2014 HLC Assurance Report
Criterion One: Mission

December 11, 2014
1.A - Core Component 1.A

The institution’s mission is broadly understood within the institution and guides its operations.

1. The mission statement is developed through a process suited to the nature and culture of the institution and is adopted by the governing board.
2. The institution’s academic programs, student support services, and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.
3. The institution’s planning and budgeting priorities align with and support the mission. (This sub-component may be addressed by reference to the response to Criterion 5.C.1.)

Argument

Sub-Component 1.A.1: The mission statement is developed through a process suited to the nature and culture of the institution and is adopted by the governing board.

Palmer’s Mission and related documents are reviewed and approved by the Board of Trustees in a five-year review process that is suited to the nature and culture of Palmer College.

The Palmer Mission drives all College activity. The Board of Trustees (BOT) reviews the Mission and mission-related documents, at a minimum, every five years. In a 2012 Mission review, the BOT and administration collaborated to abbreviate the Mission Statement for succinctness and increased clarity. All original elements of the Mission remain intact while being communicated more concisely. The revised Mission statement is “The mission of Palmer College of Chiropractic is to promote learning, deliver healthcare, engage our communities and advance knowledge through research.”

The 2012 mission review process began in 2009, when the BOT established an Ad Hoc Chiropractic Identity Committee (AHCIC) comprised of Trustees and College administrators. The AHCIC developed a strategic plan to collect opinion data through a series of focus groups and surveys from five constituent groups – Palmer faculty, alumni, recent graduates, patients, and the general public. This feedback would formulate the basis for developing a succinct definition(s) or identity statement(s) of Palmer chiropractic that would resonate with all these constituent groups.

Final statements on Identity, Vision, Values, Chiropractic Pillars, Characteristics of a Palmer Doctor of Chiropractic, Practice Paradigm and Philosophy, consistent with the College Mission, emerged from in-person nominal group sessions involving the BOT. Before final adoption and public release, these statements underwent a final review and feedback from faculty, staff and enrolled students.

In June 2012, after additional constituency input, the following Palmer Identity Statement was approved by the BOT – The primary care professional for spinal health and well-being. This Statement, as well as the other revised mission-related documents, were widely disseminated to all relevant internal and external constituent groups, including students, alumni, employees, and the profession at large by way of publications, presentations, and professional meeting agendas.

College faculty, staff, and administrators displayed high levels of understanding and support for the Mission as evidenced by the 2013 institution-wide survey conducted after the College had completed its extensive processes to revise its Mission and guiding documents.

Sub-Component 1.A.2: The institution’s academic programs, student support services, and enrollment...
Palmer’s academic programs, student support services and enrollment profile reflect a chiropractic-centered focus and are consistent with the Mission.

Each degree program clearly supports a chiropractic focus. A snapshot of enrollment reveals the majority (97.9%) of the College’s students are enrolled in the Doctor of Chiropractic degree program (DCP) across three campuses. The DCP is professionally accredited by the Council on Chiropractic Education (CCE), whose standards require graduates to demonstrate specific clinical competencies for chiropractic practice. The remaining 3% of students are enrolled in the Davenport campus’s three other degree programs – Master of Science in Clinical Research (MS), Bachelor of Science Completion in General Science (BS), and Associate of Applied Science in Chiropractic Technology (AAS). The Master’s program prepares graduates for a career in clinical research and/or academia. Enrollment into the DCP requires 90 semester hours; some students enter without a Bachelor’s degree. The Bachelor’s is important for those DCP graduates who desire to practice chiropractic in a state that requires a Bachelor’s degree for licensure. The AAS degree prepares chiropractic technologists to serve in a chiropractic office in a support role.

In support of its programs, Palmer offers an array of student services to enrich learning and engagement, increase financial awareness, and to promote transitions into clinical practice. Core Component 3.D provides more details on breadth and effectiveness of student services.

Sub-Component 1.A.3: The institution’s planning and budgeting priorities align with and support the mission. (This sub-component may be addressed by reference to the response to Criterion 5.C.1.)

Palmer engages in strategic planning, budgeting and institutional assessment in direct support of its Mission through the development and prioritization of institutional goals and objectives that are derived from five Strategic Directions.

Five Strategic Directions, aligned directly with the Mission, guide College operations and form the basis for strategic planning, new initiatives, resource allocation (budget) and institutional assessment. The Strategic Directions are

1. \textit{Education} – Provide high-quality, chiropractic-focused, academic and clinical programs for diverse healthcare settings;

2. \textit{Healthcare Delivery} – Model and provide chiropractic healthcare that is evidence-informed and integrates patient values and clinician experience;

3. \textit{Service} – Promote campus engagement, community service, and professional participation;

4. \textit{Resources and Support} – Ensure and manage resources and processes in support of College programs and initiatives; and

5. \textit{Advancing Knowledge Through Research} – Improve human health by advancing knowledge.

The 2011-16 Strategic Plan contains specific institutional goals and objectives tied directly to the five Strategic Directions. Planning is discussed in detail under Sub-Component 5.C.1 and the budget process is addressed under Sub-Component 5.A.5. The College’s institutional effectiveness measures and reporting, which are also tied directly to its Strategic Directions, are covered under Sub-Component 5.C.2.
1.B - Core Component 1.B

The mission is articulated publicly.

1. The institution clearly articulates its mission through one or more public documents, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans, or institutional priorities.
2. The mission document or documents are current and explain the extent of the institution’s emphasis on the various aspects of its mission, such as instruction, scholarship, research, application of research, creative works, clinical service, public service, economic development, and religious or cultural purpose.
3. The mission document or documents identify the nature, scope, and intended constituents of the higher education programs and services the institution provides.

Argument

Sub-Component 1.B.1: The institution clearly articulates its mission through one or more public documents, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans, or institutional priorities.

Palmer’s Mission and guiding documents, 2011-16 Strategic Plan, and Annual College Report are widely and publicly disseminated.

The Mission and other guiding documents such as the Identity Statement, Chiropractic Pillars, Values, Practice Paradigm, Philosophy Statement, Palmer Abilities, and Educational Principles, as well as the 2011-16 Strategic Plan and Annual College Report are disseminated to various constituency groups and the general public via publications such as the College website, Catalog, and Insights magazine (alumni publication). Other electronic means, including e-mail announcements, are used to circulate the Mission and related guiding documents to the Palmer Fellows’ group (distinguished alumni), President’s Club members (donors), alumni, College employees and students.

Sub-Component 1.B.2: The mission document or documents are current and explain the extent of the institution’s emphasis on the various aspects of its mission, such as instruction, scholarship, research, application of research, creative works, clinical service, public service, economic development, and religious or cultural purpose.

Since the Board of Trustees reviews the Mission and other guiding documents every five years, these documents reflect the contemporary commitments of the College to promote learning, deliver healthcare, engage our communities, and advance knowledge through research as The Trusted Leader in Chiropractic Education™.

The BOT approved all updates of Palmer’s Mission and related guiding documents in 2012. The guiding documents provide deeper context to the foundational elements of the Mission, while at the same time educate the public regarding the role of chiropractic in healthcare.

The College’s brand as The Trusted Leader in Chiropractic Education™ encompasses its heritage as the Fountainhead of Chiropractic as well as its aspirational vision to grow in its leadership within the profession. The purpose of its chiropractic Identity Statement – “The primary care professional for spinal health and well-being” – is to identify the focal points of its educational programs, clinical practices, and research efforts and to evolve public perception of chiropractic in the healthcare
marketplace. Primary care indicates portal of entry, direct access by patients to a chiropractor; professional identifies a publically licensed, self-regulating profession; spinal health recognizes a chiropractor’s central focus on conservative spine care as a vehicle for maintenance of and restoration to health; and well-being signifies a whole person approach to general wellness.

The *Chiropractic Pillars* inform the healthcare community (patients and professionals) of the professional practice behaviors of Palmer-trained doctors of chiropractic. The *Practice Paradigm* more specifically describes elements of clinical care that a patient may experience when seeing a Palmer chiropractor. These elements are derived directly from the program learning goals of the Doctor of Chiropractic Program (DCP) as articulated in the *Palmer Chiropractic Abilities*, which guide the curriculum. The Abilities focus the educational process on the desired program learning outcomes and graduate competencies within the DCP. The Palmer Abilities are covered in greater detail under Criterion 4. The *Philosophy Statement* provides context for how Palmer chiropractors interpret and approach health, disease, and infirmity. Palmer’s *Values* make clear the organizational practices espoused by the College in promoting a vibrant and supportive learning community. The *Palmer Educational Principles* describe the College’s commitment to academic excellence and continual improvement of its educational programs. Throughout their learning experiences, students develop and refine critical thinking and leadership skills, while gaining an appreciation for life-long learning and service to patients, the profession, and their communities. The Educational Principles are due for a community review and update in 2015.

*Sub-Component 1.B.3: The mission document or documents identify the nature, scope, and intended constituents of the higher education programs and services the institution provides.*

The College Mission and guiding institutional documents have set the direction for Palmer to advance its aspirational vision as the “The Trusted Leader in Chiropractic Education™” through its academic programs, clinical services, research efforts, and community partnerships. The College’s Mission, “To promote learning, deliver healthcare, engage our communities and advance knowledge through research,” and its guiding documents, clearly identify the nature, scope, and intended constituents that Palmer serves with its programs and services to advance the chiropractic profession in multiple arenas.

Each educational program “promotes learning” and directly or indirectly contributes to “delivery of healthcare by preparing its graduates for unique roles within the chiropractic profession” – the DC as a doctor of chiropractic, MS as a clinical researcher in the field of chiropractic, BS as a prerequisite to chiropractic licensure in some states, and AAS as a chiropractic technologist. Palmer provides patient-centered services at various campus and community clinics and through academic affiliations with multiple off-site locations.

The College “engage[s] our communities” through its involvement with alumni and the chiropractic profession at large at local, state and national levels; in myriad civic activities in the municipalities where our campuses are located; and by providing healthcare services to military personnel and their families, the medically underserved, and lower socioeconomic groups. Sub-Component 1.D.1 and 1.D.3 covers College community service and engagement in greater detail.

The College invests considerable resources to conduct and publish research through the Palmer Center for Chiropractic Research (PCCR) as well as through its non-research faculty. It develops and implements evidence-based clinical practice (EBCP) concepts in pre-clinical and clinical education at its campuses, and translates current research into clinical education and practice; this is discussed under Sub-Component 3B.5. These all are examples of its ability to “advance knowledge through
research” in support of the chiropractic profession.
1.C - Core Component 1.C

The institution understands the relationship between its mission and the diversity of society.

1. The institution addresses its role in a multicultural society.
2. The institution’s processes and activities reflect attention to human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

Argument

Sub-Component 1.C.1: The institution addresses its role in a multicultural society.

Palmer’s Mission and guiding documents, and the programs and services that the College offers reflect an understanding of its role in a multicultural society and its commitment to diversity.

The College recognizes the importance of preparing graduates to serve a diverse, multicultural society. Within the curriculum, students are exposed to various cultural influences, beliefs and value systems, and learn to recognize how these shape patient preferences and impact clinical best practices. As international interest in chiropractic education and healthcare services increases, Palmer remains the choice of many students from ethnically and culturally diverse backgrounds for their chiropractic education. This international flavor provides various and unique opportunities for all our students for global engagement in classrooms, clinics, and campus life and through international clinic trips to underdeveloped countries.

One of Palmer’s Abilities, Healthcare in Social and Community Contexts, conveys the College’s commitment to diversity issues related to healthcare through instruction and experiential learning. Students study epidemiological principles regarding the nature and identification of health issues in diverse populations and learn to recognize the impact of psychosocial and environmental factors on general health. They also study the role of chiropractic in healthcare from a sociological perspective and engage diverse populations and environments through individualized patient care. Students are trained to focus on the patient’s best interest during the process of clinical decision-making and care management. From a demographic perspective, Palmer Clinics’ patient base is representative of the communities they serve allowing students to gain valuable experience in relating to patients with differing lifestyles, socioeconomic status, and cultural beliefs.

Within its clinical education, Palmer offers several experiential learning opportunities for students through community outreach clinics, the Clinic Abroad Program (CAP), and Department of Defense (DOD) and Veterans Affairs (VA) internships. Community Outreach and remote-site clinics provide free care to patients of lower socioeconomic status and individuals recovering from substance abuse. Community Outreach opportunities are available to student interns at each of the three Palmer campuses, offered in conjunction with local religious and secular social service agencies.

Additionally, Palmer has a renowned and long-standing Clinic Abroad Program (CAP) through which it provides international clinical learning opportunities. Senior student interns provide chiropractic healthcare to medically underserved populations in eight different foreign locations, giving the interns invaluable exposure to diverse health conditions and international cultures. Nearing its 20th year of existence, CAP has grown to 12-15 trips per year. Students are introduced to local customs, attitudes, and languages through pre-trip briefings to assist them with administering care in an effective and
culturally sensitive manner.

The College devotes approximately $750,000 annually in human and fiscal resources to its Community Outreach and Clinic Abroad Programs. Service activities at Community Outreach Clinics and through the Clinic Abroad Program are available at each of Palmer’s campuses. During FY2012-13, 66% of Palmer College interns participated in the Community Outreach and Clinic Abroad Programs (58% in either CAP or Outreach, with 8% participating in both programs).

More recently, the College implemented a Military Internship Program by establishing academic affiliations with Department of Defense (DoD) and Veteran Affairs (VA) facilities across the country. This program provides students with coordinated multi- and interdisciplinary patient care experiences not typically seen in traditional chiropractic practices. Military veterans represent a complete cross-section of racial and gender groups, and seek care for a wide range of healthcare concerns. Palmer currently has 17 such affiliations at sites across the country; an increase in growth of both the number of DoD and VA affiliations and the number of Palmer student interns participating in these internships is expected. Further details on these internships are provided under Criterion 1.D.1.

Sub-Component 1.C.2: The institution’s processes and activities reflect attention to human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

Palmer’s processes and activities reflect attention to diversity along with efforts to maintain and encourage constituent diversity college-wide.

Palmer College’s three campuses are located in three regions of the United States – Davenport, Iowa, Port Orange, Florida, and San Jose, California. Student and employee demographics for each campus largely reflect the regional characteristics. The College participates in and sponsors a wide variety of gender specific, ethnically diverse, and culturally diverse activities within its campuses and its communities.

To enhance racial diversity among the student body, the College has articulation agreements with Historically Black Colleges and Universities such as Chicago State University, Jackson State University, and Bethune-Cookman University, as well as with Hispanic-serving institutions like Bloomfield University, Central Arizona, Reedley College, San Diego City College, Palm Beach and State College. A complete list of agreements can be found on the College website.

In 2014, Palmer’s Davenport Campus began participating in the Quad Cities Lumina Community Partnership, which is working to increase the proportion of adults in the Quad Cities community who have a college degree, certificate, or other credential from 34% to 60% by the year 2025. As part of the Quad Cities University and College Presidents Council, Palmer is working with other local institutions of higher education to provide leadership for the postsecondary goals and priorities of the Partnership. The initiative aims to increase the availability of educational support and private scholarships for underrepresented high school students and adults with some college credit but no degree. In the current phase, the Partnership’s goals for 2016 are to establish a Best Practices Forum among the colleges and universities relevant to recruiting and retaining the target students, and to enhance data collection and reporting in relation to these demographics.

Student Demographics

Student enrollment demographics for the last five years reveal that nearly 40% of students across the College are female. Compared to 2009 data of profession-wide demographics from the National Board of Chiropractic Examiners 2010 Job Analysis, Palmer’s percent of female enrollment is higher
than the percentage of females in chiropractic practice. The percentage of racial minority students varies by campus, and ranges from 18% at the Davenport Campus to 52% at the West Campus. Compared to data from the Job Analysis, Palmer’s proportion of racial minority and female student enrollments matches or exceeds that of the profession. In support and promotion of our student diversity, Palmer offers scholarships to minority students and hosts a number of student clubs and organizations. All international students receive a $1500 scholarship, which requires maintenance of 2.75-3.0 GPA.

Faculty and Staff Demographics

To promote diversity in staffing, the College posts job offerings within multicultural venues (e.g., Iowa Workforce Development, Quad City Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Davenport NAACP, and Quad Cities Women’s Connection). A review of demographic categories of gender and ethnicity among staff and faculty over the last 5 years at each campus demonstrate that the proportion of women faculty is greater than that found within the chiropractic profession. The proportion of racial minority faculty is comparable to that of the profession. Concerning Palmer staff, the proportion of racial minority staff is comparable to that of the profession and the proportion of women is far greater.
1.D - Core Component 1.D

The institution’s mission demonstrates commitment to the public good.

1. Actions and decisions reflect an understanding that in its educational role the institution serves the public, not solely the institution, and thus entails a public obligation.
2. The institution’s educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests.
3. The institution engages with its identified external constituencies and communities of interest and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

Argument

Sub-Component 1.D.1: Actions and decisions reflect an understanding that in its educational role the institution serves the public, not solely the institution, and thus entails a public obligation.

Palmer College of Chiropractic functions as a not-for-profit institution of higher learning, operating programs and granting degrees to add to the public welfare. The College’s clinic operations dually serve the public good in training students within the College’s primary role as an education institution and serve the healthcare needs of the communities. Palmer’s Research Center is dedicated to advancing public health through the conduct of research that will improve the delivery of chiropractic patient care.

Graduates of Palmer College provide healthcare to the public in all 50 states and world-wide, making the education of chiropractors of utmost importance. The College and its clinics invest significant personnel and financial resources toward the delivery of chiropractic healthcare to the general public, as well as pro bono care to medically-underserved and lower socioeconomic populations. In fiscal year 2013-14 alone, the Palmer clinics provided $3.6 million dollars (57% of clinical gross services) in non-military pro bono in-kind services. In addition, since 2009 the College clinics have provided over $1.67M of free chiropractic care to active duty military personnel and their qualified dependents, and to service-related disabled veterans and their qualified dependents.

Palmer Center for Chiropractic Research

The Palmer Center for Chiropractic Research (PCCR) was established in 1995 with a small research staff and less than $50,000 in extramural funding. Over the past 19 years, the Center has been highly successful in obtaining external funding in excess of $30 million from the National Institutes of Health, the Health Resources Services Administration, and the Department of Defense. It has grown significantly in staffing and clinical and basic science research productivity. In 2012, PCCR’s budget topped $7 million, with $5 million coming from extramural resources, such as grants and contracts, and $2 million from direct College support. The PCCR vision is to “conduct innovative, significant, high-quality basic, clinical and translational research that is directly relevant to improving the delivery of chiropractic patient care.” It is the largest research effort in the chiropractic educational community and has established itself as the leading chiropractic research center for basic and clinical sciences in the world. The PCCR is another example of Palmer’s commitment to serving the public good through advancing chiropractic research.
Sub-Component 1.D.2: The institution’s educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests.

Palmer College of Chiropractic is a private, non-profit higher education institution serving the sole purpose of chiropractic education in the educational programs offered and the degrees conferred. There is no parent organization, nor are there any investors or other external ownership or supporting interests with which the College must contend.

The Board of Trustees has fiduciary financial responsibility to ensure that the institution is prudently operating in a fiscally sound manner. Members of the Board of Trustees are not compensated for their service; the only financial concern of the Board is the overall health of the institution. The College’s Articles of Incorporation, its financial statements and the five-year Strategic Plan demonstrate there are no outside influences or external interests that detract from the primacy of Palmer’s Mission.

Sub-Component 1.D.3: The institution engages with its identified external constituencies and communities of interest and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

Palmer College gives meaningful attention to various external constituents and communities of interest, including its alumni, the chiropractic profession at large, and its local communities and undertakes concerted efforts to engage their interests and needs through various means.

Alumni

Palmer College has the greatest number of alumni in the chiropractic profession with an estimated 28,000 living graduates in all 50 U.S. states and 66 countries and territories. Alumni are served by a Continuing Education Department that offers robust contemporary programming to meet needs for licensure, practice-building, and advanced training in clinical areas of interest. The College is in the process of developing a more significant online presence to reach more alumni and complement its traditional in-person seminar offerings. Annual Homecoming events held at each campus provide opportunities for alumni to reconnect with their alma mater through social events and educational seminars. The Continuing Education Department also co-sponsors programs offered by outside organizations by authorizing speakers and certifying attendance.

The College relies greatly on alumni to help recruit qualified students and to transition graduates into practice. The Offices of the Chancellor, Admissions and Student Services (Center for Business Development) are building closer relationships with alumni at the state association level by forming articulation programs with states to offer free services to students and first year graduates. In turn, representatives from the chiropractic associations visit the campuses several times per year with specific information that will help graduates prepare for the transition into practice.

An Alumni Advisory Group, consisting of alumni from each campus, is solicited for ideas to improve the Palmer experience, whether educational or cultural, as well as for its collective wisdom related to prioritizing strategic initiatives and developing project ideas. College personnel and administrators regularly attend state conventions, and often sponsor booths, alumni luncheons, hospitality suites, and the like. Pertinent information is disseminated to and received from alumni at such events.

Chiropractic Profession

Palmer’s faculty, staff, and administrators serve the chiropractic profession in many ways. By publishing contemporary translational research in high-quality refereed journals like *Spine* and *The
**Spine Journal**, the profession’s evidence-based practices are being served. Palmer annually provides the greatest number of platform and workshop presenters at the Association of Chiropractic Colleges Educational and Research Agenda Conference (ACC/RAC), the largest such conference in the chiropractic profession. (A listing of faculty and staff publications and presentation is provided in Sub-Component 3B.5.) Non-research faculty present their research in chiropractic education and provide training on topics like assessment of learning, evidence-based practice, and technology to advance learning. Palmer employees and alumni also provide significant service and leadership in public health, education, public safety, business and professional leadership, public policy, and public service organizations.

**Local Communities**

The College commits considerable financial, personnel, and transactional resources to the communities in which each campus resides and encourages employee participation in community activities. It sponsors local athletic teams (e.g. Quad City River Bandits, Daytona Beach Cubs) and events (e.g. LPGA tournament, Quad City Marathon, Bix 7K race, Silicon Valley Turkey Trot); organizes and put on similar such events (e.g. Davenport Campus N-8K Race); actively participates in community fund raising (e.g. United Way); promotes public health and welfare (e.g. sponsorship and participation in the Quad Cities Women’s Health Expo and the Quad Cities American Heart Association Expo); and routinely provides in-kind pro bono chiropractic care services through respective campus Sports Councils at many of these and other events around the community. These events enhance the local communities with healthy activities and free chiropractic services.

The College clinics on each campus seat a Community-Based Patient Advisory Panel (CPAP) consisting of clinic administrators, patients, and community leaders. The CPAPs provide the College with ideas as to how the clinics can better serve the communities’ needs through patient care and other means. Examples include targeted advertising to minority local populations; development of social media pages and a Palmer newsletter for patients; lecture series on health, wellness and chiropractic; and the creation of a multicultural club to organize interpreters. On an annual basis, the College surveys its patients to determine their level of satisfaction with their care, the facilities, and the people they have interacted with. Patients consistently report high satisfaction across all Palmer clinics with the facilities and their patient care experiences.

The Davenport Campus faculty and staff engages the local higher education community as one of a consortium of colleges that provides and consumes contemporary training in teaching and learning through the Quad Cities Professional Development Network (QCPDN). See Sub-Component 3.C.4 for more information on QCPDN.
The institution’s mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution’s operations.

Summary

The mission of Palmer College of Chiropractic is to promote learning, deliver health care, engage our communities and advance knowledge through research; this publicly articulated statement guides the College’s educational and administrative decision-making. College-wide surveys in the past two years show more than 85% of staff and 90% of faculty thoroughly understand and support the mission. As an institution of higher education focused on chiropractic, Palmer has a unique opportunity to promote public good by training the next generation of chiropractic practitioners and providing chiropractic care to local communities. A diverse group of people in the areas surrounding Davenport, Iowa; Port Orange, Florida; and San Jose, California benefit from the College’s clinics and outreach programs including veterans, seniors, and low-income residents. Palmer’s commitment to serving the public is further demonstrated through its leadership in advancements in chiropractic research through the Palmer Center for Chiropractic Research.