

Lutheran Identity and Mission Outcomes Standards with Evaluation Tool: **An Introduction**

2019 Synod Convention Resolution 7-03 called for the creation of a new governance structure for the Concordia universities designed, among other things, to “strengthen all CUS institutions’ connection to the Synod” and “strengthen the confessional Lutheran identity of all CUS institutions.” To that end, a Task Force was formed with membership that includes the President of the Synod and the President of CUS and draws from the Synod Board of Directors, CUS Advisory Council, and the CUS Board of Directors, with representation from the universities’ boards of regents. That group first met in November 2019.

By the summer of 2020, consensus in the 7-03 Task Force congealed around a new governance plan that both gave the Concordia universities greater latitude in left-hand governance and created a mechanism for significant oversight in matters of the right hand.

According to the governance plan being proposed by the 7-03 Task Force, the Concordia University System universities will no longer, from the Synod side, be governed by a board with oversight over both left- and right-hand matters (presently the Concordia University System Board of Directors (CUS BoD)).

Instead, the 7-03 Task Force proposes the dissolution of the CUS and its board and the creation of a Commission on University Education (CUE), through which Concordia universities are “affiliated” with the Synod through a process of “ecclesiastical accreditation,” though no longer part of the erstwhile “system.” The overarching role of the CUE is to act as an accreditation association that brings to bear upon and demonstrates within the universities the wellbeing of the Synod’s right-hand interests in the Concordia universities.

The 7-03 Task Force proposal mandates that the CUE use an assessment tool, dubbed the *Lutheran Identity and Mission Outcomes Standards (LIMOS)*, that is both formative and summative. Functioning formatively, it should aid the Concordia universities in strengthening their connection to the Synod and their confessional Lutheran identity. Functioning summatively, the assessment should be able to certify and verify the strength of the universities’ connection to the Synod and of their confessional Lutheran identity.

To that end, the 7-03 Task Force in late Spring 2020 tasked the Concordia University System with devising a preliminary draft of the *LIMOS*. The 7-03 Task Force’s purpose in doing this was manifold:

- To provide the CUE, should it come into existence by convention action in 2023, with a working document that would allow CUE to begin its work more quickly
- To provide for itself, the 7-03 Task Force, an idea of what such “ecclesiastical accreditation” might look like
- To provide the same for all interested stakeholders, and especially for the Synod in convention

The CUS Board of Directors in turn created the Ecclesiastical Accreditation Drafting Committee (EADC), naming member Rev. Dr. J.S. Bruss chair of that committee, and charging him, CUS BoD chair Gerhard Mundinger, and CUS president Dean Wenthe, to put together the EADC with representation from seminary faculty and administrators, CUS faculty members and administrators, CUS Board members, and others with higher education experience.

The EADC comprises the following members:

Name	CUS BoD	7-03	CU admin/fac/BoR	Seminaries	Other relevant external experience/ education
Mark Braden	X			CTSWF (<i>adj.</i>)	X
Jon Bruss	X	X			X
Tom Egger			CUC BoR	CSL admin & fac	
Charles Gieschen				CTSWF admin & fac	
Korey Maas	Formerly CUS BoD member		Formerly CUI fac		X
Michael Meese		X	Formerly CCNY BoR chair		X
Steve Mueller			CUI admin & fac		
Gerhard Munding	X	X			X
Matt Phillips			CUNE fac		X
Paul Philp	X	X		Formerly CSL admin	X
Dean Wenthe	X	X		CTSWF admin & fac (<i>em.</i>)	X

With frequent and lengthy meetings between September 2020 and late January 2021, and much homework between meetings, the EADC devised two documents, the latter of which builds upon the former. The *LIMOS* identify the broad areas for accreditation consideration (Identity Standards). Identity Standards are expressed as statements. Each Identity Standard is, in turn, supplied with a series of statements that are more detailed (Mission Outcomes). Institutions for which the Identity Standards and Mission Outcomes are true meet the criteria for ecclesiastical accreditation and affiliated status

A second document, Evaluation Tool, using the *LIMOS* as its framework, supplies each Mission Outcome with one or more diagnostic questions whose answers require evidentiary support. These diagnostic questions correspond to the “measures” of the proposed bylaws. The Evaluation Tool thus serves as an outline and template for the self-study each institution would be required to perform prior to an accreditation visit from CUE, as well as a guide for site visitors and accreditors.

The *LIMOS* with Evaluation Tool was presented to the CUS BoD in February of 2021. On the Nativity of St. John the Baptist, 24 June 2021, the CUS BoD accepted the *LIMOS* with Evaluation Tool as the report of the EADC and for broader dissemination and comment. The *LIMOS* with Evaluation Tool now comes to you for that purpose.

According to the 7-03 Task Force proposal, the *LIMOS* and the associated Evaluation Tool are ultimately under the purview of the CUE. It should thus be borne in mind that while the enclosed *LIMOS* and

Evaluation Tool should give a good sense of what they will ultimately look like, it is finally up to the CUE to adopt these or a version of them or to draft entirely new *LIMOS*. The purpose of seeking comment and input at this juncture is to provide the CUE upon its inception not only with a working document, but, having heard from stakeholders, with something as close to a *workable* document as possible.

Please direct responses, concerns, queries, and suggestions to Rev. Dr. J.S. Bruss (jbruss@stjlcms.org).

In Christ's service,

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Ecclesiastical Accreditation Drafting Committee
Gerhard Munding, MD, chair
Concordia University System Board of Directors
Rev. Dr. Dean Wenthe, president
Concordia University System