

# INSTITUTIONAL PLANNING

EAP Form 1.10 (Rev. 11/18)



STATE OF WISCONSIN  
EDUCATIONAL APPROVAL PROGRAM  
P.O. Box 8366  
MADISON, WISCONSIN 53708-8366  
(608) 266-1996

The Educational Approval Program (EAP) is a postsecondary education agency that employs a regulatory model focused not only on compliance, but also institutional effectiveness. To facilitate an environment in which schools seek to be effective organizations that improve over time, the EAP requires schools to submit evidence that appropriate planning has been conducted. Although similar to a strategic or business plan, this information will enable the EAP and school officials to engage in a dialogue over time about the effectiveness and future of the school.

Schools that already have some type of strategic or business plan (e.g., schools that have either a corporate or accreditation plan) must adapt these documents to the following requirements and focus on Wisconsin operations and students. The EAP does not expect any school to divulge any sensitive, proprietary business information. The information must address the five elements identified below and provide the information requested.

## I. SCHOOL INFORMATION

Name of School:

Concordia University Irvine (in California)

## II. PLANNING ELEMENTS

**A. MISSION.** Describe your school's mission and vision, which identifies its purpose and its core values.

Mission

Concordia University Irvine, a comprehensive Lutheran Christian university guided by Christ's Great Commission, develops wise, honorable, and cultivated citizens to serve society and the church.

Core Convictions (Values)

Concordia University Irvine serves our students, colleagues, and community by being:

- *Gospel-Centered:* The faculty and staff, guided by God's Word and the Lutheran Confessions, welcomes all qualified students who are willing to engage with its mission and proclaims God's grace in Christ to each person.
- *Faithfully Relevant:* Concordia offers exceptional, rigorous, holistic, and sought-after programs in the liberal arts and professional studies, rooted in the Lutheran intellectual tradition, that prepare servant leaders who proactively address the contemporary needs of the church and the world.
- *Sustainably Excellent:* Concordia invests its resources of time, talent, and treasure in wise and sustainable ways by empowering each faculty, staff, and student to live out their vocations and to support the ongoing excellence and fulfillment of the university's mission.
- *Courageously Loving:* At Concordia, all are called to love one another, forming a community that faithfully cultivates humility and responsibility, fosters honest and charitable conversations, and offers a path to personal growth that equips students for lives of service in a diverse world.
- *Relentlessly Hopeful:* Concordia is ever hopeful as it carries out its mission in the face of the world's challenges. Our hope is rooted in the confidence that God in Christ has reconciled the world to himself and that Christ is the Lord of all creation.

**B. MARKET.** Discuss the nature of your school and the business in which it is engaged. Describe who your existing and/or potential customers are and what motivates them to enroll in your school. Explain how you let these customers know you are in business. Finally, identify who your competitors are and how you are different from them.

Concordia University Irvine (CUI) is a private, non-profit, church-related university. It offers

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traditional face-to-face undergraduate education in almost 30 majors to approximately 1,300 students on three campuses in southern California. It also offers a two online bachelor's degrees and post baccalaureate programs, under 15 master's degrees, and two doctorates to approximately 2,200 students. Many of these programs are offered fully online.

Affiliated with The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, CUI admitted its first class in 1976. CUI is accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC). Please see <https://www.wscuc.org/institutions/concordia-university-irvine/> for the 2024 Commission most recent action letter and visit team report.

CUI's undergraduate program is distinctive because of its nationally recognized Enduring Questions & Ideas (Q&I) general education program and its Lutheran heritage that provides a thoughtful and caring Christian community that develops all of its students to be ["wise, honorable, and cultivated citizens."](#)

CUI's graduate, online bachelor's degree, and post baccalaureate programs are known for their high quality approach to online education, their strong focus on professional preparation, and their emphasis on Christian ethics in their respective fields.

CUI recruits a few traditional undergraduate students from Wisconsin each year. Drawn by CUI's Lutheran identity, a number of them have enrolled in the university's church work and music programs, which are marketed through direct mail and email, and by sending admissions counselors to college fairs at faith-based high schools in the state. Our undergraduate programs compete primarily with other faith-based and public universities in southern California, and to a lesser extent with Lutheran colleges and universities in the Midwest.

CUI recruits a small number of online graduate students from Wisconsin, primarily by using search engine marketing and search engine optimization strategies. Many enroll in the master's in coaching and athletics administration <https://www.cui.edu/academicprograms/graduate/coaching>. These students are attracted primarily by the opportunity to study in a fully online program. These graduate programs compete primarily with online programs in these disciplines offered by other institutions.

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**C. MANAGEMENT.** Describe your management team and how it functions to lead, administer and position the school. If your school has advisory boards, describe how the school uses them for program and school improvement.

CUI is governed by a Board of Regents, all of whom are members of congregations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and have a broad array of valuable knowledge, skills, and experiences necessary for governing a university. CUI's president reports to the Board and leads a President's Cabinet that includes the provost/senior vice president (VP); VP of finance and business operations; chief mission officer; VP of university advancement; VP of legal affairs and general counsel; VP of university services; VP of student affairs; VP and special assistant to the president; AVP of enrollment services; AVP of marketing and strategic communications; and AVP of athletics. The president also leads a Leadership Council consisting about 20 mid-level and senior administrators, including the Cabinet, the deans of CUI's six schools, the athletic director, and assistant/associate VPs representing all sectors of the university. The Cabinet and Leadership Council both meet at least twice a month to address items related to management and leadership. CUI's faculty governance system, which includes an Academic Council comprised of faculty members selected from each of CUI's six schools, helps to establish and revise academic policy and approve curricular offerings. CUI has a comprehensive assessment program and a regular program review cycle, in which faculty/staff assess departmental objectives and learning outcomes and review program viability and resourcing, with the assistance of external consultants.

CUI's Board of Trustees, all of whom are members of Christian congregations and have significant business or finance experience, governs the Concordia University Foundation and provides guidance in the planning and implementation of all Foundation programs and activities.

**D. SWOT ANALYSIS.** Identify your school's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT). Based on the results of this SWOT analysis, provide the following:

- 3 to 5 goals for strengths/weaknesses and how they will be addressed by your school.
- 3 to 5 goals for opportunities/threats and how they will be addressed by your school.

The goals should have specific objectives, defined results, a timeline for completion and metrics (some type of evaluation or measurement) by which the institution can evaluate/measure their success. In developing its goals, the school may wish to refer to the Elements of Effective Institutions graphic that is included on the back page of this form.

**Strengths:**

- A 48-year history of successful non-profit operation, with a current annual operating budget of approximately \$93 million, an endowment of \$63, and a cash position over \$100 million
- A bond rating of BBB+ with Goldman Sachs serving as CUI's fund management company
- Purchased a second physical campus in Irvine primarily for the School of Health and Human Sciences; it is a 114,000 square foot building on 6 acres in the midst of major hospitals
- Raised more than \$37 million toward the \$45 million goal for the new building and renovation phase of CUI's main campus in Irvine
- Regularly reaching our undergraduate enrollment and budget goals, including this fiscal year despite the FAFSA fiasco
- A strong commitment to Lutheran higher education as part of the Concordia University System, affiliated with a church body with more than a 150-year history of higher education
- Received the maximum 10-year reaffirmation of accreditation from WSCUC in 2014 and the new maximum 8-year reaffirmation of accreditation from WSCUS in 2024
- Received three multi-million dollar HSI grants, two for undergraduate and one for graduate students, and a multi-million CalOptima grant for CUI's Nursing program
- Three beautiful physical campuses in excellent locations in southern California
- Continually researching and bringing forth new/revised academic programs each year
- Implementing 7-year strategic plan (2023-2030) that covers major facets of CUI, including academics, student experience, physical and digital campus, enrollment, and fundraising

**Weaknesses:**

- Fewer academic majors and programs than many of our competitor institutions
- Less name recognition and brand awareness compared to other Christian universities in southern California
- High cost of living and labor in southern California creates expense pressures
- Overreliance on athletics to recruit undergraduate students
- Smaller endowment than some comparable universities

**Opportunities:**

- In 2013, CUI founded an Office of Innovative Instruction and eLearning (OIIE), which develops high-quality hybrid and online programs that reflect CUI's mission
- The distinctive Enduring Questions & Ideas general education curriculum for undergraduates, which sets CUI apart from many competitors and prepares students to think, be civil, and serve
- In 2019, CUI became a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) with over 25% of its traditional undergraduate population identifying as Hispanic
- A second campus in Irvine and another campus in Rancho Cucamonga allows CUI to support current programs in the health sciences, add other health science programs, and expand facilities for growing undergraduate programs in computer science and

engineering

Threats:

- Fewer high schools graduates in southern California and in the surrounding region increases the competition for recruiting and enrolling undergraduate students
- Universities with large online populations have increased recruitment efforts in California and compete directly with CUI for students
- Shifting policies, potential laws, guidance letters, attitudes, and funding at the state and federal levels cause uncertainty and strain on higher education
- Discount rates for undergraduate students continue to climb as families are unable to afford the rising costs of higher education and shop around for the highest discount

Goals related to Strengths and Weaknesses

- Add 10 new academic majors and programs in the next 6 years as per our strategic plan to recruit and educate more undergraduate and graduate students
- Complete the capital campaign to fund fully the building and renovations planned on the two Irvine campuses
- Sustain and advance high quality university education at the undergraduate and graduate levels informed by a Lutheran Christian vision and ethos
- Take the last step to implement fully the results of a compensation study for faculty, staff, and adjuncts to increase pay to media of the comparable market
- Secure another \$100 million in cash, pledges, and future expectancies by 2030

Goals related to Opportunities and Threats

- Continue to build innovative online and hybrid programs with the help of OIIE
- Build the computer science and engineering wing on the second campus in Irvine to attract and educate more undergraduate students
- Implement modules into all graduate programs that address relevant big questions and ideas for students wrestle with too

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**E. FUTURE VISION.** Describe your school 5 years from now. What will it look like and how will it be positioned in the marketplace.

By 2028, CUI will have accomplished over the majority of the initiatives in its strategic plan, which includes having 10 new undergraduate, post-baccalaureate, and/ graduate programs and 6,000 total students annually.

CUI will continue to improve its Irvine campuses by executing the next phases of its campus master plan. Most immediately, this includes building two new athletics buildings with team rooms, weight and training rooms, and the like; renovating the worship and performing arts building; and renovating a wing of building to house our growing computer science and engineering majors.

CUI will continue its mission as a faith-based institution of higher learning that serves all qualified students who enroll, preparing them to be “wise, honorable, and cultivated citizens” who do good work across all their vocations in life.

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**III. SUBMISSION**

*I hereby certify that the information contained on this form and any attachments to the form is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.*

Signature of Authorized School Official: 

Print or Type Name and Title of Authorized School Official: Scott Ashmon, Senior VP,  
Provost

Date: 8.9.24

# INSTITUTIONAL SYSTEMS

