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Franklin College Switzerland

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Der Präsident
Dr. Christoph Eymann
Regierungsrat

Der Direktor
Dr. Christoph Grolimund

Academic accreditation in Switzerland
Franklin College Switzerland
Expert's report

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1 Accreditation procedure

1.1 Presentation of the unit

Franklin College Switzerland was established in 1969 as a non-profit, independent and post-secondary institution, in Lugano. It is a four-year baccalaureate degree granting institution, though recently also expanding to offer Master programmes. It is committed to offer courses that are international in perspective and cross-cultural in their contents. Thus Franklin College actually lives and works in a highly dynamic, international if not even global environment that is demanding but also rewarding for its teaching tasks and the research it is conducting as well. It is an American liberal arts college in Europe and in Switzerland, and thus it represents a kind of 'hybrid' character, in its positive sense. In a way, its location in Lugano gives it a privileged geographical position in the heart of Europe and in its access to major cultural centres. Its modern language and academic travel requirements further add to the international character of the College. Originally, Franklin College was a purely teaching institution, but it has recognised the importance and role of research, also after the recommendations given in its program accreditation in 2004. Its strength lies in the humanities and social sciences, but it is planning to expand also to natural (environmental) sciences in order to balance its offerings in a more interdisciplinary manner. The language of instruction is English.

From the very beginning Franklin College has emphasized the exposure of its students to cultures different from their own, and recently it has been embarking on efforts to expand the diversity of its student body internationally even more. This is also necessary because the institution is highly dependent on its tuition paying students, and the current 'market' is affected by a financial squeeze in both Europe and North America.

The current student body is close to 450, comprising of 2/3 women, and 1/3 of men. The majority of them come from North America and Europe, but with a good portion also from the Middle East. In the fall 2012 there were 56 faculty members, and 26 of them were full-time. This represents the full-time equivalency of 46 faculty members, which gives a student-to-faculty ratio of 9.5:1. The total number of alumni is ca. 5000, spread all over the world, and the College has an active policy of keeping good contacts with them.

Franklin College is accredited in the U.S. by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education; in Europe, its bachelor programs have been accredited by the Swiss University Conference.

At the time of the experts' site visit in Lugano in December 2012, the leadership of Franklin College was in transition when President Erik O. Nielsen, after 17 years of service, had resigned, and P. Gregory Warden elected as new President. It is now to President Warden to build a new and updated strategy for Franklin College, and this work apparently is already well underway.

1.2 Self-evaluation report

For the process of building its Self-Evaluation Report (SER) for this accreditation, Franklin College formally initiated the action in June 2012; President Warden assumed his duties in

July 2012. Already from the beginning of the year 2012, the professors, the staff and students had participated actively in the formulation of the analysis. The final Self-Assessment Report, prepared by the Steering Committee, was submitted 15 October 2012. The self-evaluation also coincides with a new phase in the institution's strategic planning process, guided by the new President.

The Self-Evaluation Report follows the format of the Swiss Accreditation Guidelines, of 28 June 2007. The Report covers the quality standards for institutions (Art. 9), but it is partially expanded to cover also several items in Art.10, apparently for the sake of providing background depth to the overall analysis. However, this 'expansion' did not necessarily add to the clarity of the message in relation to the Swiss Accreditation Guidelines.

The Self-Evaluation Report is informative, open and penetrating, even self-critical in places, and the experts' group found it useful for the evaluation process. It provided the information needed for the assessment, though also complemented for details by the interviews of various groups during the site-visit. The website of Franklin College is extensive, clear and informative, especially for those students who are looking for admission to the College.

Franklin College had also provided a special 'information desk' with specific documents and information available to complement the SER; for instance, it included 28 pieces of Appendices of various types of background information for SER. In case any specific or additional information was needed by the experts' group, it was promptly provided.

1.3 Group of experts

Peer leader:

- Professor emeritus Ossi V. Lindqvist, University of Eastern Finland, Finland.
(Former Chair of the Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council)

Experts:

- Prof. Mercedes Jaime Siso, Department of English, Faculty of Veterinary Sciences, University of Zaragoza, Spain
- Dr. Celeste M. Schenck, President, American University in Paris, France
- Prof. Kaspar von Greyerz, Department of History, University of Basel, Switzerland
- Ms. Romina Loliva, Student Representative, Bern, Switzerland
- Dr. Sandra Elman, Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, Washington, U.S.A., was prevented from attending the site visit in Switzerland, but she provided her comments on this report.

1.4 On-site visit

- The experts' group met in Lugano on 2 December 2012 for a preparatory meeting. The actual site-visit on the campus of Franklin College took place on 3-4 December 2012. The interviews were well organised and supportive to the expert group's work. The interview sessions included the President and his Cabinet; the Quality Assurance Committee; student representatives; the faculty; the research topic; administration; alumni; outside partners and employers; and the trustees. At the end of the interviews, the expert group's chair gave a short debriefing of the group's major observations to the Franklin College audience.
- The expert group, at the end of the site-visit, was of the opinion that the visit and the interviews provided the necessary and sufficient information for a true assessment of Franklin College. As always in similar situations, it is useful that the documentary information received in advance is supplemented by face-to-face interviews and discussions in order also to catch the true enthusiasm and spirit of the institution, and of its staff and students, in the very environment where they are running their day-to-day work and operations. It is also noteworthy that because of the relatively small size of Franklin College, the expert group was able to meet a great majority of the staff and the professors, and even a good portion of its students, again face-to-face, which should also add to the strength of the observations.

2 Evaluation of the Quality Standards

2.1 Area 1: Strategy, organisation, and quality management of the institution

Overall Assessment. Franklin College is a small institution in the liberal arts tradition which is putting strong emphasis on student development, not only in terms of academic disciplines but also in terms of generic skills such as intercultural competencies, communications skills, critical thinking and such, which should prepare the students better also for international life and labour market. The small size of the college allows for relatively light administrative structures, and also for close contacts between teachers and students. The existing strategy plan 2006-2011 called for a launch of its first graduate institute, The Taylor Institute for Global Enterprise Management, which has enabled to establish a Master program in Science in International Management. A second Master's program in Heritage and Sustainability Studies is under planning and to be launched in 2014. These strategic actions show that the College is developing from a purely undergraduate institute also towards graduate studies, which also shows in its strong emphasis on research. For quality management, Franklin College has taken several important steps, including specific measures for, and descriptions of student learning goals and outcomes.

Standard 1.01

The academic institution has a mission statement available to the public which states its educational and research objectives, and which describes the position of the institution in its academic and social context. The institution has a strategic plan.

Background information. Franklin College has a mission statement available to the public, which is based on the concept of liberal arts and international education, interdisciplinarity, and student-centered teaching and learning. Naturally the mission is closely connected to the strategy, which also takes note of the role the institution plays within the Swiss higher education. The current mission statement was originally formulated in 1999, and further scrutinized by the stakeholders in 2009.

Analysis. Since the Swiss accreditation of the Franklin College degrees in 2005, the institution has undergone a very remarkable change, following also the recommendations of the accreditation process and the follow-up in 2008. The College has strengthened its connections with the Swiss higher education and with Europe at large, and, especially, it appears now much stronger in the research field. This also shows in its plans to add new Master's courses. This kind of development should not concern Franklin College alone, in isolation, but also because the institution has to follow many of the general trends taking place in higher education internationally and even globally. At the end, it is a matter of competitiveness in the world scene for a small institution like Franklin College, which is also highly dependent on its tuition-paying students. It has to carve its own niche among the thousands of higher education institutions (HEIs) in the world, to show what are its true strengths, and which way it is also 'different' from all others. Thus its mission and strategy are, and should be, closely intertwined.

Recommendations for quality improvement. The group of experts noted that the current mission of Franklin College does not fully meet the current situation, as it has not kept full track of the institution's development during the last eight years, especially as the College has grown beyond being a mere teaching institution. The institution's new strategy is currently under preparation, under the new President, and it is strongly advised that the mission is re-formulated in a coherent way to support the strategy, and *vice versa*. Actually, the group of experts noted that Franklin College is already living and working under the 'new' and updated mission, though it still remains to be visibly formulated.

Conclusion. Franklin College fulfils this standard.

Standard 1.02

Decision-making processes, competencies, and responsibilities have been defined. The academic staff participate in decision-making processes concerning teaching and research. The students participate in decision-making processes concerning their education, and are able to make their opinions heard.

Background information. Franklin College is a small institution, and it has a tradition of shared governance. It has a number of key documents codifying these processes, from the Student Life Handbook to the Board of Trustees by-laws. The students are consulted in various ways, e.g., by having representation in the Curriculum Committee, the hiring committees, and the Faculty Assembly.

Analysis. The decision-making processes, competencies and responsibilities are clearly defined in the documentation. The curricular decisions are the most important ones affecting the every-day work of the institution, and it appears that it involves again a College-wide participation.

Recommendations for quality improvement. It is natural that decision-making processes concerning research functions by individual scientists cannot be closely codified, but it does not mean that the institution does not have a clear policy or even a strategy for its research activities and their development at large. This issue will be discussed later in this report.

Conclusion. Franklin College fulfils this standard.

Standard 1.03

The institution has the human resources, structures and financial and material means enabling it to realise its defined goals according to its strategic plan.

Background information. In 2012 Franklin College had 56 faculty members, of whom 26 were full-time. Some 80% of them are active in scholarly research, and it appears that this percentage is gradually rising with new appointments. The administration and the supporting staff appear to be experienced and qualified for their job. The budget priorities include expansion of the campus infrastructure and enhancing the undergraduate programs, and also faculty scholarships and research, as well as the establishment of a graduate program.

Analysis. Franklin College is dependent on its tuition-paying students, and in its strategy it has indicated a target of 500 students, for which it is falling a bit short. The strength of the Swiss franc is currently also affecting the financial basis of the Institution. The College is starting a fund-raising campaign to strengthen its endowment basis, and it is also expanding its campaign of recruitment of students outside the 'traditional' regions. The budget of the College has been balanced and is in the black. Its existing human resources and structures and its financial/material means apparently enable it to meet the defined goals according to its strategic plan, but naturally it requires constant vigilance.

Recommendations for quality improvement. Franklin College is building its new strategy in 2013, and, like any good strategy, it should also include risk analyses for the future. This would especially concern the launching of a second Master's program in Heritage and Sustainability Studies, which apparently is based on rather small number of participating students, though it was understood that the institution already has a plan to meet this 'obstacle'. The institution already recognizes that increased support to faculty research and research at large can have good payoffs with relatively small investments, and it has taken appropriate measures to that end.

Conclusion. Franklin College fulfils this standard.

Standard 1.04

Financial sources and all conditions attached to financing are transparent and do not restrict the autonomy of the institution to make decisions in teaching and research.

Background information. Franklin College is a private non-profit institution, as a Swiss foundation, and licensed also in the state of Delaware in the U.S. Its revenues from tuition and other fees constitute over 90% of its operating budget. The rest comes from various fund-raising activities. The donations received are either non-designated or designated for specific purposes such as scholarships, the Taylor Institute, etc. Yet the institution maintains a policy of declining donations from any source if they do not match its overall strategic

goals. Franklin College also undergoes six financial audits every year, in Switzerland and the U.S.

Analysis. Despite the financial constraints in the last few years, the institution has been able to invest in software, new hardware, new library supplies and acquisitions, a new video conference center, increased financial aid to students, etc. The budget process appears a bit complicated, but it is understandable as it is based on a 'zero based budgeting' model where the departments have to justify their spending requests again for each year. The annual budget is finally approved by the Board of Trustees. The faculty apparently has expressed some concern about the transparency of the process especially in its final steps.

Recommendations for quality improvement. The sources of the financial means and the conditions attached do not restrict the autonomy of the institution in relation to its teaching and research, but it is advisable that the new strategy under preparation will address the issue of better transparency of the entire budgetary process within the College.

Conclusion. Franklin College fulfils this standard.

Standard 1.05

The institution has a quality assurance system.

Background information. It appears that Franklin College has taken great care in articulating student learning objectives as well as developing quality control mechanisms for student learning outcomes. The Committee for the Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes is the coordinating body for these measures. Student progress is examined for each study year, and also the mode of instruction and even the curriculum may be re-designed accordingly. Students are also involved in the quality assurance system, e.g., they have to evaluate every course.

The College also has a system for the assessment of institutional effectiveness at the level of administrative offices and of the entire College. The Student Satisfaction Survey is used to ensure that the voice of students is present in the strategic planning decisions. In this sense the institution's progress is also assessed in order to benchmark it against other four-year private universities. Furthermore, Franklin College is systematically running alumni surveys as well as keeping close contacts with them.

Analysis. The observation by the group of experts was that Franklin College has developed an effective and extensive system of quality assurance, covering the activities of the College, with the main emphasis on teaching and students' learning. The institution should be especially complimented on the introduction of the concept of Student Centred Learning, which is also enhanced by the favourable student to teacher ratio. Of course this is also dictated by the very nature of an institution that has to compete for (good) students and their tuition fees, and, it also has to take care of a maximum effectiveness of all its functions within the budget constraints. Again, the small size of Franklin College alone adds some 'family-like' features whereby it is easier to promptly react to possible problem areas, and also take proper corrective action.

Franklin College's undergraduate programs do not fully comply with the Bologna standard because the College adheres to the American credit model rather than the European ECTS

model with modular units. Yet, Franklin offers a regular semester calendar that can be broken down into ECTS equivalencies. The College has also produced a booklet on ECTS equivalencies for its staff and students. The Taylor Institute and the associated Master in International Management conforms to the Bologna Declaration in its modular structure. The modules are also coordinated to allow students to complete their Masters' degrees in a timely fashion.

Recommendations for quality improvement. Franklin College has developed an effective quality assurance system, covering nearly all its functions. Though it does not go under the title of 'Bologna Process', it resembles it in many ways at least in spirit, and in some details may show even better results. Yet it might be useful if the faculty and students of Franklin College have some comprehension of the European Bologna Process, simply for the practical sake of building contacts with European universities, in both teaching and research. Furthermore, the European labour market is getting used to the new degree structure, including also the use of the Diploma Supplement.

It was noted that students are involved also in course evaluations. In order to complete the quality assurance system it would be advisable to establish some formal rules on the feedback and discussions of the results of the course evaluations.

Conclusion. Franklin College fulfils this standard.

Standard 1.06

The institution has established a gender equality committee, or has arranged access to such a committee.

Background information. Franklin College has taken several steps to ensure gender equality. A decade ago the faculty had only 10% of female professors; now there are 9 female and 12 male full-time professors. Among its students, females are in majority, which also reflects the composition of the academic offerings of the College. The College has already taken steps to attract more male students.

Analysis. There exists good awareness of the gender issue within the entire Franklin College, and it has taken several remedial measures to attain a reasonable balance. Overall, Franklin College already has a very positive record on this issue, though it needs to codify the process in a more open and transparent way.

Recommendations for quality improvement. Although Franklin College has been active in promoting gender equality, it is strongly recommended that, within the new strategic plan, a special Gender Equality Committee will be formally established, also for the sake of formalizing the institution's policy in this respect. Such a Committee could also be useful for public relations' reasons; it looks better to the outside world, and it could be used even in the outside marketing of the College.

Conclusion. Franklin College fulfils this standard.

2.2 Area 2: Range of programmes

Overall assessment. The principal degree offered by Franklin College is the Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree, with a very recent addition of a Master of Science in International Management (MSIM), at the Taylor Institute. This Master's is designated to provide managers of international organizations, with leadership skills, etc. Another Master's program in Heritage and Sustainability Studies is in preparation. In the spirit of liberal arts education, the College is also cultivating the generic skills, such as communication skills, critical thinking, etc. An outside observation is that its graduates are well versed to practice life-long learning, and they also appear to be well prepared to enter graduate programs in the Swiss, European and North-American contexts, for which there exist a number of good examples.

Standard 2.01

The institution offers a range of programmes leading to academic or professional degrees with defined goals. They are integrated into the existing range of higher education programmes or are a meaningful complement.

Background information. Franklin College has nine academic departments, whose curricula lead to three degrees and two certificate programs: the Associate of Arts, the Bachelor of Arts, the Masters of Science degrees, and the Program Certificate in English Language Teaching and the Honours Program Certificate. Though each department offers discipline-specific courses, the majors are composed of both discipline-specific courses and courses from other academic fields. This way each department can contribute to both majors and minors, across disciplinary boundaries. The core requirements provide a common academic experience for all students, regardless of their majors. Among the generic skills, strong communication skills in English and cross-cultural competencies are emphasized, and these include also modern languages, at least one out of French, German, Italian, or even Russian or Arabic. A special feature in Franklin College is its Academic Travel program that is a topic-oriented field study with an opportunity for students to develop both language skills and cultural competencies. In order to graduate with Honours, the students need to complete special classes and seminars, to involve in a research project, etc.

Analysis. The strength of Franklin College within the liberal arts education is in humanities and the social sciences, though it is planning to expand also towards natural (environmental) sciences, for the sake of building a good basis for true interdisciplinarity. (One interesting example of this is a course on "Natural Disasters, Catastrophes and the Environment".) The College is aiming to this end also by developing closer course collaboration in teaching. The Academic Travel program covers visits to Europe, and other countries and continents too. Its position in the curriculum and its role in the overall academic program are important, but it is under closer scrutiny now, especially when a new strategy is being developed.

Recommendations for quality improvement. Franklin College already has a good set of study programs that are well integrated to meet its mission as an undergraduate liberal arts institution. Now it is taking steps to launch new Master's programs. As already indicated, it is advisable that the College runs a thorough risk analysis of the capacity of the institution, including its real strengths and available human resources, in order to maintain reasonable success, continuity and overall sustainability of the new programs. The Academic Travel program appears somewhat underutilized, and it might benefit from a re-orientation, by

connecting it more closely to the institution's academic curriculum, and by linking it more closely with possible partner universities or institutions in Europe and elsewhere.

Conclusion. Franklin College fulfils this standard.

Standard 2.02

The institution participates in national and international exchanges of students, teaching and academic staff.

Background information. The students coming from outside Switzerland actually are in a foreign setting at Franklin College. The institution has established partner agreements with several universities, in South Korea, the U.S., and in France. The students can complement their studies at Franklin by taking specific courses in those institutions. Besides, students may choose to study at an accredited institution in the U.S. or abroad. For a B.A. degree the students need at least 125 credit hours (equal to 250 ECTS credits), out of which they may transfer up to 65 credit hours. International collaboration in research is discussed further in Area 3 below.

Analysis. Although most students at Franklin College are in a 'foreign' environment, still the opportunities for expanding its mobility and exchange programs exist and should be pursued. Though the institution is not a direct participant in the European Bologna Process and its Mobility programs, the avenues and examples it provides, including its advisory role in Switzerland and in Europe at large should be used where possible. It should also be possible to aim towards a limited number of particular strategic international partnerships, including partnerships in research, which should give a good boost to such a small institution as Franklin, and give it a certain competitive edge.

Recommendations for quality improvement. In the recent years Franklin College has intensified considerably its efforts towards cooperation with other universities, nationally and internationally, but it is still necessary that the institution is active in promoting this particular area of activity, in the present international setting where higher education at large functions. The possible strategic partnerships could involve student mobility and student exchange, but they could also be used as tools for possible sabbaticals for the faculty.

Conclusion. Franklin College fulfils this standard.

Standard 2.03

The institution has specified the conditions for measuring and certifying performance and conferring academic degrees, and monitors adherence to these conditions.

Background information. Franklin College is using the standard practices of liberal arts colleges of specifying the conditions for attaining records of achievement and academic degrees. For the BA degree the students must have attained at least 125 credit points (equal to 250 ECTS credits), out of which residency requirements are at least 60 credits earned at Franklin College. The student's performance in a course is evaluated by final letter grades, from 'A' to 'F'.

Analysis. The students also have to hold a minimum grade point average (GPA) of 2.0 in courses in the major, a minimum of 2.0 in courses in the minor, and a final cumulative of 2.0 or higher, on a scale from 4 to 0. Students' achievements beyond the minimum degree requirements are recognized with distinction. The students with a semester GPA of 3.5 or higher are named to the Dean's List. At the graduation, eligible students who have completed the Honours Program requirements will receive the Honours Program Certificate, which is also noted in their Official Transcript.

Recommendations for quality improvement. No specific recommendations.

Conclusion. Franklin College fulfils this standard.

Standard 2.04

The institution makes use of periodically collected information on its graduates.

Background information. Franklin College is regularly conducting alumni surveys and career profile updates. Annual surveys are performed by the Office of Career Services. A major comprehensive alumni survey was last conducted in 2009. According to it, one third of the alumni were pursuing further education, for postgraduate degrees, etc. A good majority of the students were employed in an organization or a company that is 'global' or 'international'. The majority of the alumni were of the opinion that their college education at Franklin had prepared them well for the job market. The surveys are also being used to track student success for a feedback for improvement of courses of study. Furthermore, recently the alumni have also been surveyed for their input to the New Strategic Plan of Franklin College.

Franklin College also has Alumni Council. The College is also arranging a number of events for its alumni, including the Global Alumni Reunion 2012, in May 2012. The Franklin alumni have also started regional Alumni Clubs, in London and in Colorado, and some more could be in the planning.

Analysis. For Franklin College the surveys and direct contacts with its graduates and alumni are seen very important, following also the liberal arts colleges' tradition and practice. The surveys also serve well for the improvement/development of the course contents, as useful direct feedbacks from the labour market. Certainly the Franklin's alumni also serve as important 'marketing' spokesmen for the College around the world.

Recommendations for quality improvement. This issue is well taken care of by Franklin College, and no further recommendations are given.

Conclusion. Franklin College fulfils this standard

2.3 Area 3: Research

Overall Assessment. At its foundation, Franklin College was seen as a purely teaching liberal arts institution, and the degree given was a two-year Associate (AA) degree. In the mid-eighties it went into a BA-granting institution, which also brought in a new type of professors, with research agendas, though the research interests and the overall qualifications of the professors then were still rather diverse. The current Strategic Plan

(2006-2011) called for heightened importance of research in strategic planning, faculty hires and policies. The College is also planning to expand its graduate offerings, where good and relevant research is fundamental for quality and success, also for its teaching. The target was that the full-time faculty spends 30% or more of their time on research, and apparently this target has been achieved. An increase in the number and in visibility of its faculty publications can be achieved through institutional projects, through collaborative partnerships, and research institutes both on and off campus. Thus the current strategy covering research in and by Franklin College is relatively adequate for the time being, but requires vigilance since the area is in constant change and may require special measures in its overall research policies. The College is currently in the process of creating a new five-year Strategic Plan.

Standard 3.01

The institution's current research activities are in concordance with its strategic plan and meet international standards.

Background information. Franklin College has taken many important steps to support and promote research during the last seven years or so. The new hiring policies of new faculty support such development, and the direct financial support to the existing faculty has been on the increase. Research is demanded of all professors hired after 2005. Also the infrastructure to support research, e.g., the library, has been supplied with new resources. Overall, the Faculty Manual (revised in 2012) states that proper professional engagement involves, among others, scholarly publications, creative work in literature, music or the fine arts; presenting conference papers; participating in professional organizations, etc. Some of the faculty have been given course releases to give them more time for scholarly activities, though admittedly the course load of an individual faculty with six or seven courses taught per year is rather heavy. This situation would only call for closer coupling of teaching and research. The list of faculty publications for 2009-2012 is rather impressive, and it certainly meets the international standards. The faculty is also strongly encouraged to host international conferences and events on the campus, for which there are good examples from recent years. The College provides special funds to support these activities.

Analysis. The steps that Franklin College has taken to promote itself as a more research-oriented institution have produced good results and they are all in the right direction. Understandably the paradigmatic change from a teaching college into a true research-based institution takes time, but apparently Franklin has at least taken a very good start. The research policies in higher education institutions in the international setting are quickly changing and developing, and it was noted that Franklin College also follows these 'big trends', to a large extent. For instance, there is a general move away from single-discipline to trans-disciplinary and heterogeneous fields of research. (Very few problems in the society can be solved within one academic discipline only!) New forms of research activities also call for temporary collaborations, at several sites and even in several institutions at the same time. The research funding that traditionally used to be purely institutional, is now often raised for each project from a range of 'outside' and of various types of sources. The assessment and quality control of research in the past used to be of purely academic interests, but for instance, the possible societal impacts (cultural, technological, financial, etc.) have now to be written-in already in the definition of the problems. If in the past the

scientists were working mostly for their own CV, the society at large nowadays puts numerous other demands on them, simply for the sake of the money invested.

All these trends put new pressures to the policies and policy planning, also at Franklin College, and it seems to be responding well. For instance, it was noted that the College is already taking good steps in the new direction, e.g., by introducing new transdisciplinary programs and topics into its curriculum and research. The College's budget and finances show that the work currently being done to raise funds for the College support these goals. It is important that Franklin College continues to raise funds designated to faculty research, and for recognition of top scholars, maybe in the form of the College's first chair.

Recommendations for quality improvement. It is recommended that Franklin College continues its support for research in order to raise its overall research profile. It has undertaken collaborations with European, notably local, universities. It could still expand this sphere, for instance, by making strategic partnerships also in the field of research.

It is important that Franklin College continues to raise funds designated to faculty research, and for recognition of top scholars, maybe in the form of the College's first chair. More funds need to be invested in faculty development, since even a little goes a long way! This would also involve possibilities for a sabbatical year (or half-a-year) outside Franklin every six years or so. The Institution allows for a temporary leave of absence, but it is only partially funded.

Research also requires a proper infrastructure, and in this sense the library should be the very soul of the campus. Given the total number of Franklin students, and of its staff and faculty, both the staffing (two professional staff members only, though assisted by voluntary students) and the space in the libraries seems inadequate for the actual service needs; there is barely room for some 20 students to study and work, and even less space for team work in the library visited by the experts' team. There are two library facilities on the campus; a new one opened only a few years ago. Naturally, the students can also use the public libraries in Lugano and in the region.

The area where Franklin College apparently needs to be more vigilant is in an active college-wide research policy. The self-evaluation report of Franklin clearly indicates a part of the problem: "Most professors pursue individual research agendas" (p 6). It is natural that research and research problems are formulated by individuals, but it needs to be complemented by higher level policies that encourage (also interdisciplinary) team work within the College and with other outside institutions, building on the College's actual strengths, on its publications policies, and also aiming towards fund-raising for research projects from European and international sources at large, etc. The College's own internal funding alone for research would soon prove inadequate.

Finally, it is important that the College develops a clear policy and system of periodically evaluating and assessing the quality and impact of the research produced; it is important for the outside profile of the institution, and internally it could also be used to support the staff promotion policies, etc. The sheer volume of research produced may be a rather poor measure of its quality and true value. But admittedly, assessing the 'true' quality and value of any piece of research is difficult, and sometimes even prone to 'historical' errors, and so hopefully some common sense could also prevail. In humanistic and social sciences the publications, with single authors, may each require a work of even several years, while in

many fields of natural sciences with big research groups involved the rate of publications may be much higher.

All these issues are advised to be present in the deliberations in the formulation of the next Strategic Plan of Franklin College.

Conclusion. Franklin College fulfils this standard.

Standard 3.02

The institution ensures that current scientific findings are integrated into its teaching practices.

Background information. Against this standard, Franklin College follows the common practice in higher education institutions at large. The professors are elected on the merit of both teaching and research. In order to ascertain that the classes also include up-to-date scholarly and scientific research, there are three formal mechanisms. At the departmental level the chairs review the syllabi regularly; on a curricular level, the Curriculum Committee reviews the course proposals; and on the institutional level the Dean reviews teaching performance and course contents on an annual basis.

Analysis. Most of the research done by the professors at Franklin College go to peer reviewed journals and books, or scrutinized in art shows. Active research is required of all professors hired after 2005. It is also worth noting that both undergraduate and master's students are involved and participate in research activities, and the very best of the students even publish their research findings through appropriate venues.

The two most popular programs at Franklin have been the majors in International Relations, and in International Banking and Finance. Both of these are currently very dynamic fields, which would require that the teaching staff is involved in appropriate research and is able to follow the international developments closely.

It appears that the link between teaching and research is well taken care of, and secured at several levels of the College's activities.

Recommendations for quality improvement. The policies and practices in securing good linkage between teaching and research seem to be adequate for an institution like Franklin, though the demands for direct research input may somewhat vary between different courses. Yet it is advisable that this very issue is also emphasized in the forthcoming Strategic Plan.

Conclusion. Franklin College fulfils this standard.

2.4 Area 4: Academic staff

Overall Assessment. The procedures for selecting and nominating the full-time professors involve several steps in Franklin College. The Dean recommends new hires, after initiatives from the departments and the Faculty Assembly, to the President of the College. First, the Dean convenes a search committee that consists of the chair of the department that is doing the hiring in addition to two or three colleagues from related fields. The hiring department

consults on the profile of the desired person to be hired and determines the criteria. The hiring ads are placed in proper professional venues, in both European and Anglo-Saxon contexts. The search committee also nominates one or two students in the field of study of the hire as non-voting members. Once all the applications are in, they are screened first with initial phone interviews, and then by video conferencing interviews, which narrow down the list to two or three candidates. They are invited to on-campus interviews, where they meet the constituents of the College, they teach a class and give a lecture on their current research to the campus at large. Finally, following the search committee's recommendation and after consultation with the Personnel Committee, the Dean makes the final recommendation to the President of the College who makes the final decision.

The commonly asked questions involve something like if the candidate fits the job profile? Does the list of publications show promise? Does he/she have a PhD from a reputable school? Are his/her teaching evaluations good? Etc. It is natural and even necessary that Franklin is running a very careful procedure when selecting its faculty, since a small College with a rather limited number of faculty members cannot afford to make 'bad' choices. Previous experience or ranks are taken into account, and the new hire's position on the promotion ladder becomes part of the initial contract.

The general promotion scheme and the assessment criteria are available in the Faculty Manual, which is accessible to everyone. The main principles for promotion are teaching, research, and service. Assistant professors are reviewed annually during their first six years in the College. After this period they may be promoted to associate professor, and thereafter they are reviewed every three years to assess their work and contributions in each of the three categories. Associate professors with excellent work in two of the three areas can become full professors, after six years of service as associates.

The situation concerning the full-time faculty appears well established, and the procedures in the selection, appointments and in promoting the faculty appear to serve well the College and its strategy.

However, the procedures with regard to the adjunct faculty members are not as well developed, which is also admitted by the Self-Evaluation Report (p. 28). Many of the adjunct faculty members have been teaching for long periods of time, though there are also teachers hired on an annual basis only. The selection processes for the adjunct faculty members are not as thorough as that of full-time faculty members, also because they are not part of the institution's career path.

Standard 4.01

The procedures for selecting, appointing, and promoting academic staff are regulated and made public. For teaching staff, these procedures consider both teaching skills and scientific qualifications.

Background information. The process of selecting, appointing, and promoting of full-time academic staff follows the rather standard practice in higher education institutions, with the research component being an important part of it. The process is public and described also in the Faculty Manual, last revised in 2012. The position of the adjunct faculty is less clear, as some of them are hired for short periods only, though there are also long-term part-time

faculty members teaching. Also, the adjuncts are not assessed as regularly as the full-time faculty.

Analysis. Though the adjunct faculty makes about half of the College's teaching staff, they are not part of its career path. Some of them may be conducting research and should be recognized for that. That is, their academic contributions would support the larger goal of raising the institution's research profile, and possibly prepare them for a more permanent position. However, the Department of Modern Languages, with a large contingency of adjunct faculty, is piloting with an assessment of the adjuncts with regular class visits, etc., with the aim of developing new assessments instruments, and also stimulating discussion about pedagogy. This could help in better integrating the adjuncts into the regular professional teaching staff, and it could also be a strong motivational factor as well. If successful, this pilot could be expanded to other areas of the College.

Recommendations for quality improvement. Franklin College is running a transparent and developmentally oriented career path for its full-time faculty, which apparently serves well its strategic goals. For better integrating its adjunct faculty with the entire staff and the strategic goals of the institution, it is advisable to look into possibilities of offering possibilities for career path for the adjuncts as well as for continuing education, where feasible.

Conclusion. Franklin College fulfils this standard.

Standard. 4.02

The institution regulates the continuing education of its academic staff with respect to both teaching skills and subject knowledge.

Background information. Franklin College promotes continued education of their academic staff by supporting them to travel to appropriate conferences and workshops for the purpose of maintaining and upgrading their academic skills. Also, regular teaching and research workshops are offered at least in August and January every year. The need for continued training in pedagogical skills will be met by new plans for regular teaching workshops. Active research as such and attendance in conferences, etc., are good means to maintain and develop one's subject knowledge. For the full-time faculty, also the student course evaluations play an important role in the annual evaluation cycle.

Analysis. The results of the classroom performance are seen important, also for the career path. Professors do have access to workshops on pedagogy, teaching technology and research, offered periodically. The faculty development fund specifically supports requests to attend conferences, also with a focus on pedagogy. But it should also be noted that the teaching load of the academic staff is rather heavy, which hopefully is not seen as an impediment to participate in continuing education.

Recommendations for quality improvement. Although the current practices on continuous education for the academic staff appear adequate, there still exists room for further innovative solutions to maintain and develop the teaching skills. In this respect, Franklin College could also look for cooperation with other Swiss institutions, or even outside Switzerland in Europe, or in the U.S.

Conclusion. Franklin College fulfils this standard.

Standard 4.03

The institution pursues a long-range policy of promoting upcoming young academics.

Background information. The policy for hiring and promoting the academic staff actually means that the six years as an assistant professor is the time for carefully monitored development in Franklin College. There thus exist no young scholars in the same way as is the case in most European universities with strong graduate, and especially, PhD programs.

Analysis. Since the current promotion scheme was started in Franklin College in 2009, two assistant professors have been promoted to the associate status. One professor has failed, and this professor was issued a terminal contract.

Recommendations for quality improvement. The current policy and practice at Franklin College are appropriate and serve the College well.

Conclusion. Franklin College fulfils this standard.

Standard 4.04

The institution ensures that its academic staff has access to career development counselling.

Background information. The procedure described above (standard 4.01) on selection, appointment and promotion of the academic staff give answers to this issue and standard.

Analysis. The academic staff, for instance in the library services and information technology, etc., regularly attend conferences and webinars related to their own professional development.

Recommendations for quality improvement. The current policies and practices are adequate for this purpose.

Conclusion. Franklin College fulfils this standard.

2.5 Area 5: Administrative and technical staff

Overall Assessment. The existing Strategy Plan (2006-2011) of Franklin College calls for an increase in the numbers of administrative and technical staff, which apparently also requires expansion of the administrative space and other infrastructure, etc. The self-evaluation report does not explicitly cover the situation on administrative and technical staff, but the information is available in other documents.

Standard 5.01

The procedures for selecting and promoting administrative and technical staff are regulated and made public.

Background information. The Employee Handbook gives a detailed description of these procedures, very much in the same spirit with the Faculty Manual.

Analysis. Cf. the Employee Handbook.

Recommendations for quality improvement. No specific recommendations for quality improvement.

Conclusion. Franklin College fulfils this standard.

Standard 5.02

The institution ensures that continuing education is available to administrative and technical staff.

Background information. The Employee Handbook gives a detailed description of these procedures, very much in the same spirit with the Faculty Manual.

Analysis. The staff members have been attending workshops and conferences, which also offer them adequate development opportunities.

Recommendations for quality improvement. No specific recommendations for quality improvement; anyway, continuing education for the entire staff is a good investment by the College and should be maintained.

Conclusion. Franklin College fulfils this standard.

2.6 Area 6: Students

Overall Assessment. The current student body is some 450 strong, and most of them come from the U.S. and Europe, though the 'web' is being cast to other continents in order to obtain more diversity. Some 60 countries are represented among the students. The mandate at Franklin College is to provide students with an international course of study in the global, liberal arts tradition. Besides the specific goals defined for each program, the College has also articulated the general competencies, skills and stage of development that all Franklin students should reach by the end of their study career, regardless of their specific area of study. Among them are, intercultural competencies, international engagement, social responsibility, scientific literacy, communication skills and languages, and mathematical competency, among others. Thus the College is paying a lot of attention to the adoption of human values pertinent in the multicultural 21st century, in its course contents but also as kinds of side effects emanating from them. This also includes the Life Long Learning Scholarship Program that will prepare the student to be career-ready upon graduation. Thus it appears that Franklin is also taking care of the education it is offering in much wider contexts than would be the case in most traditional European universities, as of now at least.

The students are required to have residence in specific residence houses on campus, unless they live with their family. This should also add to the feeling of a 'community' at Franklin. Advanced students with a good study record can also apply to live off-campus, with certain conditions.

Franklin College recognizes the importance of financial aid programs, and needy students can obtain direct financial aid from the College, related to the available resources by the student's family. Besides, several financial assistance programs in the U.S. are also available, including the US Federal Loan Program. The College also has a strict policy

whereby it does not discriminate in its admissions and financial aid policies and practices on the basis of race, sex, sexual orientation, age, colour, religion or regional group.

The Franklin College Student Government Association (SGA), elected by the student body at large, is responsible for representing students' needs and interests. It is intended to be an effective means of discourse between the student body and the administration.

Furthermore, Franklin College has a good follow-up of its graduates, and it has built a strong alumni web including annual alumni events, etc., both on campus as well as internationally. The alumni are even consulted through a survey about the new Strategy Plan under preparation.

The College also provides numerous opportunities for extracurricular activities, in sports, community service, etc.

Franklin College provides a 'Student Life Handbook', which gives detailed and useful advice on living in Lugano and Switzerland at large, and on the campus life and appropriate College regulations.

Standard 6.01

The conditions and procedures for admission to the institution's range of programmes have been declared and substantiated.

Background information. The standard procedure for an application for admission in Franklin College involves proper transcripts from the student's secondary school, three letters of recommendation, though transfer students are required only one or two depending on the circumstances. The applicants must compose an essay on an issue on his/her international experience, and a personal statement on why to apply to Franklin. Because teaching is done in English, the applicant must produce results from the SAT or ACT test. Non-U.S. applicants for whom English is not a first language are required to submit scores of their TOEFL test. Also, advanced standing may be obtained if the applicant has passed the examinations or diplomas e.g., in International Baccalaureate, French Baccalaureate, German Abitur, Swiss Maturita, Italian Maturità, British 'A' level, etc. American students entering with a high school diploma will take four years to complete the BA, but European and international students with a recognized high school diploma may have the equivalent of the first year of credit recognized, and hence can complete their BA in the normal three-year cycle.

An important part of the admissions procedure is a personal interview, conducted either in Lugano, New York or the hometown/secondary school location of the prospective student.

Admission to Franklin College is limited and competitive. In 2011 the acceptance rate was ca. 64 %.

A comprehensive and detailed package of information for admissions, about the programs and their course contents, etc., is provided by a Franklin booklet 'Undergraduate Academic Catalog 2012-2014'.

Analysis. The admission procedure itself gives some guidance as to the interests and motivation of each individual student for a particular program. The Academic Catalog

provides clear and detailed instructions for admissions and conditions for study in the programs. The conditions for progressing from a bachelor to a master's course are regulated.

Recommendations for quality improvement. It appears that the conditions and procedures for admission to the programs are appropriate, and no further recommendations are given.

Conclusion. Franklin College fulfils this standard.

Standard 6.02

Gender equality is assured.

Background information. Among the Franklin College students, about 2/3 are female, and 1/3 male. It is natural that this composition also reflects the academic courses that are offered in a liberal arts college, as some fields are necessarily favoured more by women and others by men, and thus the situation is not fully in the institution's own hands. Furthermore, Franklin College draws its students from around the world, and still in many places educational imbalances exist, in favour of males, while in Europe or in the U.S., a female majority in higher education institutions often exists.

Analysis. While Franklin students occasionally have expressed this imbalance in negative light, yet it can also be viewed in terms of 'improvement' compared to the historical imbalances. Thus it is natural that e.g., in student activities on the campus the female students excel as leaders in a number of cases. The students are also arranging, for instance, discussion events on the gender issue. The College has already taken measures with the aim towards better gender balance, including by supporting such extracurricular activities and sports that are favoured by males, e.g. men's soccer, etc.

Franklin College has a strict policy against any discrimination on the basis of race, sex, sexual orientation, age, colour, religion, or regional group.

Recommendations for quality improvement. Franklin College seems to be fully recognizant of the gender issue, and is working towards a better balance. In this context it is useful that Franklin also continues its policy of enhancing diversity at large, and beyond gender equality also to the social composition of its student body.

Conclusion. Franklin College fulfils this standard.

Standard 6.03

The institution observes the development of students' achievements and the duration of study.

Background information. Franklin College keeps close track of its students' retention and graduation rates, and it takes proper action for a follow-up of the academic advancement of its individual students.

Analysis. The College has formulated clear learning goals for the students, with descriptions of the learning outcomes. The College expects that all its students meet the college-wide learning goals upon graduation, which also means that the academic departments, majors,

and minors have integrated these goals into their courses and programs. The students also have a chance to meet their advisors regularly for advice about their academic plans and the progress towards degrees. It should be also noted that Franklin College students, embedded in a very international student body coming very diverse backgrounds, also learn a lot from each other, outside the formal classes. This kind of education as such can be very valuable means of character building for the students, and it also supports the overall mission of the College.

This item has been partly discussed above, with the standards 2.02 and 2.03.

Recommendations for quality improvement. The relatively small size of Franklin College also makes it possible for close contacts between the staff and students, and thus the students' achievements can be closely followed, which apparently is being taken care of exceptionally well by Franklin. The procedure at Franklin is adequate and it supports its mission and overall educational goals. No specific recommendations given.

Conclusion. Franklin College fulfils this standard.

Standard 6.04

The ratio of staff to students must be adequate to ensure that the educational goals of the institution and its organisational units can be achieved.

Background information. The ratio between staff to students is exceptionally good at Franklin, that is, slightly better than one to ten (reported as 1 : 9.5.)

Analysis. The average class size at Franklin is reported at 16 students, and no classes have more than 30. This certainly helps that the educational goals can be achieved as planned. Again, the small size of the College, tightly integrated between students and the staff, makes it more a family-type community where also cross-communication appears easy.

Recommendations for quality improvement. No specific recommendations, as this staff to student ratio in Franklin College seems exceptionally good, at least in the overall European context.

Conclusion. Franklin College fulfils this standard.

Standard 6.05

The institution ensures that potential and current students have access to counselling and guidance services. The institution implements measures that allow the students to assess their progress through the programme.

Background information. It appears that both potential and current students have good access to counselling and guidance services, either in Lugano or, for US-based families, in New York, U.S., in the Franklin College Admissions Office.

Analysis. The current Franklin students have a chance to meet their advisors regularly for advice about their academic plans and the progress towards their degrees. Cf. also standard 2.02. The students can assess their progress through the program. The Office of Student Life is also available for guidance services.

Recommendations for quality improvement. The guidance services are being taken care of well in Franklin College, and the students interviewed expressed their satisfaction for the services they obtain.

Conclusion. Franklin College fulfils this standard.

2.7 Area 7: Infrastructure

Overall Assessment. In Switzerland, the Franklin College campus in Sorengo is divided into two neighboring sections, the Kaletsch Campus and the North Campus. The campus includes the space for administration and various other services, including for food service, two libraries, and the classrooms. The campuses also have ten residence houses for the students. The overall impression obtained by the experts' groups was that the facilities are proper for the current functions of the College, though the physical space available for students in the library raised some concern. For the planned expansion of the student body, it will need to expand its physical space as well. Franklin College as a liberal arts college does not need any expensive laboratories as such, and its classrooms appear to be adequate for the current needs.

Standard 7.01

The institution has an infrastructure adequate to fulfil its medium and long-range objectives.

Background information. As described above, Franklin College has an infrastructure that meets its current and medium or even longer-term objectives, but there also exist plans for an expansion of its facilities, especially if the strategic increase in the size of the student body can be realized.

Analysis. The experts' group expressed its concern about the physical space in the library available for student work. Yet the current library resources appear rather adequate for the needs. The Grace Library is holding about 36,000 volumes, over 100 periodical titles in print, as well as access to several thousands of electronic journal titles, and also a variety of multi-media materials. This mostly English-language collection has been developed with regards to the curricular needs of the College. The serials collection features substantial number of titles about Europe and European Union, and also titles from European national banks.

The Fowler Library houses materials in French, German, Italian, Portuguese, Russian, and in Spanish, and also books on science, mathematics, technology, and health. This is to support the Modern Languages and Environmental Science majors as well as the general study needs. There is some space available for students to study individually and/or to conduct team work.

Recommendations for quality improvement. Franklin College apparently has plans to expand and improve its infrastructure, depending also on the success the fund-raising campaign it is running. Its existing strategic plan apparently is well geared towards the current and its future needs as well. The experts' group took special attention on the library and its services, as they are in many ways the lifeline of any liberal arts college. Nowadays, no library can be 'big enough' to cover all the needs, but it is important that through its library Franklin students and staff can reach to the outside world, by electronic means or otherwise,

but it also requires that professional library services are available for the students and the teaching/research staff as well.

Conclusion. Franklin College fulfils this standard.

Area 8: Cooperation

Overall Assessment. After its assessment in 2004, Franklin College has expanded greatly its contacts and cooperative links on the national and international level, also guided by its strongly strengthened involvement in research.

Standard 8.01

The institution has established successful relationships on the national and international level. It promotes cooperation with other academic institutions, the professional environment, and relevant stakeholders in society.

Background information. Franklin College is promoting collaboration locally, nationally, and also internationally. On the local level, it works directly with several organizations, including Il Museo Delle Culture, in Lugano, Pro Natura, in Ticino, Istituto di Filosofia Applicata della Facoltà di Teologia, in Lugano, etc. Its students enrolled in the English language teaching certificate program carry out student-teaching in Sorengo and Lugano public and private schools. The faculty is involved in a number of international research programs, one of them financed for instance by the SNIS (Swiss Network for International Studies). Internationally, both individual professors and the institution work on a variety of research projects across several disciplines. Institutionally, Franklin College is an active member of Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU), and the Global Alliance of the Great Lakes Colleges Association.

Through the interviews it was also learned that Franklin has good mutual relations with the community of Sorengo and its leadership, as well as with some local industrial companies, that also can use Franklin students as trainees, etc.

Analysis. It appears that Franklin College has built networks, in teaching and in research, and both nationally and internationally, that so far serve well its overall strategies and educational targets. Yet this work towards stronger national (Swiss) and international links can be seen as a good start, and it should be further pursued with vigour. This issue on networks was already discussed in more detail in this report with standard 2.02.

Recommendations for quality improvement. For any institution of higher education, the international as well as national cooperative relations constitute a crucial lifeline for their competitiveness and overall academic quality. Thus the experts' group can only recommend that Franklin College is constantly active in its pursue of cooperative links in Europe and elsewhere, in both student and staff exchange as well as in research.

Conclusion. Franklin College fulfils this standard.

3 Strengths and weaknesses, recommendations for quality enhancement

Franklin College is an American and private institution of higher education in Europe, and thus it represents a kind of 'hybrid' organisation. It has introduced new educational principles into the European setting, it is very international by its course offerings and by its student body, and in its teaching it puts heavy emphasis on the general skills and human values, that are especially appropriate for the 21st century world. Its programs are well linked to meet the current challenges in higher education, also on a global scale. Its teaching methods are innovative and appropriate. The involvement of students in the management and student affairs of Franklin College is active, and they have several formal and informal avenues of being heard and consulted. The students also have a strong feeling of belonging to the Franklin community. The network of its alumni appears to be very active, spread all over the world. The Franklin graduates appear to be well placed especially in international companies.

The College is highly dependent for its funding from its tuition-paying students, which makes the College's future challenging, but it is also engaged in active fund-raising campaign right now, and it has been able to balance its budget with careful management. Its strategic goals appear very appropriate to meet the needs and challenges higher education at large is currently facing at least in Europe, but also globally.

4 Recommendation for accreditation

The experts' group recommends accreditation of Franklin College Switzerland, without conditions.