



Chapter Four

Criterion Three Student Learning and Effective Teaching

Through the three components of blended learning, applied field-based instruction is combined with a multi-disciplinary curriculum spanning health, conservation, and social science. Blended learning is a powerful, flexible instructional tool, providing the pedagogical foundation of each course.

“The Organization provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission.”

The Future Generations master’s of arts program in Applied Community Change and Conservation provides effective teaching and learning for students who gain knowledge, values, and skills and become well-grounded generalists in diverse vocations of sustainable development. This section explains the relationship between the organization’s mission, its blended learning pedagogy, and community engagement through an empowering of students as well as their higher education in an “age of global convergence.”¹

“Future Generations teaches and enables a process for equitable community change that integrates environmental conservation with development. As an international school for communities offering graduate degrees in Applied Community Change and Conservation, we provide training and higher education through on-site and distance learning. Toward this end, we support field-based research, promote successes that provide for rapid expansion and build partnerships with an evolving network of communities that are working together to improve their lives and the lives of generations yet to come.” (Emphases added)

These eight points of reference in the mission statement guide curricular development and implementation of the blended learning pedagogy:

- Equitable community change
- Conservation alongside development
- On-site training and education
- Interactive online learning
- Field-based research
- Opportunity for rapid expansion
- Creation of opportunity for partnerships
- Attempt to create positive effects for future generations

Addressing the 2007 HLC Evaluation Review Report

Before we address systematically the core components of Criterion Three, we will comment on one specific issue raised by the prior Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Peer Review Team. This assurance requirement stipulated a greater effort be made to develop assessment tools and use them to connect learning objectives with the learning process. Future Generations already possessed an assessment method, Self-Evaluation for Effective Decision Making (SEED), which is central to all institutional operations. From this a new tool, termed XPRS, (eXit interview, Professor assessment, Review by administration, and Student learning assessment) was developed to serve the learning objective assessment requirement.

¹ Jeffrey D. Sachs, *Common Wealth: Economics for a Crowded Planet* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2008), pp. 18-31.

Through XPRS a standardized process has been created whereby students, faculty, staff, and communities evaluate the effectiveness of the blended learning pedagogy's components of interactive online instruction, site-based residential studies, and applied research in communities.

XPRS grows out of the Self-Evaluation for Effective Decision Making (SEED) process of the Seed-Scale method which underlies the whole organization. SEED utilizes the three-way partnership involved in any change process (in this case students and their communities from the bottom up, graduate school administration from the top down, and the faculty from the outside in) and increases effectiveness through the gathering of evidence and self-driven monitoring. The process is iterative, where a perfect solution is never expected (nor attempted) but each iteration is an improvement and an adjustment to time and resource constraints. Having an in-place assessment process, such as SEED, one that is embedded in all institutional operations and not just student performance assessment, has been extremely beneficial during the recent economic challenges. This feedback loop has allowed the Graduate School to turn a crisis into discipline for growth. A full discussion of SEED is available elsewhere.² Application through XPRS is as follows:

- X.** The entire class joins in open-ended eXit interviews at the end of each residential course of study, which lead to a follow-up review and assessment meeting of professors and staff (exhibit 4.1).
- P.** Each Professor, in consultation with the dean, evaluates whether his or her course has achieved its stated learning outcomes (exhibit 4.2). Moreover, the annual Faculty College provides a forum for all professors, the staff, and the dean to discuss blended learning pedagogy, teaching activities, applied learning experiences, and new technological and pedagogical pathways (exhibit 4.3).
- R.** Review by the dean and administration of online student evaluations of teaching effectiveness. This is provided to professors as direct feedback on each course (exhibit 4.4).
- S.** Professors assess Student learning through steady feedback on assignments (e.g., essays, projects, presentations, online postings, and exams) and final grades. As each student continues to work on the Practicum across all four terms, he or she learns to dialogue with community, evaluate that relationship, and build upon community-based knowledge and assets. While the Student Learning Plan (SLP) is initially developed in Term I, students revise it each term and use it as a self-evaluative tool. The SLP is submitted to the Practicum professor during Terms I and IV for more formal feedback.

Daniel Taylor-Ide and Carl E. Taylor, *Just and Lasting Change: When Communities Own Their Futures* (Johns Hopkins University Press: Baltimore, 2002), pp 261-282.

Pedagogy of Blended Learning

Through the three components of blended learning, applied field-based instruction is combined with a multi-disciplinary curriculum spanning health, conservation, and social science. Blended learning is a powerful, flexible instructional tool, providing the pedagogical foundation of each course:

- a. In the interactive online learning, computer-based communication and instruction draws its strength from student collaboration and personal empowerment.
 - i. Students enlist each other's cooperation via interactive online communication, building relationships, and learning during the long stretches between each of the four-month-long residential programs.
 - ii. Since this master's is not a campus-based program, students and professors use blended learning to shape the world campus into the classroom. The computer screen helps students interact with each course and one another, supported by an interactive online coordinator and a Web-CT facilitator (exhibit 4.5).
 - iii. As faculty members did not earn their degrees with on-line technology, the annual Faculty College provides workshops on how to close the digital divide. Students must study online with classmates, staff, and professors for 20 months of the program's two years (exhibit 4.6).
 - iv. Professors utilize diverse telecommunication methods to facilitate learning. Some use e-mail, telephone, and Skype to mentor students directly. Others use threaded dialogue on discussion boards. Most recently, some professors have begun Webinars and learning activities that segue to case studies observed during the site-based residential programs.
 1. For example, during the Term IV course "Synthesis and Integration," students spend two months online and one week together in Kathmandu valley. Each Monday during the online months, students engage assigned readings and questions. Then, two times each Wednesday – 16:00 and 03:00 GMT – they log onto one or two live Webinars wherein a professor facilitates analysis of the reading, a Power Point and video clips, and a running "public chat" recording each class members' questions and comments. The professor "passes the microphone" from student to student so they can verbally address the entire class. Students may also be given the "presentation screen" and assume leadership of the Webinar. Transcripts of each Webinar are posted on Moodle for further class dialogue. Each Saturday, students post their written response to the guiding question and Webinar on a Moodle forum. This nurtures a rich threaded discussion.
- b. Since applied research is the critical clinical part of this program, the dean, professors, many field-based practitioners, and all students focus on the applied research task beginning in Term I and ending in Term IV.
 - i. Practicum courses take students from basic research design and methods (Term I), to prospectus design (Term II), to two rounds of applied research

- (Terms III and IV), to each student's final presentation of research results and community-based work plans for change and conservation (Term IV residential).
- ii. Students follow a common syllabus, template, and grading rubric (exhibit 4.7). They also follow developments in one another's practicum projects (exhibit 4.8). While grades are an important part of assessment, the students' focus is on collaborative, not competitive, learning.
 - iii. Since the Practicum is both scholarly and practical, the dean and students together identify and appoint during Term II local mentors with expertise in each student's field of community research and work. In addition, a faculty member is appointed as an advisor to each student.
 - iv. The dean leads professors and in-country mentors in a coordinated process of facilitating the students' progress on behalf of community change and conservation.
 - v. The culmination of this well-researched and analytical work is either a fully documented action plan or a more traditional master's thesis.
- c. For effective site-based residential studies, the Future Generations Country Program directors, master's program staff, and professors collaborate to integrate in-class instruction, learning objectives, visits to "best practices" in the field, and cultural/historical attributes of the five countries visited:
- i. Since professors and students travel, eat, lodge, study, and research together for four month-long residentials and share 20 months of online interaction, they become a "community of learning". By the end of Term IV students come to understand that they are a global community grounded in shared relations, theory, practice, research, and wisdom and vision.
 - ii. Teaching and learning effectiveness is discussed driving the winding roads from Ziro to Guwahati in northeast India, canoeing in the Adirondack State Park, train travel from Cuzco to Machu Picchu in Peru, a Sherpa-guided trek up to Namche Bazaar in Nepal, and trans-Himalayan travel from Kathmandu to Rongbuk, Tibet/China at the foot of Mount Everest.
 - iii. During Term I, students cross central India from Gandhi's Ashram at Sevagram to the northeast tribal state of Arunachal Pradesh. Through the experience of learning in these extraordinary Indian "classrooms" they witness community-based projects that reinforce their book knowledge and online learning. Students thread together philosophical strands presented at Gandhi's Ashram in "Introduction to Community Change and Conservation," applied lessons in health care practices at Jamkhed to state-of-the-art field-based research at Gadchiroli in "Healthy People, Healthy Communities," integrating all these in their community applications in "Practicum: Research Design and Methods." Such threading across courses is held together each term by a further course grounded in that culture that serves as the residential's classroom: "Pedagogy of Place."

Core Component 3.a The organization’s goals for student learning outcomes are clearly stated for each educational program and make effective assessment possible.

The master’s program is the only credit-bearing program offered by the Future Generations Graduate School. Noncredit certificate short courses and workshops are offered through country offices. The Board of Trustees has approved, and plans are underway to offer, for-credit nondegree instruction. This could feed students into the master’s program (at the same time letting the school judge the competence of potential applicants), and let Future Generations focus on topics that otherwise are dealt with more generally in the master’s degree. Every piece of the Future Generations curriculum, whether degree granting or otherwise, is grounded in the following Statement of Core Values:

“This graduate program promotes respect for all life—human, animal, and plant—and the conditions for their harmonious coexistence. It recognizes the dignity of every human being. It prioritizes the interests of women, who have a particularly strong interest in the well being of their families, children, and community. This program adopts a holistic and ecological approach to community change and conservation. It emphasizes equity, empowerment, and self-confidence, especially among marginalized members of the community.”

In developing its assessment of teaching and learning effectiveness, the master’s program is moving from complexity to simplicity. It first designed Table 4.1, a matrix of 27 core competencies, concepts, principles, and professional skills based upon the above values (exhibit 4.9). Table 4.2 shows how all courses address these learning objectives. Table 4.3 demonstrates the integration of the eight guiding parts of the institution’s mission statement and these learning outcomes.

The master’s program is now in the process of restating more simply yet more concretely a new rubric for assessment purposes. Table 4.4 is forward-looking, presenting for the next class the “first reading” of seven simplified learning outcomes that were introduced at the May 2009 Faculty College (exhibit 4.10). Before Class Four of this master’s program matriculates in 2010, professors and staff will discuss these learning outcomes further at a specific Faculty College for this purpose. Integrated online assignments, field-based learning activities, and applied research steps will augment this simplified set of learning outcomes.

To understand the growth of this Master’s program it needs to be stressed that at the outset in 2003 a very broad range of learning outcomes was sketched—clearly a matrix that consists of a chart 27 by 20 is unwieldy, but it created a framework used through Class Three to better understand the universal nature of our students and graduate program. The Graduate School had to ask the question: do our present courses actually achieve the learning we believe is needed by our very diverse body of students? Now the essential challenge is to simplify these so that effective management can occur with subsequent classes of students.

Table 4.1 LEARNING OUTCOMES, COMPETENCIES, CONCEPTS, PRINCIPLES, AND SKILLS

Core competencies	
1.	Work as a catalyst for change
2.	Provide group facilitation and leadership
3.	Observe and gain confidence in collaborating with communities
4.	Learn to assess community needs
5.	Draft community work plans
6.	Carry out population-based surveys
7.	Use quality improvement techniques
8.	Monitor and evaluate progress
9.	Write project proposals
Core concept and principles	
1.	Ethical standards of community change and conservation including public health ethics
2.	Approaches to community change, including Seed-Scale methodology and nonviolent strategies for change
3.	Local and global application of nature conservation and ecology, including natural resources management and protection
4.	Experiential learning in successful community development programs
5.	Goals of equity, empowerment, and social change at the individual, household, and community levels
6.	Geopolitical forces and economics affecting communities
7.	Food and water security studies covering current production, availability, distribution, agrology, management decisions, alternative farming systems, and agriculture systems
8.	Community-based approaches to health improvement with special emphases on reproductive health, child health, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, water, and sanitation
9.	Organizational management, group decision making, and leadership as they apply to community change and organizational behavior
Core professional skills	
1.	Critical analysis
2.	Intercultural communicative competence, including proficiency in a second language—English or another language—relevant to the student’s community work or Future Generations country program projects
3.	Methods for working in community, such as listening, facilitating, resource and leadership identification, empowerment, networking, training, and consensus building
4.	Skills in nature conservation and environmental improvement, such as discerning environmental resource stakeholders, environmental problems, expertise, negotiation potential, and ecological principles
5.	Applied principles of economics for sustainable economic development, household wealth and income, and the effects of regional–global economics on local communities
6.	Skills in food and water security measurements
7.	Health, nutrition, and demography skills including public health and primary care models, demographic and health surveys, and knowledge of first aid, oral rehydration, water potability, iodine content, and warning signs of primary health threats
8.	Skills in program design, monitoring and evaluation, such as participatory techniques, census taking, survey collection, computer-based survey analysis, grant proposals, budgeting, and assessment
9.	The ability to present professionally before diverse audiences

COURSE-BY COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

Learning Outcomes	Term I Courses				Term II Courses				Term III Courses				Term IV Courses							
	Pedagogy of	Change and Conservation	Sustainable Development	Healthy People/Communities	Practicum: Research Design	Pedagogy of Place – U.S.	Conservation & Management	Leadership and Org Dynamics	Change and Conflict	Practicum: Prospectus Design	Pedagogy of Place – Peru	Going to Scale	Food and Water Security	Empowerment	Practicum: Applied Research I	Pedagogy	Human Ecology	Nonprofit Management	Practicum: Applied Research	Synthesis and Integration
Competency 1	X	X				X	X	X	X	X	X					X	X			
Competency 2		X	X				X	X	X		X			X				X		X
Competency 3			X				X	X						X			X			
Competency 4	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X					X	X	X		X
Competency 5	X	X			X	X		X	X	X	X					X	X	X		X
Competency 6			X	X	X									X			X			
Competency 7		X	X	X					X	X	X					X	X	X		X
Competency 8	X	X		X	X	X			X	X	X					X	X	X		X
Competency 9					X				X		X						X			X
Concept/principle 1	X		X	X		X				X						X				X
Concept/principle 2	X	X	X			X	X	X		X	X					X	X	X		X
Concept/principle 3	X				X	X		X		X	X	X			X	X	X	X		X
Concept/principle 4	X	X			X	X			X	X	X				X	X	X	X		X
Concept/principle 5		X	X				X	X	X		X	X		X						X
Concept/principle 6			X	X								X					X			X
Concept/principle 7												X								X
Concept/principle 8	X			X	X	X				X		X			X	X				X
Concept/principle 9							X										X			X
Professional skill 1		X						X	X		X			X						X
Professional skill 2	X		X			X				X						X				X
Professional skill 3		X		X	X		X	X	X		X					X				X
Professional skill 4							X										X			X
Professional skill 5			X																	
Professional skill 6												X								
Professional skill 7				X										X						
Professional skill 8		X		X	X				X		X							X	X	X
Professional skill 9	X	X			X	X	X		X	X	X				X	X				X

This matrix is useful for visualizing how the individual courses contribute to achieving the program learning objectives.

These learning outcomes define qualities and abilities expected of a master's graduate. Table 4.3 shows how each of the 27 student outcomes relates to the educational foci in the Future Generations mission statement.

Table 4.3 RELATIONSHIP OF MISSION STATEMENT AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

Mission statement educational	Addressed by learning outcome
1. Equitable community change	Competencies 1, 3, 5, 6 Concepts and principles 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 9 Professional skills 3, 5, 7
2. Conservation alongside development	Competency 4 Concepts and principles 1, 3, 6, 7 Professional skills 4, 5, 6
3. On-site training and education	Competencies 2, 5 Concept and principle, 4 Professional skills 1, 2, 6, 8
4. Interactive online learning	Competency 2 Concepts and principles Professional skills 1, 2
5. Field-based research	Competencies 4, 6, 8 Concept and principle 4 Professional skills 1, 2, 3, 6, 8
6. Opportunity for rapid expansion	Competencies 5, 8, 9 Concept and principle 2 Professional skills 4, 5, 6, 8, 9
7. Opportunity for partnerships	Competencies 2, 3, 5, 9 Concepts and principles 7, 9 Professional skills 3, 8, 9
8. Positive effect on future generations	Competencies 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9 Concepts and principles 1, 2, 7, 8 Professional skills 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8

Table 4.4 "FIRST READING" OF SIMPLIFIED LEARNING OUTCOMES

	General Learning Objective	Detailed Expectations
1.	Critical Thinking à analyze problems to reach evidence-based conclusions	a. Perceive problem and assess how to frame questions b. Identify assumptions and bias c. Formulate independent questions and conclusions
2.	Knowledge of development issues à show theoretical and practical understanding of social, economic, political, environmental issues and implications	a. Show knowledge of principles across development sectors b. Apply variables of human rights, gender and class to issues c. Relate local development to national, regional, global forces

3.	Community change facilitation and leadership à show knowledge and skills needed for change agency and empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Practice to facilitate community input and empowerment b. Identify, promote, and mentor emerging leadership c. Network to cohere resources and expertise re a problem
4.	Program design and management à independently design and implement sustainable development programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Conduct valid survey and develop community work plans b. Manage program logistics, human resources, and finance c. Write well-edited reports and convincing grant proposals
5.	Monitoring and evaluation à use qualitative and quantitative methods to monitor and evaluate a program, and adapt programs based on assessment results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Gather solid baseline data for further monitoring, evaluation b. Identify indicators of progress and implement research plan c. Update program based on evaluation data, analysis, and community discernment and input
6.	Communications à read, listen, write, and publicly present with competence, showing the ability to access, use and synthesize local and global information for community applications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Access Web-based information, learning fact from frivolous b. Deliver persuasive oral presentations to diverse audiences c. Gain proficiency in a second language
7.	Research à evidence-based work, analysis, decision-making, and effect on policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. After two iterations of data- and community-based research and analysis, students present to classmates and community either a: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Master's thesis (more traditional research and analysis) - Practicum for action (more applied in nature and delivery)

Table 4.5 demonstrates student progress from Term I to Term IV per courses taught, residential country visited, residential theme and overall community-based learning objectives, particular site visits, student learning plan (SLP) objectives, and cumulative credits earned.

Student learning is evaluated in each course through a combination of exams, quizzes, term papers, written journals, written assignments associated with readings, field assignments, oral presentations, and group projects. From the beginning to the end of the program, students also self-evaluate their progress according to their submitted SLPs. Professors not only grade student work but also provide constructive criticism. Exhibit 4.11 includes syllabi showing methods of evaluation used for all courses. Each faculty member is free to choose the learning assessment tools that best fit the learning objectives of his or her course. However, all syllabi are to state clearly methods of evaluation and feedback, and all adhere to a basic template that lays out learning objectives and evaluation rubric.

Table 4.5 TERM-BY-TERM STUDENT PROGRESS

	Term I	Term II	Term III	Term IV
Courses	<p>Pedagogy of Place – Home and India</p> <p>Introduction to Community Change & Conservation</p> <p>Sustainable Development</p> <p>Healthy People, Healthy Communities</p> <p>Practicum: Research Design and Methods</p>	<p>Pedagogy of Place – United States</p> <p>Nature Conservation and Management</p> <p>Leadership and Organization Dynamics</p> <p>Social Change & Conflict Transformation</p> <p>Practicum: ProspectusDesign</p>	<p>Pedagogy of Place: Peru</p> <p>Going to Scale with Community Development</p> <p>Food and Water Security</p> <p>Empowerment</p> <p>Practicum: Applied Research I</p>	<p>Pedagogy of Place: Nepal and Tibet/China</p> <p>Human Ecology</p> <p>Applications of Nonprofit Management</p> <p>Synthesis and Integration</p> <p>Practicum: Applied Research II</p>
Residential country	India	United States	Peru	Nepal and Tibet/China
Residential learning theme	How to initiate community-based change and conservation	How to sustain social change with leadership and community energy	How to take community-based change to scale	How to evaluate and monitor community change
Residential site visits	<p>Gandhi's Ashram</p> <p>CRHP, Jamkhed</p> <p>SEARCH, Gadchiroli</p> <p>Future Generations, Arunachal Pradesh</p>	<p>Summer Peace building Institute at EMU, VA</p> <p>Future Generations, WV</p> <p>Washington, D.C.</p> <p>Paul Smith's College, NY</p> <p>Adirondack State Park, NY</p>	<p>Child Survival Program, Future Generations, Cuzco</p> <p>Machu Picchu</p> <p>Local Community Health Association, Future Generations, Huanuco</p> <p>Future Generations, Lima</p>	<p>Kathmandu Valley</p> <p>Sola Kumbu Sherpa Trek</p> <p>Qomolangma National Nature Preserve, QNNP</p> <p>Pendeba Projects, Future Generations, Shegar</p>
Student learning plan (SLP) objectives	<p>Students submit SLPs</p> <p>Community history, status, assets, needs, and decision-makers are identified</p> <p>Language needs discerned</p> <p>Computer competency</p> <p>Language requirement</p>	<p>Students update SLPs</p> <p>Cybrary skill building</p> <p>Identification of mentor</p> <p>Community changes (for better or worse), most critical needs, and desire for new opportunities lead to research questions</p> <p>Computer competency</p> <p>Language requirement</p>	<p>Students update SLPs</p> <p>Cybrary skill building</p> <p>Appointment of mentor</p> <p>First iteration of research gathers data, identifies key people, describes assets, and discerns necessary refinements for the next iteration of research</p> <p>Language requirement</p>	<p>Students resubmit SLPs</p> <p>Cybrary competency</p> <p>Second iteration of research leads to a final action plan or master's thesis</p> <p>Community applications</p> <p>Practicum presentations</p> <p>Language completed</p> <p>Graduation at Rongbuk, Tibet/China</p>
Total Credits	9	18	27	37

Table 4.5 Note: Language study is a graduation requirement. Students must complete two levels of the IC3 learning platform or take an alternative language class or program. A transcript or affidavit of satisfactory completion is required. Students may include up to 2 credit hours for language study. Hence the total credit hours for graduation range from 37 to 39.

In their practicum, students bring learning from their course work, residential experiences, and other sources to bear on a problem of community change or conservation. Here the students engage their primary constituency, the community, through applied learning, research, and work plans. They share their knowledge with the community and take the wisdom of the community into consideration. Results of this activity are shared with and assessed by faculty and classmates in the Synthesis and Integration course in Term IV. This course begins online and culminates with student presentations and critique during the Nepal residential. The relative success or failure of practicum work becomes apparent as students consult with community members, classmates, professors, and their local mentor. Synthesis and Integration is the final student-to-student and faculty-to-student evaluation of the practicum, since the final critique is that of each student’s community. As Future Generations develops a more comprehensive assessment process, direct input from the students’ communities will be sought in evaluating the success of practicum projects.

The following tables summarize results of four student surveys that were administered at the end of each term for Class Three and Class Four: Campus Climate Survey (Table 4.6), Course Evaluations (Table 4.7), Residential Evaluations (Table 4.8), and Online Instruction Evaluations (Table 4.9). Each of these tables shows that the evaluative steps described above and embraced by the Future Generations staff, professors, and country program directors have resulted in improved median scores on a five-point scale.

Table 4.6 **CAMPUS CLIMATE SURVEY**

Question		2006-2007	2008-2009
1	Support needed to succeed	8.7	9.0
2	Relationships with other students	9.0	8.17
3	Graduate School flexibility	6.7	8.33
4	Relationship with faculty	7.7	8.5
5	Relationship with staff	8.0	8.83
6	Adequate academic support	6.5	6.17
7	Quality of online instruction	7.6	8.17
8	Residential quality	8.0	8.17
9	Academic rigor	8.2	8.33

Table 4.7 SUMMARY OF COURSE EVALUATIONS (on a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 being the highest)

Evaluation Questions	Term I - HPHC		Term I - RDM		Term II - NCM		Term II - SMSC		Term III - FWS		Term III - EMP		Class II	Class III
	Class II	Class III	Class II	Class III	Class II	Class III	Class II	Class III	Class II	Class III	Class II	Class III	Class II	Class III
Course Content														
Course was well organized	3.54	4.13	4.50	4.30	4.71	4.50	4.83	4.71	4.80	5.00	4.00	5.00	4.40	4.61
Materials were presented clearly	3.62	4.00	4.42	4.40	4.71	4.40	4.67	4.57	4.80	5.00	3.80	5.00	4.34	4.56
Stated learning outcomes met	4.15	4.00	4.25	4.20	4.71	3.80	4.67	4.57	4.70	5.00	3.60	4.42	4.35	4.33
Course added to knowledge/understanding of subject	3.92	4.25	4.33	4.50	4.43	4.86	4.83	4.71	4.60	5.00	4.00	4.86	4.35	4.70
Course added to practical skills	4.23	4.00	4.17	4.30	4.43	4.22	4.83	4.57	4.30	4.88	4.20	4.57	4.36	4.42
Course made contribution to career goals	3.85	4.25	3.83	4.30	4.14	3.33	4.67	4.00	4.00	4.75	3.80	4.57	4.05	4.20
Field experience relevant to field work	4.17	3.50	4.25	4.40	4.29	4.00	4.40	4.20	4.30	4.75	4.00	4.71	4.24	4.26
Interactive online learning added to learning/understanding	3.60	4.50	4.33	3.10	4.14	3.75	4.17	3.83	4.20	4.88	3.40	4.71	3.97	4.13
Faculty														
Knew subject matter	4.62	4.38	4.58	4.30	4.71	4.57	4.14	4.86	4.70	5.00	4.25	5.00	4.50	4.69
Were prepared for course/lectures	4.23	3.75	4.75	4.50	4.71	4.57	4.14	4.86	4.70	5.00	4.25	5.00	4.46	5.61
Encouraged participation	4.15	4.00	4.75	4.70	4.57	4.57	5.00	4.86	4.70	5.00	4.50	5.00	4.61	4.69
Presented material clearly	3.77	4.00	4.42	4.40	4.71	4.57	4.83	4.86	4.70	5.00	4.25	5.00	4.45	4.64
Stated clear goals and objectives	4.18	4.25	4.67	4.10	5.00	4.43	5.00	4.86	4.70	5.00	3.20	4.86	4.46	4.58
Stimulated interest	4.15	3.25	4.75	4.50	4.57	4.29	4.83	4.43	4.50	4.88	4.25	4.14	4.51	4.25
Answered questions effectively	4.15	3.75	4.66	4.40	4.71	4.57	4.50	4.57	4.70	4.88	4.25	4.71	4.50	4.48
Provided useful evaluation	4.46	4.13	4.58	4.30	4.33	4.00	4.50	3.71	4.70	4.88	4.25	4.71	4.47	4.29
Responded in a timely manner to questions/drafts/assignments	4.50	4.25	4.67	3.30	4.67	4.71	4.50	3.86	4.70	4.88	4.75	4.29	4.63	4.22
Graded work fairly	4.38	4.13	4.58	4.40	4.40	4.33	4.60	4.20	4.70	4.88	4.50	4.43	4.53	4.40
Were prepared for field assignments	4.00	3.25	4.67	4.30	4.86	4.57	4.20	4.20	4.50	4.88	4.25	4.86	4.41	4.34
Course Materials														
Readings were useful	4.38	4.13	4.42	4.70	4.43	4.00	5.00	4.86	4.70	4.88	54.50	4.71	4.57	4.55
Reading contained sufficient info	4.15	4.38	4.08	4.40	4.71	4.00	4.67	4.86	4.80	4.75	4.25	4.71	4.44	4.52
Readings were useful for the field	4.46	3.88	4.42	4.50	4.57	4.14	4.40	4.00	4.50	4.86	4.00	3.86	4.39	4.21
Course syllabus was clear and easy to follow	3.54	3.75	4.67	4.60	4.86	4.57	4.83	4.57	4.80	4.88	4.50	4.71	4.53	4.51
Course documents were clear and easy to follow	3.62	4.13	4.50	4.30	4.71	4.57	4.67	4.71	4.80	4.88	4.50	4.71	4.47	4.55
Course materials will be useful as references	4.46	3.88	4.42	4.70	4.29	4.00	4.83	4.43	4.80	4.75	4.25	4.57	4.51	4.39

FWS – Food and Water Security
EMP - Empowerment

NCM – Nature Conservation Management
SMSC – Social Movements Social Change*

HPHC – Healthy People, Health Communities
RDM – Research Design Methods

*Titles of course changed somewhat from Class II to Class III

Table 4.8 SUMMARY OF RESIDENTIAL EVALUATIONS

Evaluation Questions	INDIA Class II				INDIA Class III				Class II Mean	Class III Mean
	Delhi	Palin	Ziro	Kilkata/Passighat	Delhi	Palin	Ziro	Kilkata/Passighat		
Time was well organized	3.64	4.50	4.25	4.3	3.83	3.75	4.25	4.2	4.05	4.15
Stated learning outcomes were met	4.17	4.50	4.58	4.1	4.00	4.58	4.50	4.3	4.33	4.23
Time spent added to knowledge/understanding	4.33	4.50	4.58	4.1	3.83	4.58	4.50	4.3	4.32	4.20
Facilities were acceptable	3.92	4.67	4.58	4.6	4.58	3.33	4.58	4.3	4.25	4.18
Sufficient classroom space	4.08	4.67	4.17	4.8	4.25	3.83	4.17	4.8	4.27	4.58
The overall experience was helpful to my learning	4.58	4.75	4.67	4.7	3.92	4.67	4.75	4.7	4.57	4.58
	UNITED STATES Class II				UNITED STATES Class III					
	EMU	Akron	Chevy Chase	West	Towson	EMU	West	Towson		
Time was well organized	4.20	4.10	3.89	4.70	4.00	4.58	4.25	4.17	4.18	4.52
Stated learning outcomes were met	4.30	4.60	4.11	4.60	4.10	4.67	4.50	4.17	4.34	4.60
Time spent added to knowledge/understanding	4.22	4.50	4.22	4.22	4.30	4.50	4.42	4.17	4.29	4.57
Facilities were acceptable	4.50	4.00	3.89	4.10	3.90	4.75	4.58	4.25	4.08	4.67
Sufficient classroom space	3.90	4.80	4.44	4.20	4.30	5.00	4.58	4.92	4.33	4.80
The overall experience was helpful to my learning	4.00	4.80	4.22	4.33	4.30	4.75	4.58	4.50	4.33	4.75
	PERU Class II				PERU Class III					
	Lima	Cusco	Tingo Maria	Cusco	Lima	Cusco	Lima	Lima		
Time was well organized	4.50	4.09	4.50	4.90	4.60	4.70	4.70	5.00	4.42	4.80
Stated learning outcomes were met	4.08	3.82	4.42	4.58	4.50	4.60	4.60	4.90	4.23	4.63
Time spent added to knowledge/understanding	4.18	3.91	4.36	4.45	4.70	4.50	4.70	5.00	4.23	4.73
Facilities were acceptable	4.75	4.33	4.67	4.42	4.90	4.80	4.60	5.00	4.54	4.83
Sufficient classroom space	4.67	4.30	4.58	4.20	5.00	4.50	4.90	5.00	4.44	4.85
The overall experience was helpful to my learning	4.00	4.18	4.58	4.50	4.80	4.50	4.80	5.00	4.32	4.78
	NEPAL Class II				NEPAL Class III (Fall of 2009)					
	Trek	Park	Thimpu	Trek	Thimpu	5.00	5.00	5.00	4.88	
Time was well organized	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	4.75	4.25	4.50	4.56	
Stated learning outcomes were met	4.75	4.75	4.25	4.50	4.75	4.75	4.75	4.50	4.69	
Time spent added to knowledge/understanding	4.75	4.75	4.75	4.50	4.75	4.00	4.75	5.00	4.63	
Facilities were acceptable	4.00	4.75	4.75	5.00	4.50	4.50	5.00	4.50	4.75	
Sufficient classroom space	4.50	5.00	5.00	4.50	4.50	5.00	5.00	4.50	4.81	
The overall experience was helpful to my learning	5.00	5.00	4.50	4.75	4.75	5.00	4.50	4.75		

Table 4.9 SUMMARY OF ONLINE INSTRUCTION EVALUATIONS

Interactive Online Learning Evaluation		
	2006-2007	2008-2009
It was easy to access a computer frequently enough to participate in the course.	3.59	4.67
It was easy to use the discussion boards.	3.50	4.67
I actively participated in the course discussion boards.	3.59	4.67
My Web site problems were resolved satisfactorily	3.54	4.67

Such raw survey data (see exhibit 4.12) helps Future Generations assess and track progress in the various components of our programming and pedagogy, but equally helpful are the individual comments of students. The tightly knit faculty–student relationships that emerge in each course and through the residential programs have provided perhaps an even more helpful input to the assessment process, adding nuance and raising concerns that survey questions do not reveal (exhibit 4.13).

Full-time faculty, administrators, and staff working out of the North Mountain campus steadily assess the progress and effectiveness of the master’s program. Three key personnel on North Mountain are:

- Dr. Acker has more than thirty years of experience administering academic institutions and implementing large regional programs in economic development. In Nepal as a Fulbright Professor he was one of the two principals involved in rewriting the entire biology curriculum. He then served as project director for the U.S. Peace Corps in Nepal, dean of Arts and Sciences at St. Joseph’s University, and for eighteen years as president of Wheeling Jesuit University. Most recently and concurrently with his tenure as dean at Future Generations he serves the chairman of The Higher Education Foundation, building a new shared campus for seven institutions of higher education to serve the poorest parts of the state of West Virginia. Dr. Acker earned his B.A. in classical language from Loyola University (Chicago, 1952) and Ph.D. in biology from Stanford University (Palo Alto, 1961).
- Christie Hand, registrar and Interactive Online Learning coordinator, has a master’s degree in Developmental and Adult Education from Texas State University. She spent eight years living abroad, in Cameroon, France, and Austria. She worked with international students in the Texas State Intensive English program, and has taught English in a nearby West Virginia community college. She also serves Literacy West Virginia, a nonprofit organization promoting adult literacy.
- Director of Admissions and Financial Aid Administrator, LeeAnn Shreve, supports potential students throughout the admissions and financial aid process. LeeAnn is a lifelong resident of Pendleton County, West Virginia, the home of Future Generations Graduate School. She is completing her master’s degree in Strategic Leadership. She is involved with Autism Speaks and the Business and Professional Women’s organization.

As necessary, North Mountain administrators and staff conduct phone conferences with distant faculty and students to widen the net of input and assessment. Most critically, there is also an annual Faculty College gathering at the North Mountain campus in conjunction with the summer Board of Trustees meeting and the international staff meeting. Here, major programmatic issues and proposed changes are brought to the faculty for a vote. The Graduate School faculty makes decisions about curricular and programmatic changes at the time of these meetings.

Assessment of student progress makes it possible to determine which students complete the requirements for graduation. Graduate School faculty members are expected to maintain high academic standards in their courses. As can be seen in Table 4.10, less than half of the students entering Class One completed all the requirements and graduated from the program. This occurred despite the fact that all but one of the entering students were supported with institutional scholarships. No one dropped out of the program for financial reasons. Among students who did drop out (two from Afghanistan, two from China, one from India, and one from Peru), the primary reason was the inability to meet academic standards.

Accordingly, admissions requirements tightened for Class Two and major improvements were made to the educational process in order to help students complete the program. The result was that 13 of the 18 enrolling students entered Term IV, and of those 10 graduated and three more are finishing graduation requirements. This shows that effective student assessment is taking place and that students are being held to a high academic standard. Table 4.10 also shows our projected goals for student recruitment, allowing for more selectivity in student admissions and an anticipated higher rate of program completion.

Table 4.10 RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

	Class One 2003–2005	Class Two 2005–2007	Class Three 2007–2009	Class Four 2010–2011 (projected)
Number of students recruited	18	20	60	85
Initial enrollment	17	18	16	20
Students entering Term IV	9	13	10	
Graduates	8	10	9	

Evaluation of core component 3.a

This program's blended learning pedagogy and the ongoing XPRS assessment method are showing positive results from Class Two to Class Three. This pedagogy—particularly, the interactive online learning component—will become more effective with the rapid increases in global connectivity, making even isolated students and their communities part of the global learning community.

The 27 learning outcomes, though complex, have served their purpose so far in that there has been clear progress across early iterations of this program. Perhaps such a complex initial tool was useful to determine what parts of it were most helpful—but, as noted, as a continuing tool the intent is to simplify the learning outcomes. The Faculty College has completed a first reading of proposed learning outcome changes and will augment these with concrete learning activities. Each of these variables, too, must be measurable. As noted above, improvement of the assessment process is both on-going and also a high priority.

Core Component 3.b The organization values and supports effective teaching

In this section on effective teaching, we identify three faculty strengths, three challenges before us, and two areas of teaching growth.

In terms of strengths, Table 4.11 summarizes and the vitae in exhibit 4.14 demonstrate that the faculty is strongly credentialed and highly qualified. Second, if one were to add up the years that this faculty has spent in the field for research and service, the cumulative total exceeds 250 years. Third, this seasoned and experienced faculty provides a deep pool of expertise with which to mature the Future Generations blended learning pedagogy.

Table 4.11 FACULTY CREDENTIALS

	Full-time Future Generations employees with teaching responsibilities	Adjuncts and instructors
Number	6	9
Terminal doctorates	5	11
Master's degrees (only)	1	1
Countries of residence	United States, China, Peru, Bolivia, and India	

Note: In some cases, the faculty members hold more than one terminal degree, so the number of employees is less than the total number of doctorates and master's level degrees.

Of the challenges facing the Graduate School, a continuing emphasis will be placed on enhancing delivery of blended learning, site-based residential studies, and online instruction. This is a new pedagogy, and although it has been very powerful so far, Future Generations recognizes that it can be made even more effective.

1. **Implementing blended learning:** The blended learning approach of this master's program combines interactive online learning with residential programs and community-based research on several continents. To deliver this across the span of humanity's cultural landscapes, Future Generations must have strong relationships with practitioners and field

experts who are engaged in community change and conservation efforts. To assist in this, Future Generations has supported the development of an intercultural communicative competence (IC3) learning platform, which is tied to achieving the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs) across cultures, religions, and political systems. Finally, the community-based practicum is an innovation in master's level education. Instead of writing a master's thesis or conducting a project, students partner with a community and use their combined skills to address a real problem. They move from the role of student to that of change agent.

Even with many academic degrees and decades of field experience, Future Generations faculty members are challenged as they implement blended learning. As an evolving method, it will take continuing iterations before the most effective balance is struck among online, residential-based, and community-applied coursework to achieve the desired learning objectives.

Faculty members must hone the applicability of learning objectives, readings, and assignments for each course. Most of all, they must listen to the critique of students themselves from their diversity of cultures, languages, and professions.

Moreover, while faculty members are responsible for their own course modifications, support comes through discussion around a common rubric for course construction and integration into the overall learning objectives of the graduate program. Syllabi conform to a template to ensure that students are clear about course objectives and requirements (exhibit 4.15).

Faculty members in the residential programs occasionally team-teach. Some professors attend other's class sessions. This provides an opportunity for faculty to share and compare teaching methodologies. For example, the Term IV course "Human Ecology"—the one to be visited by HLC evaluators this fall in Nepal—combines the experience of three Future Generations professors, all gifted in different ways. The lead professor, Robert Fleming, is a world-renowned Himalayan naturalist. With five decades of experience in Nepal, Dr. Fleming can craft a personalized study of human ecology, Sherpa-guided ecotourism, and sustainable development on the Nepal side of Mt. Everest. Mike Rechlin, a forestry and Adirondack State Park expert with twenty years' teaching experience, can guide the class in completing field exercises that teach the skills needed to implement community-based natural resource programs. The assigned text and online readings are challenging graduate-level materials. Dr. Rechlin guides the class online with assistance from Dan Wessner, a professor at the University of Denver, designer of blended learning pedagogy, and editor of the IC3 learning platform.

2. Unique challenges of site-based residential programs: The site-based residential experiences require close contact among students and faculty. They eat together, travel together, and share recreational and social time

as well as studying and learning together. Students and faculty interact collegially from early morning to late at night. This is an extraordinary learning experience for everybody. This horizontal and democratic relationship is empowering for some students, but culturally strange for others. Specifically, when faculty and students share open-ended questions, this can contradict hierarchical, formal, and rote educational systems with which some students are more familiar.

3. Online connectivity in an age of digital divides: The Graduate School balances its quest to use “best practices” in information systems for online instruction with the existing digital divide. Presently, the program uses a Moodle Web-CT site of its own design and the IC3 learning platform to deliver interactive online learning. Neither platform requires broadband access. Such customization to fit our specific needs is a growing capability within the Graduate School. As seen in Table 4.9, our students are increasingly pleased with the quality of our online instruction.

The Graduate School is committed to providing state-of-the-art learning services that work for and in developing and industrialized countries. Thus, at the annual Faculty College, teaching effectiveness workshops are usually part of the program. In 2006, the first such workshop was on the use of Blackboard (exhibit 4.16). In 2007, our second workshop focused on the possibilities of interactive online learning. Dr. Van B. Weigel of Eastern University and author of *Deep Learning for a Digital Age: Technology’s Untapped Potential to Enrich Higher Education* facilitated this faculty enhancement (exhibit 4.17). In 2009, a third workshop led by Dr. Dan Wessner focused on the shift from Blackboard to Moodle applications (exhibit 4.18).

The Graduate School has identified two areas of growth related to effective teaching.

1. Active professional involvement: Effective teaching depends on active professional involvement. The Future Generations Graduate School expects its faculty to be active practitioners of community change and conservation, even as they engage students in learning about this subject matter. All faculty members lead active professional lives as researchers and consultants in the subjects they teach. Exhibit 4.19 is a listing of recent faculty publications and presentations at professional conferences.
2. Mentorship and Advising Programs: Class Two began and Class Three continued the use of local experts, who serve as mentors for the students’ fieldwork (exhibit 4.20). Mentors, as authorities in the students’ fields of interest, help students assess locally available expert, library, data, and practical resources needed for their research and community work. Mentors also typically have a history of serving in communities and have relational networks that may assist students. Usually, these mentors are community members who can offer information on historical, political, familial, cultural, and social cues. The dean approves and oversees these student–mentor relationships. He also calls upon faculty members to

serve as academic advisors. Mentor and advisor relations are established by the end of Term II. Up until that point, the dean and interactive online coordinator are the primary contact people for the students. Ultimately, the mentorship and advisory roles form teams that enable the students' successful completion of practicum projects.

Evaluation of core component 3.b

One strength of this graduate program is the credentials of its faculty. In addition, the program provides a unique teaching opportunity, both in its mode of delivery and in its programmatic content. Faculty are recruited with extensive field experience, which is the only way the residential programs could work. Nonetheless, the program does come with special teaching challenges. Besides forming a faculty that is adept at teaching online and face-to-face before global classes of students, a challenge is identifying how the faculty can interact with each other. The graduate school design allows for a global faculty pool—but it is not yet clear how the faculty will be able to share a sense of collegial camaraderie in the absence of regular face-to-face dialogue and brainstorming. Finally, there certainly is more that we could do to improve teaching effectiveness, and we are committed to take steps in that direction; in this regard the use of XPRS has been a great help in systematic assessment to identify best next steps.

Core Component 3.c

The organization creates effective learning environments

The Future Generations Graduate School and its master's program are evolving. Each term, students, faculty, and communities assess the program's learning effectiveness from many vantage points. This section presents what Future Generations has learned about the students and communities attracted to this program, the needs of these participants, the questions posed by students, and the steps taken to enhance learning effectiveness through this graduate program. The faculty and administration have learned as they dealt with the diverse student body and their diverse needs, language levels, time management challenges, academic performance requirements, academic integrity issues, and grievances; all this is requisite to an effective learning environment.

At the end of this section, Table 4.13 tracks changes made across three iterations of the graduate program *Catalog* and the recently completed *Student Handbook*. This table shows the implemented and projected changes from Class One to Class Three, changes adopted after input from faculty meetings, student surveys, and discussions during the residential programs. Before the release of the present *Student Handbook*, the Graduate School experimented with a different format which it called the *Field Guide*. The *Field Guide* was written based on extensive student input from Class One and Class Two (exhibit 4.21). The Graduate School intends to continue experimenting in order to evolve what works best as instructional support.

The seven points below illustrate aspects of the learning environment the organization strives to create for our students. The blended learning pedagogy used and the student population served create extraordinary opportunities as well as challenges to learning.

1. **Diversity:** The Future Generations Graduate School may, in fact, define the ultimate in diversity in academia. Class One matriculated 17 students from 11 countries, Class Two 18 students from 14 countries, and Class Three 16 students from 10 countries. The school has admitted students from 22 countries and is likely to have graduated students from a total of 18 countries in its first three classes (Table 4.12). Along with ethnic diversity comes a diversity of ages, cultures, religious beliefs, and political perspectives. Class members are social activists, educators, social workers, health supervisors, doctors, conservationists, government officials, and clergy. Student age goes from 22 to 64 years. The residential programs put students in proximity with people from backgrounds they are unlikely to have encountered in their lives to that point. Together, faculty, staff, and students learn to live simultaneously across more than a dozen cultures, bridging also a dozen time zones as they log onto Dimdim for the weekly Webinars. And yet prior to enrolling in this master's, a good number of the students had scarcely traveled beyond their local regions. Even still, this diverse group lives and works together. They learn to get along—and not just accommodate but to thrive from their differences and find in their common academic experience a powerfully rich learning experience.

Table 4.12 STUDENT DIVERSITY AND STATUS

Class	Class One	Class Two	Class Three
Admissions	17	18	16
Graduates	8	10	in process
Anticipated further graduates	0	3	11
Students advanced to next class for completion of the program	2	3	2
Completion rate (to date)	47%	56%	56%
Completion rate (anticipated)	47%	67%	69%
Countries of graduates and continuing students	Afghanistan, 1 st Nations, Canada, China, Ethiopia, India, Nepal, Nigeria, Peru, United States, and Zambia	Afghansitan, Bhutan, Cambodia, Czech Republic, Egypt, 1 st Nations, Canada, India, Iran, Norway, Rwanda, Uganda, United States, and Vietnam	Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Bolivia, India, China, Mozambique, Peru, Uganda, and United States

There are also issues of caste, gender, national identity, and many dietary considerations. The students respond to this mix of humanity in ways that can be both humorous and touching. On the humorous side, on a canoe outing in the Adirondacks, two of the younger women were needling one of our more traditionalist Iranian male students about whether he would touch them even if they fell out of the boat. He assured them that when he figured they had two seconds left to live before drowning that he would seriously consider extending his hand. So, too, the residential sessions are academically and physically

demanding, and at these times students band together as a supportive unit to help those facing the challenges. One critical lesson learned was to respect students' needs for personal time, space, and rest during each week of residential studies and travels.

2. Advising and mentoring: Student advising in the master's program is multifaceted. Course and program advising was formerly done by the director of academic programs, and is now shared by the dean and online learning coordinator. The needs here are especially important in the beginning of each new class as students from a diversity of educational backgrounds and systems adapt quickly to the demands and expectations of international graduate-level education even as the graduate program adjusts to the many diversity issues summarized above.

Students, though, take primary responsibility for their anticipated learning curve. Beginning with the initial Pedagogy of Place course, master's candidates devise a student learning plan (SLP). This academic work plan helps them identify their strengths and weaknesses, place in community identity, language needs and objectives, Internet and connectivity concerns, and actionable community-based questions. Students update their SLPs each term (exhibit 4.22) and use the SLP as a tool for self-evaluation at the end of the program.

Graduate School personnel are there to assist students throughout the four terms. The registrar records the students' progress, assists with issues of connectivity, and coordinates Moodle usage. The director of admissions and financial aid communicates with the students and their communities up to the point of matriculation, and handles logistics of the residential study programs, also helping students with travel and visa issues. The coordinator of information technology updates, refines, and provides assistance with any Moodle- and Dimdim-related questions. Several faculty members work with the same students on their practica during the four terms. The dean oversees mentorship and advising relations with students, and facilitates the success of the practicum project for each student.

3. Language: The director of online learning provides language instruction, assisting with tutorials and skill building before and during the students' time in the master's program. IC3 materials and instruction are available for language study and graduate-level preparation before matriculation. Based on TOEFL scores and recommendations, some students begin to work on English language skills several months prior to the start of a new class. In addition, during the residential programs, Future Generations provides language tutoring and assistance. Finally, based on needs identified in SLPs, the language instructor continues online skill building with members of the class.
4. Time allocation and management: An effective learning environment also includes a holistic approach to life and learning in community. Hence student family time, community commitments, and graduate studies are all valued and in need of finding their proper balance. If our international class of students were on a traditional campus it is probable they would be far away from home, and expected to place higher value on courses than distant family and community.

However, Future Generations students are among their communities and families for 80 percent of their time, where they face demands other than just the academic ones. Time and priority management issues are thus a challenge.

During admissions, Future Generations tries to discern if a student is choosing the right time in his or her life to pursue challenging graduate-level work. Also, in the students' personal statements of community, Future Generations looks for evidence of an embedded relationship and trust between the student and community. The admissions committee follows up carefully with academic and community referees to discern levels of community support and interest. Additionally, modifications have been made to assist students with time management. Online and residential coursework has been staggered so that students are focused on just two courses at a time. Syllabi have been standardized for easy navigation from course to course. An inviting Moodle-based virtual campus is maintained to facilitate interactive online instruction. Ninety IC3 modules are provided prior to and during the program to assist students in need of English language proficiency (exhibit 4.23). The interactive online learning coordinator helps to troubleshoot online problems. An online Web profile connects students to each other and their communities. Students are linked with mentors for their practicum work. And overall, the program remains flexible even as academic standards are maintained.

5. Academic honesty: Effective learning also means addressing instances when students do not understand or choose to violate academic policies. Students, with their diverse backgrounds, respond in many ways to the program's academic and other demands. One student may keep silent; another will directly confront the professor; still another may not quit until he has unearthed an answer; and yet another student may copy directly the materials that a classmate is writing. In a conventional academic program it is both easier and more appropriate to tell students what the standard is and to expect cooperation. This is not as effective in the context of the diversity of backgrounds among Future Generations students, combined with the relatively short periods when there is face-to-face contact. First, students are often baffled because the new knowledge challenges a variety of their values. Second, the students remain primarily in their home cultures in important ways during this program; in fact, they are taking the lessons learned back to their cultures. Thus mastering the full implications of academic honesty has with some students taken a term or two to accomplish. It is important, therefore, to determine whether there has been an intentional abuse by the student or whether the issue is one of the above-mentioned learning challenges. The Graduate School processed this question carefully before stating an academic honesty policy in the *Student Handbook* (exhibit 4.24).
6. Grievance procedures: Another policy that gives underlying credibility to an effective learning environment is the Graduate School's grievance procedure. As presented in the *Student Handbook* (exhibit 4.25), the concern is to ensure that any grievances bring reconciliation and growth in ways that enhance the academic community. If it is determined that an institutional or personnel error has occurred, the second concern is to determine appropriate redress. This process should be nonadversarial and open, undertaken for the sake of understanding,

and hopeful for a solution. The *Student Handbook* outlines the specific steps for a Grievance Committee to take in seeking reconciliation, growth, redress, nonadversarial understanding, and solutions.

7. Rigorous on-site residential program: With the strenuous travel and physical demands of residential programs, the learning environment can be unpredictable. A professor schooled in traditional U.S. university life may walk into class and have to cope with no chalk. Support staff are hired for each residential to facilitate preparatory, accommodations, learning, and personal needs. Still it is not uncommon for a professor to work with students to free a vehicle from mud, race around to find blankets for the night, or deal with electricity cuts or classroom shortages. Through it all, students build character and have learning experiences that forge lifelong friendships. These challenges add value and strengthen the learning community-based life. Step-by-step and together, students and professors learn to be effective agents of community change and conservation.

Evaluation of core component 3.c

The master's program provides students with exceptional learning environments based in some of the most outstanding examples of community-based social change and conservation projects in the world, and it does this under the leadership of some of the most knowledgeable experts in their field. Furthermore, Future Generations goes to great extremes to accommodate cultural, work, and religious differences among students. The organization also works to provide connectivity and comfort while on the residential. However, our learning environments come with challenges. In Class One those challenges were primarily Internet access. Class Two had less difficulty, because of the use of Blackboard as a learning platform and because the Internet was two years further along in its development. By Class Three, the new Moodle-based virtual campus and increasing access to wireless services simplified class access to the Internet for coursework and to maintain relations with families, classmates, and home communities and institutions. Residential studies can also be difficult, with some students rising to the challenge and others not being able.

In this self-study it has been repeatedly emphasized that this graduate program continues to evolve and change. Changes described in Table 4.13 were a response to the student and other input we have reported on in core component 3a. The positive is that the Graduate School is responsive and improving. The negative is that the program lacks a settled feeling, which can affect the learning environment. But the cumulative result is that the program has gotten noticeably better.

Table 4.13 TRACKING IMPROVEMENTS FROM CLASS ONE TO CLASS THREE

Concern	2003–2005 <i>Catalog</i>	2005–2007 <i>Catalog</i>	2007–2009 <i>Catalog</i>	2007–2009 <i>Student Field Guide</i>
Interactive online learning	Distance learning as part of blended learning concept	Interactive online learning coordinator IC3 learning platform Cybrarian HINARI	Cybrarian Clearer role for online and language tutors Access to library and cybrary facilities through EMU and Paul Smith's College	Academic Programming section lays out the blended learning goal with steps to enhance the students' applied, collaborative learning
Site-based residential studies	Participants are largely employees and affiliates of Future Generations	Residential assistants Reduced class hours Country program directors instruct	Clearer integration of the residential courses, site visits, themes, and country programs	Clearer threads/themes connecting all four residential programs, site visits and partners
Applied practicum research	Introduced in Terms III and IV	Practicum is key aspect of program from Terms I to IV Designated practicum instructors Mentorship program introduced	Informal mentors invited by start of Term III Mentorship component Integrated, Terms I to IV	Fuller dialogue of the role of research, community input, and mentoring in applied goals of master's
Student learning outcomes		Student learning plans (SLP) introduced Identified need for assessment of all student outcomes	SLP integrated from admissions through graduation with one's community Clearer assessment tools, procedures, and surveys	Matrix shows how courses fit into the overall learning outcomes for program Grievance procedure
Credits required for graduation	42	37	37	37
Major emphases in course changes	Seed-Scale	Pedagogy of place Practicum Comparative schools of thought in change and conservation	Pedagogy of place Practicum Further course changes to include comparative theories and practices	Pedagogy of place Practicum Seed-Scale is presented in the context of diverse arguments for change and conservation
Academic support services	Language tutoring via other campuses	Language proficiency and Web connectivity discerned by Term I Online IC3 tutoring	Language proficiency and Web connectivity preceding Term I Online IC3 tutoring	Student Life section explaining available resources to succeed in the master's
Number of faculty members	5	17	17	
Fees	\$16,500 (with airfare)	\$15,000 (no airfare)	\$17,500 (no airfare)	Clearer fees/payments
Total scholarships and other financial aid	\$330,000	\$396,500	\$400,000	

Faculty rights and responsibilities		Rules and procedures Indemnification clause for faculty members	Clearer implementation of faculty rules and responsibilities	
Faculty College	Faculty meetings	Regularized faculty meetings Annual Faculty College convenes Faculty workshops	Annual meetings of the Faculty College Faculty workshops and teaching upgrading Regularized meetings	
Virtual campus		Web profile introduced in Term III Enhanced master's home page introduced with Terms III and IV	Web profiling to begin with Term I Enhanced master's home page Tie from master's program to 100 nodes	Community Life section explaining students' work, their webbed relations with one another, and their tie to the 100 nodes
Faculty exposure via associations		Carnegie grant to study community-based peace building	Graduate School affiliation with more associations and joint research projects Engaging people in peace-building project	Invitation to students to join in Future Generations research projects

Core Component 3.d The organization's learning resources support student learning and effective teaching

The primary learning resources for this program are in the students' communities and project offices. The academic objective is "applied," the intent being to give students new skills and knowledge so that they improve their work with their communities. The intent is to reposition students in this journey in such a manner that it is a lifelong process. To achieve this applied objective, students visit a wide range of communities, some similar to and some very different than their home communities. The programs visited during the residencies should be viewed the way laboratories are at brick and mortar campuses, or in the manner that the teaching hospital is used in medical graduate education. Students learn what works by seeing what works, hearing the testimonials of what works, and listening to the songs of praise for what works (exhibit 4.26).

The visits that make up a residential study program are generally selected as the best available learning resources. The India residential begins at Sevagram, Mahatma Gandhi's Ashram. This historic site is a global icon for nonviolent change and community service. There, students not only absorb Gandhian philosophy but also visit applied technology and science sites inspired by Gandhi's values. The students also spend time at the Comprehensive Rural Health Project at Jamkhed (<http://www.jamkhed.org/>) where some of the original work on community development leading to the Seed-Scale methodology was developed. Jamkhed's director, Dr. Raj Arole, takes a personal interest in the Future Generations master's students and students have full access to Jamkhed's educational materials. The same is true from the leadership and resources of the outstanding Society for Education, Action, Research in Health in Gadchiroli India.

At Cuzco, Peru, students examine empowerment (and of course disempowerment) and child survival programs in the city where conquistadors toppled the Inca Empire. Then in Andean villages around Huanuco, students witness the Los Moras community-based modern health system, a model that arose from the bankruptcy of civil war and terrorism. The educational resources here are the people, who still speak Quechua, and follow Inca culture.

Future Generations recognizes the importance of library resources for the scholarly work of a graduate program. During the U.S. residential, students have full access to the Joan Weill Adirondack Library at Paul Smith's College and also to the library resources of Eastern Mennonite University (exhibit 4.27). Course books are all provided to students, as are special readers prepared by the professors. Other academic resources are provided as downloadable files on Moodle or through Web links. There is a limited "best practices" hard copy library on the North Mountain campus primarily for faculty use.

Expanding library resources is a priority for Class Four. Online library access is being expanded as well as cooperative agreements with academic libraries. But the most important library access—given the applied focus of this degree program—is to improve student access to library resources back home in their communities. What students really need is to learn how to do scholarship in their work lives. Each student in Class Four will be requested to join the best physical library available to them back home. Future Generations will provide them support in making this connection. During Term II, students will be given access to a U.S. university library, with continuing use privileges when they return home. Also during Term II, students will receive training in using the Internet for research, and be given access to the online academic resources of Academic OneFile, an online database of thousands of peer reviewed journals. Electronic learning resources are steadily improving, and students will be prepared to utilize this as capabilities grow.

The year in which this self-study is being prepared has been arguably the most challenging for American higher education in the last seventy years. Nonetheless, the Future Generations Graduate School has continued its steady growth and institutionalization. While challenged, overall fiscal health did not suffer despite the financial troubles that affected the nation. The budget of the Graduate School has grown from \$371,546 in FY 2004 to \$555,448 for FY 2007 to \$1,300,000 for FY 2009. While class size has remained essential stable across these years (growing primarily in approximately doubling in the retention of students) the quadrupling of annual operating budget occurred because faculty were added and because the formal research projects were started.

In addition to growth in annual budgets, in the six years of its life, the Graduate School has grown an impressive endowment with a book value of \$5,377,000; this includes two endowed scholarship funds and three endowed professorships. The Graduate School, once as an integral part of the parent CSO, today, to guarantee its fiscal health, has its own fully independent governing Board of Trustees, a separate budget, and is subject to its own separate audit. In financial terms, the Graduate School has displayed a strong commitment to setting in place the fiscal foundation to match its learning objectives—and demonstrates very healthy continuing trends.

Evaluation of core component 3.d

Learning resources for this program include students' communities, the expertise of experienced leadership used in the field and in the classroom, computer, and library resources. With the interactive online component of the program, students are required to have computer access before matriculating. To support their library needs, a plan has been put in place that begins with the best library resources in students' communities and extends to the Internet, with adequate training also being provided to students in how to use that rapidly improving electronic resource.

Conclusions

The analysis of this criterion and its core components leads to the following conclusions.

Strengths

The Graduate School is a distinctive academic environment where students learn to promote equitable community change and conservation. Its enhanced blended learning approach is an innovative educational model wherein students stay connected to their communities and their work while pursuing their advanced degree. Future Generations has attracted a faculty that is highly qualified both as teachers and development practitioners. Finally, the learning environment for this program works, though not without challenge, to prepare the program's graduates to be agents of a just and lasting change.

In terms of the eight core components of the Future Generations educational mission, there is clear and convincing evidence that the master's program has been attentive to and has sought to improve its delivery of each component.