

# Penn View Perspectives

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## Projected Accreditation Timeline

- Nov. 2012: Submitted first Self-Study
- Feb. 2013: Commission on Accreditation (CoA) reviews Self-Study
- Spring 2013: Evaluative team visit
- Nov. 2013: We respond to evaluative team's findings
- Feb. 2014: CoA grants PVBI Candidacy Status (we trust!)

## PVBI Has Completed Its First Self-Study

At 11:28 on the night of November 15, 2012, Dr. Cooley submitted the last document of PVBI's first Self-Study to the Association for Biblical Higher Education (ABHE). Students, you aren't the only ones who push deadlines ☺! The completion of the Self-Study was a vital step in PVBI's accreditation process.

As the name implies, a self-study consists of an institution's careful scrutiny of itself in relation to its own mission and to accepted standards for effective fulfillment of a higher education mission (see p. 4). The study results in three documents (see p. 2). First, an Assessment Plan addresses the question of how the institution will evaluate how well it is doing at fulfilling its mission, as

guided by the standards. Second, a Compliance Document demonstrates how well the institution is doing *right now*. Third, a Planning Document lays out a path for overall institutional improvement—how it will do even better at fulfilling its mission in the future.

Though this intense self-investigation actually began with the first ABHE staff consultant visit in August 2010, its major thrust occupied the past year. With the support of PVBI's board and administration, Academic Dean Cooley played the foremost role in guiding the Self-Study to completion, serving as chair of the accreditation Steering Committee and the primary author of all three documents. President Zechman, Director of Opera-

tions Brenizer, and Rex McDowell worked closely with Dr. Cooley as the other Steering Committee members. Numerous additional individuals contributed through their participation on accreditation subcommittees, in the faculty, etc. A special thanks to all of you!

Penn View has always been concerned about doing its best for the Master, and the concept of self-evaluation is thoroughly scriptural ("Examine yourselves," 2 Cor. 13:5a). This first formal self-study has provided clear documentation of PVBI's current effectiveness at fulfilling its God-given mission, at the same time highlighting areas in which we can strive to provide the Lord and our students improved service in the future.

## What Accreditation Is All About

A common misconception concerning accreditation is that it's all about satisfying the requirements of picky accreditors, just so an institution can say it is accredited. Another false idea is that accreditors are out to radically change an institution's identity.

A more accurate conception of accreditation, at least with ABHE, is that it helps an institution accomplish *the institution's own mission* to the very best of the *institution's ability*, by

holding the institution accountable for honestly looking at itself in light of its stated mission and actively engaging any weaknesses it finds, in a quest for continual improvement.

The accrediting agency seeks to foster an institutional culture of ongoing assessment, planning based on assessment, and resulting advancement.

An added benefit of accreditation, of course, is the credibility that comes when a reputable

agency *accredits* us before the public as indeed doing the job we profess to do. It increases the confidence that others have in our work and the transferability of our credits.

Our primary purpose in pursuing accreditation, though, should always be our commitment to being the very best we can be, not for our glory nor even for our students' good, but for the glory of God and the good of His Kingdom!

## How Is PVBI Doing Now? Compliance Document

And the Lord said to me, "Amos, what do you see?" And I said, "A plumb line." Then the Lord said, "See, I am setting a plumb line in the midst of my people."

Amos 7:8



In the Compliance Document, we look hard at our mission and at the eleven ABHE standards, and we answer the question, how are we doing *now*? To what extent are we in compliance with the standards and their 154 supporting essential elements? How do we measure up to the plumb line? The document itself is organized according to the standards, with responses to each of the essential elements.

Based on PVBI's history of educational excellence and the diligent labors of our personnel, we believe we were able to demonstrate an

acceptable degree of compliance with the ABHE accreditation standards for this point in the accreditation process. The self-study identified numerous PVBI strengths. As an academic dean of a sister Bible college observed years ago, what we are doing here is without question creditable.

On the other hand, the self-study also highlighted existing issues or weaknesses relative to each of the standards. Most of these do not suggest that we are doing poorly; rather, they surface areas where we can (and need) to do better. They, therefore, are also positive

results of the self-study, because they aid us in our purpose to give our best to the Master.

Full compliance with the standards is a goal that is never completely achieved, for there is always room to improve. If PVBI is granted Candidacy Status in 2014, as we hope, it will mean that the Commission on Accreditation (CoA) believes we are positioned to reach *substantial compliance* within four years. Rather than an excuse to sit back and relax, initial accreditation will be an incentive to, in Bro. Mowery's phrase, continue "forward and upward"!

"Assessment . . . informs planning that leads to continual improvement for God's glory."

## How Will PVBI Know How It's Doing? Assessment Plan

This article's title distills the essence of assessment. PVBI has a Kingdom-significant mission. ABHE has compiled general standards for effective fulfillment of a biblical higher educational mission. We face, then, a number of questions that concern us all.

- Are we fulfilling our mission? That is, are we equipping Christlike servant-leaders who are effective in fulfilling the Great Commission within the conservative holiness context?

- How do we *know* that we are producing such students? To what evidence can we point?
- How are we doing in relation to the ABHE standards? How do we know?
- Can we demonstrate to donors, churches, parents, and prospective students that we are able to deliver on the promises we make?

The Assessment Plan simply looks at PVBI's mission, organization goals, program objectives,

etc., and develops a way to answer the question, how effective are we for the Kingdom's sake? Assessment goes beyond how we *think* we're doing to actual data that *shows* how we're doing.

The other big thing is that assessment should never be an end in itself. As we look at how we're doing, the data will also reveal areas where we need to do better. Assessment data, then, informs planning that leads to continual improvement for God's glory.

## How Will PVBI Do Better? Planning Document

Based on its other two Self-Study documents, PVBI has identified the following seven Key Result Areas (KRAs) in which we believe we can do even better in our service to Christ, the conservative holiness movement, and our students:

- To advance *financial* stability
- To greater achieve *academic* excellence
- To improve *administrative*

excellence

- To enhance *library* and information services
- To more effectively serve our *students*
- To increase student *enrollment*
- To engage *strategic planning* as an institutional process

The Planning Document addresses these KRAs across five

years, with specific goals for the first year and a half. The plan identifies the persons responsible for overseeing the different KRAs, provides for consistent reporting of results to appropriate stakeholders, and anticipates ongoing evaluation of progress with adjustments as appropriate. Doing ever better for Jesus' sake will increasingly become who we are!



## Where Do I Fit In?

You may possibly feel that the accreditation process is happening around you but has little to do with you—until it produces some change that *does* affect you (such as the switch to ABHE-Solutions software; see below). Maybe you haven't been too sure what accreditation entails. Depending on your role at Penn View, you may not think you have had much opportunity to contribute to the Self-Study or accreditation, or perhaps you would like more information about what is going on. In other words, you may be asking, "Where do I fit in?"

The accreditation that is the focus of this newsletter relates primarily to the Institute; however, we want the whole Penn View family to be well informed about the process and have the chance to give input along the way. We are fundamentally one institution. Under the pressure of the first Self-Study deadline, the Steering

Committee had no choice but to push ahead with the project; there wasn't time to achieve as much broad-based collaboration during this phase as the committee would have liked. As the ongoing process continues, though, we will do our best to include you with both information and the opportunity for feedback.

Part of where you fit in, of course, depends on you. Haven't we all been guilty at times of overlooking information that has been made available to us, and then wondering why we weren't better informed? ☺ Or perhaps we've been invited to give feedback on a certain matter but have never gotten around to doing it. So you could start fitting in by reading this whole newsletter carefully! It is one attempt to make sure you get pertinent information.

The Steering Committee has created a page on PV Online called

*PV Information & Input*. You can access PV Online at [www.pvbi.mdl2.com](http://www.pvbi.mdl2.com). High school and institute faculty are already able to enter PV Online and view this page. We hope to add board members, administrators, and staff to the system in the near future. You will receive login information separately. Rex McDowell is the PV Online site manager; if you need help logging in, contact him.

The complete Self-Study is posted on *PV Information & Input*. We intend to add other information as we can, as well as forums where you can post your feedback. The Steering Committee members also welcome your questions or your input at any time, by any means of communication.

Iron sharpens iron. Don't stay on the sidelines. Please get informed, and let's work together to make Penn View its best for Jesus!

*"Part of where you fit in depends on you.*

*You could start fitting in by reading this whole newsletter carefully!"*

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## ABHE-Solutions

ABHE-Solutions is a powerful, integrated software programmed by ABHE personnel specifically to meet the needs of ABHE member educational institutions. It includes recruitment, enrollment management, course scheduling, academic records, library catalog and circulation, business accounts, and more, all in one package.

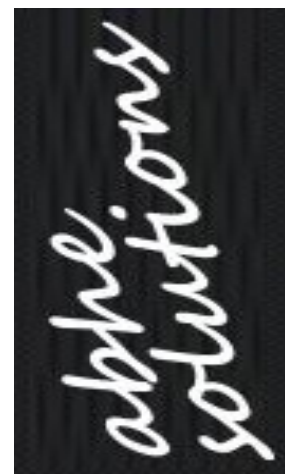
Naturally the transition to such a comprehensive software has not been painless. Special recognition goes to the Business Office ladies and the Registrar for making the biggest jumps the quickest ☺! Other users are making the tran-

sition as well. For instance, the PVBI faculty now submits attendance reports by ABHE-Solutions. The PVBI library's holdings are in the ABHE-Solutions OPAC (Online Public Access Catalog); however, more information needs to be added to the records before the OPAC may be released to students. The PR department is getting familiar with the advanced capabilities that ABHE-Solutions offers.

Training is planned for Spring 2013 to enable the faculty to record grades in ABHE-Solutions. Eventually, we will open parts of ABHE-Solutions

to students, so they can keep track of their attendance and grade records for themselves. The timeline for student use of ABHE-Solutions has not yet been established.

Before PVBI adopted ABHE-Solutions, Dr. Cooley carefully compared the software to other available options. He discovered that its value for cost far exceeded its competition. The technical support provided to PVBI as a member institution has been amazing. As we all get more comfortable with ABHE-Solutions, we will discover more and more of its power.



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Find more details  
at PV Online!

*To be like Jesus*



*Penn View exists*

*to prepare Christ-like Servant Leaders*

*through higher education that engages*

*spiritual transformation,  
academic excellence,  
social integrity, and  
practical experience,*

*in the conservative Wesleyan-Arminian tradition  
to fulfill our Lord's Great Commission.*

## ABHE Accreditation Standards

*These standards help clarify what "doing well at fulfilling our mission" looks like.*

### 1. MISSION, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES

The institution has a clearly defined mission that is appropriate to higher education as well as its own specific educational role. The mission statement serves as the foundation for institutional operations, programs, and activities. Statements of the goals and program objectives specify how the institution will fulfill its mission.

### 2. STUDENT LEARNING, INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS & PLANNING

The institution demonstrates that it is accomplishing and can continue to accomplish its mission, goals and program objectives and improve performance through a regular and comprehensive system of assessment and planning. Central to this plan is the systematic and specific assessment of student learning and development through a strategy that measures the student's knowledge, skills and competencies

against institutional and programmatic goals.

### 3. INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRITY

The institution is a model of Christian ethical behavior, both internally and externally. The institution demonstrates integrity in all of its practices and relationships, with strict adherence to ethical standards and its own stated policies.

### 4. AUTHORITY AND GOVERNANCE

The institution is legally constituted as a nonprofit organization authorized by its state or province to operate as an educational institution and grant all degrees and/or offer credentials. The institution has a governing board with legal and fiduciary responsibility to exercise appropriate oversight over institutional integrity, policies, resource development, and ongoing operations.

### 5. ADMINISTRATION

The institution has a core of administrators that brings together its various resources and

allocates them to accomplish institutional goals by implementing policies and structures in collaboration with appropriate constituencies.

### 6. INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES

The institution has the human, financial, physical, and technological resources needed to achieve its mission and has implemented policies and procedures to manage these resources effectively.

### 7. ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT

The institution has developed and implemented an enrollment management plan that is consistent with its mission and addresses issues of recruitment, admissions, financial aid and retention.

### 8. STUDENT SERVICES

The institution provides services that contribute to the holistic development and care of students and that are appropriate to the level of education and delivery system.

### 9. FACULTY

The institution maintains a faculty committed to its mission and qualified academically and spiritually to facilitate student learning within their disciplines and to contribute to the development of a biblical worldview. The institution fosters an academic climate that stimulates the exchange of ideas, encourages professional development, and promotes the well-being of faculty.

### 10. LIBRARY AND OTHER LEARNING RESOURCES

The institution ensures the availability of learning resources and services of appropriate form, range, depth, and currency to support the curricular offerings and meet student needs.

### 11. ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

The institution's academic programs are appropriate to the achievement of its mission and to the level of educational programs offered, with some programs oriented specifically to full-time vocational ministry but all programs enabling students to achieve a biblical worldview.