligned to our program learning outcomes. In faculty meetings every other week, we tuned course syllabi, course projects, analyzed student work, identified the criteria we cared about, and refined our assessments/rubrics (Appendices S and Y). This process was particularly valuable for faculty in the SL program, as their program began in 2008/09. They are currently drawing upon direct and indirect evidence of student learning from their first graduating class to design/revise portions of the curriculum to better support students in completing the graduation requirements and demonstrating mastery of the PLOs.

Our assessments of student learning—and the degree to which students meet the course and program outcomes—are not based on course completion alone, but on direct assessments of the quality of work students in our programs produce and equally important, how students feel about the work they produce. We knew that if students weren't proud of their work and didn't feel that it connected intimately to their lives, we needed to change what we were doing. In many cases, this meant spending more time with students generating shared standards for our work, providing enough flexibility within projects that students could personalize them to their passions and their contexts, and supporting the creation of "beautiful work" through scaffolded assignments, critique, and multiple opportunities for revision. This attention to both direct measures of student learning (related to course projects and presentations of learning) and the student experience (through surveys, exit cards and course evaluations) has helped us identify areas for improvement, celebrate areas of strength, and act immediately to improve teaching and student learning each year.

These efforts have paid off. As discussed in Standard 2, our self study reports (Appendices D and E), and confirmed by our External Review (Appendix F), our on-going analysis of student learning reveal that our programs are effective in supporting students to meet our program learning outcomes, while maintaining a high level of rigor and personalization. In her report, Dr. Driscoll wrote:

It must be noted that their direct assessment of student achievement of the PLO's has affirmed that students are achieving the PLO’s in both programs at an exemplary level in most cases. The data displays in the Appendices of the self studies of both programs illustrate the qualities of excellence. Major student assignments are reviewed by faculty panels as well as being assessed by individual faculty evaluations. Student evidence examples such as the action research projects or the leadership projects do reflect the “theory into practice” intentions of the programs, the relevance of GSE’s curriculum, and the qualities of scholarship and leadership in both programs. Those integrated projects also promote and demonstrate students’ capacity to synthesize their learning from the complete graduate program. The element of student choice must also be acknowledged for its importance to these adult learners and the quality of the rigor and commitment evident in their work.” (p. 5)

Results from our 2009/10 annual survey also speak to these issues, with 83% of GSE students rating the programs' rigor as "excellent"; 88% rating the flexibility to personalize learning experiences as "excellent"; and 83% "strongly agree" that they have created work of which they are proud.

Furthermore, per the recommendations of the CPR visiting team, the Self Studies conducted in 2010 also included quantitative and qualitative indicators of effectiveness in terms of program quality (academic curriculum; student learning, success and satisfaction; faculty quality), program viability and sustainability (program demand, allocation of resources) and contributions to the institution. The self study is designed to be an evidence-based assessment of the program, therefore the Program Review Guide (Appendix C) clearly identifies data/evidence relevant to each dimension of the self study. For example, in the section on Student Learning, Success, and Satisfaction, the self study team is asked to respond to several questions by drawing upon an analysis of qualitative and quantitative evidence that may include: annual results of direct and indirect assessments of student learning; assessment tools/rubrics; analysis of the degree to which students achieve
program standards; analysis of student and alumni satisfaction surveys; student and alumni self-reports of behaviors and achievements; peer/colleague/student critiques of GSE students' work and performance; student retention and graduation rates; efforts by faculty to "close the loop" by responding to student learning assessment results and student feedback.

Finally, in addition to faculty assessments of student work and learning, student feedback has continued to play a key role in our on-going program improvement efforts. Students are asked to reflect on their learning and provide feedback throughout the program—through frequent exit cards at the end of each class, course evaluations, annual student surveys, and the annual retreat where students and faculty work together in study groups to propose new ideas for improving different aspects of the program that impact student learning. As described in CFR 4.4, faculty members choose topics for the retreat based on their assessments of student work and themes that emerge from the annual survey results. Each year, we have made significant changes to the program based on the ideas that emerge from this retreat and these study groups (discussed in CFR 4.7).

Annual faculty reflections (Appendix OO) also contribute to course improvements. Just as GSE students are expected to cultivate habits of reflection that lead to improved practice, GSE faculty reflect on course evaluation data and assessments of student work each year to improve the courses they teach. For example, a faculty member in SL program identified the following actions for this year by reflecting on a course she taught last year:

- Provide opportunities for students to share leadership dilemmas and case studies—issues arising in their work or schools sites—and to discuss and read articles on broader leadership and school design issues
- Support students by scaffolding the projects and providing clear timelines with manageable due dates
- Support the critique and revision process with more time during class to engage in dialogue about their work with critical friends that remain consistent throughout the year

A faculty member in the TL program conducted a similar analysis and set the following goals for the Action Research course this spring:

- Provide more support in refining data collection and analysis plans prior to the first year POL
- Support students in crafting beautiful research proposals by collaboratively analyzing model methods sections to generate shared standards, and co-construct rubrics that reflect these standards
- Close the loop by having students self-assess their work using co-constructed rubrics to identify next steps for revising their work
- Link particular readings with the specific content of each week’s class, and better integrate the readings into class conversations (rather than just responding to them online)

4.5. Institutional research addresses strategic data needs, is disseminated in a timely manner, and is incorporated in institutional review and decision-making processes. Included among the priorities of institutional research function is the identification of indicators and the collection of appropriate data to support the assessment of student learning consistent with the institution’s purposes and educational objectives. Periodic reviews of institutional research and data collection are conducted to develop more effective indicators of performance and to assure the suitability and usefulness of data.

An On-going Assessment of Strategic Needs

Through multiple mechanisms—including data collection (Appendix AP), annual reviews of student learning, the program review process (Appendix C), and the institutional assessment process (Appendix B)—the GSE collects evidence on its educational effectiveness to inform decision making about enrollment, outreach, financial planning, course alignment, faculty quality, student support structures and student learning. Highlights from these assessments are discussed below:

Enrollment and Outreach

An analysis of info-session attendance, admissions and enrollment data revealed that most GSE students have learned about the GSE through their principal or a colleague. Accordingly, we are reaching out to local principals through personalized e-mails, mailings and school visits in the hope they will share information with their faculties about our programs and events. We encourage GSE students to bring colleagues and K-12 students to GSE events. As discussed in CFR 4.1, we are tracking attendance data to guide future outreach efforts. Moreover, we have created a GSE Marketing study group to devise ways of reaching desired applicants, including a GSE Facebook page and NPR spots during the morning commute. Finally, we are considering
institution a process this year whereby principals could nominate excellent people for our programs, to whom we would then send a personal invitation to apply.

In response to quantitative data about ethnic diversity in the student body (see Chapter 2 in the Self Studies, Appendices D and E), the GSE has implemented an outreach plan that includes GSE staff personally reaching out to schools serving disadvantaged populations through calls to administrators and inviting teachers from schools with diverse populations to attend Collegial Conversations and the Unboxed Speaker Series. As a result of these efforts, our cohorts have become more diverse. This is discussed in CFR 1.5 and Appendix AM.

**Financial Planning**

Each spring, GSE program directors engage in a budget building process, taking into account actuals from the prior year, enrollment projections, revenue sources and expenditures (e.g., faculty, staff, marketing, instructional), to propose a GSE budget. The proposed budget is shared with the GSE Dean, President and core faculty and is discussed at the Annual Planning Retreat each fall (Appendix ZZ1). The document becomes a touchstone for discussions of capacity, strategic impact, and future programming. For instance, an analysis of the budget, in conjunction with the request from outside parties to work closely with the GSE led the faculty to develop a cost schedule for GSE services, including residencies at High Tech High as well as on-site workshops and consultation. Further, responding to the expressed desire for long-term relationships with the GSE, the faculty developed the on-line hybrid Leading Schools Certificate program (described in CFR 4.1) as a means both to increase the reach of the institution and to generate revenue.

**Course Alignment**

In assessing our course alignment, GSE faculty consider both the students’ experience (via annual survey) as well as course alignment with program objectives. As discussed in CFR 4.1, GSE faculty revisit the program alignment matrices (Appendices LL2 and LL5) each year, alongside course syllabi and samples of student work, to ensure that students are provided well-scaffolded opportunities to master the course and program learning outcomes. Course evaluations in both programs indicate that students are highly satisfied with their courses, and 100% of students indicated on the 2010 Annual Survey that the value of the courses was "very good" or "excellent." Moreover, 96% of TL students and 78% of SL students rating the sequence and flow of courses as "good" or "excellent" (see Self Studies, Appendices D and E). Although some students stated in the survey that they wanted some courses to be longer, in discussions at the retreat, none wanted other courses to be shorter. Instead, students suggested that all new GSE students be strongly encouraged to attend the HTH Odyssey in August (Appendix AB)—an 8-day training for newly hired teachers to HTH schools—to give them a preview of project-based learning and the philosophies that undergird HTH schools and the GSE’s adult programs. The few GSE students that attended the Odyssey in Fall 2010 found it extremely valuable in setting the stage for GSE courses. We plan to move forward with this recommendation next year.

**Student Support**

To assess our student support efforts, the GSE collects quantitative data about graduation rates and course completion rates, discussed in CFR 1.7. In addition, faculty examine direct assessments of student learning (aggregated results from rubrics of course projects, culminating projects and POLs), as well as indirect measures of students’ perceptions of support. The individualized nature of the GSE lends itself to the collection of qualitative data after each class (exit cards), after each course (course evaluations), and at the end of each year (annual survey and annual retreat). Both quantitative and qualitative data are used to guide decision-making processes and improve the quality of student support structures. For example, the 2008/09 annual survey revealed that many students felt the clarity of program expectations, particularly within the School Leadership (SL) program, could be improved. This was not surprising to us, given this was the first year of the program and we were still figuring out what structures to put in place to support students. At the 2009 annual retreat a study group recommended the following:

- include SL students in the program orientation provided for TL students at the beginning of each year (Appendix WW)
- restructure the SL program to include courses focused on particular topics, and revise syllabi to include detailed descriptions of assignments, projects, and due dates (Appendix Z)
- for both programs, develop a more formal advising structure (Appendix I)
Faculty enacted these changes and the 2009/10 survey data revealed that these efforts led to improved clarity: 79% of TL students rated the clarity of program expectations as "excellent" and 22% of SL rated it as excellent (respectively, +32% and +22% from the previous year).

Student ratings of support for meeting program requirements also increased, with 100% of TL students and 78% of SL students in 2009/10 ranking this "good" or "excellent" (see Self Study Reports; p 16 in Appendix D and p 24 in E). Students' responses to the open-ended question, "How can the GSE better support students in meeting the program requirements?" reveal that most students feel very supported by advisors, faculty, and other members of their small cohort, but that they desired more on-line resources related to the program (calendars, announcements, syllabi, etc), more support in goal-setting to help them stay on track, and better scaffolding of the work products in the SL program. As a result of this feedback, faculty enacted the following changes for the 2010-2011 year:

- The development of program websites that serve as a one-stop place for all program info/activities (discussed in CFR 4.2)
- Better integration of the Personal Learning Plan (PLP) throughout the program, so that it serves as an evolving touchstone document for conversations between GSE students and their advisors.
- More effective use of models and critique to help student collaboratively identify and internalize criteria for beautiful work and provide better feedback to each other to guide revisions
- Providing digital portfolio workshops twice/year to support students in creating and maintaining their DPs.
- Scaffolding the SL work products through clearer product descriptions and by building more workshop time into the courses (discussed in detail in SL Self Study Report, Appendix E).

Analysis of the 2009/10 annual survey (See p. 2-3 of 200910 GSE Survey) also revealed that while most students felt the GSE resources and co-curricular activities were "good" or "excellent," we can improve the access to scholarly resources, the support we provide to students in using technology, and the clarity of the tuition process.

To this end, we have integrated more visits to local libraries (including UCSD, where all GSE students have community cards), designed resource scavenger hunts to help students learn to use library databases as well as Google Scholar; integrated tech support into the program orientations and the courses, offering tech workshops as well for those who want them; and instituted a tuition process and schedule for all students for the entire year so they are aware of deadlines and payment procedures. While students would prefer to have greater access to scholarly resources (meaning remote access from their homes), we were happy to see that 92% of TL students and 89% of SL students ranked the "support to engage with scholarly literature" as good or excellent. This is a marked increase from previous years and, along with faculty assessments of students' literature reviews in culminating projects, is evidence that our efforts to better scaffold the development of the literature review in both programs have been successful.

Student Learning

Student perceptions of increased support were also corroborated by a general increase in the quality of the final products produced by students in both programs, as determined by a faculty analysis of student work. For example, as a result of some action research proposals being more developed than others at the end of the TL Program's first year (2007/08), coursework was restructured to better support the development of these proposals. In the 2009/10 annual survey, 100% of students rated the support for designing their proposal as "good" (25%) or "excellent" (75%), and 100% of students rated the support for completing their action research project in the second year as "good" (8%) or "excellent" (92%).

Faculty are proud of these results, and of the work GSE students are producing. As described in CFR 4.4, GSE faculty use a Looking at Student Work protocol (Appendix AC3) each year to examine a random sampling of student work products related to the program learning outcomes assessed in that year. As a result of these collaborative analyses of student work, changes have been made to rubrics to more clearly identify criteria, and PLOs have been reworded to more clearly articulate program goals. Moreover, as our rubrics have become more refined, we have been able to collect data about student progress and mastery of learning outcomes within each

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4 It is important to note that cross-year comparisons are difficult to make with some questions since we moved from a 5-point scale in 2008/09 to a 4-point scale in 2009/10. In future years, we will keep questions on a 4 point scale to ensure comparability.
program as part of our Presentations of Learning (POLs), where each proposal, thesis/project, and digital portfolio is reviewed by a graduate committee of three people (the student's GSE advisor, their critical friend, and a third member with a Master's degree or higher). The rubrics and notes from those POLs are then used to guide program adjustments for the following year. In reviewing this data through the Program Self Studies (Appendices D and E), we concluded that students are achieving our desired learning outcomes at a level we would expect, and that there are adequate supports in place to scaffold the process of completing these capstone graduation requirements. This was also noted by Amy Driscoll, our external evaluator, who wrote, "It must be noted that their direct assessment of student achievement of the PLO's has affirmed that students are achieving the PLO's in both programs at an exemplary level in most cases."

Our identification and assessment of indicators of student learning have become more sophisticated over the past year in particular, as we have moved toward a more embedded approach to assessment. At the WASC Assessment Workshop in Fall 2009, in her keynote address, Amy Driscoll publicly applauded the multiple ways the GSE assesses student learning and provides students with feedback throughout our programs. As our team mentor, she advised us in ways to integrate and formalize assessments of our learning outcomes throughout our courses, by clearly aligning our SLOs, PLOs, and course assignments (as shown in Appendices T,Z, LL3 and LL6) and designing rubrics that clearly assess the degree to which students are achieving these outcomes. In her external review in Fall 2010, she concluded, "There is a careful sequencing and scaffolding of the assessment tasks that mirrors the same care in curriculum and coursework. In some cases, aligned pedagogy is also indicated for SLO’s which indicates a sophisticated level of course design and program" (p. 4).

Disseminated in a Timely Manner

Once collected, survey data are shared with GSE leadership and faculty immediately by the Director of Policy and Research. Faculty gather within days to analyze the data together and draw conclusions. All faculty also gather data from student work, as the process of examining work samples together is part of on-going faculty meetings and the annual reviews. Program Directors review course evaluation data and meet with instructors frequently, both formally and spontaneously, to improve the quality of instruction.

As described in 4.3, various forms of program and institutional data are gathered each year and provided to GSE leadership and faculty members at key points in the year, such as before the Annual Retreat with students and faculty (in the spring) and the Annual Planning Retreat for GSE leadership and faculty (in the fall). The Program Review Guide (Appendix C) and the Institutional Assessment Plan (Appendix B) delineate clear timelines for data to be disseminated to various members of the GSE community.

Finally, technology is used strategically to provide all members of the GSE community with access to relevant institutional data and research. For example, student and faculty e-mail listservs are used for regular communication; prior to the annual retreat, the Director of Policy and Research e-mails the results of the annual surveys to all students, alumni and faculty for review. Relevant data and reports are posted on GSE and program websites for public view. In addition, Google docs have provided GSE leadership and faculty with a means to share information more privately within a designated group, where collaborators are able to make edits, leave comments, and interact with a document.

Incorporating Research into Institutional Review and Decision Making

As described above, there are multiple structures in place—Institutional Assessment Plan, Program Review Process, annual reviews of student learning, annual retreat, annual surveys—to ensure that institutional data/research provides an accurate assessment of educational effectiveness and is used to drive decision-making. As described above and consistent with the responsive and flexible nature of the GSE, changes based on the evidence and feedback collected are made on an ongoing basis, without waiting for the five year Program Review cycle to initiate change. This is especially the case when it comes to improvements in student learning, which is our top priority as an institution. As Dr. Driscoll noted:

Consistent input of students is translated into program and course revision. Several examples of the faculty use of formal and informal feedback and assessment from students currently in the program or at completion has been used to make significant changes to improve coursework and both programs. Although faculty have used indirect assessment in most of the examples, they are excellent examples of "closing the loop," they represent a culture of openness to using data for improvements. (p. 7)
Reviewing and Refining the Research and Data Collection

Three notable examples of how we have refined our institutional research/data collection processes are:

- **Development of a multi-phased multi-pronged approach to data through our Program Review process** (Appendix C; discussed in 4.4). As a new institution, we are committed to gathering data each year not only to inform decision-making and better support student learning, but to refine the tools/rubrics/indicators we use to assess our programs' and our institution's effectiveness. Although we conducted our Program Self Studies in 2010 (Appendices D and E), we drew upon our earlier data collection experiences (since 2007) to design a program review process that would challenge us to reflect on the important aspects of our programs and give us useful information in moving forward.

- **Refinement of the rubrics we use to assess student learning** at the course and program level (Appendices S and Y; discussed in CFR 4.4).

- **Refinement of our Annual Survey** each year to better understand the student experience and the degree to which students are practicing the behaviors we most care about (Appendix O).

The annual survey for the 2007/08 year (Appendix O1A) was comprised of open ended questions about the student experience, ideas for improving the program, support for research, and program resources. This provided a lot of unstructured opportunity for candidates to share their impressions, which was enormously valuable and appreciated, but didn’t provide us with the quantitative look that we also would have found useful, particularly for cross-year comparisons. So, in 2008/09, open ended questions remained, and some items to rate on a five point scale were added about the value of the content, rigor of the program, quality of faculty feedback and advising, clarity of expectations, usefulness and ease of technology, and support for completing graduation requirements (Appendix O3A). In this iteration of the survey there were also questions about specific activities in the programs, which the faculty later decided would be best captured in course evaluations. As a result, the 2009/10 Annual Surveys for current students and alumni (Appendix O4) were designed to function as an assessment of the programs and institution more generally. To this effect, additional items were added to better understand students' perceptions of:

- the learning community (value of peer feedback, support to take risks, opportunities to self-assess, etc.)
- the program as a whole (relevance to practice, support to engage with scholarly literature, opportunities to pursue passions, create products of lasting value and share work with authentic audiences, etc.)
- quality of institutional resources & co-curricular activities (tech, events, support for well-being, etc.)
- the degree to which they feel the program has impacted their work with students and colleagues
- the frequency with which they engage in the behaviors we care about

These data and associated next steps are discussed in detail in the program Self Study Reports (Chapter 5 in Appendices D and E). This last category was particularly interesting to faculty when we compared alumni and current students' responses. In general, we found that alumni were continuing to engage in the behaviors we cared about past graduation in the program, often at a greater rate than our current students. This was particularly the case when it came to facilitating professional development at their schools, publishing work for external audiences, participating in study groups, and supporting students in tackling school issues. It is notable that the one teacher who now teaches at a more traditional test-driven school continues to apply his learnings from the program and his experiences at HTH, though they are not supported in his current setting.

However, as one current student commented on the survey, "Because of the nature of my school there is less opportunity for these types of things." For faculty, this highlighted the need to make time within the programs to explicitly discuss how students can apply their learnings in the GSE within more traditional school sites, and for our programs to find ways to support students in working and leading "against the grain." It also supports our thinking about helping students find less formal ways of practicing leadership within their setting; for example, engaging in collegial coaching partnerships vs. serving as official mentors who are often selected by administration, or initiating lunch time collegial conversations vs. relying on administrators to provide time for these conversations in staff meetings.

Another noticeable difference between how alumni and current students responded is the frequency with which they report engaging in collegial coaching activities (observing others and having others observe them, followed by reflective conversations) and using video as a reflective tool. Alumni engaged in fewer of these
activities than current students. These are practices we value in the GSE and that we hope graduates of our program will sustain. Their decline makes us wonder: 1) how can we engage current students in more of these types of activities, with the hope that they will become valued tools that students continue to use to improve their practice and collaborate with colleagues? and 2) how can we work with school directors—both at HTH and non-HTH schools—to help them integrate these practices into the adult learning taking place in their schools?

4.6 Leadership at all levels is committed to improvement based on the results of the processes of inquiry, evaluation and assessment used throughout the institution. The members of the faculty take responsibility for evaluating the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process and use the results for improvement. Assessments of the campus environment in support of academic and co-curricular objectives are also undertaken and used, and are incorporated into institutional planning.

The GSE has made great strides in developing clear policies and processes for gathering, analyzing, and reflecting on data to guide decision-making at the course, program and institutional levels. The Institutional Assessment Plan and Program Review Guide (Appendices B and C) provide schedules to ensure that no details fall through the cracks, but by no means is data collection and response limited to those structures. GSE faculty continually solicit feedback from colleagues and students, for immediate adjustments to their practice. Faculty design course and program evaluations collaboratively to ensure that areas of concern are addressed. They openly share their course evaluations and student work samples with one another. To support open dialogue, GSE leadership and faculty often use structured protocols to look at student work, tune syllabi and assessments, and discuss dilemmas. The final step in all of these conversations is to identify "next steps" to "close the loop" and improve teaching and learning.

In addition to assessing academic supports (as described in CFR 4.4 & 4.5), the GSE monitors the value of co-curricular activities sponsored by the institution, most notably:

- **Unboxed, a Journal of Adult Learning**, published twice yearly
- Unboxed Speaker Series, a series of talks with experts in education and social reform
- Collegial Conversations: monthly round table discussions about teaching and learning with educators
- Residencies & Institutes: multi-day events for educators from around the world, free to our students

These activities are central to our efforts to offer GSE students a well-rounded experience, and to broaden the GSE's impact within and beyond HTH. In annual surveys from the past two years, student ratings of the **value of UnBoxed and the Speaker Series events have remained around 90% good to excellent.** In 2009/10, 58% of GSE students attended at least one residency or institute (though not required), and 100% who attended ranked them good to excellent. In CFR 4.1, we discuss the data collected on these events and the steps we have taken as an institution to maximize their impact and ensure their feasibility.

4.7 The institution, with significant faculty involvement, engages in ongoing inquiry into the processes of teaching and learning, as well as into the conditions and practices that promote the kinds and levels of learning intended by the institution. The outcomes of such inquiries are applied to the design of curricula, the design and practice of pedagogy, and to the improvement of evaluation means and methodology.

As we wrote in our CPR report, GSE faculty are committed to modeling the process of action research—with its evolving cycles of inquiry, action, and reflection—that we expect of our students. The GSE is essentially an action research project for faculty, focused on the questions: How do our students experience our programs? To what degree are students achieving our program learning outcomes, and demonstrating the skills and understandings we hope to cultivate in educational leaders? In the CPR visit the WASC team concluded, "There was adequate evidence that HTH GSE has significant faculty involvement in the on-going inquiry into the processes of teaching and learning (CFR 4.7)." The 2010 Program Self Study Reports (Appendices D and E), the External Evaluator's Report (Appendix F), and the discussions in this document offer further evidence that GSE faculty are passionately engaged in efforts to improve teaching and learning within their courses, programs, and the institution (see Appendices K and AP). As our external reviewer noted, student learning is our top priority:

*The Program Review as outlined in the Guide is sequenced and focused to keep achievement of the Program Learning Outcomes as its central indicator of program quality. The components of the Annual Reviews of Student Learning are exemplary and lead to thoughtful "closing the loop" followed by the plans for "an annual retreat (already in place) in which students join faculty in action groups to work on program related issues." Such collaboration is consistent with the philosophy of the GSE and illustrative of its commitment to student-centered education. (p. 6)*
Ongoing Inquiries into Teaching and Learning: Faculty and Students Working Together

As an institution, we are proud of the multiple ways we solicit student feedback and engage students as co-collaborators in our improvement efforts. As the 2009/10 annual survey revealed, most students in our programs feel they play a significant role in shaping the design and vision of our programs (96% in TL and 89% in SL rating these opportunities as good or excellent). Beyond collaborations in courses and through advising, the power of these partnerships is most apparent in the Annual Retreat, where students and faculty work together on program issues (as identified by faculty through an analysis of the Annual Survey data and faculty assessments of student work). In study groups, faculty and students identify design issues, possible design solution and recommended next steps (see Appendix XX1) for issues like the following:

- Where is the "leadership" in TL & SL? What should it look like, and how should it be supported?
- How can we use technology to support the learning community? (i.e. digital communication)
- How can we support external students to do the work in their contexts?
- Opportunities and support to create authentic work and present to broader audiences
- Feedback to Support Growth (i.e. How can we support students in self-assessing and goal-setting? How can we maximize the value of faculty, advisor, and peer feedback?)

Changes made as a result of these conversations have been discussed in CFR 4.1-4.5, and are described more fully in the Annual Retreat Study Group Notes (Appendices XX2 and XX3) and Program Self Study Reports (Appendices D and E). Worthy of note are the recasting of HTH 212 as Leadership for School Change, the creation of program websites, the use of Google docs to start a list of publication/presentation opportunities for students and faculty, and the refinement of the Personal Learning Plan to guide students in pursuing professional goals. In general, the Annual Retreat has become not only a vehicle for improving our programs, but an affirmation of our learning community. As two students wrote in the 2009/10 Annual Survey,

- I feel that the Teacher Leadership program has created a group of professionals who are reflective practitioners, thoughtful designers of learning activities, and truly supportive colleagues. The relationships I have formed with fellow students are deep and meaningful, and are all centered on our common connection of teaching and learning.
- The learning community really seemed to be designed to have teachers revolving around each other. I really appreciated the various ways that we got to interact with one another—whether in tuning protocols, guided conversations or more loosely structured 'workshop' times.

One of our central goals is to create a community of learners, where students and faculty see each other as supports and resources in their ongoing work. Starting with a program orientation and continuing in the courses, faculty incorporate pedagogies that, as one student wrote in the annual survey, "ensure we were able to create lasting and meaningful connections in our cohort." The student continued, "This then created an atmosphere of trust and collaboration like none I have experienced in my academic or professional life." Each year, we have refined our Annual Survey questions (Appendix O) to evaluate the success of these efforts, incorporating more questions about the quality of peer feedback and the learning community. Our self studies verified that students value their GSE peers, faculty, and the learning community in both programs.

4.8. Appropriate stakeholders, including alumni, employers, practitioners, and others defined by the institution, are involved in the assessment of the effectiveness of the educational programs.

"It is clear that our voices matter. Our feedback is elicited continuously and each staff member listens."

~ GSE Student, 2010

As described above, GSE students are closely involved in program improvement efforts, providing feedback at the course, program and institutional level, as well as participating in study groups at the annual retreat. In the 2009/10 annual survey, 65% of students rated the opportunities to shape the direction of the programs as "excellent" and 28% rated it "good." The GSE also solicits feedback from a small but growing group of stakeholders—alumni, practicing educators who serve on graduate committees and POL (Presentation of Learning) panels, and GSE board members. Each of these groups are invited to participate in processes of assessment and program improvement, most notably by joining a study group at the Annual Retreat.
Per the recommendation in the GSE Capacity and Preparatory Review Report, in 2009/10 an alumni survey (Appendix O4) was administered to the first cohort to have completed the TL program (N=6, 100% response rate), measuring the frequency with which alumni engage in behaviors associated with our program learning outcomes, the impact of the candidate's program on his or her practice and/or employment, and suggestions for improvement. We found that alumni were continuing to engage in the behaviors we care about past graduation, often at a greater rate than current students. All "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that the program had positively impacted their work with students and colleagues, and helped them to develop as leaders in their schools. The survey results and our emerging questions are discussed in more detail in the TL Self Study Report (p 30-33 in Appendix D). We are eager to compare results from this first cohort to those in future years, which will include more non-HTH teachers and students from the SL program. We will continue to assess the alumni experience, particularly for those working in more traditional schools, and use this information to refine our programs.

Alumni are invited to participate in the Annual Retreat (discussed in CFR 4.1, 4.4, 4.6), sit on POL panels for current students, and serve as co-teachers/facilitators in GSE courses. This year two TL alumni have attended each Research Seminar, serving as consultants for current students and in some cases co-facilitating the seminar with GSE faculty. In general, alumni have expressed a strong desire to stay involved in the GSE, particularly those that graduated in Spring 2010. At the GSE annual retreat, several students from this cohort openly described how the program had kept them in the profession, revitalized their teaching and given them renewed hope that they could be the teacher they wanted to be, even in test-driven traditional schools.

Practicing Educators
The perspectives of stakeholders in the broader educational community are integrated into the GSE assessment process through the participation of educators and other content experts as members of GSE students' graduate committees and as panelists during Presentations of Learning (POLs). Over the years the graduate committees have evolved to include the GSE advisor, the students' Critical Friend from the cohort, and an additional person chosen by the student. This person must hold a Masters degree or higher, and have expertise in the students' area of research/leadership. Students have chosen a range of people including professors from local universities, community leaders, school directors/principals, and colleagues. In addition, students are encouraged to invite colleagues from their schools to serve as panelists for their POL.

In general, we have found that the most lively and generative POLs have involved the students' school administrators and colleagues, in that they often lead to conversations about what whole schools can do and how GSE students can assume greater leadership at their sites. This has led us to think about requiring GSE students to invite at least two colleagues from their school to attend their POL each year, in an attempt to broaden their support within their schools, but also to build the learning community beyond the GSE. Currently, committee members and POL panelists use a structured rubric/feedback form (Appendices V and BB) to provide GSE students with feedback on their work.

This year, we will **develop a tool for committee members and POL panelists to provide feedback** about their experience participating and working with the GSE student (including an assessment of the students' work with colleagues and students). POL panelists consistently report that GSE programs have transformed GSE students' practice and that their work has inspired colleagues and students at their school. However, like schools of education across the country, we are trying to figure out what constitutes a direct measure of the impact of GSE students' learning on their students and schools. We feel that the current push to equate teacher performance/learning with student test score data is both inadequate and misguided. The list of self-reported behaviors in our Annual Survey (p 10 in O2 and p 9 in O1B) is our attempt to articulate the practices and dispositions we most care about, but in the future we also hope to solicit feedback from our students' principals, colleagues, and students to supplement these self-reports and faculty assessments of student work. The feedback tool above is one step in this process and will help us refine the structure of the POLs and the programs to maximize the benefits to our students and the communities they serve.

K-12 Students
As a graduate school embedded in a K-12 environment, we are well situated to draw on the perspectives and expertise of the ultimate beneficiaries of our work: K-12 students. Michael Fullan5 (2001) refers to students as

one of the most "vastly underutilized resources in school reform efforts." Indeed, a thread running through our programs is the importance of soliciting, listening and responding to student feedback to improve our work as educators. GSE students engage in these processes through coursework, action research, and their leadership projects, gathering data from their own students to assess their effectiveness and guide next steps.

In 2009/10, the GSE took steps to involve middle and high school students as consultants in courses. Students have worked alongside teachers to tune projects, watch videos of teaching, and offer their views on aspects of teaching and learning (e.g., grouping practices, project-based learning, assessment). While student participation may not be appropriate for all sessions, GSE students have found great value in their presence thus far. To formalize this process, we are considering creating a GSE Student Faculty—a cadre of K-12 students who not only attend select GSE courses, but who participate in professional development within HTH schools. If we move in this direction, we will create a feedback tool to gather their impressions of the GSE programs and support their meaningful involvement.
Integrative Comments

Three themes, among many, figured prominently in the EER process. Present since the inception of the GSE, these themes are central to our mission of preparing reflective practitioner leaders who work with colleagues and communities to develop innovative, rigorous learning environments. One theme is our continuing commitment, commended in the WASC team’s CPR report, to link teacher education with school reform by modeling the practices and dispositions, both pedagogical and collegial, that we wish our students to acquire. A second theme is assessment—how do we know that we are accomplishing our goals for learning and development across the institution? The third theme touches upon our role in the university community: how do we best contribute to conversations with university peers and the broader community about teaching, learning, and teacher education? Below we discuss lessons learned, recommendations, and next steps for these and other critical areas.

Lessons Learned

Articulate implicit values by aligning content with PLOs and SLOs
The GSE originated in a culture of adult learning and professional development at HTH schools. The values and processes of the K-12 programs are well articulated and widely shared. However, the task of stating program learning outcomes was a lively one for the GSE, pushing faculty members to articulate implicit values and processes. Once the Program Learning Outcomes were articulated, more specific student learning outcomes could be derived, and then aligned to coursework. This process of backwards planning—with careful attention to when candidates would be introduced to, practice and ultimately master the content—led the faculty to refine their coursework thereby enhancing shared understanding of program goals, both for faculty and for students.

Draw upon varied types of evidence, direct and indirect, to assess student achievement
Because student voice is so honored in the GSE’s approach to teaching and learning, candidates’ self-assessments have played a large role in the overall assessment of their work and our programmatic success. These have been matched with ongoing faculty and peer feedback, culminating in rubric-driven projects and presentations. Even so, the process of working towards candidacy has opened up to us a world of direct evidence that, when looked at alongside the indirect measures already in place, enhance our understanding of student learning and program needs.

Looking at student work is collecting data
As we continue on the accreditation journey, we have come to realize that deep examination of student work (in place from the beginning as a dialogical process), guided by carefully constructed rubrics and a systematic process, offers a powerful means of collecting direct evidence. Documenting and aggregating these findings to better understand student learning and improve instructional practice has been of immense value to the faculty and students at the GSE.

Increase, and document carefully, participation in the broader dialogue
While reflecting on faculty presentation at conferences and publications, we arrived at two understandings: 1) we want to continue to increase our participation in the dialogue about adult learning and teacher education; and 2) we want to better document our already substantial participation—on the part of faculty and students as well.

Recommendations

Continue to refine assessment tools
Guiding GSE students to create high quality, authentic work that can be used in their practice is a key GSE value. We recommend that GSE faculty continue to refine assessment tools so as to improve feedback to candidates while affording useful evidence for program improvement.

Improve support for external candidates
Sensitive to the concern that external students may struggle upon going “back to reality” in their non-HTH school placements, GSE faculty will continue to work with external candidates to better understand their settings and provide them with additional support and resources. Alumni from the first cohort of external graduates
Conclusion

report that it was during their second year that it became clearer how to apply their emerging understandings strategically in their school sites. GSE programs will strive to precipitate that revelation sooner in a candidate’s experience by restructuring HTH 212 and building relationships between external candidates and external alumni, so that current students can benefit from the experience of graduates.

Continue to honor and deepen faculty development
GSE faculty development will build on the collaborative structures currently in place, which include tuning of syllabi and assignments, looking at student work, and addressing dilemmas in each other’s practice. Further resources and encouragement for faculty development include peer revision of articles for publication, funding for attendance at conferences, and dedicated staff time to engage in collegial coaching and collaboration.

Focus on financial sustainability
The GSE will continue to develop and execute a strategy toward financial sustainability. Using the scenarios described in the Strategic Plan as a guide, GSE faculty will work closely with the CFO and other Leadership staff to stay apprised of our fiscal reality and agile in responding to it.

Assessment of Goals and Outcomes from the Letter of Intent
The GSE Letter of Intent, submitted to WASC in April 2008, identified several areas of growth as a focus for Candidacy Review:

• Clarifying and articulating program goals, student learning outcomes, and desired levels of achievement to stakeholders (faculty, students, committee members)
• Developing inclusive and systematic structures for evidence-based inquiry and decision-making at the program and institutional level.
• Enhancing and formalizing our short-term and long-term program assessment plans.

Our success in those areas is described in detail in the EER report, and briefly discussed below.

Over the last two years of this intensive review process, GSE Faculty have clarified and articulated program level learning objectives and derived more specific Student Learning Outcomes based upon them. These more concrete SLOs are measureable and aligned with course assignments. The PLOs are communicated to faculty, students and committee members in various ways: on the GSE website and Program sites, in the Faculty and Student handbooks, and on all course syllabi, within which the relevant PLOs are clearly highlighted.

As our candidates are taught to do in their classrooms, GSE faculty have developed inclusive and systematic structures for evidence based inquiry and decision-making at the program and institutional levels. Direct and indirect evidence is collected in individual class meetings, from assignments, through the online student forum, through capstone projects, Advisor meetings, course evaluations, annual surveys and end-of-year Presentations of Learning. This mix of formal and informal assessment yields ongoing data that is vital for mid-course corrections and longer-range program planning. In particular, faculty have developed a process for analyzing aggregated student work that will serve the institution well as it grows in size.

A review of the GSE’s School Quality Review Process led to an enhanced and formalized Program Review and Institutional Assessment plan that takes place on a five-year cycle, combining an assessment of operational/institutional data with annual reviews of student achievement related to our PLOs, culminating in Program Self Studies, an External Evaluation and the articulation of a Quality Improvement Plan. On the advice of the CPR team that visited the GSE in March 2009, we sought the guidance of an external assessment expert who was instrumental in the design of this plan. This expert, Amy Driscoll, who served as the HTH GSE team’s mentor at a WASC retreat on assessment, later agreed to be the GSE's external evaluator and completed her review in Fall 2010. For short-term assessment, GSE faculty annually revisit multiple direct and indirect indicators of student learning and satisfaction and adjust the program as necessary.
Sustaining Momentum with Next Steps

GSE faculty will sustain the momentum of the accreditation process by refining structures to support ongoing collection of data, analysis of evidence, and data-driven program improvement on the institutional, programmatic and course levels. These processes for embedding assessment into regular institutional functioning will endure far beyond the Educational Effectiveness Review.

Institution

- Engage in regular budget review meetings with the CFO
- Continue to offer co-curricular activities that at once support the learning objectives of the institution and cultivate a community of practice for local educators
- Continue to complete annual cumulative reviews of the program assessments described below to identify institutional needs and make changes for improvement

Program

- Hold regular budget reviews with Program Director and CFO
- Conduct annual reviews of admission rate and diversity numbers and adjust recruitment and marketing efforts as necessary
- Refine annual reviews of cumulative course evaluation results alongside cumulative assignment results to identify any disconnect between the results of direct assessment of student learning by instructors and candidates’ self reported learning progress
- Analyze survey results and cumulative POL results annually for any disconnect between the results of direct assessment of student learning by instructors and candidates’ reflections
- Develop tools for soliciting Director/Principal feedback and analyze this alongside Annual Survey results to identify any disconnect between the result of direct assessment of student learning by colleagues in school sites and candidates’ reflections

Course:

- Continue to collect and reflect upon student feedback via informal mechanisms (e.g., Exit Cards) in every class meeting
- Refine ongoing assessment of student engagement and depth of understanding through cohort discussion and online forum participation in every course
- Continue ongoing refinement of assessment tools (e.g., rubrics) for course assignments so that they clearly articulate learning goals and expectations, and are aligned to SLOs
- Analyze course evaluations annually by course and in the aggregate, to identify any patterns that may suggest changes for improvement

Moving forward, we will be mindful of the strengths noted in the WASC team’s CPR report and draw upon them as we make changes for program improvement. We will continue to

- emphasize reflective practice and collegial leadership as we link teacher education to school reform
- practice a clinical model of teacher education, based in an innovative K-12 environment
- strengthen a conceptual framework focused on inquiry and design, leadership, and reflection
- provide GSE students the tools to do practitioner research in their own work places and to put findings into practice
- use the culture of innovative planning and assessment that evolved in the development of successful charter schools in further strategic planning and assessment of the GSE

We look forward to further collaboration with WASC as we work to improve our programs and achieve our mission.
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