

Science/Psychology. Its ability to measure and evaluate local and national market trends will result in sustainable long-term enrollment levels. (Core Component 2a)

- Tiffin University has engaged in a series of annual strategic plans, along with actions taken to update progress and continued needs. These plans have been embraced by institutional stakeholders and the Board of Trustees. It is evident that the University is embracing innovation and change with regard to on-line programs and Ivy Bridge entrepreneurship ventures. The University has stayed true to its mission in these new opportunities. Its focus on career oriented disciplines such as business and criminal justice is clear evidence of programs that support the mission. (Core Component 2a)
- TU has effectively applied the principles of entrepreneurship in identifying market opportunities to grow its enrollment. It utilizes a fairly narrow segmentation strategy concentrating on a few academic programs (Business, Criminal Justice) where it has the expertise to recruit students and effectively deliver programs. (Core Component 2a)
- TU effectively utilizes strategic alliances/partnerships to develop and grow academic programs and to expand its local, national, and global presence. These alliances have been particularly effective in the success of the online Associates Degree programs and the International master's and bachelor's degree programs. (Core Component 2b)
- TU is appropriately investing in the main campus in Tiffin, Ohio. Recent investments include a new technology center, general facility modernization, athletic fields, and areas where students congregate. A new recreational center is now under construction. These investments are a core factor in the University's long-range student retention strategies. (Core Component 2b)
- The financial resource base of Tiffin University has had challenges but, with increasing enrollments, a number of institutional improvements have been implemented. For example, it has granted faculty and staff salary adjustments of 4-5% over the past several years. Investments in technology have been numerous, including 25 new computers in the student complex and many upgrades throughout the campus. Tiffin has been generous with its tuition benefits to faculty and staff. In addition, facilities have been built and a new recreation center is being constructed and is projected to be debt-free by its completion. (Core Component 2b)

- TU desires to be a “good neighbor” to Seneca County and the City of Tiffin. Service to the greater Tiffin community is a value defined in the TU Principles for Action. Students are involved in a wide variety of service learning opportunities locally and throughout the state of Ohio. Locally, students volunteer at the Humane Society, tutor at area public schools, hold music clinics for local high school students, raise funds for organizations such as the American Cancer Society, Susan G. Koman Foundation for Breast Cancer Awareness, and the American Red Cross. They also do volunteer work with the Highway Clean-up for Seneca County Program and the local YMCA to name just a few ways the campus students seek to serve and be involved in their community. (Core Component 5c)
- TU has proven to be responsive to the educational needs in its immediate area, region and across higher education. Through market research, TU recognized the need within higher education for programs including the following:

**C-1. Recommendation of Team**

Pattern of evidence sufficiently demonstrated; no Commission follow-up recommended.

**D-1. Rationale for the Team Recommendation**

The University consistently demonstrates good practice in the operations of the Prague program. It has made the necessary financial and intellectual investments required to deliver a quality academic program.

**E-1 Other Accreditation Issues [If applicable]**

None

**A-2. Statement of Focus-** Site visit to the Toledo Academic Center. The team chair toured the Toledo facility and then met with administrators, full-time faculty, adjunct faculty, and current students. In June of 2008 the Commission conducted a multi-site visit for Tiffin University that included the Toledo Academic center. This report addresses the issues raised in the multi-site report that were relevant to this particular location, the facility tour, and the results of discussions with key personnel. The resource room had all relevant partnership documents and the team chair spoke directly to the principal investor by conference call. Below is a brief description of the essentials of the Partnership Agreement:

*This joint venture was developed in careful consideration of the HLC "Policies Regarding Institutional Dynamics" and the Commission's "Good Practices in Contractual Arrangements Involving Courses and Programs". TU is authorized by the HLC to offer the Associate of Arts in General Studies, the Associate of Business Administration, and the Associate of Criminal Justice degrees in the online format. TU is fully and exclusively in control of all academic aspects of these degree programs, as well as financial aid, registrar, bursar, library, and bookstore functions.*

*The associate's degree programs are delivered under the auspices of and in the name of TU, and graduates earn a TU degree. In addition to the academic content delivered by TU, the programs also include a system of student mentoring and academic support, as well as articulation agreements with colleges and universities throughout the U.S. that allow the graduates to continue their education toward a bachelor's degree. This type of outreach is well aligned with the mission and values of TU, and more than 700 students are currently enrolled.*

*The investor group provided the initial resources for the development and marketing of this venture, and this funding has been very helpful in establishing a solid enrollment and assuring quality. Each year's net operating revenue is shared on a 50/50 basis between TU and Altius Education, Inc. The legal documents and other information about this joint venture were provided for review by the HLC team during its visit to Tiffin in March. (Excerpts from a statement drafted by the Tiffin University President)*

**B-2. Statements of Evidence**

- **Evidence that demonstrates adequate progress in the area of focus.**
- The University effectively addressed the areas needing attention as documented in the 2008 multi-site report.

Area Needing Attention	Team Comment
Adequacy of Assessment of Student Performance	As documented in the Criterion 3 discussion, Tiffin has effectively addressed this issue through strong data collection and analysis processes, a sound general education assessment process, and an effective institutional process for making curricular and pedagogical improvements based on assessment results.
Lack of Support Staff	As a result of the Ivy Bridge partnership, the Toledo site has implemented excellent support staff in terms of human resources and effective processes for assisting students.
Safety Issues	Facility improvements to the Toledo center effectively addressed this issue.

- The concept of the Ivy Bridge partnership is an excellent strategic initiative. It addresses an underserved population through a strong curriculum, efficient and effective academic support, excellent instruction, and a very good online portal for program delivery.
- The Toledo facility is located in a strategic location next to a major thoroughfare. It has adequate parking and safety concerns are a priority area. TU has recently leased additional space in the small shopping mall to house additional support staff.
- The CEO and center director are effective administrators who are thoroughly involved in advancing the mission of Ivy Bridge and the entire Tiffin University.
- Team discussions with faculty indicated that they are dedicated professionals delivering a quality academic program. The faculty are committed to the concept and spirit of assessment of student learning and making ongoing curricular and pedagogical improvements.
- Students are generally satisfied with the concept, location, quality of faculty, and academic support given at the Toledo center.
- **Evidence that demonstrates that further organizational attention is required in the area of focus.**

- Students feel that the quality of the classroom technology needs enhancing. The team encourages the center administrators to address this issue as time and resources permit.
- One veteran student felt that the quality of instruction could be improved if administrators made more frequent appearances in the classroom. This is a more serious issue and should be addressed quickly and effectively by the administration.
- **Evidence that demonstrates that further organizational attention and Commission follow-up are required.**  
None
- **Evidence is insufficient and demonstrates that Commission sanction is warranted.**  
None

**C-2. Recommendation of Team**

Pattern of evidence sufficiently demonstrated; no Commission follow-up recommended.

**D-2. Rationale for the Team Recommendation**

Ivy Bridge College delivers quality education to a relatively underserved population. Its staff support concept is innovative and well received by the students.

**E-2 Other Accreditation Issues [If applicable]**

None

**A-3. Statement of Focus-**The University effectively addresses the low CFI indicator. Tiffin University entered into an irrevocable letter of credit in 2006 as required by the Department of Education due to noncompliance with the required financial responsibility ratios (Composite Financial Indicator) as defined by DOE. The amount of the letter of credit was approximately \$1.1 million secured by real estate (source: Notes to Financial Statements, April 30, 2009).

**B-3. Statements of Evidence**

- **Evidence that demonstrates adequate progress in the area of focus.**  
Tiffin entered into an agreement to sell certain assets and liabilities of its wholly owned subsidiary, TUII (a senior residential facility) for \$1.25 million. The result of this transaction increased Tiffin's CFI indicator to 2.4x from .9x in fiscal year 2007 and 1.2x in fiscal year 2008. As a result of this transaction, Tiffin was removed from the DOE noncompliance list.
- **Evidence that demonstrates that further organizational attention is required in the area of focus.**

- Tiffin should submit a report of projected and annual revenues including revenues generated from tuition, auxiliaries, and fundraising.
- To ensure that the debt burden remains manageable, Tiffin should report on any significant additions to long-term debt or significant increases in the use of lines of credit.
- Tiffin should develop 5 and 10 year endowment goals and report on the progress against toward those goals.
- Tiffin and the team agreed that the University should work to maintain the CFI score between 1.7 and 2.5 or higher during the five year reporting period. The Commission should be notified if events indicate that the score will sink below 1.7.

**Related Areas:**

- The report should include annual projected and actual enrollments by major program and delivery method
- The annual tuition discount rate
- The Progress Report should also document annual retention rates-the freshman retention rate and retention persistence in all other programs
- Tiffin should notify the Commission in the event that a contingent liability is recorded in the context of the Prague lawsuit (this should occur when the knowledge of a potential liability is known).

**5. Other visits scheduled-None**

**D. Commission Sanction or Adverse Action**

None

**E. Summary of Commission Review**

Timing for next comprehensive visit 2019-20

**Rationale for recommendation:**

**Environmental Scanning:**

Tiffin's planning processes include a strong environmental scanning component that enables it to identify unique market opportunities consistent with its core competencies. Its international graduate programs and domestic majors such as Homeland Security are clear examples of acting effectively on available market intelligence.

**Strategic Alliances:**

Tiffin's Ivy Bridge partnership and its European alliances are clear example of using external relationships to further the mission of the University and stabilize the financial condition.

**Assessment of Student Learning:**

Tiffin has excellent structures and processes to collect, process, and analyze student performance data. In addition, it has committed and competent personnel to execute its assessment strategy.

**Academic Programming:**