The Journey Begins—Congratulations to DVS on Six-year Accreditation

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In a letter dated July 5, 2007 the Accrediting Commission for Schools of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges accredited Developing Virtue Secondary School (DVS). We received a six-year term of accreditation, until June 30, 2013, with a one-day midterm review in 2010. We achieved this distinction through the combined efforts and support of DRBA, the Board of Education, school administration, faculty and staff, students, parents, and community.

All who participated have our heartfelt thanks for their extraordinary efforts. This places DVS in an elite group. To my knowledge, DVS is the only full curriculum Buddhist High School in America to be accredited. For those not familiar with accreditation, school accreditation has advantages that extend beyond the here and now.

When a school becomes accredited:

* Universities worldwide recognize our graduates as having graduated with a rigorous education of the highest quality.

* The school must put processes in place that include all stakeholders and lead to continuous improvement of the quality of education provided to our students.

* They are periodically reviewed to assess their worthiness for continued accreditation.

Thus, DVS has entered on a journey of ongoing improvement to education. Congratulations to all who participated in the Self Study.

The journey that DVS, embarked on in 2004 is taking the school from where it then was to the institution envisioned by the Venerable Master Hsuan Hua. Two important milestones DVS has completed are becoming a Candidate for Accreditation in 2004 - the State of California gave private schools until 2007 to become candidates - and full accreditation in 2007. This auspicious beginning forms a solid
foundation upon which to build the world-class educational institution the Venerable Master envisioned.

A three person Visiting Committee from WASC evaluated DVS during the Spring semester of 2007. We were fortunate to have a very experienced team of educators as our Visiting Committee. Here are some of the findings from their final report to WASC on the areas of DVS strengths:

* The school embodies and communicates its mission clearly and consistently and represents its values through well-defined goals in its expected schoolwide learning results.

* The high behavior standards that constitute the framework for character education apply to everyone in the community and create a culture fully consistent with the school’s expected schoolwide learning results.

* Student confidence and the lack of stress they feel about grades is an outstanding characteristic of the school and indicative of the level of support, clarity and professionalism the students recognize in their instructors.

* The strong Parent Teacher Organization, the parents who are on staff and part of the community at the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas, and the many volunteers are also a commendable asset for the school, as are the staff members who serve as parent figures for the boarding students.

* The school’s governance structure - the Board of Education and the Advisory Board - takes full responsibility for, is committed to, and involved in support of the mission and in providing resources for the ESLRs.

In addition to these areas of strength, the Visiting Committee found five areas of growth that DVS must address during our term of accreditation. These areas form the basis for our school action plan for the next six years and help bring the school more in line with the Venerable Master Hsuan Hua’s vision.

Attaining this vision will not be easy, but it will be exciting! As the schools improve, we expect many more prospective students to apply each year. This has already begun. The schools are becoming better known as centers of excellence in education. Let us all work together in the future to attain the Venerable Master’s vision.

Editor’sNote: Developing Virtue Secondary School has a Boys Division and a Girls Division, but both follow the same curriculum and are legally considered the same school.