West Liberty University

Report of the Review Team on the 2011 Compact Update

February 2012
West Liberty University

Progress on compact elements:

- West Liberty University met and exceeded its enrollment goals in both the fall headcount and annualized FTE enrollment for the 2010-11 year. With a fall headcount of 2,738 and an annualized FTE of 2,424, the university showed a 13.8 percent increase in headcount and a 15.6 percent increase in annualized FTE over the 2007-08 base year. The university has implemented several new strategies which have results in increased enrollment and FTE.

- The addition of master degree awards and increases in the number of baccalaureate degrees awarded manifested itself in an increase in degree production from a total of 372 in the previous year to 470 for this reporting period.

- STEM degree production more than doubled in 2010-11, from 19 in the previous year to 50 during 2010-11. Student participation in research is known to be an important element in successful retention and completion efforts and is a strong component of West Liberty’s program. Adding additional programs and the structured summer activities to share information with students and parents about STEM fields may continue to enhance this area.

- West Liberty University has set a goal of increasing external funding for research by 11 percent over the five-year cycle. It appears that the university is positioning itself well to attain that goal having exceeded its annual goal of $366,600 generated through external sources during the 2010-2011.

- Over $2 million was distributed in financial aid to students at West Liberty University during 2010-11. The university has identified long term goals and is successfully implementing strategies to meet those goals.

- West Liberty University has shown progress in meeting their technology goals. Online course offerings increased from 74 in 2009-2010 to 103 online courses delivered in 2010-11. Technology training has been offered, a webmaster has been hired, and additional ongoing faculty support has been provided.

- West Liberty University is seeing acceptable pass rates in the majority of testing areas and is providing support and classes to better prepare students for success.

- Retention and graduation rates at West Liberty University have exceeded the annual goals for each area. The first to second year retention rate increased from 66 percent in the previous year to 74 percent in the 2010-11 reporting year while the graduation rate increased from 35 percent in 2010-11 to 39 percent in 1010-11. The evaluation team
believes that additional strategies may be merited to reach the five-year goals and that the evaluation of specific strategies should be included in the 2012 update.

- West Liberty University is to be commended for its use of assessment data in decision-making and program revisions and is a member of the HLC Assessment Academy. It is noted in the 2011 update that the sharing of assessment results with the faculty was highlighted at the Fall 2011 assessment workshop. The evaluation team looks forward to hearing about the results of this activity in the 2012 update.

Areas requiring institutional attention:

- With a focus placed upon increasing enrollment, it will be important for the university to be cognizant of the provisions for allowable percentages of students admitted conditionally as provided for in Series 23. The 2012 update should address how the institution is meeting this challenge.

- Through an emphasis on the RBA Today, expansion of online course offerings, and the development of completion programs, West Liberty University continues to extend its outreach to adult students. The 2012 update should include information as to how the Highlands Center is used to further the goals of adult outreach.

- The University has worked to promote a culture of diversity. Twenty students studied abroad during the 2010-11, an international exchange has been formalized with an institution in China, and other opportunities have been made available. The evaluation team looks forward to hearing about the curriculum integration and the work of the Center for International Education and Research in the 2012 update.

- The University has increased budgetary support for its programs of distinction by approximately 4 percent during the reporting year and has designated additional programs of distinction. The 2012 update should include information on how the institution is enhancing each program of distinction with resources and support.

Evaluation Team recommendation:

- Approval of the 2011 compact update.