



# ACCREDITATION TIMES VOL.VII

**Criterion 4:** The organization promotes a life of learning for its faculty, administration, staff, and students by fostering and supporting inquiry, creativity, practice, and social responsibility in ways consistent with its mission.

## What Faculty & Staff Should Know

- IU South Bend recognizes the importance of research and creative activity as a central dimension of faculty work
- The university supports undergraduate research and experiential learning, which expands students' active engagement in acquiring and applying knowledge
- Graduate program policies and practices have been clarified and strengthened
- Extended study programs support the community's engagement in a life of learning

## What Students Should Know

- That opportunities exist for experiential learning and internships that lay the foundation for future careers and advanced study
- That faculty are committed to engaging students in undergraduate research
- That the general education curriculum provides a foundation for all undergraduate degrees

This newsletter is all about Criterion Four: Acquisition, Discovery and Application of Knowledge. The HLC expects all campuses to demonstrate through their actions that they value a life of learning. Campuses should be able to demonstrate that acquiring a breadth of knowledge and skills and exercising intellectual inquiry responsibly are central to their educational programs. At the same time, the university is expected to ensure that it continuously assesses the usefulness of its curricula to students who will live and work in a global, diverse, and technological society.

To demonstrate the extent to which it met this criterion, IU South Bend has reviewed its commitments to open inquiry, its adoption of a new general education curriculum for all undergraduate majors, and its capacity to engage in and support research and creative activity. It also analyzed faculty productivity and internal and external grant support. Finally, it considered the advances made in graduate study, and the development and implementation of graduate school policies and practices since 2000.

*"Discovery" is the goal of university study—discovery of general knowledge, discovery of disciplinary perspectives, discovery of critical tools, and discovery of the resources the university has developed for its constituents to pursue a life of learning.*

IU South Bend has made strong progress in the past seven years to create a campus environment that prioritizes the acquisition, discovery, and application of knowledge for students, faculty, and staff. A primary success has been the creation and implementation of a campus-wide general education program that emphasizes the basic academic skills appropriate for a global, diverse, and technological society, but also fosters a life of learning through interdisciplinary offerings. The university sponsors dozens of co-curricular events and organizations, and the American Democracy Project maintains a lively forum for electronic discussion and information sharing. Although the process of discovery through research and artistic activities has long been a point of pride at IU South Bend, the university has put renewed focus on these activities by hiring an Associate Vice-Chancellor for Graduate Programs and Sponsored Research. This has most notably resulted in the revitalization of the Graduate Council, which has consolidated and coordinated the university's 17 master's degree programs and has established uniform policies and academic standards.



In our Mission Statement, IU South Bend affirms its commitment to undergraduate research and experiential learning, involving students and faculty in shared inquiry. Currently, the campus is exploring the expansion of such student-faculty collaboration as a hallmark of an undergraduate degree. Promoting engagement of undergraduate students with faculty mentors and supporting student presentations at regional, statewide, and national undergraduate research conferences creates a strong foundation for future inquiry. Credit and non-credit programs developed by the Office of Extended Learning Services benefits both campus and community and creates the environment to sustain a life of learning.

## Our Strengths and Challenges

IU South Bend is meeting or exceeding standards in nearly all areas covered by Criteria Four. Our strengths include:

- Adoption of a new general education program that stresses interdisciplinary, diversity, and a global perspective
- Expansion and strengthening the Office of Research through the hiring of an Associate Vice-Chancellor for Graduate Programs and Sponsored Research
- Reorganization of the graduate program and establishment of clear policies for graduate studies
- Support of faculty research and creative activity and increased efforts to attain external funding
- Support of professional development for administrators, faculty, and staff.
- Nationally accredited professional school programs

There is, however, still some work to be done, specifically in the following areas. In most cases, this work is already ongoing or soon to begin, but it's been too soon to see results.

- Fund and staff some aspects of the general education program to meet future needs
- Fund and recognize student research to provide a level of acknowledgement worthy of university efforts
- Develop additional interdisciplinary programs and certificates of interest to students and employers
- Strengthen and institutionalize the international curriculum

