

PREFACE

This self-study is being undertaken during a critical time in the University's history. Frostburg State University is experiencing a number of important transitions. During the spring 2005 semester, Dr. Catherine R. Gira announced that she will be retiring on June 30, 2006, after serving as president for fifteen years. The University is also undergoing a revision of its mission statement. Although there is no substantive change, the process has focused attention on those characteristics that help to make FSU distinctive. In addition, a significant percentage of faculty members and staff are approaching retirement age. Through their dedication to the institution, their work ethic, and their commitment to students, these individuals have played an enormous role in shaping the qualities that define the institution described in this self-study. The recruitment of new faculty and staff is a major challenge facing the institution. Linking planning with strategic resource allocation has been particularly difficult during a period of statewide cost containment; however, the University has become much more thoughtful and systematic in its efforts to engage in meaningful assessment. The assessment of student learning is a cornerstone of the University's recent revision of its undergraduate curriculum. Finally, in the past few years considerable emphasis has been given to forming partnerships with the private sector, state agencies, and various community and regional groups in an effort to make a more substantive contribution to the region's economic, social, and cultural development. As Frostburg State prepares to welcome a new president, it is hoped that this document will serve as a valuable planning blueprint.

The University

Institutional Identity

Founded in 1898, Frostburg State University (FSU) is a comprehensive, largely residential, regional university. It is the only four-year institution of the University System of Maryland (USM) west of the Baltimore-Washington metropolitan area, thereby serving as the premier educational and cultural center for Western Maryland. With both a culturally and ethnically diverse student population and faculty and staff, FSU provides unique programs and experiences and a stimulating learning environment to the entire state. Because of its significant role in the System and state, FSU has a tri-fold mission of excellence in education, community service, and economic development.

Frostburg State University offers a comprehensive array of high-quality and affordable undergraduate and graduate degrees emphasizing academic programs in education, business, applied science and technology, and creative and performing arts, with selected programs in the humanities and social sciences. Although the main campus focuses on traditional residential students, the University serves the diverse learning needs of nontraditional students with on-line courses, distance learning, collaborative programs and downstate centers. The academic programs promote intellectual growth with a diverse learning environment that equips learners with critical thinking skills essential to developing civic responsibility and global awareness. These programs provide "real life" experiential learning opportunities for students in virtually every discipline. Through a

distinguished and caring faculty and staff, students are afforded a supportive environment which helps them complete their degrees in a timely manner.

Nationally known for its programs in community service and leadership, FSU offers an array of opportunities for students to engage in regional volunteerism and service-learning activities. Through students' internships and volunteer positions at statewide businesses and non-profit and government organizations, the University encourages practical application of classroom knowledge and promotes civic responsibility. University faculty also serve the community through educational outreach activities, hosting educational events and training programs for regional schools and businesses. In addition, Professional Development Schools serve as valuable resources for K-12 teachers throughout Western Maryland and neighboring states.

FSU is also an integral component of regional development initiatives. Each college provides technical and business expertise through its faculty, students, and facilities. Faculty administer research grants, offer consulting services, and manage experiential-learning programs. Students are involved in internships, applied projects, and student-led research and problem solving. The University also makes available shared space for business incubation with an emphasis on engaging faculty and students with business to ensure the collaborative nature of all ventures.

Institutional Capabilities

Building on a foundation of excellence, Frostburg State University will continue to grow and to develop programs responsive to the diverse needs and interests of students and will collaborate in outreach initiatives focusing on education, public and community service, and economic development.

The University holds as its primary function the provision of high-quality education at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. As the result of a comprehensive review of its offerings, the program of undergraduate education provides students opportunities for interdisciplinary study, collaborative experiences, service learning, and undergraduate research through both its program of general education and its majors. Graduate programs offer students additional opportunities for scholarship and research in a variety of fields.

The University also recognizes its responsibility to assist the State in addressing the critical shortage of teachers and information technology professionals. Therefore, the University will seek to increase the number of qualified undergraduate and graduate students recruited to and graduating in those disciplines. Expanded curricular offerings in education and applied technology will be accompanied by increased efforts in retention in those fields.

FSU also acknowledges its responsibility to strengthen public schools through the preparation of certified teacher-education graduates and K-16 partnerships directed at improving curriculum and pedagogy. Increased opportunities for the continuing education of teachers will be accomplished through the expansion of Professional

Development Schools in collaboration with the Maryland State Department of Education and the Maryland Higher Education Commission.

In addition to its focus on teaching, the University understands fully the unique opportunities presented for public and community service as the only public four-year institution of higher learning west of the Baltimore/Washington metropolitan area. Collaborations with government agencies, other educational institutions, and business and non-profit organizations address the emerging needs of the broader community. The institution's highly acclaimed programs in volunteerism and community service (AmeriCorps, America Reads, VISTA, VOICE, Learn and Serve) have brought the University national eminence.

The University also uses its facilities and professional staff to bring to the region outstanding productions at both the local, national, and international levels in music, dance, theatre, and public/current events, in addition to serving as the home for a rich array of student productions. These programs draw audiences from Allegany and Garrett Counties and adjacent counties of neighboring states. Both private and University resources have combined to make the institution the premier cultural center of the region.

Another integral component of public service is contribution to the area's economic vitality. In this regard, the University recognizes its role as a major force for economic development in the region. FSU is a major employer in the area, providing a positive stimulus for the regional economy and opportunities for advanced learning for the employees of area businesses and professions. Each year the University attracts thousands of visitors to the region through special events such as Homecoming, Family Weekend, and commencements and through its vigorous summer programming, all of which bring additional resources to the institution and to the area. Excellent campus facilities and the expertise of University personnel also enable FSU to serve as a center for applied research in the environmental and social sciences, teaching and learning, and other disciplines responsive to societal needs.

In addition to its contributions to economic development through employment and campus programming, the University plays a role in attracting new businesses to the area. University faculty are available as consultants in a wide variety of fields and specialties to stimulate business activity. The Center for Regional Progress conducts research and analyses for the local Chamber of Commerce and numerous other area agencies. The University has also earmarked Tawes Hall, the former science building, to serve as a temporary incubator/design facility designed to build the county's base of technology-related businesses. Ultimately, the University hopes to grow the incubator over the next four years, with current tenants and/or other companies moving into new buildings in the new Allegany Business Center at Frostburg State University (ABC @ FSU). Currently, the University is working with the Allegany County Department of Economic Development and the Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development to establish this business park. A major attraction for both the University and the private sector will be the excellent location and the availability of University resources, including faculty and student interns.

The Self-Study

In fall 2003, the President appointed the Associate Vice President for Student and Educational Services and a Professor of Communication Studies as co-chairs of the self-study. The co-chairs attended the Self-Study Institute sponsored by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education in November 2003. The following spring (2004), the President appointed the members of the steering committee after consultation with the Vice Presidents and the co-chairs of the self-study.

The members of the steering committee decided to conduct a comprehensive self-study with a special emphasis. Such an approach is especially congruous with our institutional identity and the scope of our mission. A comprehensive study enabled the steering committee to examine all aspects of the University, and to identify both strengths and those areas that need improvement.

The steering committee determined that the University's relationship with the community would serve as the special emphasis for the self-study. As indicated above, FSU holds the distinction of being one of the USM institutions most fully woven into the fabric of the surrounding region. Various dimensions of the relationship between the University and the surrounding communities are explored in the final chapter of the self-study.

Objectives of the Self-Study

The steering committee identified the following objectives for the self-study:

1. To model a process in which effective and thoughtful assessment leads to the improvement of both teaching and learning and institutional effectiveness.
2. To assess the degree to which the mission of Frostburg State University continues to be relevant and responsive to the needs of its many constituencies.
3. To celebrate the significant accomplishments of FSU and recommend ways in which we can further develop the institutional strengths that led to these successes.
4. To identify particular challenges facing the institution and to make constructive recommendations that will enhance FSU's ability to respond to these challenges.
5. To demonstrate the University's compliance with the fundamental elements identified in the *Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education*.
6. To demonstrate accountability to various stakeholders by conducting a candid, open, and constructive self-study that will result in institutional improvement.

Organizational Structure

The steering committee includes representatives from among the faculty, students, professional staff, and senior administration. The steering committee completed the self-study design document, reviewed the reports of the work groups and their recommendations, provided suggestions to the work groups for improvement, and engaged in discussions that informed the self-study report.

In most instances, members of the steering committee also served as co-chairs of work groups. Each of the work groups was responsible for examining one or more of the Commission's standards. Eight working groups were formed; seven of these groups focused on the University's compliance with the fourteen standards identified in the *Characteristics of Excellence*. A separate working group composed of both University personnel and members of communities within Western Maryland conducted a comprehensive examination of the relationship between the Frostburg State University and the communities it serves.

Surveys

The steering committee conducted surveys of the faculty and full-time undergraduate students during the spring 2005 semester. The surveys were administered in April 2005, with the results compiled by the Office of Information Services during May 2005. A total of 125 faculty and librarians completed the faculty survey, a response rate of 41.5% for full-time, tenure-track faculty and 33.6% for part-time faculty. There were 663 undergraduates who completed the student survey, for a response rate of 17.6%. Both surveys included opportunities to respond to open-ended questions. In designing the student survey, the steering committee placed the focus on student learning and asked students to respond to the following question: "What courses or other experiences have had the greatest impact on your learning as an undergraduate?" The steering committee found the student responses to this particular question to be both thoughtful and helpful.

Two additional surveys were conducted during the fall 2005 semester. A survey of staff was administered in November 2005; there were 233 staff members who completed this survey, a return rate of 47%. In response to a concern voiced that the first draft of the self-study had given insufficient attention to graduate education, a survey of graduate students was administered in December 2005. This survey was completed by 98 students, a return rate of 13.6%. The complete results of all of these surveys are included in the exhibits and are also posted on the self-study website.

Participation in National Surveys

The University participated in two national surveys as part of the self-study: the Faculty Survey conducted by the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) at UCLA and the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE).

Unlike the survey designed by the steering committee and administered on-campus, the UCLA survey included only full-time faculty members and was sent to the home address of faculty during the fall 2004 semester. The HERI Faculty Survey is designed to provide colleges and universities with information about the attitudes, experiences and concerns of faculty regarding job satisfaction, workload, teaching practices, and professional activities. Information resulting from the survey provided the steering committee normative data that placed the responses of FSU faculty within a national context. There were 124 faculty members who completed this survey, for a response rate of 51.9%.

The National Survey of Student Engagement was administered to both first-year and senior students at Frostburg State University. A total of 394 students (189 first-year students and 205 seniors) completed the survey, for a 25% response rate. NSSE explores five benchmarks of institutional effectiveness.

1. Level of academic challenge
2. Active and collaborative learning
3. Student-faculty interactions
4. Enriching educational experiences
5. Supportive campus environment

Several chapters of the self-study include the results for relevant items, with comparisons to our peer institutions. In November 2005 the University received an Institutional Benchmark Report. This report provides scores for each of the five benchmarks identified above and compares them to schools in our Carnegie classification and the NSSE national norms. The Institutional Benchmark Report is included in the appendices of the self-study.

Open Meetings

The steering committee identified a number of opportunities for students, faculty, and staff to provide comments and suggestions on the first draft during the fall 2005 semester. The most substantive concern expressed was the inadequate attention given to graduate education in the first draft. By responding to this concern and other suggestions made by various members of the campus community, the steering committee believes that this self-study report has been significantly improved.

CHAPTER ONE

MISSION, PLANNING AND RESOURCES

Standards 1-3

The Middle States Commission on Higher Education states in Standard 1 of the *Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education* that an “institution’s mission clearly defines its purpose within the context of higher education and explains whom the institution serves and what it intends to accomplish. The institution’s stated goals and objectives, consistent with the aspirations and expectations of higher education, clearly specify how the institution will fulfill its mission.” Since it is upon the mission that an institution bases all major decisions regarding academic programming and resource allocation, it is only fitting that it is the focus of the first standard of excellence. This chapter examines Frostburg State University’s mission and goals with a particular emphasis on how they influence planning and resource allocation. Questions that will be addressed include whether the University’s mission statement effectively defines the purpose of the institution; whether our priorities guide decisions about resource allocation; and to what extent the results of assessment activities are used to inform the planning process. The physical facilities of the University, in addition to its human, financial, and technical resources, are analyzed to ascertain whether the necessary tools are available for the institution to achieve its mission and goals. This chapter will determine, in particular, whether there is sufficient integration of assessment, planning, and resource allocation.

Methodology

Eleven faculty members representing the three colleges and the library and two staff members from the Division of Administration and Finance were selected to conduct research and evaluate the University’s compliance with the first three standards identified to be characteristics of excellence by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. The committee was divided into two task groups. One group was assigned to review the elements of standards 1 and 2: mission, goals, objectives, planning, resources allocation and institutional renewal. The other group’s task was to assess, in reference to standard 3, the University’s human, financial, technical and physical resources. Each group was given a list of charge questions to guide the research. They were also asked to evaluate how well the University meets the fundamental elements identified in *Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education* for each of their standards. Methodology for completing the review included consulting official University documentation, interviewing administrative personnel such as vice presidents, associate vice presidents, deans and directors, and participating in campus-wide surveys.

Mission Statement

The current official mission statement that defines the essence of Frostburg State University was approved by both the University System of Maryland (USM) Board of Regents and the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC). It is widely available in a variety of university documents and resources, including the undergraduate and graduate catalogs, the

university's web site and in many strategic planning documents. In the campus-wide surveys of Frostburg State University's faculty and staff conducted in 2005, an overwhelming 93% (or 116) of the 125 faculty who responded and 76% of the 233 staff respondents said they have read the FSU Mission Statement. The full mission statement is written to comply with a format adopted by MHEC for public colleges and universities. Comprised of two parts, the first section provides a clear institutional identity for Frostburg State University as well as detailing the "primary program emphasis as a high-quality, affordable undergraduate education" for our students. The second part presents a well-defined menu of objectives the University is confident it is capable of achieving. There is a distinct relationship between these Institutional Capabilities, as the second part is called, and the goals and objectives of the University. Both provide a realistic framework for institutional planning.

The mission statement provides an overall perspective of the university philosophy. It also highlights clearly those characteristics that are particular to this institution, such as our strong programs in community service and service learning, our role in the economic development of western Maryland, and our position as a cultural center for the area. However, much detail is also included. As a consequence, specific references within the document have become out-of-date. In May 2005, during the institution's self-study investigation, MHEC issued an invitation to the Chancellor of the USM and all public college and university presidents to participate in its periodic mission review process. Dr. Catherine Gira organized a committee from the campus community to assist in revising FSU's current mission statement. While many of the format requirements prescribed by MHEC remain the same, the institution received authorization to include a summary mission statement for publication purposes.

Frostburg State University Draft Summary Mission Statement

Frostburg State University has provided paths to success for students for over 100 years. Founded in 1898 to prepare teachers, the institution today is a public, comprehensive, largely residential regional university offering a wide array of affordable programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels. The only four-year institution of the University System of Maryland west of the Baltimore-Washington corridor, the University serves as the premier educational and cultural center for western Maryland. At the same time, it draws its student population from all counties in Maryland, as well as from numerous other states and foreign countries, thereby creating a campus experience that prepares students to live and work in a culturally diverse world.

The University is distinguished by a scenic campus encircled by mountains, its excellent academic programs, its nationally acclaimed community service programs, and its vital role in regional economic development initiatives. As a result, it holds the distinction of being one of the University System institutions most closely woven into the fabric of the surrounding area.

Frostburg State University is, first and foremost, a teaching institution in which students are guided and nurtured by dedicated, highly qualified faculty and staff. Faculty engage in wide-ranging research and scholarly activity with the ultimate goal of enhancing student learning. The academic experience of undergraduates includes a rigorous general education program in the liberal arts and sciences,

including development of core skills. Major areas of specialization are offered in education, business, science and technology, the creative and performing arts, and selected programs in the humanities and social sciences. The University provides numerous opportunities for students to engage in community service, leadership development activities, undergraduate research, and internships. These activities serve as experiential laboratories in which students apply what they have learned in the classroom to real-world situations. Graduate programs provide specialized instruction for students involved in or preparing for professional careers.

Frostburg State University continues to define its core mission as providing pathways to success – in careers, in further education, and in life – for all of its graduates.

At this writing, the process of approval of the mission statement is still underway. The University presented a draft of its mission and goal statements to the USM BOR in early September 2005. All USM institutions' mission statements must be formally approved by the BOR and then reviewed by MHEC to ensure they are consistent with the State Plan for Higher Education. The entire review process is expected to continue until February 2006.

Goals and Objectives

Frostburg State University's Goals and Objectives

1. Continue to provide a broad array of affordable, high-quality undergraduate and graduate programs that promote the personal growth and economic wellbeing of students; enhance the market readiness of graduates by increasing the number of internships and undergraduate research opportunities available to students under the tutelage of faculty mentors; respond to market demands by expanding and enhancing programs that address areas of workforce shortage, including computer science, information systems, and teacher education; expand the array of programs available through collaboration with other institutions, especially in allied health professions, biotechnology, and doctoral-level programs in selected areas.
2. Promote the economic development of the region by providing an educational and research infrastructure that makes the region attractive to business; promote the technological literacy of students; provide technological support for educational and research initiatives of faculty and students; enhance the University's role as a physical and intellectual center for regional economic activity; continue the development of the Allegany Business Center.
3. Maintain and enhance a diverse undergraduate population by continuing to recruit, retain, and increase the graduation rate of minority students; continue to promote interdisciplinary education within the core general education program and through collaborative educational efforts; continue to recruit a diverse faculty, including members of minority groups underrepresented on the campus.
4. Continue to develop resources to promote increased professional activity of faculty, including research and presentation at professional conferences; provide increased opportunities for undergraduates to engage in professional activities.

5. Recognize, support, and channel the service-to-community philosophy embraced by the University's faculty, staff, alumni and students; create increased opportunities for students and faculty to engage in service learning; expand programs that enable students to engage in direct, hands-on experiences and reinforce classroom learning (e.g. internships and undergraduate research opportunities); enhance existing living/learning programs; implement additional innovative strategies that fully engage students in a holistic learning environment.
6. Continue the University's commitment to an aggressive physical plant expansion plan that will permit the University to meet projected growth in enrollment; enhance infrastructure, expand interactive distance learning, and increase the number of online courses developed by faculty; increase the programs available on the main campus and at off-campus sites through collaboration with other institutions in areas such as allied health and doctoral-level programs in education and the environmental sciences; explore strategies that encourage life-long learning for individuals not currently served through existing academic programs.
7. Be responsive to accountability measures required by various State agencies (e.g., Department of Budget and Management (DBM), Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC), and the General Assembly).

The formal goals and objectives of Frostburg State University are published to the university community in our primary strategic planning document entitled *The Frostburg State University Institutional Plan and Selected Implementation Strategies* [Exhibit G-12]. The University has used this format since 1995 when the first draft was sent out to the campus community for input prior to it becoming an official plan. Included in that version was a message from the President, inviting discussion and comments "as to whether our goals and strategies seem appropriate and/or whether significant changes should be made in order for the document to reflect our priorities at both the institutional and divisional levels."

Subsequent iterations of the plan include the original seven goals outlined in the first version as the framework on which strategies for achieving the goals are attached. The Institutional Plan is intended to be a fluid document that is re-visited each year and revised as appropriate. While the major goals of the plan, like those of most institutional or strategic plans, have not changed significantly over the past decade, specific implementation strategies are inserted or deleted as a reflection of progress made or of changing priorities, in response to the dynamic nature of academia and external influences. In the 2001/2002 and the 2003/2004 publications, a new goal was added to each to reflect the significant impact that technology and the focus on assessment have had on higher education.

As stated in the introduction to the university's institutional objectives and outcomes for 2004/2005, Frostburg State University makes a concerted effort to tie its goals to those of the Maryland State Plan for Postsecondary Education and the USM [Exhibit 1-1]. A comparison of the documents clearly shows that FSU's goals and objectives strive to fulfill its mission and support the planning documents of the overseeing agencies.

The President's Cabinet, which is considered to be a broad representation of the campus community, is most actively engaged in the process of developing the document and

evaluating progress related to our goals and objectives. The Cabinet, consisting of the President, Vice Presidents, Deans, faculty, staff, and the Student Government Association President, is an advisory group to senior administrators on matters regarding institutional planning and the budget. In addition to producing the institutional plan, the Cabinet determines budget priorities to support the university's goals. The Cabinet also invests considerable time in environmental scanning, identifying those external influences (e.g., the loss of the HOPE scholarships, the increased involvement of parents) that may shape University planning. Each spring, specific strategies and objectives are identified by the Cabinet as priorities for the coming year (from among those identified in the longer-range plan), and, where appropriate, budget allocations are made to support the priorities.

The Cabinet devotes its May and August meetings to a review and revision of the Plan's goals and objectives. Copies of the revised plan and the list of annual strategies and priorities are sent to all members of the University community, excluding adjunct faculty, many part-time staff members, and the general student population. A complete copy of the Institutional Plan is also posted on the Frostburg State University website. The results of the 2005 faculty survey corroborate that the Plan is made readily available to the faculty, with a 72% affirmation that it is widely distributed on campus and an overwhelming majority, or 84%, indicating they are aware of the goals identified in the Plan. The survey also confirmed that 58% of the faculty considers the Plan to affect directly the goals of their department or unit. On the other hand, only 44% of the staff who responded to their survey agrees that the Plan is disseminated widely across campus, though 59% conveyed they are aware of the goals identified in the Plan. In answer to the question whether the Plan directly affects the goals of their department or unit, 49% of the staff respondents replied that it does.

The self-study surveys also indicate that many members of the staff and faculty do not believe that they have adequate input into the review and revision processes of the Institutional Plan. According to the staff survey, only 27% of the participants agree they have input in the Institutional Plan, either directly or through representation. Although the majority of the members of the Cabinet are from Academic Affairs (administrators and faculty), only 50% of the faculty respondents confirmed they have input in the Plan. This creates a challenge for the administration, which is attempting to work with the Institutional Priorities and Resources (IPR) committee of Faculty Senate to strengthen communication. IPR is comprised of the chair of the faculty and five members of the faculty senate (at least one per college) appointed by the chair.

At the conclusion of each year a progress report is prepared to indicate which objectives have been met, which are ongoing, and which have not been met. The annual accountability report of accomplishments, along with minutes of regular meetings of the Cabinet, is distributed to the Faculty Senate.

Recommendation 1.1: The University should explore ways to more fully engage the broader campus community in the planning processes that take place at the divisional and institutional levels.
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Each administrative division of the University also prepares an annual plan and goals tied to and cross-referenced to the Institutional Plan. These are coordinated by the Vice Presidents working with their department chairs and are also shared with Cabinet. In the case of Academic Affairs, the divisional plan is produced by the Dean's Council, the chief advisory body to the Provost. The divisions of Administration and Finance and Student and Educational Services have developed divisional plans for the past several years but the Academic Affairs and Advancement divisions, under relatively new leadership, have only initiated the process within the past few years. In addition to the major strategic planning documents for divisions and departments, separate planning documents set goals for important efforts, such as the centennial fundraising campaign.

All managerial level staff members are encouraged to identify professional goals and objectives annually. For administrative and clerical staff, objectives are established with their supervisors in April, at the beginning of the periodic review cycle and evaluated for completion in the following March, at the end of the review cycle. Ideally, an individual's objectives should be tied to the department's or unit's objectives and could ultimately be traced back to the division's and university's objectives as outlined in the Institutional Plan. As stated earlier, the results of the self-study surveys indicate that 58% of the faculty and 49% of the staff consider the Plan to directly affect the goals of their department.

The practice of establishing goals and objectives is ineffective if the success or failure of their achievement is not adequately evaluated in a timely and consistent process. As in most organizations, annual reports are the most common form of reporting tool used internally throughout the University. The smaller administrative departments evaluate and report the success or failure to fulfill staff and departmental objectives in their annual reports to their supervisors. Subsequently, the vice presidents of the divisions are responsible for producing annual reports which review the completion of relevant goals stated in the Plan, as well as their own divisions' plans.

In October of each year, the President's Board of Visitors produces its *Annual Report* [Exhibit G-13], an acknowledgement of the achievements of the University in the previous academic year. While it is not written in a format that links directly to each goal and strategy in the Institutional Plan, the University's accomplishments highlighted in the Board's *Annual Report* can be aligned easily with the broad goals identified in the Plan and provide evidence that the University is making progress in completing its strategies. Because of its highly complimentary nature, the *Annual Report* is an excellent promotional tool for informing the University community of the goals and strategies that have been achieved on an annual basis, in which many campus members have participated. Due to its limited distribution, however, the report is not well known to most members of the campus community. Although the *Annual Report* includes a section entitled "Observations, Concerns, and Recommendations," the comments and recommendations are not directed to the University as suggestions for improvement, but as "issues of consequence that, in our opinion, merit the attention of the Governor, the legislature, and the Board of Regents." As a result, the *Annual Report* serves better as an annual catalog of the University's accomplishments than it does as a rigorous assessment tool.

Official state reporting documents submitted periodically by the Office of the Provost, the Office of Information Services and the Associate Vice President for Budget and Planning to MHEC, the USM, and the Maryland Department of Budget and Management provide more effective mechanisms for assessing the extent to which the University is achieving its goals and objectives. The reports include Managing for Results (MFR) Report [Exhibit G-14], Peer Performance Data [Exhibit G-15], Middle States Annual Reports [Exhibit G-16] and MHEC's Accountability Report [Exhibit G-17]. These will be discussed more fully in subsequent sections of the self-study report. In addition, all academic departments conduct periodic program reviews every five years for the USM, at which time programs are evaluated against the institutional mission.

Recommendation 1.2: All colleges and academic departments, as well as each non-academic unit within the University, should participate in an annual review and revision of the Institutional Plan, particularly those portions that have an impact on the college, department, or non-academic unit.

Planning and Resource Allocation

The planning and budgeting process at Frostburg State University focuses on the mission, resources, established goals, and coordination of the administrative divisions of the University. The process is conducted by the Executive Committee and the President's Cabinet, and involves several decision-making stages. The Executive Committee — composed of the President, the Provost, the Vice President for Student and Educational Services, the Vice President for Administration and Finance, and the Vice President for Advancement — is the University's senior administrative team, and as such is ultimately responsible for planning and budgeting within the parameters established by the Governor's budget, the legislature, and the University System of Maryland's priorities, in addition to the institution's mission and goals. The Cabinet uses the Institutional Plan as a guide in recommending the allocation of fiscal resources. Other parties may be asked to contribute information, opinions, data, etc., to augment information already collected. The University's faculty is represented on the President's Cabinet by the chair of the Faculty Senate, FSU's representative to the Council of University System Faculty (CUSF), and the members of the Institutional Priorities and Resources Committee (IPR). As outlined in the *Faculty Handbook* [Exhibit G-18], the purpose of the IPR is "to provide for faculty input into institution-wide planning and budgeting." Faculty representatives are involved in the planning process at two Cabinet retreats: one in May and one in August to finalize the plan.

The self-study surveys support a concern of members of the campus community that relatively few faculty and staff are involved in the planning process. Student participation is even more limited; only one student representative is on the Cabinet. Seventy percent of the faculty and 67% of the staff respondents agreed that they do not have adequate input into the allocation of university resources. Nearly the same number of faculty (68%) and 63% of the staff indicated they do not have sufficient input into the assessment of resource allocation. Of the 663 students who responded to the student survey, only 27% agreed that they have adequate input into the allocation of student fees. While the majority of the students indicated they did not have an opinion, 38% stated that students do not have enough input.

The Cabinet's direct involvement in resource allocation is very limited, particularly during years of fiscal austerity. There have been only a few years in which healthy enrollments have created excess attainment funds for the Cabinet to disperse. Although institutional priorities are discussed within the Cabinet when there are discretionary funds available, the planning process would be strengthened by more frequent and widespread discussion about priorities. The Institutional Plan identifies a number of initiatives designed to support the achievement of goals, yet there has been little effort to identify the most important among these initiatives.

The resource allocation process involves a great deal of Executive decision-making that can be disconnected from faculty and mid-administrative staff input. For example, as noted above, although the charge of IPR states it is intended to provide input into institution-wide planning and budgeting, the committee's first glimpse of the proposed budget is the final draft. In periods of fiscal austerity, the planning and allocation process is often budget-driven rather than mission-driven. During years of cost containment, there is little discretionary funding to provide additional support to specific programs or priorities. Both of the faculty and staff surveys produced similar results that show that the majority, or 74% of the faculty and 70% of the staff who responded, agree that the process of creating the annual budget is not made clear to them. The results of the surveys also imply there is a perception among 58% of the faculty and 54% of the staff participants that budget decisions are not made in an equitable manner.

Procedures related to allocating and hiring human resources differ depending on the type of position. Decisions to hire non-teaching faculty and staff ultimately reside with the President and the Executive Committee. When hiring teaching faculty, the Provost makes the final decision as to the number of faculty to be hired.

Recommendation 1.3: Develop an approach that integrates curricular, fiscal, and organizational needs and activities with assessment and incorporates the assessment process in a systematic fashion into annual and long-term planning activities linked to the University's mission and institutional priorities, goals, and objectives.

Institutional Renewal

Effective planning and institutional renewal require constant assessment of results and attainment of objectives. During the self-study review process, the committee investigating these standards was charged to identify any evidence that the results of assessment activities are used to inform the planning process and ultimately stimulate institutional renewal. As a Maryland state institution and a member of the USM, the University has to respond to several State and System-generated assessment tools, particularly data gathering instruments and surveys. The most noted of these resources is the Maryland Managing for Results (MFR) report. The University uses the MFR to establish its annual and long term goals, and to guide its budgeting process. The Maryland Department of Budget and Management describes the MFR as "a strategic planning, performance measurement, and budgeting process that emphasizes [the] use of resources to achieve measurable results, accountability, efficiency, and continuous improvement in State government programs." The report, sent to the MHEC

and the Department of Budget and Management through the University System of Maryland, addresses the established goals and objectives and the progress or lack of progress of these goals, as well as the trends that have an impact on the achievement of these goals. Specific objectives of concern are also discussed in the report.

Evaluation of Frostburg State University's Institutional Resources

Financial Resources

Frostburg State University's budget is guided by the policies and procedures established by the USM BOR, documented in the Bylaws, Policies and Procedures, and by the goals and objectives of Frostburg State University as well as the USM. The Executive Committee is responsible for the budget with final approval by the BOR on the tuition and fee schedule. The Governor of the State, through the Department of Budget and Management and the Maryland Higher Education Commission, and the State Legislature review, modify and approve the proposed budget for the University System of Maryland and its constituent institutions. The final budget is communicated to Frostburg State University through the same channels.

With the budget established and approved, the responsibility for major decisions regarding the allocation of resources rests with the Executive Committee. The management of the budget is the responsibility of the Office of Vice President for Administration and Finance, while the daily oversight of the different programs' respective budgets is in the hands of the provost, deans and directors, including academic department chairs. Changes had been made in the past few years to allow the budget managers flexibility with their respective budgets, allowing them to work with one account and to apply the funds where needed as long as the mandatory expenses were met appropriately.

The University uses the Maryland Managing for Results (MFR) to establish its annual and long term goals and to guide its budgeting process. Other external assessment tools include audits, the Performance Accountability Report of the Maryland Public Colleges and Universities [Exhibit 1-2], and the Funding Guidelines Peer Performance Analysis [Exhibit 1-3], in which FSU is compared to its peer institutions: Sonoma State University, University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth, SUNY College at Potsdam, California University of Pennsylvania, Winthrop University, Western Connecticut State University, SUNY College at Oneonta, SUNY College at Plattsburgh, East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania, and Western Carolina University. Internal assessment is achieved through the accomplishment of goals set in documents such as the 10-year Facilities Master Plan [Exhibit G-19], the Institutional Plan, the Technology Plan [Exhibit G-20], and the Online Education Plan [Exhibit G-21] or through the correction of a need discovered during assessments completed throughout the year.

Frostburg State University is a fiscally responsible institution, creating a balanced budget every year while setting aside an average of 8% of its funds in a reserve account, more than the mandatory amount of 5%. By setting aside more, the university contributes to the ability of the USM to establish a better bond rating, thereby allowing FSU to borrow at a lower interest rate. By being involved with larger institutions, Frostburg State University has

achieved goals it could not by itself. Frostburg's connection with the University System has allowed it to purchase a new, updated online catalog for the library and subject databases to support the different colleges. The university's relationship with the State of Maryland has assisted in goals in areas such as campus facility improvements. An example of this is the ramp for handicapped students, staff and visitors located between Dunkle Hall and Tawes Hall, funded by Academic Revenue Bonds (ARB).

In 2002, the state of Maryland began to experience the same economic downturn that the rest of the nation experienced and cost containment measures were initiated. Higher education was especially impacted in Maryland. As a result, Frostburg State University, along with all the USM institutions, received the first of several reductions to state appropriations. State appropriations were reduced to 33% of the total fiscal 2006 budget for the institution after being approximately 40% in fiscal year 2002. Severe cost containment measures were implemented during fiscal years 2003 and 2004 to compensate for additional loss of state funding. One of the actions implemented by the university was a tuition increase of 13% in fiscal year 2004, an increase comparable to that of other USM institutions. A complete list of the cost containment measures can be found in the MFR Narrative, Frostburg State University, June 25, 2003 and MFR Narrative, Frostburg State University, June 25, 2004. In FY2004, for the first time in its history, the university received more in tuition and fee revenue than it received in state appropriations, with the tuition and fees contributing 35% and state appropriations contributing 33%. Because of the financial combination of tuition increases and appropriation decreases, Frostburg State University now relies more on the student than on any other source to raise revenue to balance the budget. Administrators are more aware of the impact of shifting enrollment numbers. As the President pointed out to the Maryland Legislature in her 2006 Legislative Testimony [Exhibit 1-4], "we offer a very good educational program with a resource base significantly below that of most of our peers . . . we are funded at approximately \$2,000 per FTE below the median and over \$2,600 per FTE below our funding guideline goal. In dollars, those comparisons equal a deficiency of nearly \$9 million or nearly \$12 million, respectively. The state is, in sum, getting a good return on its investment at FSU, and we pledge to continue to use our resources wisely and well as you seek the means to stabilize and reinvest in our institutions."

Additional Sources of Revenue

The FSU Foundation

The community of support for the FSU Foundation is wide ranging and includes alumni, faculty, staff, students, friends, businesses and organizations - all interested in supporting and promoting Frostburg State University. The support of programs directly benefiting students has been the underlying theme of the Frostburg State University Foundation, Inc. Since its inception in the early 1970s, the Foundation has been designated to administer private support for Frostburg State University through cash gifts, pledges, real property, gifts-in-kind and planned gifts. The Foundation is registered as a not-for-profit corporation for the stated purpose of supporting the educational mission of Frostburg State University and is recognized by the University System of Maryland Board of Regents as the "named affiliated foundation" for FSU. Annually, gifts and revenue-generating activities to the Foundation exceed \$1 million, and transfers and payments in support of university programs exceed \$750,000.

Endowed assets now total over \$8 million with more than 300 scholarships given annually in addition to endowments supporting programs and activities. The appendix includes a chart showing the growth in the assets of the Foundation.

The Office of Research and Sponsored Programs

The Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP) coordinated the submission of fifty-nine (59) grants that were awarded in FY 2005 at a total sum of \$1,841,509. Two programs that were submitted for funding in FY '05 were delayed in processing and were awarded after the close of the fiscal year. The two programs netted an additional \$681,313. The ORSP also coordinated submissions valued at \$233,906 that were awarded through the Frostburg State University Foundation to comply with funding agencies requirements that the recipient have a 501 (c) (3) designation. Eight proposals submitted in FY '05 with a dollar value of \$412,565 were not acted upon by close of the fiscal year. The target for contract and grant awards in FY 2006 is \$3,000,000.

The Office of Conferences & Events

The Office of Conferences & Events is designed as a revenue stream for Frostburg State University for contracted access to facilities. Summer camps comprise the vast majority of the auxiliary income through this office, which also serves a target market of high school students primarily from the State of Maryland, and presents a positive first impression of campus life. In 2005, total revenue from all Conferences billings generated for room, board, facilities and other services was \$1,004,100. This summer lineup includes Maryland Girls State, Coach Wootten's Basketball Camp, and approximately 50 groups with 6,709 total overnight guests in the summer of 2005.

Operating Budgets

There is a perception across the campus that the operating budget has not changed in several years. Despite the increase of dollars spent for operations (approximately 18.9 million in FY 1997 to approximately 29.6 million in FY 2005), these expenditures have ranged from 35% to 39% of the budget since fiscal year 1997. While the fiscal managers have more control over their respective budgets than before, there are still the mandatory expenses that must be met before funds can be moved to where they are needed and not used as initially designated.

In order to supplement the support deriving from tuition and state allocations, various Divisions and Departments actively pursue federal and state grants. The Student and Educational Services Division is one area which relies heavily on this type of resource to achieve the student support it gives; this pattern of operation creates some concern. While it is commendable to seek outside sources beyond the established budget to achieve this supportive environment, it is a risk to rely for its achievement on a soft income that could disappear and no longer support the programs that may be the main or only reason why some students graduate.

Recommendation 1.4: The University should determine those activities within grant-funded programs that are most integral to the mission, and develop strategies for identifying resources that will enable these programs – and the students they serve – to be supported through regular and reliable funding, in the event that a grant is not renewed.

The reduction in operating budgets has created a particular challenge for planning, as evidenced by an examination of operating budgets over the past five years. While there has been growth in the overall budget of the institution, the increases have been directed for the most part to mandated expenses.

OPERATING BUDGETS BY DIVISION

Fiscal Year	2002	2006	% Change
Operating Budget			
Executive	102,119	109,851	7.6%
Recruitment	188,087	237,838	26.5%
FSU Hagerstown Center	367,210	0	N/A
Academic Affairs	6,701,688	6,119,765	-8.7%
Admin. & Fin.	16,349,501	19,367,332	18.5%
Student Services	1,371,686	1,132,881	-17.4%
Univ. Advance.	275,551	239,182	-13.2%
USM Hagerstown	0	(376,000)	N/A
Scholarships	1,858,323	2,740,051	47.4%
Total	27,214,165	29,570,900	8.7%
Percent of Total			
Executive	0.38%	0.37%	0.0%
Recruitment	0.69%	0.80%	0.1%
FSU Hagerstown Center	1.35%	0.00%	N/A
Academic Affairs	24.63%	20.70%	-3.9%
Admin. & Fin.	60.08%	65.49%	5.4%
Student Services	5.04%	3.83%	-1.2%
Univ. Advance.	1.01%	0.81%	-0.2%
USM Hagerstown	0.00%	-1.27%	N/A
Scholarships	6.83%	9.27%	2.4%
Total	100.00%	100.00%	0.0%

In the table above, the budget shown for FY 2002 was the original budget prior to cost containment measures mandated by the State of Maryland that began in October 2001. This table illustrates that the reductions to divisions' operating budgets during fiscal years 2002, 2003, and 2004 have not been restored. Mandatory increases in expenses such as fuel and utility costs and academic revenue bond payments are budgeted and expensed from the Administration and Finance division.

Recommendation 1.5: The University should systematically assess the impact that cost-containment measures have had on departments and offices. A plan, consistent with university priorities, should be developed to restore funding to these areas.

Human Resources

“The best resource we have is our people.” This comment, made during an interview with a senior administrator, reflects the sentiment of most. Human resources at Frostburg State University are definitely a strength in terms of quality and a weakness in terms of quantity. At FSU, we have administrators, faculty, and staff who are qualified, talented, capable, loyal, and long-term.

Prior to initiating any paperwork for a search, the department seeking to fill a vacancy must assure that (1) funds are available for the position; and (2) if the position is a regular benefited position, that the Executive Committee has approved the PIN or Position Identification Number. At this point, written approval must be submitted to the Office of Human Resources stating that funds are available and that the Executive Committee has authorized a PIN for the position, if applicable.

The table below shows the actual breakdown of the number of Frostburg State University employees with permanent, benefited positions (PINS) by type of position.

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Teaching Faculty	231	230	227	233	234	235	235
Non-Teaching Fac.			10	10	10	8	10
Exempt	135	138.0	139	147	147	142	155
Non-Ex.	291.5	289.5	281.5	290.5	282.5	266.5	254.5
	657.5	657.5	657.5	680.5	673.5	651.5	654.5

The numbers are stable within each category until FY04, when the University was forced to turn back 22 PINS to the State. During this period, state appropriations were significantly reduced, resulting in a hiring freeze and layoffs. As the President stated in her 2006 legislative testimony to the Maryland State Legislature, the University placed its highest priority on retaining personnel directly responsible for instruction. As a result, most of the PINS were taken from non-instructional positions, leaving some support units severely short staffed.

Some offices have yet to recover from the impact of the PIN reversions to the State. To continue to provide basic services, many directors were forced to fill vacancies by employing contingent employees. These positions were funded out of departmental operating budgets. Although this approach enabled offices to meet the needs of students, operating budgets have remained severely depleted.

According to the institution’s 10-year Facilities Master Plan prepared in 2001, the University had a staff to faculty ratio of 1.8, which is overly efficient compared to our ideal benchmark

of 2.25 and the actual ratio of 2.5 for the USM. Our goal, as projected in the Master Plan, is to achieve a ratio of 2.1 in 2011. It is apparent that we are balancing efficiency with reasonable workload. The employee group where the shortfall is most evident is the administration. As a result, many faculty members are performing administrative roles. This is a problem given the current state-mandated Faculty Workload Policy, which has set the average faculty workload at 7.5 course load/ year for 2005.

In response to the increasing need for additional technical support, the institution has created several new positions and hired new staff in the Department of Information Technology during the past three fiscal years. The majority of the new staff was hired to provide administrative and programming support for the implementation of PeopleSoft, the new administrative and academic data management system for the University. The department itself was created in 2004 by combining three administrative technology related units into one for efficiency, and in 2005, a new position was created for a Chief Information Officer with an internal appointment. Administrators in the University's technology centers note that it is difficult to recruit highly specialized people in information technology, the sciences, and engineering. In addition to its remote location in an isolated and economically depressed part of the state, the institution, like most academic institutions, cannot compete with the salaries paid to information technology experts in industry or the corporate environment. Many of the technology staff employed by the University are the product of the University, educated and trained internally.

Often, what can be a benefit can also be a challenge. Frostburg State University exceeds all other USM institutions when comparing long-term employment, with an average number of 18 years for longevity, 5 more than the next state institution. Administration, faculty, and staff like it here, they work hard, and they take pride in what they do. Faculty rank is also high with approximately 40% of faculty full Professors. The longevity of our employees positively manifests itself in institutional giving because "relationships with people are critical to raising money." The Division of University Advancement is identifying recently retired faculty from various colleges to work contractually to contact prospective donors among the alumni. A number of these retirees have also returned to teach on a contractual basis. Ironically, this longevity can also be a concern. The Office of Human Resources (HR) has been working on "succession planning," since we have a significant number of administrators, faculty, and staff who are close to retirement.

In spring 2004, the Department of Human Resources completed the University's first collective bargaining agreement with non-exempt employees (those employees who are not exempt from the Fair Labor laws) represented by the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) [Exhibit G-22a]. Exempt (or salaried) employees also ratified a Memo of Understanding (MOU) with AFSCME later that same year [Exhibit G-22b]. The process of adopting an agreement and the overall relationship between union officials and University management has remained positive. Wages, merit pay, employee benefits and other issues that require BOR involvement are bargained for collectively by a coalition of AFSCME members from several USM institutions. The university police are represented by the Maryland Classified Employee Association (MCEA) [Exhibit G-23]. When asked on the 2005 staff survey whether collective bargaining has had a positive impact on the campus community, 22% of the staff affirmed that it has, while 43% disagreed.

As is true for all public colleges and universities, Frostburg State University's employment policies and practices are regulated by state and/or BOR decisions. Following a period of several years of austerity that included hiring freezes and furloughs, the State was finally able to approve cost of living and merit increases for state employees in the 2004 and 2005 fiscal years. In fall 2004, the President commissioned the Office of Human Resources to conduct a thorough equity study of administrative salaries [Exhibit 1-6], recognizing that the restricted resources and frozen salaries of the past years had almost certainly yielded some major deficiencies in the salaries of some staff. That report was reviewed by the Executive Committee in March and adjustments in those salaries that are farthest off the mark were made for Fiscal 2006.

In October 2004, the BOR approved a decision that all USM contingent level II employees of more than three years must be converted to Regular Status or permanent positions. As a result, several long-time contingent employees at Frostburg State University were finally able to receive employee benefits. On the other hand, administrators were faced with having to forego the hope of increasing a staff that is already overly efficient by using available PINs and personnel funds to cover the conversion. Frostburg State University's Executive Committee reevaluated the institution's policies related to contingent hiring and issued a new policy in February 2005 that limits the hiring of Category II Contingent employees. As a general rule, the policy states that new vacancies will be filled by regular status (PIN) positions and temporary employment needs shall be addressed by Contingent Category I positions only.

Technology

Technology services and equipment have risen from a small but important part of the infrastructure and budget in the early 1990's to an integral part of the daily functioning of almost all offices at FSU. The Board of Regents has had a significant influence on elevating technology initiatives throughout the USM and Frostburg State University. In January 2000, the BOR adopted a resolution on technological fluency to ensure that "all graduates of USM institutions are information technology fluent, commensurate with the needs of the marketplace in their chosen majors and/or career choices." This was followed in April 2000 with the University System of Maryland Minimum Information Technology Standard [Exhibit G-20a] to ensure that each institution provide students with a minimum level of information technology proficiency.

To assist institutions in implementing these standards, the BOR established a student technology fee for all USM institutions in fiscal year 2003. Several stipulations were included to ensure that the funds were used as intended. The revenue from the technology fee for the past three years and the projection for the current year are as follows:

2003 Actual: \$621,985
2004 Actual: \$623,979
2005 Actual: \$606,338
2006 Budget: \$667,040

In academic year 2003 - 2004 major technology improvements were completed. These improvements include: upgrading the university's e-mail system, providing greater capacity, security and protection against viruses; improving Web-based student registration and course scheduling applications; controlling peer-to-peer file sharing on campus and copyright violations; installing new web-based software for event scheduling and reserving university vehicles; and establishing the University's first-ever wireless internet networks in the Compton Science Center and Edgewood Commons student apartments.

The University also began the implementation of PeopleSoft (PS), a data management software system to be used by all administrative and academic offices on campus. It was estimated that the implementation of PeopleSoft alone cost a minimum of \$1 million a year over a three-year period. As noted earlier, several new positions and new staff were hired in the recently reorganized Department of Information Technology to provide administrative and programming support for the PS implementation. One of the effects of converting to PS is the need for academic and administrative departmental managers to maintain in-house data files to track their own local financial commitments and expenditures, resulting in an increase in the workload of an already overly efficient staff.

Information technology improvements in AY 2004-2005 include upgrades to student computer labs, the completion of PeopleSoft's student administration and university advancement modules, implementation of single sign-on access to the University's computer network, and the launching of a new on campus e-mail system and antivirus control software in the residence halls. In AY 2005-2006, improvements and upgrades were focused on initiatives such as an electronic billing solution for students, a Digital Music and Video Service for our on-campus students, an upgrade to the university's online learning system (Blackboard) which enabled advanced integration capabilities with PeopleSoft and single sign-on, and further expansion of our wireless on-campus network.

All University technology fund expenditures are made through a deliberative process that includes students, faculty, and administrators. Expenditures are guided by the University's Technology Plan [Exhibit G-20], which is formulated by the Technology Advisory Group (TAG), a campus-wide committee that includes faculty, staff, and student representation. The President's Cabinet, whose membership includes the President of the Student Government Association, must approve this three-year plan. In the spring of each year, TAG makes specific recommendations regarding the expenditure of technology funds for the next fiscal year. These recommendations are forwarded to the Provost and Vice President for Administration and Finance who, in consultation with the other vice presidents, create the University's technology budget. Final decisions regarding the expenditure of all technology funds rest with the President.

Students and faculty have access to a rich computing environment that includes a 24-hour/7 day-a-week lab and specialized department labs housed in various campus buildings as well as in the main University Computer Center. The Center offers Apple, Windows, and SUN workstations connected to the campus network and the Internet; scanning and printing facilities; standard software including word processing, spreadsheets, Internet browsers,

email, programming languages, graphics production; and access to statistics packages and database programs through academic servers.

The results of the student and faculty surveys conducted as a part of the self-study indicate that, in general, both groups are satisfied with the availability and quality of technology-related hardware and software on campus. However, in the free responses included with the survey, a significant number of students criticized the dependability of the campus network and the University's decision to limit available bandwidth for students. Measures taken to better detect and remediate viruses have significantly stabilized the network providing a dependable technical environment for the entire University. Another recurring concern identified during the interviews with university officials and in the free responses received in the surveys focused on the critical need for additional staff to support specific technology needs: staff to organize, teach, and exhibit the uses of technology and staff to resolve technology problems.

Facilities

The University buildings and grounds, set on 260 acres, make learning, living and working on the Frostburg campus a special pleasure. Nature easily enters into the daily lives of students: buildings are set around grassy quads; varieties of plants and the surrounding woods change with the seasons. An overwhelming majority of faculty and students agreed in the self-study surveys that the facilities and campus environment are well maintained and that security and safety measures across the campus are adequate. Most student services offices — Admissions and Financial Aid, the Registrar, University and Student Billing, Graduate Admissions and Services, Programs for Academic Support and Studies (P.A.S.S.), Disability Support Services, and Student Support Services — are centralized in one building to maximize efficiency and easy access for students.

Every ten years, the university is required to develop a master plan for the next decade with an update in five years. In November of 2002, the Board of Regents approved the university's latest 10-year Facilities Master Plan and Utility Infrastructure Analysis. This master plan focuses on a maturing campus emphasizing the quality of the learning environment. In 1994, the university opened the Performing Arts Center providing a state-of-the-art facility to serve not just the campus but also the surrounding community. Recent development at the university has focused on science and technology as evidenced by the renovation of Gunter Hall in 2002 and the opening of the new Compton Science Center in 2003. The university spent \$6.8 million to equip both of these facilities with modern equipment. As a result, FSU has the latest technology in specialized departmental labs, science facilities including a planetarium, greenhouse, live animal rooms, centrifuge, herbarium, arboretum, biotechnology center and electron microscope. Future plans include demolishing Tawes Hall and replacing it with a building constructed specifically to co-locate computer science, graphic design, mass communication, and the radio and television stations in one modern facility.

The University continues to work with Allegany County to attract companies to the 53-acre technology park being developed on our campus. Infrastructure has been installed, with the assistance of \$1.3 million in federal and state funding. The Appalachian Laboratory of the USM Center for Environmental Studies is considered the first tenant in the technology park.

It provides research facilities for FSU students and faculty, as will future occupants in the new research park. There are currently five external companies and government agencies located in Tawes Hall that could potentially relocate to the technology park.

In recent years, the university has developed and improved auxiliary facilities. Edgewood Commons, a privately owned 400-bed apartment-style complex, opened in fall 2003. In addition to these 400 beds, the university has approximately 1,700 beds in its own residence halls. This provides on campus housing to nearly 50% of undergraduate students. In recent years, the University has spent over \$1 million for significant improvements to residence halls. The University's ten-year contract with Aramark, its food service provider, includes a commitment to upgrade the food service facilities on campus. During the summer of 2004, Aramark provided \$1.2 million for renovations to the Chesapeake Dining Hall and a new food court in the Lane University Center. Architects will begin the design phase of a major renovation to the Lane University Center in July 2006 with construction to begin the summer of 2007.

With over 12% of undergraduate students involved in intercollegiate athletics, the University continues to develop facilities to support athletics. The university has begun to upgrade the football stadium to become a multi-sport facility to compensate for the limited space on campus for level playing fields. Lights were recently added to the stadium to facilitate its use in the evenings by intramural sports programs, regular students, and the community. The stadium will soon be covered with artificial turf allowing men's and women's soccer, men's and women's track and field, lacrosse and football to use one field.

A direct result of cost containment reductions in 2002 through 2004 was budget reductions in facilities renewal. In spite of cutting \$178,000 in FY2002 and \$200,000 in FY2004, the university has been successful in maintaining its commitment to facilities renewal. The Board of Regents recently passed a new policy on facilities renewal that requires USM institutions to spend 2% of the replacement value of all institutional capital assets. In FY2005, Frostburg State University spent 1.3% of this replacement value, the highest percentage of the USM institutions. Even with the achievements made to facilities, the university is not without challenges. Of the 40 major building structures on campus, 24 are over thirty years old and do not lend themselves to renovations. A majority of our buildings are relatively small, one to two-story structures. They should be replaced with taller buildings that could be placed in the same location but have more floors. Because we are part of a state system, securing funding is a long and uncertain process. The building requested to replace Tawes Hall has been pushed back once again in the state's capital budget, from 2008 to 2011. This delay could have a negative impact on recruitment and will postpone the University's ability to provide a state-of-the art facility for academic departments (such as mass communication, computer science and graphic design) that rely heavily on technology. Due to rising energy costs, the university is looking to improve its energy management program to reduce both costs and consumption. FSU recently joined the other USM institutions in a contract to purchase natural gas and electricity. The Board of Regents is currently requiring new residence halls to be built using private funding. While this removes the burden of loan re-payment, it also eliminates a major revenue source.

CHAPTER TWO

GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

Standards 4-6

Governance

Frostburg State University has been a member of the University System of Maryland (USM), the nation's 12th largest university system, since 1988. The Board of Regents, appointed by the Governor, is responsible, with the assistance of the Chancellor of the USM, for the general oversight of the eleven campuses within the University System of Maryland and its two research institutions. Both the Regents and the Chancellor are advocates for system institutions and recently have been effective in establishing positive relationships with legislators. The University is also overseen by the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC). While the University's budget is determined by the Board of Regents, its mission and new academic programs are approved by MHEC.

In addition to establishing broad policies that govern the constituent institutions of the University System, the Regents have recently mandated a number of goals that are more specific or prescriptive: e.g., attain no less than an average faculty workload of 7.5 courses for FSU and other comprehensive institutions in the System; require that, on average, at least 12 credits be earned outside a regular classroom setting (for freshmen entering in the fall of 2005); restrict graduation requirements to 120 credits except where licensure is required. These initiatives reflect the Regents' concern with the growing number of high school graduates in Maryland and the capacity of the System to accommodate them. Most of the initiatives are directed toward building capacity and reducing time to degree.

The major influence of Maryland's legislature on FSU is in its review of the budget of the University System of Maryland submitted by the Chancellor. Each spring the FSU president testifies before committees within both houses of the legislature. Her testimony is made available to the University community on the FSU website and is often summarized at the President's Spring Convocation.

The president works with an appointed Board of Visitors. This advisory group, comprised of fourteen professionals from the local area and the state, meets twice a year (once per semester) to discuss issues involving the campus and the community. They are required by law to submit an annual report [Exhibit G-13] on Oct. 1, evaluating FSU's progress and the leadership of the president. Its annual report is distributed to members of the Board of Regents, the Chancellor, selected leaders within the Maryland legislature, and the Governor.

The governance system at FSU has experienced some changes since our last self-study in 1996 and subsequent periodic review report in 2001. The Staff Senate, an active governing body representing the staff at Frostburg State University, was dissolved in 2002, as eligible University staff voted to implement a collective bargaining (union) agent on campus.

Shared Governance

For most of the past decade, Frostburg State University operated with three major governing bodies that represented the faculty, the staff and the students: the Faculty Senate, the former Staff Senate, and the Student Government Association (SGA), respectively. Each of the campus governing bodies adheres to strict by-laws in making certain their designated constituents are well represented and given a voice on the FSU campus. Two additional bodies serve to advise the President: the President's Cabinet gathers to discuss strategic planning and institutional priorities and the President's Student Advisory Council (PSAC), an assembly of student leaders representing major student organizations, meets on a regular basis with the Executive Committee to exchange information and hear concerns of special importance to students.

Faculty Governance

Both tenured and tenure-track faculty are invited to participate in the Faculty Senate, led by a chair who is elected by the faculty at large. The current structure consists of 25 elected faculty senators represented among the three University colleges and the library (librarians were acknowledged as faculty in 2002) plus three Council of University System Faculty (CUSF, a USM-wide committee) representatives, the CUSF alternate, the Chair of the Graduate Council, and the Chair of the Chairs' Council. A long roster of committees, subcommittees, and advisory groups (found in the *FSU Faculty Handbook* [Exhibit G-18]) includes a total of over 90 positions in faculty governance. Many faculty serve on two or more committees. These committees focus on issues such as curriculum, promotion and tenure, sabbatical leaves, faculty development, institutional priorities, and faculty concerns. Faculty self-nominate, and the seats for the committees are awarded as the result of elections held near the end of spring semester.

The monthly meetings of the Faculty Senate (eight per year) and Faculty Assemblies (three per year) are open to all full-time and part-time faculty. Those in attendance are encouraged to express their views on proposals before the Senate or at Assemblies. Questions may also be addressed to attending administrators (including the president, provost, deans, and vice presidents). A Faculty Senate newsletter, distributed to all faculty once a month prior to the next Senate meeting, gives a detailed report of the Senate's actions and happenings.

Following the formal Senate meetings, the chair of the Faculty Senate forwards to the president the recommendations of the Senate. In a timely manner, the president reviews the recommendations and advises the Faculty Senate chair of her decisions. If the decision is to withhold approval, the president provides the Senate chair with the reasons for her decision and offers to meet with appropriate faculty to explain those reasons, if the faculty so desire. Faculty members serving on the Senate have consistently commented on the extent of the Senate's authority for curriculum development. While the Senate is formally identified as advisory to the President, Senate leaders have noted that the President has consistently approved proposals for curricular changes.

The importance of involving new faculty in campus governance is an issue that has been identified by both administrators and faculty leaders. With the demands of teaching and research initiatives, there is a sense among new faculty that governance matters are either not

needed or too time consuming. The steering committee believes that the governance system benefits from the perspectives of faculty members who are relatively new to the University.

Recommendation 2.1: Greater efforts should be made by current faculty leaders to encourage the active involvement of more faculty in the governance system of the University.

The need to introduce much greater accountability for the work of administrative and Faculty Senate task groups has been noted by the steering committee. Such groups, which usually include a significant number of faculty members, are often assigned the responsibility to coordinate efforts to address University priorities, such as improving retention. While the major governance committees of the Faculty Senate are expected to produce annual reports that receive wide distribution on campus, there has not been a systematic or consistent process in place to ensure that these task groups are functioning effectively.

Student Government Association

The Student Government Association (SGA) serves as the official body representing the students of Frostburg State University. The leadership is elected by the student body. Open meetings are held bi-weekly for the campus to raise issues and discuss concerns and take action on various student-related topics and policies.

The SGA also meets with senior administrators to talk about specific issues. SGA representatives also serve alongside key administrators on various campus committees (such as President's Advisory Committee on Diversity, Academic Standards or certain employee search committees). The 2004-2005 president of FSU's SGA noted that "the student voice has never been undermined or ignored. I could never express how great I believe our shared governance is at Frostburg, especially after working with other schools and hearing their complaints."

Although student government leaders have consistently reported a very positive relationship with administrators, the steering committee notes that many students are not aware of the efforts made to solicit student views and the opportunities to serve on various committees within the governance system. In response to the statement on the student survey, "My opinions on matters relating to university policy and procedures are sought and heard," only 41.3% of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed. While a relatively small percentage (16.6%) disagreed or strongly disagreed, the greatest number of students (42.1%) either chose to not answer the question or indicated that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement.

One of the most important functions of the Student Government Association is the allocation of student activity fees to student organizations. In spite of the autonomy that SGA has in carrying out this task, only 27.3% of the survey respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the statement, "Students have sufficient input into the allocation of student fees." This fact, together with the very small percentage of students who have voted in recent elections for the

SGA president, would suggest that the student body is largely unaware of the important role played by SGA members in making decisions about the allocation of student activity fees.

Since they do not pay a student activity fee, graduate students do not have representation on the Student Government Association; however, they voice their concerns to FSU's Graduate Council or their individual graduate program coordinators.

Recommendation 2.2: University leaders should collaborate with the Student Government Association to increase student awareness of the role of SGA, its authority for the allocation of student activity fees, and the educational benefits of participation. In addition, the opportunities for student involvement in governance committees should be more effectively communicated to the student body.

The Former Staff Senate/the Introduction of Collective Bargaining

Until 2002, the Staff Senate represented all non-faculty employees of the University, excluding associate vice presidents, academic deans, and officers. Members of the Senate were elected by the employees to represent five major divisions: the Office of the President, Administration and Finance, Academic Affairs, Student and Educational Services, and University Advancement. The group met with senior administrators to discuss issues of common concern. The chair of the Staff Senate served as a member of Cabinet, met with the University president and shared concerns of the staff.

Since the introduction of a collective bargaining unit for exempt staff at FSU, the Senate was dissolved. All issues are handled through the channels outlined in the official Memo of Understanding (MOU) [Exhibit G-22,23] agreed upon by both the University and the bargaining agent. Due to the strict guidelines of the MOU, there is no union representation on the President's Cabinet.

As a result of the advent of collective bargaining in 2002, FSU no longer has a Staff Senate. All employee groups – exempt, non-exempt, and police – are represented by bargaining units. Employees excluded from bargaining units (those classified as managerial, supervisory or confidential) are represented on the Council of University System Staff (CUSS). In an effort to compensate for the dissolution of the Staff Senate, excluded employees are invited to participate in open agenda meetings with the president; these meetings occur at least once a year.

As a result of the dissolution of the Staff Senate and the introduction of collective bargaining, the FSU president was required to terminate some interactions with FSU staff members. In the past, the president would hold breakfast meetings for members of the maintenance staff or afternoon teas with members of the secretarial and clerical staffs. The purpose of these meetings was to hear employees' concerns and provide them an opportunity for informal interaction with senior officials. Notes were taken at the meetings and issues were passed on to the appropriate vice presidents. The collective bargaining MOU does not allow for informal meetings such as these. According to the president, some staff members have shared how they miss the personal interaction with senior officials and how the meetings brought

about quick results to concerns and issues that would arise in these meetings. As one survey noted, “Many aspects of shared governance are [now] negotiated rather than discussed.”

Leadership

Despite the recent budget reductions by the State of Maryland, the administrative leadership at FSU has continued to move the institution forward with new projects (including new capital projects) and new academic initiatives. President Gira has been particularly effective in forming strong relationships with the regents, the system staff, and a great many legislators. Her leadership at the system level has been acknowledged in a variety of ways, including serving a three-year term (2002-2004) as chair of the Council of University System of Maryland Presidents, a group that advises the USM Chancellor. She also served as a key member of the system-wide “E & E” (Efficiency and Effectiveness) Committee, which examined programs, policies, and practices at all USM universities to determine ways to be more resourceful. Initiatives from this group include a call for increased collaboration among the system institutions.

Dr. Gira has been particularly focused on exploring ways to increase the contribution that the University can make to the economic development of this region. This topic is fully explored in the special emphasis of this self-study (Chapter Eight, *The University and the Community*). In addition, she has worked tirelessly to secure the funding for a new Center for Communications and Instructional Technology.

In addition to having strong representation on a variety of system committees (e.g., the Provost served as a member of the Tuition Task Force appointed by the Chancellor), senior administrators have been strongly encouraged to serve in various leadership roles on the county, state, and national level. Examples include recent or current service on Leadership Allegany, Leadership Maryland, the Maryland Humanities Council, the Board of Trustees of the Western Maryland Health System, and the Maryland Chamber of Commerce.

Evaluation of Institutional Leadership

The president receives an annual evaluation from the Chancellor of the USM System. Board of Regents policy (VII-5.00) states: “The [USM] Board [of Regents] shall evaluate annually the performance of the Chancellor and charges the Chancellor with the responsibility to annually evaluate the constituent presidents. The Policy also designates a select committee of the Board to conduct the Chancellor’s evaluation and to work with the Chancellor in reviewing the president’s evaluations.” The president also receives yearly evaluations by the faculty through a process developed by the Faculty Senate.

The provost, vice presidents, and deans are evaluated annually through the Performance Management Process (PMP) which focuses on specific objectives for the year. The provost and vice presidents meet with the president to assess their performance over the past year, while the deans are evaluated by the Provost. Administrators can receive one of five ratings from “outstanding” to “unsatisfactory” on a range of topics including planning, leadership, decision-making and others. A complete overview of the administrative evaluation system is available in the *FSU Employee Handbook*.

The provost and deans also receive yearly evaluations by the faculty through the Faculty Senate. The provost, deans, vice presidents and all administrative directors may also be evaluated by those they directly supervise through the Manager Feedback Form, administered by the Office of Human Resources.

Administration

The administrative structure at Frostburg State University currently includes five divisions: Office of the President, Academic Affairs, Student and Educational Services, Administration and Finance, and University Advancement. The former division of Enrollment Management (the offices of Admissions and Financial Aid) was temporarily incorporated into Administration and Finance following the resignation of the Vice President for Enrollment Management in spring 2005. The University's Executive Committee is composed of the President, the Provost, the Vice President for Administration, Finance, and Enrollment Management, the Vice President for Student and Educational Services, and the Vice President for University Advancement. A current organizational chart of the University is included in the Appendix.

There have also been several personnel changes in key leadership roles in the past ten years, including a new provost, new deans and vice presidents, and the addition of several associate and assistant deans within the colleges. The previous four "schools" of the University (Arts and Humanities, Natural and Social Sciences, Education, and Business) were restructured and renamed as three "colleges" (Liberal Arts and Sciences, Education, and Business). A new academic structure called the Division of Performing Arts (encompassing the majors of Communication Studies, Dance, Music, and Theatre) was established within the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

A fundamental element identified in *Characteristics of Excellence* calls for "periodic assessment of the effectiveness of administrative structures and services." In spring 2004, the Board of Regents developed the "USM Institutional Strength Index" to measure the performance, productivity, and financial strength of USM institutions. The Board of Regents staff compared data for each USM institution and compared the results with the average of that institution's peer group. The percentage of scores that were identified as being consistent with peer groups were calculated for each institution; the average for all USM institutions was 37.6%, with Frostburg State having the highest rating at 83.3%. The Board of Regents identified this as a "sign of balance and even, steady, solid management." This report is available in the exhibits [Exhibit 2-1].

In *Characteristics of Excellence*, the Middle States Commission asserts that the "administrative staff should work effectively as a team and work cooperatively with other constituencies of the institution." The HERI survey of faculty revealed potential concerns in this area. In this survey, only 43.4% of faculty described their "relationship with administration" as satisfactory. This figure compares with 54.6% of faculty at other public four-year institutions.

Recommendation 2.3: The University should further investigate what factors are contributing to a minority of faculty describing their relationship with the administration as satisfactory. For example, serious consideration should be given to providing faculty members an opportunity to evaluate all senior administrators. The results of such evaluations may provide further insight into the nature of faculty concerns and an opportunity to address them in a constructive manner. The evaluation process should be designed to distinguish substantive concerns from those that focus on style or personality.

Department/Division Chairs

Concern was voiced over the election and lack of authority of chairs. At present, chairs are elected by the faculty in their respective departments with approval of the Dean and/or Provost and are not appointed by the dean (See *Faculty Handbook, Department Chair Policies and Procedures, Supplementary Procedures, April 12, 1988*). In some cases, chairs end up with no power because the faculty can vote them out or request that the dean conduct an election. Chairs are also evaluated for merit (75%) by their respective evaluation unit. Therefore, chairs must run their department by consensus, which can be a challenge in fractious departments.

Chair compensation has not changed in many years. Chairs receive a financial compensation of \$1,000 per academic semester and \$1,400 for summer (totaling \$3,400). They also receive course release time – one course per semester (the chair of a department with 12 or more faculty receive two course releases per semester). In smaller departments, the release time often cannot be taken by the chair. Chairs can receive special merit pay increases (\$400 to \$800, depending on performance evaluations), if the monies are available. Many years, it is not.

In light of the decentralization of many activities (from purchasing to scheduling of classes), and increased requirements for reporting and assessment, the workload of chairs has significantly increased. In many departments, finding faculty who are willing to assume the position of department chair is problematic.

Recommendation 2.4: The Provost should conduct a formal review of the chairs' role, compensation, contract, appointment, and evaluation in order to more clearly define the position of the chair.

Integrity

FSU has clear policies regarding integrity and ethical behavior in the workplace. Standards governing ethical behavior, professionalism, and the academic integrity of classroom teaching and administrative offices are published in the *Faculty Handbook* and *Employee Handbook* [Exhibit G-24].

One of the measures of integrity is the confidence that constituents have in the procedures in place to deal with potentially difficult issues, such as the promotion and tenure of faculty or

student grievances. Survey results in this area are positive. In responding to the statement on the HERI survey, “The criteria for advancement and promotion decisions are clear,” 86.6% of the respondents indicated that they agree “strongly” or “somewhat.” This was in contrast to only 69.3% of faculty at all public four-year colleges and universities completing the survey. Students also responded in a positive manner to a statement included in their survey: “The University has policies and procedures than can address my complaints or grievances.” Only 9.6% of students disagreed with this statement, while close to sixty percent (57.9%) either agreed or strongly agreed, with the remaining students not expressing an opinion.

The steering committee found that faculty members are able to appeal or file grievances to the appropriate faculty committees and to the administration when warranted. The Faculty Concerns Committee constantly reassesses policies and procedures, especially when procedural questions arise out of individual cases. The Committee’s recommendations for revision are discussed and voted upon at the Faculty Senate. Once approved by the faculty and the administration, these revisions are sent to the USM for review when necessary and then, in some instances, to the Office of the Attorney General for legal sufficiency.

Academic Freedom

Frostburg State University’s policy on academic freedom is linked with the University System of Maryland’s Statement on Academic Freedom, Renewal and Tenure. The policy is outlined in the Faculty Handbook. The policy views academic freedom as essential to teaching and research. Freedom in research is important for advancing the truth, and freedom in teaching is crucial for protecting the rights of faculty in teaching and of student learning. Academic freedom and responsibility apply to tenure, full-time tenure-track, part-time faculty, and teaching assistants who teach in the university.

Diversity

In 1996, the Middle States visiting team commended the FSU administration and leadership for its efforts in creating diverse programming and a climate that fosters diversity. FSU continues to note the importance of diversity in its institutional priorities. In the University’s Mission Statement, FSU emphasizes its “culturally and ethnically diverse student population and faculty and staff.” Surveys of the faculty conducted for this self-study have echoed FSU’s commitment to diversity in its mission statement. In free responses, many faculty members praised the University for its diverse student body and named it as a strength for this rural institution.

While the University’s success in recruiting minority students will be discussed later in this study, the responses of both students and faculty on various surveys administered emphasize that Frostburg State University has appropriately communicated the value it places on diversity to the campus community. The campus-designed survey asked students to respond to the following statement, “Faculty members demonstrate a respect for a range of backgrounds, ideas, and perspectives in my classes.” Almost 82% of students strongly agreed or agreed with the statement, while only 4.4% strongly disagreed or disagreed. Another 13.7% of the students chose not to register an opinion.

There were two items on the National Survey of Student Engagement that provide some insight into issues of campus climate. Students were asked to identify how often (on a scale where 1= never, 2 = sometimes, 3 = often, 4 = very often) they have “had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity than your own.” The mean for first-year students at FSU was 2.74, while the mean for first-year students at selected peers was 2.47, a difference that was identified in the NSSE Institutional Report [Exhibit G-9] as statistically significant at the highest level. Similarly, first-year students reported that they had often (mean = 2.83) “had serious conversations with students who are very different from you in terms of their religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values.” The mean for first-year students at peer institutions was 2.66, a difference that NSSE reported to be statistically significant. The mean for FSU students responding to both of these items was higher than the mean at peer institutions; however, the difference was not identified to be significant.

		FSU	Selected Peers
Had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity than your own	First-year	2.74	2.47 ***
	Senior	2.64	2.59
Had serious conversations with students who are very different from you in terms of their religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values	First-year	2.83	2.66 *
	Senior	2.82	2.69

National Survey of Student Engagement, 2005

* p < .05 *** p < .001 (2-tailed)

For students, issues of ethics and integrity are clearly outlined in the FSU student handbook, the *Pathfinder* [Exhibit G-25], under the section “University Standards of Personal and Group Conduct.” Topics covered in this section range from Academic Dishonesty, Computer Dishonesty, Falsification of Information, and Obstruction of the Rights of Others. The *Pathfinder* also outlines judicial process and sanctions for students who do not follow these Codes of Conduct.

FSU continues to attract diverse students to our campus. In fall 2005, minority enrollment was listed as 18.9 % of FSU’s total student body. An examination of the graduation rates of various cohorts reveals a concern about the graduation rates of African-American males. Further study should be conducted to determine some of the factors that are contributing to a considerably lower graduation rate for this group.

To demonstrate the importance of diversity, the president has continued with the President’s Advisory Council on Diversity, which looks at diversity on campus as a whole – including recruitment of students, faculty and staff, and event planning. The Diversity Center on campus continues to serve as a main resource for students of all backgrounds. A strong Black Student Alliance continues to thrive on campus, serving the 12% African-American population on the FSU campus.

Gender and Sexual Orientation

Historically, discussions on this campus regarding diversity have primarily focused on race and ethnicity. During the past several years, members of The President’s Advisory Council on Diversity (PACD) have made concerted efforts to also address issues of gender and sexual

orientation. In November 2005, the PACD sponsored a survey on gender and sexual orientation. The instrument was designed to gauge perceptions of the presence/absence of harassment, ridicule, discrimination based on gender and sexual orientation. While generally those surveyed (faculty, staff, and students) responded positively in regard to the campus climate, those individuals who self-identified as homosexual or bisexual reported a different experience. The steering committee is reviewing the results of the survey. Members of the PACD observe that “there appears to be a need ...for a wider discussion of sexual orientation.” The PACD report observes that such discussion needs “to be consistently and continually integrated into campus life in order to affect students’ development throughout their college careers.” [Exhibit 2-2]

Recruitment of Minority Faculty and Staff

Diversity among administration, faculty, and staff is difficult to achieve, especially in a geographically isolated and relatively mono-cultural area such as western Maryland. Despite the university’s success in attracting minority students, it is very hard to attract African-Americans or other minority faculty or staff to this area because of low salaries and the lack of significant ethnic diversity. Achieving more diversity in the faculty continues to be within the top three goals of the institution, as noted in the list of long and short-term goals. With 77% of the faculty respondents and 75% of the staff answering in the affirmative, both the faculty and staff surveys corroborate the efforts of the institution in actively promoting diversity.

The Office of ADA/EEO continues to monitor University hires, both administrative and academic. FSU is committed to a policy of equal opportunity and to the elimination of discrimination in both education and employment on the basis of race, color, national origin, ethnic background, gender, sexual orientation, age, creed, political or religious opinion or affiliation, disability, veteran’s status or marital status, in conformity with all pertinent federal and state laws on nondiscrimination and equal opportunity. Although the ADA/EEO Office has specific responsibilities to affirmative action and equal opportunity, each office, student, and employee is an essential component in fostering diversity and respect for differences.

CHAPTER THREE

INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT

Standard 7

The study of institutional assessment was approached with the following assumptions: (1) the primary use of assessment should be for institutional improvement; and (2) our goal is to gauge the level of assessment efforts at FSU, determine if those efforts are effective, and make suggestions for improvement. The study focused on evaluating how well current assessment practices measure results and how effectively these results are being used to bring about institutional improvement. We approached the task by developing an assessment model and meeting with representatives of each Middle States workgroup and University division and examining the assessment practices. Over the course of approximately eighteen months, we interviewed employees, managers, department heads, deans and vice presidents.

Methodology

A model of assessment was created that is consistent with the aims of Middle States (that the primary use of assessment should be for institutional improvement) and assessment practices suggested by experts, such as Peggy Maki and Linda Suskie, to guide the group's work. The model includes five phases of the assessment process: (1) establishing goals and outcomes related to the University's mission statement, (2) providing learning opportunities/programs/services, (3) measuring the extent to which the outcomes are achieved, (4) using the results for improvement and decision-making, and (5) reporting these efforts to stakeholders/constituents. This model was also used to gauge the status of assessment at the institution, another aspect of good assessment practice.

The review of assessment at FSU included three dimensions: (1) an examination of the status of assessment for each standard identified in *Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education* using an instrument, the "Conceptual Framework Matrix," [Exhibit 3-1] as a means to systematize the information gathered; (2) the assessment efforts within each major organizational unit of the University, also using the Matrix; (3) an examination of the efforts that have been made to educate faculty and staff about assessment. More detailed information regarding the findings of the study, including a copy of the instrument identified above, may be found in the exhibits.

Assessment of Standards

The Conceptual Framework Matrix was used to establish the status of assessment efforts related to all of the standards within *Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education*, except standard seven. The picture of assessment that emerged from this analysis is that assessment practices are broad-based, have a substantial foundation, and are becoming interlaced with the function of the University. More emphasis needs to be placed on using the results of assessment for institutional improvement. A detailed description and analysis of the assessment activities within each standard is available in the exhibits.

Institutional Level

The Institutional Plan was used to gauge the status of institutional assessment. The goals listed in the Institutional Plan [Exhibit G-12] are interpreted as “institutional objectives” because they seem to be more detailed aspects of the goals. This terminology is consistent with the assessment framework used by practitioners in the field of assessment.

The Institutional Plan identifies goals and outcomes/objectives that are aligned with the University’s mission statement. In addition, the plan specifies strategies to accomplish these objectives/outcomes. The plan would be strengthened by more consistently including elements that are identified as essential to an effective assessment model: quantitative and qualitative measures, data collected to assess performance, factors critical to each outcome achieved, evidence that assessment influenced decision-making, or communication of assessment results to constituents. Including such items will assist in more deeply embedding assessment into the culture of the institution. The focus of our efforts at the institutional level needs to shift from having a list of tasks to be accomplished to being able to articulate how the successful implementation of these strategies has made a difference in the lives of our students, faculty, and staff.

Results of the Middle States surveys of faculty and staff were used to further examine assessment at the institutional level. A majority of faculty and staff who responded to surveys indicated they are aware of the goals of the Institutional Plan (84% and 59%, respectively) and have read the Mission Statement (93% and 76%, respectively); however, only half of the faculty (50%) and less than a third (27%) of the staff believe they have input into the plan, either directly or indirectly. Most faculty (58%) but less than half of the staff (49 %) feel the Institutional Plan directly affects the goals of their departments. In addition, few faculty and staff (14% and 9%, respectively) believe they have input into the assessment of resource allocation, and not many faculty and staff (35% and 18%, respectively) are of the opinion that effective assessment processes are in place to evaluate institutional leadership or governance.

It is important to note that the institution has made a commitment to gather data for the self-study and it is expected these efforts will be continued. In addition to the Faculty Survey mentioned above, the faculty also participated in the 2004-2005 HERI Faculty Survey [Exhibit G-4] to provide some comparison of FSU faculty views to those of other 4-year colleges participating in the survey. FSU students participated in four surveys: two Middle States Student Surveys [Exhibit G-6], one administered to all undergraduate students and another administered to graduate students, a Student Athletes Survey [Exhibit 4-7], administered to all intercollegiate athletics participants, and the National Survey of Student Engagement [Exhibit G-9], administered to freshmen and seniors.

Division Level

The Conceptual Framework Matrix was used to gauge the status of assessment at the division level. The steering committee concluded that assessment is taking hold at the division level. The first two phases of the assessment process are becoming established and should serve as a strong foundation for improving and completing the remaining phases. The focus of most divisional assessment efforts has been on developing and implementing assessment practices at the program/department level.

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Program/Department Level

A comprehensive survey of assessment practices was compiled and administered to the programs/departments of five divisions of the University: Academic Affairs, Administration and Finance, Enrollment Management, Student and Educational Services, and University Advancement. A summary of assessment in each division's programs/departments follows.

Academic Affairs

During the spring 2003 semester, all academic departments submitted descriptive information concerning assessment efforts they had underway. These were compiled in the "Status Report: Assessment Initiatives and Activities" as of May 2003 [Exhibit 3-2]. Considerable progress has been made since then, such as the major revision to the General Education Program and the request by the Provost for all departments to submit learning outcomes for their programs by the end of the 2005 spring semester. The departments within the College of Education have all five phases of the assessment process fully implemented. The departments within the College of Business have made substantial progress toward the first three phases of the assessment model, establishing goals and outcomes, developing learning opportunities, and creating and implementing measures of achievement. Lastly, the numerous departments comprising the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences show much variation in their progress toward assessment. A few have few assessment activities in place, while many others have elements of assessment such as an alumni survey, a capstone course, or standardized testing of seniors. Several departments, notably Psychology, Engineering, Visual Arts, and English have fairly fully developed assessment plans, though it is difficult to tell how or if results are used for improvement and if they are reported to stakeholders.

Academic Affairs also contains a number of support units such as the Library, Center for Teaching Excellence, Office of Information Services and Center for Instructional Technologies. Each of these units has developed a strategic plan that aligns missions, goals, objectives, and outcomes and annually reports measures of achievements [Exhibit 3-3]. However, it is unclear to the Workgroup how these influence decision-making at the unit or division level.

Administration and Finance

Administration and Finance is probably the division most affected by external assessment requirements. The very nature of the work performed, (athletics, budget and planning, facilities, finance, human resources, information technology, and university police), creates the basis for a culture of assessment. Each department is required to prepare and submit a myriad of reports at the institutional, university system, State and Federal levels. Over fifty (50) annual reports, measuring everything from accidents in the workplace to IT help desk requests are prepared by this division. Independent and legislative auditors review financial and related documents on a regular basis. Assessment results are tracked, and policies and procedures as well as allocation of resources are reviewed based upon those results.

Program managers and the vice president of the division completed an Assessment Audit Questionnaire [Exhibit 3-4]. All report that units have stated departmental goals, the goals are measured, and the results are used for decision-making. In addition, all state that assessment

is important. Improving communication, utilizing a more systematic approach to assessment, and better connecting department goals to the institution's strategic plan were suggestions made to improve assessment efforts within the division.

Enrollment Management

The two departments of the Enrollment Management Division (Admissions and Financial Aid) do not have formal, written mission statements or goals that drive decisions. However, historically they evaluate a number of processes in order to recruit more students and award financial aid more equitably. For example, the Admissions Office regularly evaluates Open House procedures and dates, tour guide staff, scholarship awarding, admissions requirements, and correspondence with prospective students. The evaluations are not part of written goals or procedures but are derived from past statistics and the experience of staff members.

The goal of Admissions is to meet the enrollment targets for new students. In addition to setting these targets, the Executive Committee provides general guidelines for the academic profile of the incoming freshman class. The work of the Financial Aid Office is heavily regulated by federal and state laws. The office never formally developed or followed an assessment plan. However, the office informally reviews procedures for making processes as effortless as possible for our students. To demonstrate compliance with federal and state law, the Financial Aid Office is required to submit annual reports to both the Department of Education and the Maryland State Scholarship Commission. The FISAP and the HEGIS reports [Exhibit 3-5] provide data on the numbers of students receiving specific categories of aid. Most of the processes used by the Financial Aid Office are not outcomes of formally written goals; however, the Financial Aid Office frequently evaluates their processes and awarding strategies to meet the needs of students.

Student and Educational Services

All departments within Student and Educational Services (SES) have implemented components of the assessment model. The division has conducted a series of workshops and trainings over the past four years to support increased assessment and evaluation of student services. In addition, the professional staff generally accepts the importance of assessment and expresses supportive beliefs and values toward assessment. Even though there are assessment activities, student service offices do not follow a comprehensive model to guide assessment, according to evidence from several sources, including annual reports, focus groups, and the Student Services Assessment Practices Inventory [Exhibit 3-6]. With the exception of workshop on assessment for professional staff held three years ago, there are few human or fiscal resources dedicated to assessment within the SES division. Typically, the department head or an individual staff member assumes responsibility for departmental assessment activities.

A review of the SES annual report [Exhibit G-28] and other documents indicate that many departments have increased the frequency and type of program assessment over the past several years. Almost all SES departments have implemented components of assessment; most list assessment goals or objectives, and all have student use data. Assessment data are inconsistently used to impact decision-making or influence recommendations for improvement, however.

University Advancement

The programs within University Advancement (Development, Alumni, News and Media, Publications, and WFWM) have developed detailed strategic plans [Exhibit 3-7]. Each program has goals linked to the division mission and lists strategies to achieve the goals. The strategic plans also list assessment measures, though they are not linked specifically to a goal or strategy nor do they contain benchmarks or targets. It was not possible to ascertain from the materials submitted by University Advancement whether data is collected, used for decisions, or reported. It is clear that the division has made an effort to systematize planning and assessment; in doing so, it has fully implemented the first and second phases of the assessment model, which provides a solid foundation for further progress.

Professional Development

There have been substantial professional development efforts to improve faculty and staff understanding of assessment and skills associated with implementing assessment practices. Student and Educational Services can trace the formal discussion of assessment to 2001. There were 30 documented meetings, workshops, or projects related specifically to understanding and improving assessment across the division. In addition, units and staff within the division have engaged in educational efforts such as bringing consultants to campus, attending workshops, completing coursework, or volunteering to participate in assessments of other institutions for external organizations.

Academic Affairs has also aggressively pursued the development of an assessment culture within the division through numerous initiatives, examples of which follow. The format of the program reviews, required by the University System of Maryland and the Maryland Higher Education Commission, was altered four years ago to include a section on outcomes assessment. The Center for Teaching Excellence has sponsored workshops focused on assessment practices for the past two years. There is further discussion of professional development activities that have focused on the assessment of student learning in Chapter Eight, *General Education and Assessment of Student Learning*.

Because assessment is so externally driven in the Administration and Finance Division, it is imperative that employees keep current with practices and regulations. Division employees attend seminars and continuing education courses to ensure that each department within the division meets all compliance requirements at all times and under all circumstances.

Conclusions and Recommendations

As a result of focused and conscientious efforts made by a great many faculty members and administrators, the campus has considerably increased its understanding of how critical assessment is to achieving our mission and institutional improvement. It is clear that if we cannot measure our efforts, if we cannot document our successes and our failures, we cannot ensure that we are fulfilling the mission we have set for ourselves. If we do not tie our outcomes to our mission through proper assessment efforts, we cannot ensure the proper allocation of fiscal and human resources.

The mission of the University is sufficiently clear to serve as a guide for institutional assessment. It sets a broad agenda from which more specific goals and objectives, across all disciplines and administrative units, may be developed.

At the institutional level, the University is currently developing a formal assessment plan. However, this is not to say that effective assessment does not occur. Our findings point to effective assessment efforts across the University. Almost every unit, from the Executive Committee to the individual employee, assesses performance and measures goals and objectives on a regular basis. The problem is that these efforts are inconsistent from one area to another and are often informal.

We found that most units conduct assessment activities and there is evidence that some decisions are based upon those assessments. The assessment methodologies used are mixed, however, ranging from those fully in accord with the formal assessment model (i.e., they “complete the loop of assessment”) to a variety of partial efforts or works in progress. There is also evidence that most faculty and staff feel they have little input into assessment, nor see a relationship between resource allocation and assessment; this attitude may create a challenge for those working toward the creation of a culture of assessment at FSU.

Many departments follow federal, state, USM, accrediting agency mandates, and guidelines that require effective, formal assessment or data upon which critical decisions are made. In general, these areas have the most fully developed assessment efforts. Other areas set internal goals only. In short, assessment, albeit uneven, does occur and in the best cases, departmental strategies and resource allocations are based upon the results of the assessment process. Although formal efforts have not been made in all areas to educate the University on the intrinsic benefits of assessment, the success of strong assessment practices in certain areas should set an example for areas with less effective assessment efforts. When combined with the requirements for assessment mandated by the USM and federal, state, and accrediting agencies, this success encourages development of more formal assessment models across the University.

There is clear evidence that assessment activities are an important part of University practice and are performed on an on-going basis. Unfortunately, due to the lack of a formal assessment plan and the failure to communicate assessment efforts across all levels of the University community, assessment does not sufficiently impact institutional decision-making, improvement, and planning. The following recommendations are offered in an effort to remedy true shortcomings and to address misperceptions that may exist in some quarters:

Recommendation 3.1: Establish a university-wide institutional assessment/planning entity that reports to the president, is part of the governance system, is provided administrative and technical support, and has a dedicated budget for assessment activities and professional development.

Recommendation 3.2: Develop an institutional assessment plan that includes a definition of assessment, and demonstrates a clear linkage between assessment, planning, and resource allocation. Such a plan should serve to educate the campus community about the important contribution that assessment can make towards institutional improvement.

Recommendation 3.3: Coordinate other institutional planning cycles (e.g., at the division or departmental level) with the Institutional Plan to assure continuity of planning and engagement of the University community. Clearly identify how the goals in the Institutional Plan will be assessed.

Frostburg State University has a 20-year history of assessment efforts and has made substantial gains toward expanding and institutionalizing assessment since last reported in the 2001 Middle States Periodic Review Report [Exhibit G-26]. The notion of assessment has extended into most activities of the University. During the past five years the University has gained considerable experience with assessment, particularly – and most importantly – with outcomes assessment. For example, all academic departments have gone through at least one cycle of using Periodic Program Self-Assessment Guidelines [Exhibit 3-8,9] that require documentation of student learning outcomes as an element. As the University engages in systematic institutional assessment, it must make clear and intentional linkages between institutional assessment and the assessment of student learning. For example, an examination of the impact of institutional policies and procedures on student learning should be an integral part of the institutional assessment plan.

To further enhance assessment practices, we need to make institutional assessment a formal process, connected to institutional planning, with clear guidelines and reporting requirements. Existing processes (e.g., program reviews, Department of Budget and Management reports such as Managing For Results, divisional annual reports) should become integral parts of the institutional assessment plan. The assessment process may involve developing a standard tool for reporting, setting annual cycles for submission of reports, and developing an annual report for constituents which includes measured outcomes, established institutional goals, and how assessment led to more effective resource allocation and institutional improvement. For this effort to be successful, University personnel must be appropriately trained and engaged with the process.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE STUDENTS

Standards 8 & 9

The Middle States Commission on Higher Education recognizes the importance of a well-developed student affairs program in assisting students to meet their educational goals. The Commission refers to these student life programs as “Student Support Services”. Since FSU has a Student Support Services office that provides services to low income, first generation students, this self-study chapter will use the label of “student services” to describe the educational and personal support programs at the University. The chapter examines both the student admissions function and the variety of academic and personal support programs available at Frostburg.

The goal of each FSU student service is to enhance the academic and personal development of students. The University has a rich tradition of promoting the personal, academic and social growth of students within the context of the University’s mission. The student service programs respond to student needs and are available to all FSU students.

Most FSU student services are organized within the Division of Student and Educational Services (SES). These services include Residence Life, Career Services, Counseling and Psychological Services, the S.A.F.E. Office, Health Services, Student Support Services, Programs for Academic Support and Studies, Upward Bound, the Regional Math-Science Center, Disability Support Services, Student and Community Involvement, Center for Volunteerism, the Diversity Center, and the Office of the Registrar. The Office of the Vice President for Student and Educational Services coordinates the summer orientation program, judicial programs, and the first-year experience course (Introduction to Higher Education).

Other student services are organized in other divisions within the University. Admissions and Financial Aid were located in the Division of Enrollment Management and are now part of the Division of Administration and Finance, along with Athletics, University Police, Student Billing, and the Children’s Center.

Admissions and Retention

The FSU admissions policies and practices support the University’s mission. The Admissions office seeks to enroll an appropriate number of students who believe that the university is the right fit, that will be successful, that will benefit from their education here, and therefore, who will continue to enroll at FSU until their timely graduation.

More specifically, the goal for the last several years for the Fall semester has been to enroll 1000 freshman while increasing the SAT scores to the national average as well as enrolling 400 transfer students. The current goal is to enroll 1400 new students (transfer and freshmen) for the Fall semester. For the entering freshmen, the target average SAT score is one at or above the national and state averages while the target average high school GPA is at least 3.0.

FSU enrolls students from every Maryland County and thirty different states. A total of 52 international students were enrolled at FSU during the fall 2005 semester. In order to maintain our minority enrollment and meet the goals of Maryland's partnership agreement with the Office of Civil Rights [Exhibit 4-1], which is to "maintain the percentage of African-American undergraduates at 12.6% through 2005," the Admissions office uses specific strategies, including having a diverse staff and sponsoring bus trips for high school students from targeted areas. The University continues to enroll a diverse student population from various racial and ethnic backgrounds. For Fall 2005, 18.9% of the undergraduate enrollment was minority with 14.8% identified as African American. Most of the minority population is from Prince George's County, Baltimore County, Baltimore City and Montgomery County. The University has continued to be effective in its efforts to recruit minority students from these areas; such outreach is particularly important since the minority population in Allegany County is less than 3%.

The enrollment for fall 2005 is 5,041 students, with an FTE of 4,404. This represents a substantial drop from the previous fall when the University enrolled 5,327 students; the FTE during fall 2004 was 4,596. The appendices include detailed information regarding enrollment trends and a profile of the fall 2005 enrollment. Although recently there has been extensive reliance on consultants in the area of enrollment management, there has been insufficient effort made to engage the campus community in understanding the challenges within this area. Both recruitment and retention are University-wide concerns; the entire campus should be challenged to find ways to make a positive contribution to improving the enrollment.

Recommendation 4.1: The University should engage in an in-depth analysis of the enrollment issues facing the institution. The results of this analysis should be widely circulated. Efforts should be made to engage the campus community in exploring ways for offices and departments to assist in recruitment and retention efforts.

The Admissions office activities include traditional marketing efforts. Personal interaction with admission counselors, coaches, and faculty assists in recruiting students. There has been an increase in the number of prospective students attending on-campus Open House programs – 1,234 students participated in 2004-05 compared to 763 students attending Open House programs in 2000-01. There has also been an increase of approximately 1,200 inquiries for Fall 2005 compared to Fall 2003. However, the increased Open House attendance and inquiries have not led to increases in submitted applications for Fall 2004 and Fall 2005.

Recommendation 4.2: The University should re-examine its marketing activities and develop strategies to increase the recognition of Frostburg State University in the mid-Atlantic area.

Financial aid and scholarships can play a major role in students' decisions to enroll or stay at FSU. Financial aid is used efficiently and in support of recruiting and retaining students.

Scholarship award practices are changing. Academic scholarships have always been awarded based on a student's academic merit. For the last two years, additional scholarship money was awarded to students who also had financial need. For the Fall 2004 semester, slight adjustments were made to scholarship awards as the Director of Admissions became aware of individual students' needs for additional funds. For the Fall 2005 semester, in addition to scholarship money based on academic merit, an additional \$147,000 was offered to admitted students who were scholarship candidates and showed a financial need based on the results of the FAFSA. It is too early to measure the impact that these efforts have had on the recruitment of students. There has been some reallocation of scholarship money. Approximately \$15,000 in foundation scholarships previously earmarked for new students has been redirected to the Academic Affairs division to assist in retention efforts.

All new freshmen and transfer students get a preliminary award notification based on initial financial aid information, regardless of whether or not all paper work for financial aid is complete. Obviously, this effort assists families with making a decision to attend FSU. In March and April, we offer scholarships and financial aid packages to newly admitted students. In June, currently enrolled students receive aid notification after final grades are computed and after all their paperwork is completed. Additional financial aid has been made available by the institution to help alleviate increasing costs. The FSU Grant was funded at \$475,000 for 03-04, \$640,000 for 04-05 and \$650,000 for 05-06. These increases in financial aid funded by the University have not compensated for the amount of aid reductions by the state and federal government.

The following chart details the retention and graduation rates of all FSU students:

Retention and Graduation Rates of All Students				
	Second-year Retention Rate*		Six-Year Graduation Rate**	
Frostburg State University	73.0%	a	48.3%	a
MD Public Colleges and Universities	81.9%	b	49.0%	d
Peer Institutions	74.0%	c	47.8%	c
* average over a four-year period (1998 - 2001 cohorts) ** average over a three-year period (1994-1996 cohorts) a OIS: Trends in Retention of First-Time Full-Time Students b MHEC: Retention and Graduation Rates at Maryland Public Four-year Institutions, April 2004 c Peer Performance Data 2001-2004, MS Blackboard web site d OIS				

[Exhibit 4-2]

FSU's second-year retention rate is comparable to our peer institutions, while lagging behind the other Maryland public universities. FSU's six-year graduation rate for all students is similar to both peers and other Maryland public universities. FSU's second-year retention rate of African-American students is similar to other Maryland public institutions, while the FSU graduation rate of African-American students lags behind other institutions within the University System of Maryland and peer institutions.

Retention and Graduation Rates of African-American Students			
	Second-year Retention Rate*		Six-Year Graduation Rate**
Frostburg State University	75.5% a		31.8% a
MD Public Colleges and Universities	75.7% b		44.4% c
Peer Institutions	NA		37.6% d
* average over a four-year period (1998 - 2001 cohorts) ** average over a three-year period (1994-1996 cohorts) a OIS: Trends in Retention of First-Time Full-Time Students b MHEC: Retention and Graduation Rates at Maryland Public Four-year Institutions, April 2004 c OIS d Peer Performance Data 2001-2004, MS Blackboard web site			

The University's retention rates fluctuate from year to year. For the 1998-2001 cohorts, the retention rate varied from 69.8% to 75.7% for all first-time, full-time students and from 70.8% to 78.2% for African-American first-time, full-time students. Frostburg State University does not currently have a comprehensive retention plan, and, therefore, should develop and implement one that has specific goals and is evidence based. The FSU Retention Council has a recent history of inactivity. Even though some retention efforts have been implemented, University-wide retention efforts have been limited and there is a lack of institutional commitment and leadership in this area.

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Recommendation 4.3: The University should develop and implement a comprehensive retention plan with assigned leadership responsibilities. The plan should contain specific goals to obtain meaningful data concerning student enrollment and student withdrawal. Retention studies should examine the reasons for lower minority student graduation rates following reasonably high second year retention rates. Additional retention studies should examine important student factors, such as academic profile, reasons for withdrawal, and first-generation status.

According to the 2005 Managing for Results (MFR) document [Exhibit G-14], the University reviewed its strategies to improve the retention and graduation rates of FSU students. As part of this review, the most effective initiatives currently in place at the University were identified for continuance, including the Learning Community program, award-winning community service and leadership programs, and the academic support and monitoring programs located in the SES division (Student Support Services, Programs for Academic Support and Studies (PASS), and the Diversity Center).

Several student service departments within the University track retention data for their programs. Athletics has a retention rate of 71% to 81% between 1999 and 2003. PASS attempts to increase the retention of students who enter the University with low basic skills. PASS reports success in retaining students who successfully complete developmental

mathematics, reading and writing courses. Student Support Services attempts to improve the retention and graduation rates of low income and first generation students. For the 2002 cohort, Disability Services has an 80% retention rate, and Student Support Services has an 84.1% retention rate for the respective program participants.

The University has also adopted new retention strategies. The two most important of these are additional scholarship support for qualified students who are likely to leave the University and the requirement that each academic department works closely with its college dean to institute department-specific activities to encourage retention.

Several departments and colleges have implemented strategies to improve retention. For example, in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS), three chairs meetings during 2004 focused on retention. Thirteen departments within CLAS have published retention plans on the CLAS web page: <http://www.frostburg.edu/colleges/clas/retention.htm>. These plans underscore the need for greater sophistication in both data collection and analysis. The steering committee concurs with the observation made by some chairs that concern about retention has too often focused on under-prepared students, with minimal attention given to the attrition of students who are performing well academically.

Recommendation 4.4: The Council on Retention should identify strategies for retaining students who are performing well academically. Additional efforts should be made to celebrate student achievements.

Special Needs and Advising

Special student needs encompass academic, social, financial, and disability related concerns among the enrolled student population. The University's diverse student body reflects the larger multicultural society. Such diversity requires support services that meet the ethnic, academic, social, and disability-related needs of students.

FSU programs address the needs of minority students, low income/first generation college students, students with disabilities, international students, and students with academic deficiencies. Ethnic minority students comprise 18.9% of the current University population (Fall 2005 Enrollment Profile) [Appendix]. In comparison, the minority population in Allegany County is about 3%.

The Office of Information Services (OIS) data shows that the second year retention rate average for the 1999-2003 cohorts is 75.1% for African American students, 72.3% for minorities, and 73% for all students. The six-year graduation rate average for the 1994-1997 cohorts is 33.5% for African American students, 35% for minority students, and 49.1% for all students. More study is necessary to determine the reasons for the lower minority graduation rates following reasonably high second year retention rates.

The Diversity Center staff provides a number of services for minority students. These services include a peer-mentoring program for new freshmen, academic monitoring, academic

advising, and leadership programming. In addition, the Diversity Center staff contacts every incoming African American freshman at least once and invites them to use the services of the Center. They also contact every African American student on academic probation at least once. The Director of the Diversity Center advises the Black Student Association (BSA) and is a resource for other minority student organizations on campus. The close personal contact with students appears to contribute to positive retention rates. During the 2003-04 academic year, 91 minority students enrolled in the academic monitoring program. Eighty-four of the students were eligible to continue their studies at FSU. Seventy-two students actually enrolled for the Fall 2004 semester for a 79% retention rate. To improve the retention and graduation rates of minority students, the Diversity Center is coordinating efforts with the PASS office, the Student Support Services program, and the HallSTARS program, which is an AmeriCorps program for undergraduate students. Two professionals and a support staff person formerly did the work of the Diversity Center. Due to a retirement, only one professional and a support staff person now staff the Center. The number of minority students, however, continues to grow.

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Student Support Services (SSS) is a federally funded TRiO program that provides academic support to first-generation college students, low income students and students with disabilities. SSS offers professional tutoring, study skills workshops, academic advising, financial aid assistance, personal advising, and social activities to assist this student group. The program receives funding for only 275 eligible students; typically 60-70 freshmen that show the greatest need are invited into the program by SSS staff during SPC. However, averaged over the years 2001-2003, 46% of the incoming freshman class alone (455 students) was eligible for the program, based on their being either first-generation only or first generation and low income.

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Nearly one-fifth of each freshman class over the past three years has been identified as low-income (OIS). These students not only require financial aid to support their cost of attending the university, but also need supplemental instruction to improve academic skills, because they generally come from poorer school districts. Many of these students require developmental instruction in math, reading, and English, as well as tutoring. The Programs for Academic Support and Studies (PASS) office administers developmental instruction and a peer-tutoring program that includes both individual and group tutoring. The Student Support Services (SSS) staff provides professional tutoring in a wide variety of academic areas specifically to low income students. The 2005 SES Annual Report [Exhibit G-28] documents the success of these programs.

Approximately 6% of current students have self-identified as having a disability (OIS). Currently, the Disability Support Services (DSS) office provides accommodations, accessibility, and advocacy to 324 students who have physical and/or cognitive disabilities. The DSS staff works in conjunction with the ADA Compliance office to assure that the needs of students with physical disabilities are met and provides accommodations to students with cognitive disabilities.

The University devotes resources to the Center for International Education to address the needs of international students and FSU students that study abroad. This office oversees

international student programs and services and assists students with procedures of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), learning about local customs and cultures, adjusting to campus life, and understanding the U.S. educational system. Fifty-two international students attended FSU during the fall 2005 semester.

The SES Division takes steps to identify and address a variety of student academic and personal development needs for incoming students. All admitted students are sent a congratulations packet in which they can identify academic, health, and disability needs. This information is distributed to appropriate offices when student needs are identified. Specific departmental assessments of student needs may be found in the exhibits [4-3]. Current students' needs are identified and addressed by service or referral.

The Divisions of Academic Affairs and Student and Educational Services share responsibility for academic advising. Staff and faculty who teach Introduction to Higher Education (IHE) to new freshmen serve as the academic advisors of all first-time, full-time freshmen at least through the first week of their second semester or until the students have declared a major. Faculty members in each department advise students following their declaration of academic major. The Assistant Provost provides ongoing training opportunities for all advisors to hone their skills.

The 1996 Middle States visiting team urged the University to give the most serious attention to the self-study recommendations on improving academic advising, including implementing student evaluation of advising, putting greater emphasis on advising in the faculty evaluation system, and conducting a needs assessment of advisors to plan necessary training. As outlined in the 2001 Periodic Review Report, these recommendations, along with strong interest by the USM Board of Regents, led to the development of a five-year academic advising enhancement plan. After conducting a needs assessment survey, a training program entitled the Advising Mentor Program was developed to offer a series of workshops on advising issues. Advisors can earn the credential "Advising Mentor" by passing a test on advising information, and 25 faculty and staff have done so to-date. Initially, departments were instructed to include advising as a dimension of evaluations, with different departments interpreting this mandate in disparate ways. A campus-wide student evaluation of advising was pilot tested with different sub-populations of advisors. Beginning with evaluations prepared in Spring 2006, the student evaluations of each advisor must be included in evaluations for merit (which in turn affect salary increases, continuation, promotion, and tenure).

Advising Center

A significant difference exists between the retention rates of students who transfer with a major and those who arrive as undeclared. For the past ten years, the second year retention rate has averaged 73.2%, while the retention rate for undeclared transfers averaged only 59.4% during this time period. A task force recently completed a study of transfer student advising practices, resulting in the creation (January 2006) of an advising center. The Center assists all undeclared students and those students who are questioning their majors or actively exploring new ones. This Center was established in January 2006 and is staffed by two full-time professional employees.

Assessment of Advising

Both the pilot student evaluations and the fall 2005 mandated evaluations confirm that undergraduate students at FSU rate the assistance they receive from their advisors highly. In fall 2005, with 2298 students (62 percent of all undergraduates approved to register) responding to five questions that measure the approved academic advising goals, the overall University average score (on a scale of 1=strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) was 4.76. The results from this survey, the most representative of the undergraduate student population, were even more positive than the other surveys described below; 85% of students indicated they “strongly agreed” that their “advisor exhibits a personal and caring attitude.”

The results of student evaluations, participant evaluations of workshops, and item-analysis of testing results are fed back to improve the Advising Mentor workshops and the administration of the advising system. The workshops also change with new developments. For example, when the PAWS student administration system was implemented, several workshops on using PAWS in advising were added.

Academic advising also received considerable attention in the two student surveys administered in conjunction with the self-study. The National Survey of Student Engagement included two questions related to advising. The first asked students to identify how often, on a scale of 1-4 (1 = never, 2 = sometimes, 3 = often, 4 = very often), they had talked about career plans with a faculty member or advisor.

		Frostburg State	Selected Peers
	<i>Class</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Mean</i>
Talked about career plans with a faculty member or advisor	First-Year	2.45	2.12 ***
	Seniors	2.66	2.44 **

National Survey of Student Engagement, 2005 ** p<.01 *** p< .001

The greater number of conversations regarding their career plans that FSU students are having with faculty members and advisors is encouraging. As the above table indicates, first-year students are having these conversations much more often than first-year students at selected peers. Much of this difference may be a function of the career exploration component of the orientation course required of first-year students.

In our efforts to assess the overall effectiveness of academic advising, the National Survey of Student Engagement provides some insight into students’ perceptions of the quality of advising they have received. (1 = poor, 2 = fair, 3 = good, 4 = excellent)

		Frostburg State	Selected Peers
	<i>Class</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Mean</i>
Overall, how would you evaluate the quality of academic advising you have received at your institution?	First-year	3.09	2.90 **
	Seniors	2.93	2.83

National Survey of Student Engagement, 2005 ** p<.01

While these results are encouraging, there is no reason for the University to become complacent about its efforts to improve advising services. At an institution that takes pride in the amount of personal attention given to students, 30% of the seniors completing the NSSE rated the quality of advising they have received as “poor” (10%) or “fair” (20%). Subsequent administrations of the NSSE, with an effort to increase the response rate, should result in the collection of data that would enable us to measure how students in different academic areas evaluate the advising they have received.

The advising program has stated goals in terms of what advisors are expected to do, but student expectations need to be identified. Pieces of the advising program, however, such as SPC and IHE, do have measurable student outcomes. Ninety-six percent of SPC participants state that they know and understand the GEP requirements following their participation in the summer program. Eighty-two percent of freshmen in the IHE course state their academic advisor provided valuable assistance during the pre-registration process, and 83% report receiving academic information about academic policies, procedures and degree requirements.

Three additional questions on the Middle States Student Survey addressed academic advising. The results were strongly positive with 84.8% agreeing or strongly agreeing that they have a clear understanding of academic standards, 74.2% agreeing or strongly agreeing that their advisor provides accurate information, and 72.5% agreeing or strongly agreeing that their advisor exhibits a genuine interest in the student. It is worth noting that there is a small but consistent difference between the responses of native and transfer students, with the average response of transfer students being less positive.

The First Year Experience committee is examining the transition of students from their orientation course advisor to their advisor within the major department. In fall 2006, new students will have the opportunity to become affiliated with their major department earlier in the semester.

Recommendation 4.5: The academic advising program should more clearly delineate the responsibilities of various programs and personnel involved in advising, provide ongoing training, and assess the student learning outcomes of academic advising. Particular attention should also be paid to the declaration of major process and the transition of students from the Introduction to Higher Education course to the major department.

Graduate Student Advising

The survey administered to graduate students in December 2005 indicated some concerns regarding advising at the graduate level. Since the number of respondents to this survey was somewhat low, the Graduate Council is encouraged to explore the most effective way to assess the effectiveness of the academic advising for graduate students.

Student Learning

Student service programs promote intellectual growth and equip learners with problem solving and decision making skills. FSU's student services are supportive of the University mission, however the mission does not reflect the depth, breadth or impact of these services on student retention and success of students.

All student services programs are supportive of student learning. Program examples of student learning are found in the 2005 SES Annual Report. Specific examples include Counseling and Psychological Services, IHE orientation course evaluation data, AlcoholEdu, Peers Advocating Wellness Strategies Learning Community, PASS, and Career Services. According to the results of the Middle States Student Survey [Exhibit G-6], among those students who reported that they often use student services, an average of 74.3% found the services to be somewhat to very effective.

Students are aware of the services on campus. According to the Middle States Student Survey, 96% of students were aware of the majority of services listed. Seventy-two percent of students surveyed felt the service was important; however 45% of students never used these services.

Student participation in co-curricular and experiential learning programs supports the mission of the institution and contributes to student learning. According to the results of the National Survey of Student Engagement, both first-year students and seniors at FSU report a much higher level of engagement in co-curricular activities than students at peer institutions.

	<i>Class</i>	Frostburg State	Selected Peers	
		<i>Mean</i>	<i>Mean</i>	
Participating in co-curricular activities (organizations, campus publications, student government, social fraternity or sorority, intercollegiate or intramural sports, etc.)	First-Year	2.68	2.02	***
	Seniors	2.38	1.91	***

National Survey of Student Engagement, 2005

*** p < .001 (two-tailed)

There are many venues in which students can access experiential learning at the university. Significant research has been conducted by research centers within higher education to determine the impact of experiential learning on students in and out of the classroom. FSU student affairs educators have used the findings and conclusions from various national research projects to guide program development and assessment planning. In addition to NSSE, these national project instruments include the Cooperative Institutional Research Program Survey (Astin and UCLA) and the College Student Survey (Higher Education Research Institute).

The staff of the Department of Student and Community Involvement has utilized the results of this research and has also recently begun to more formally assess student learning. Through a variety of assessment instruments administered to FSU student leaders, organizations and program participants, the assessment data is used to shape the department's programs and services as well as improve the quality of student life through involvement in campus activities for the 2005-06 academic year. One of the significant instruments being utilized is the Student Involvement Survey [Exhibit 4-4]. Partial analysis of the Involvement Survey indicated that the biggest reasons that the respondents stayed on campus during weekends included attending activities (41%) and social opportunities (59%). In addition, students consistently stated that their campus involvement had a positive impact on their acquisition of specific skills and characteristics, including leadership (78%), human understanding (76%), verbal skills (82%), values and morals (73%) and intellectual tolerance (80%).

Qualified professionals administer student service programs. The qualifications of the staff match their roles and responsibilities. In order to ensure that qualified candidates are selected, all professional searches must be approved by Human Resources, EEO, and the Vice President. A significant number of professional positions in the SES division are grant-funded and are dependent upon continued grant funding. The SES division employs 75 full time staff members. Of that number, 15 (20%) of those positions are grant funded and 16 (21%) of those positions are contingent and are not PIN positions (do not include full system benefits). Most of these positions are in offices that support special needs populations. The result of losing grant funding would be the loss of valuable services to students.

An informal survey of student service departments [Exhibit 4-5] indicates that staff members participate in professional development activities such as conferences, seminars, and workshops even though some concerns about funding were brought forth. The Vice President for Student and Educational Services and department heads indicate a decrease in funding over the past few years. Continuing education is often limited to programs available at FSU because staff members cannot take full advantage of tuition remission available at all USM institutions due to our distant location. The SES Division sponsors at least two professional development workshops each year.

Assessment/Outcomes

The Student Services Assessment Practices Inventory [Exhibit 3-6], based on the 2003 *Checklist for an Assessment Program* developed by the National Association for Student Personnel Administrators, was created to guide the examination of assessment practices and culture within student services programs. There is a developing culture of assessment, particularly within the Student and Educational Services (SES) division. The SES Vice President has sponsored a series of workshops and trainings over the past four years to support increased assessment of student services. In addition, the professional staff members believe in the importance and value of assessment. Lastly, most departments have increased the frequency and type of program assessment over the past several years and have implemented components of assessment. For example, staff members in the Lane University Center have modified their programs as a result of departmental assessment. Residence Life benchmarking data have influenced changes in staff training and residence hall practices, and student evaluations led to changes in the summer orientation program for freshmen.

A compelling example of how assessment results have been used to influence resource allocation and decision-making is in the area of alcohol education. Five years ago, after examining the results of the CORE Survey of Alcohol Use [Exhibit 4-6], the Director of Counseling and Psychological Services recommended that the University require its first-year students to complete AlcoholEdu, an on-line alcohol education course. It was determined that the Introduction to Higher Education course would serve as an appropriate vehicle for enforcing this requirement. Resources were identified within the Division since this was viewed as a high priority. During the first year of implementation, FSU was one of only eight colleges and universities to require the course of all first-year students. The course has documented significant gains in our students' awareness of risk factors associated with the abuse of alcohol. The University's prevention program received the 2006 Prevention Excellence Award for its substance abuse prevention efforts that integrated AlcoholEdu into

its comprehensive program to reduce student alcohol and drug use. More importantly, although it cannot be directly attributed to the course, there has been a reduction in the binge-drinking rate of our students, according to subsequent administrations of the CORE survey. Assessment efforts across programs would be greatly enhanced if student service offices followed a consistent and comprehensive model to guide assessment.

Recommendation 4.6: All student services should develop assessment plans that focus on student learning outcomes yet include other indicators of program efficacy to inform policy and planning.

Athletics

The National Collegiate Athletic Association's (NCAA) requirement that institutions conduct a self-study of athletics at least every five years simplified the assessment of athletics. FSU conducted such a self-study in 2002 [Exhibit 4-7] that concluded that the FSU athletic programs are regulated by the same academic, fiscal, and administrative principles, norms and procedures that govern other institutional programs. This conclusion was confirmed based on numerous sources including documents, interviews, and faculty and participant surveys.

FSU students who participate in intercollegiate athletics do as well or better academically than non-participants on all indicators: semester grades, first year retention, and graduation rates. The semester and cumulative GPAs of athletes are very similar to non-athletes (generally within 0.1 GPA). The retention rate of student athletes who entered as first-time freshmen exceeded those of other students in their cohort for the past five years. For the 2002 cohort, athletes were retained at a rate 11 percentage points higher than non-athletes and for the 2003 cohort, the rate is 9 percentage points higher. Graduation rates of student athletes for the 1999 and 2000 freshman cohorts are very similar to non-athletes, and are improving. For the 2000 cohort, the four-year graduation rate for athletes is slightly higher than this rate for non-athletes. The Athletics department staff and coaches have put into place extensive monitoring processes and programs to promote the academic success of athletes. Based on the results of the Survey of Student Athletes [Exhibit 4-8], the student athletes clearly believe that their participation in FSU athletics has made a positive contribution to their academic success and the development of their social and personal skills.

A thorough analysis of gender equity showed FSU to be in compliance with Title IX, though female athletes generally viewed their treatment inferior to other teams on the Survey of Student Athletes. This analysis would have been simplified if the institution had a formal process to periodically ascertain compliance. In addition, having other sources of data for the outcomes listed in the departmental mission statement would strengthen the program. The athletic department should be encouraged to develop a departmental assessment plan, similar to those created by other student service programs and academic departments. The department's strong mission statement and goals will serve them well in this process. More detailed information about Athletics may be found in the exhibits.

Student Grievances

Students have a variety of forums to address complaints and grievances. General direction is available to students in the *Pathfinder*. Multiple student organizations address student concerns such as the Student Government Association, the Residence Hall Association, the Black Student Alliance, the Greek system, University Programming Council, the *Bottom Line* (the student newspaper), the President's Advisory Council on Substance Abuse, Encore (a non-traditional student association), the University System of Maryland Statewide Student Council representative, and Edgewood Commons Community Council. Representatives from each of these groups meet monthly with the President and Vice Presidents to discuss areas of student concern.

The Middle States Student Survey indicates that 58% of the students agree or strongly agree with the statement, "The University has policies and procedures that can address my complaints or grievances." This indicates that most students are aware of the policies and procedures. Additionally, the *Pathfinder* is updated annually to ensure that policies are current and relevant.

Student Records

The institution continues to modify and upgrade security issues related to electronic records. Students, faculty, and staff are assigned a username and password that must be changed every sixty days. Access to records is given on a need to know basis. For example, student address information is available to advisors, but can only be updated by the Registrar's Office. Employees are required to sign a Certification of Security form [Exhibit 4-9] in order to obtain a user account. Critical student records are audited by the state and adjustments are made based on its recommendations. Student record data are backed up incrementally on weekdays with full backups on weekends. Approximately four weeks of backups are stored. A consultant is currently working with FSU on a disaster/security compromise plan.

Students are made aware of the security policies and procedures in the student handbook (*Pathfinder*, p. 78) and policies regarding the release of information, including a listing of those items that are considered directory information, can also be found in the student handbook (*Pathfinder*, p. 77). The Middle States Student Survey indicates that 73.9% of the students surveyed agree or strongly agree with the statement, "the university has policies and procedures that safeguard the privacy of my student records."

CHAPTER FIVE

THE FACULTY

Standard 10

Faculty members in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, the College of Business, the College of Education, and the Lewis J. Ort Library effectively support Frostburg State University's mission and programs. These highly qualified professionals design, develop, and assess programs for the students in their disciplines; they maintain close contact with students and consider teaching their primary responsibility.

The university — represented by departments and colleges, the faculty senate, and administrators — has established criteria for determining expected and preferred credentials in the hiring of new faculty, for evaluating faculty performance, for providing material support, for establishing guidelines for hiring and evaluation of contractual and adjunct faculty, and for recruiting and retaining minority faculty.

Several methodologies were utilized in gathering information for this chapter. The methodologies included review of university documents, interviews with administrators, a survey of Departmental Chairs, data from the Office of the Provost, a campus faculty survey [Exhibit G-3], and data from a survey of faculty administered through the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) at the University of California, Los Angeles [Exhibit G-4].

Faculty Profile

Faculty at Frostburg State University are highly qualified and academically prepared to support the mission and programs of the institution. There are three categories of faculty at FSU: full-time teaching faculty, part-time teaching faculty and full-time non-teaching faculty. Full-time non-teaching faculty includes faculty administrators and librarians. Teaching faculty are employed for 10 months, while non-teaching faculty are employed over a 12-month period. There were 346 faculty teaching at FSU in 2004. Of this number, 66 % were full-time, while 34 % were part-time. Full-time faculty with tenure comprised 70.3 %; 19.7 % were tenure-track, and 10 % were non-tenured. The proportion of female faculty has increased steadily over the years: during 2004, 62.7 % were male and 37.3 % were female. The earned doctorate was held by 76.3 %, and 22.3 % held a master's degree.

The principal responsibility of faculty is teaching. The 2004-2005 HERI Faculty Survey indicates that 99.2 % of faculty at Frostburg State University consider teaching as the principal activity while 86.8 % of all 4-year colleges and 94 percent of public 4-year colleges consider teaching as their principal activity. The same survey shows that 48.8 % of FSU faculty agree that their interests lie heavily in teaching, compared to 31.2 % for 4-year public colleges, and 27 % for all 4-year institutions. Class sizes are small, in keeping with the emphasis on teaching. About 85 % of classes have fewer than 30 students and the student/faculty ratio is 17:1. This is congruent with the 2005 faculty survey in which 74 percent of respondents agree that class sizes for their courses are appropriate.

Teaching accounts for 65-75 % of faculty work load. Frostburg State University is proud of the quality of teaching by its faculty. The student evaluations of faculty, administered in a confidential environment at the end of each course, provide evidence of the quality of teaching. Since spring 2002, the average score for all faculty member evaluations has been 4.47 or higher. The student evaluations conducted in Spring 2004 and Fall 2004 yielded means of 4.50 and 4.52, respectively for all undergraduate courses. Results of the 2005 self-study student survey also support the finding of teaching excellence. About 75 % of respondents agree that FSU has excellent faculty, a slight increase over the seventy percent of students who agreed with this statement in the 1995 Self-Study Survey. Eighty-eight (88%) percent of students indicated that they will have the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in their academic fields when they complete their academic majors. Free responses made by the students in the survey were overwhelmingly positive about the faculty; the comments demonstrate that FSU students recognize and appreciate the quality of faculty.

Faculty are also engaged in a number of scholarly activities including book publications, refereed/non-refereed publications, conference presentations, and creative activities. Over the past five years, the FSU faculty published an annual average of 18 books, 91 refereed publications, and 177 non-refereed works. Collectively, they engaged in an average of 359 creative activities each year, and made an annual average of 181 professional presentations. Further insight into professional activities and involvement of both the faculty and the administrative staff may be gained by reviewing *Professional Achievements*, a brochure published annually by the University [Exhibit 5-1].

Faculty Professional Productivity

	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	5-year Ave
Books	19	15	30	12	16	18.4
Refereed Publications	75	111	94	85	88	90.6
Non-Refereed Works	120	179	181	186	217	176.6
Creative Activities	375	480	267	411	266	359.4
Professional Presentations	185	183	161	183	193	181.0
Externally funded Grants	52	37	49	48	27	42.6
Days Spent in Public Service	1,621	1,987	1,940	2,108	1,829	1,897

Source: *USM Annual Faculty Non-Instructional Productivity Survey* [Exhibit 5-2]

All faculty are expected, in addition to teaching and professional development, to participate in university service, and many also provide volunteer service to the community. Committee work includes service at the university, college, and department level; a faculty member is often involved at all three levels at one time. Because FSU is committed to shared governance, faculty have the opportunity to make major contributions to decisions which affect all constituencies of the university. The majority of faculty serve as advisors for majors in their departments; a faculty member may advise as few as three students or as many as dozens of students. Faculty also participate actively in community service: during the last five years, they spent an average of 1,897 days per year in public service. These professional

activities and services were achieved in addition to a typical teaching load of eight courses per year.

Although teaching is the primary concern, Frostburg State University and the University System of Maryland (USM) expect faculty to participate actively in all three areas — teaching, scholarship, and service — and, as dedicated professionals, most FSU faculty members show significant achievement in all of these areas. Results of the 2005 faculty survey show that most faculty agree that excellence in teaching, professional development, and service is appropriately recognized at FSU (62.4 %, 68 %, and 62.4 % respectively). The survey also points to several concerns. One of those is the response to the question of faculty morale. Only 29.6 % feel that morale on campus is excellent or good; 36.8 % rate morale as fair, and 31.2 % deem it poor. Several factors might contribute to this assessment. Budget crises during the last several years have created problems in a number of areas: no raises or very limited raises were granted; support for professional development was limited (54.4 % disagreed with the statement that professional development is adequately supported); updates in computing equipment, facilities, and instructional technology were deemed inadequate by 44.8 %; and 63.2 % stated that their ability to participate in professional development and service is unduly affected by the teaching and advising workload.

Hiring of Full-time Faculty

The decision to authorize new full-time tenure-track positions is fundamentally and intrinsically tied to the USM budget and timeline, which in turn depend on actions of the Governor and Legislature and their timing. The number of full-time faculty positions that can be funded for the next fiscal year can thus only be estimated. Predicting the number of positions that might be available depends not only on the budget, but also the number of retirements and resignations that might yet occur. These conditions often result in the delay of job advertisements and recruitment of new faculty.

Faculty Hiring Trends and Credentials

The number of full-time tenured and tenure-track positions in the colleges of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Business, and Education since 1996 are provided in the following table.

Full-time permanent positions per college, 1996-2004

College	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04
CLAS	139	144	145	139	141	148	143	139.5	135.25
Business	39	39	38	36	34	37	40	40	40
Education	34	34	36	39	40	43	41.5	37	38
Total	212	217	219	214	215	228	224.5	216.5	213.25

The actual number of tenure-track faculty hired in the past five years and their credentials at the time of hiring is shown below. The greater proportion, i.e., 60.9 %, of those hired within the past five years hold doctorates in their respective fields at the time of hiring.

Faculty Credentials at Hiring

Academic Year	PHD	EDD	MFA	Master's	Total Hired
2000-2001	7	1	0	2	10
2001-2002	9	2	1	6	18
2002-2003	2	1	1	5	9
2003-2004	0	0	0	1	1
2004-2005	6	0	1	1	8
Totals	24	4	3	15	46

Faculty Qualifications at Hiring

The USM policy requires that the qualifications used in hiring new faculty should be the same as those used to promote faculty to the equivalent academic rank. The FSU *Faculty Handbook* [Exhibit G-18] provides that scholars in a particular field have the competence appropriate to evaluating the potential of future colleagues. Faculty in the unit seeking to fill a vacancy are thus fully engaged in the search process. The FSU *Faculty Handbook*, in keeping with USM policy, also provides general qualifications required for appointment of new teaching faculty at each rank.

The Office of Human Resources requires a search committee when seeking to fill all full-time exempt and faculty positions, whether contingent or regular. The size of search committees varies from department to department: there are usually three to five people. The FSU *Faculty Handbook* states specifically that the Director of Human Resources shall review the minimum and preferred credentials employed by departmental search committees for their compliance with the classification and compensation standards set by USM policy on new appointments.

Policies and Guidelines of Contractual and Adjunct Faculty

The Board of Regents (BOR) of the University System of Maryland adopted policies on Full-Time and Part-Time Non-Tenure Track Instructional Faculty Employment in 2002; the policy was subsequently amended in August 2004. These policies are designed to foster equitable treatment and working conditions for non-tenure track faculty members and to incorporate these individuals more fully into the intellectual and professional life of the institution. The policies address issues such as search procedures, credentials, hiring, faculty rank, and work conditions.

Frostburg State University has made significant progress implementing these policies. Some recommendations (e.g., the role of non-tenure track faculty in governance) are still to be reviewed by the Faculty Concerns Committee and the Faculty Senate. A separate handbook, Contractual Faculty and Employment Resource Guide, is being developed. The departments of English, and Health, Physical Education and Recreation experimented with a pilot program for mentoring new contractual faculty in the fall of 2004.

Supporting contractual faculty in their teaching and professional development is more crucial than ever, as FSU has increased its reliance on part-time faculty. In 1986, 96 % of faculty

were full-time; by the fall of 1994, the proportion had declined to 77 %. The proportion had reached 66.5 % by 2004. Of the 346 faculty members employed in 2004, 20 were full-time contractual and 116 were part-time contractual.

Stipends for part-time contractual faculty have not changed since 1994. The typical stipend offered currently is \$1800 per course section. Adjuncts at Allegany College of Maryland, located in nearby Cumberland, are paid as much as \$2700 per three credit course by comparison. Institutions are required, according to the BOR policy, to make salaries professionally appropriate and competitive for contractual faculty. It should be noted that the \$1800 per three-credit course during the regular semester is considerably less than the \$3000 compensation that instructors of three credit courses receive during Intersession and Summer School.

Recommendation 5.1: The University should increase the stipend paid to adjunct faculty and continue to identify strategies to more fully integrate these faculty members into the University community.

Faculty Participation in Curriculum Development and Revision

Faculty members play a major role in all aspects of FSU curriculum development including the General Education Program and courses for specific majors. The 2005 faculty survey indicates that 74 % of respondents agree that institutional policies allow faculty to participate in program development. The charter of Frostburg State University states that the Faculty Senate is the principal decision-making body of the university on matters relating to academic programs and policies at the graduate and undergraduate level. Through the Faculty Senate's Academic Affairs Committee and the Graduate Council, faculty members are charged with the responsibility of reviewing and acting upon curriculum proposals at an institution-wide level. Faculty members were particularly engaged in shaping the reforms of the Undergraduate Education Initiative (UEI) [Exhibit G-27], the recent revision of FSU's undergraduate curriculum. Faculty continue to be involved in the various faculty planning groups that have been formed to implement and assess the UEI. These groups and their tasks are discussed in chapter eight.

Faculty Workload and Performance

A new Faculty Workload Policy [Exhibit 5-3] was approved by Faculty Senate in November of 2003 and by the University System of Maryland in August of 2004. The purpose of the policy is to promote optimal performance of faculty and to provide a mechanism for public accountability of performance. Faculty performance is measured in the areas of instruction, professional development (research, scholarship and creative work), and service. The new policy reflects the institutional emphasis on teaching. The standard workload and responsibilities for full-time tenured and tenure-track faculty are as follows:

<i>Faculty Role</i>	<i>Percent Effort</i>
Teaching	65-75 (7-8 course units)
Professional Development	15-25
Service	5-15

Workload in the area of teaching includes preparation, classroom time, grading, advising and the evaluation of instruction. Faculty members are expected to teach 8 “course units” per year. This translates into 12 teaching “workload units” per semester and 24 units for an academic year. Faculty members may also be assigned workload units for professional development, service, and administration. Non-instructional workload units, including professional development, are assigned for a specific duty and are evaluated and approved in advance by the department chair and college dean. Faculty are not ordinarily assigned more than three workload units for professional development per semester.

The 2005 faculty survey measures faculty perceptions regarding the existing workload policy. Most (78%) of those responding to the survey agree that their departments distribute workload fairly. Similarly, 76% agree that class sizes within their departments are appropriate. In apparent contrast to these positive responses, 73% of the faculty respondents believe that their professional development and service are unduly affected by the teaching and advising workload.

Institutional Support for Faculty

Frostburg State University has made a significant effort to support its faculty in the areas of instructional and professional development. A noteworthy example is the Center for Instructional Technology, which was created to promote technology in the classroom. The primary responsibilities of the Center are administering distance education, providing media production, and scheduling instructional equipment distribution. The Center also provides assistance to faculty in the use of instructional technologies and in the development of materials specifically designed for use in online teaching, interactive video, and “smart” classrooms.

Center for Teaching Excellence

The mission of the Center for Teaching Excellence is to promote and foster student learning to the greatest extent possible through instructional development of the faculty. The Center facilitates faculty instructional development by increasing the understanding of the teaching/learning process, by promoting scholarly teaching and the scholarship of teaching, by encouraging collaboration among the faculty as well as students, and by creating an environment on campus that fosters dialogue among campus constituents: administration, faculty, and students. The Center encourages professional growth of faculty through open sharing of theory, research and best practices. Recent activities of the Center include brown bag lunches, assessment workshops, and sponsoring of faculty members to attend the Lilly conferences on college and university teaching.

Faculty Development Grants

The Faculty Development and Sabbatical Subcommittee administers a number of grants to full-time faculty with the primary objective of supporting their continued professional development. The grants include 1) Assigned Time Grants, 2) Project Grants, 3) Workshop and Speaker Grants, 4) Faculty Lecture Series, 5) Conference Presentation Grants, 6) Publication Assistance Grants, 7) Undergraduate Research Grants, 8) Graduate Research Grants, 9) Faculty Achievement Awards, and 10) Summer Stipends. The Faculty Development and Sabbatical Subcommittee’s budget since 2000 has remained at \$25,000.

These funds are awarded based on competition among faculty proposals for project grants, released-time grants, workshop/speaker grants, summer stipends, sabbatical leaves for faculty, and faculty lecture series.

Each academic department also provides limited funds that are used to support the professional development of its faculty. Conference travel funds available to faculty vary widely among departments, from as little as \$123 per faculty member in the Division of Performing Arts (Music, Dance, Theatre, and Communication Studies) to as much as \$600 in the College of Business. In some instances, the Deans and the Office of the Provost have also provided travel funds to faculty. These awards are used by faculty for scholarship and instructional development.

Overall, institutional support for faculty development has remained very inadequate. The results of the 2004-2005 HERI Faculty Survey indicate that only 28.3 % of respondents agree that there is adequate support for faculty development. National averages are higher by comparison, with 51.2 % for public 4- year colleges and 53.0 % for all 4-year institutions. Similarly, when asked whether opportunity for scholarly pursuits was a satisfactory aspect of their jobs, only 27.3 % of the faculty agree. The national average is 54.6 %.

Some might feel that research/scholarship in the academic affairs division is given low priority, since FSU is a comprehensive teaching institution. Vice-Presidents of the other divisions, by contrast, encourage or require their staff to attend regularly regional and national conferences to promote institutional improvement. While the funds for faculty development in support of those presenting at conferences have not been cut in lean budgetary times, some still believe that the monies allocated for these endeavors are minimal.

Recommendation 5.2: The University should explore ways to increase funding to support professional development activities of faculty members.

Frostburg State University is committed to diversity among its faculty. The university has policies in place that have been effective in increasing the recruitment of minority faculty. Black African Heritage, Asian, and Latina/Latino minorities taken together comprised 8 percent of full-time faculty in 1989. Women comprised 28 %. Black African Heritage, Asian, and Latina/Latino representation has since that time increased steadily (to 10 % in 1996 and then to 13 % in 2002), as has the representation of women (to 34 % in 1996 and then to 38 % in 2002). The 2004-2005 HERI survey shows minority faculty account for 13.2 % of faculty at FSU while the national average reported in the HERI survey is 11.2 %. The following table on faculty diversity provides another comparison between FSU and faculty nationwide.

Faculty Diversity: Frostburg State University and the Nation

Frostburg State University (full-time faculty)						
	Black African Heritage	Asian	Latina/Latino	Total Minority (non-White)	Women (White and non-White)	All
2002	10 (4%)	15 (6%)	7 (3%)	32 (13%)	94 (38%)	248
1996	7 (3%)	12 (5%)	4 (2%)	23 (10%)	82 (34%)	239
1989	6 (3%)	8 (3%)	5 (2%)	19 (8%)	67 (28%)	241
Nationwide (all faculty)						
1999	53,401 (5%)	48,892 (5%)	30,961 (3%)	133,254 (13%)	425,361 (41%)	1,027,830

Frostburg State University Trends in Full Time Employee Diversity 1989-2002 [Exhibit 5-4]

Hiring policies encouraging serious consideration of minority applicants and women might account for the positive trend in the recruitment of minority faculty at FSU. The University's *Search Committee Guide* [Exhibit 5-5] charges the Search Committee to recommend candidates for hire consistent with the University equal employment and non-discrimination policies and to meet regularly with the offices of Equal Employment Opportunity and Human Resources. The *Search Committee Guide* stipulates that membership of search committees should be as expansive as possible. It should be composed of individuals who bring to the search process a variety of perspectives and who are sensitive to affirmative action and the goals of equal employment opportunity.

These policies, along with the good will of faculty, staff, and administrators responsible for carrying them out, have often yielded a percentage of minority hires that is greater than the corresponding percentage of minority applicants, as is illustrated by the table below. The rate of increase in the number of one minority group in particular, those of Black African Heritage, has been disappointing despite the influence of policies and good will.

Application Pool of Women and Minority, 1999-2002

	Women (White only)		Black African Heritage		Latina/Latino		Asian		Total Minority (non-White)	
	App (%)	Hired (%)	App	Hired	App	Hired	App	Hired	App %	Hired %
2001-2002	16.1	42.9	1.9	7.1	.6	0	10.4	10.7	12.9	17.8
2000-2001	15.7	21.7	2.1	4.3	1.7	4.3	4.9	8.7	8.7	17.3
1999-2000	16.9	41.4	4.4	6.8	.6	0	11.2	6.9	16.2	13.7
3 Year Ave.	16.2	35.3	2.8	6.1	1.0	1.4	8.8	8.8	12.6	16.3

In view of the information provided regarding the percentage of minority applicants and the percentage of those hired, the source of the problem appears to be not a bias against Black African Heritage applicants but, to some extent, the number of persons of Black African heritage applying for positions. Recognizing this, the University has in recent years enacted additional recruitment strategies. The University has expanded the use of online resources to advertise available positions and to identify and hire qualified minority candidates. It has also increased collaboration with professional and academic organizations to identify and recruit minorities. Use of the state-supported Henry C. Welcome Fellowships helps the University to attract and retain eminently qualified African-American faculty. Since 1998, seven faculty members have been recipients of the fellowship. The departments of Business Management, History, Philosophy, Psychology, Social Work and Visual Arts have hosted Henry Welcome Fellows. Moreover, a committee organized in 2002 to deal specifically with the challenge of recruiting and retaining minority faculty and staff has recently proposed a number of new recruiting strategies, which are currently under University review.

Applicant pool size is not the only source of the problem regarding the hiring of Black African Heritage full-time faculty, however. It is, rather, an inability to retain Black African Heritage faculty. Listed below are the new recommendations of the Committee on the Recruitment and Retention of a Diverse Faculty and Staff.

- Support the development of coordinated materials in a packet to be distributed to prospective recruits.
- Continue to mail out vacancy notices to historically black, Hispanic, and Native American colleges and universities that have doctoral programs.
- Include diversity events as part of the curriculum by providing to faculty in June a list of cultural events for the coming academic year.
- Enter into formal agreements with historically black institutions in the area with doctoral programs (Bowie, Morgan, Howard) with the goal of placing of doctoral candidates in contractual and/or tenure track faculty positions in programs at Frostburg.
- Provide mentors for all new faculty members, but especially for faculty of color.
- Support development of the Center of Studying Minorities in Rural Settings.

Recommendation 5.3: The University should increase its efforts to both recruit and retain minority faculty and staff. In addition to those recommendations identified by the Committee on the Recruitment and Retention of a Diverse Faculty and Staff, efforts should be made to more fully understand the reasons for the attrition of minority faculty and staff.

Institutional Expectations and Review of Faculty

The job performance of faculty/librarians is reviewed formally through different processes. While broad institutional requirements are outlined in the *Faculty Handbook*, specific departmental requirements are contained in departmental documents. All teaching and library faculty are supplied with copies of these documents. The institution adheres strictly to the guidelines contained in these documents. Just over half (52 percent) of the faculty agree that the faculty evaluation process is an accurate assessment of their job performance despite the

existence and application of evaluation guidelines. The same survey indicates that only 37.6 percent agree that the evaluation process recognizes interdisciplinary/intercollegiate collaboration.

As outlined in the *Faculty Handbook*, there are three specified areas in which the performance of faculty at Frostburg State University is evaluated. The three categories include teaching and advising, professional development, and service. Teaching and advising are further classified into instructional design and development, teaching performance, and feedback to students. The evaluation process allows faculty to create an individualized emphasis among the three faculty roles within certain limits as described below.

The minimum and maximum weights allowed for the evaluation of the three roles are as follows:

<u>Minimum</u>		<u>Maximum</u>
50%	Teaching and Advising/Job Performance	80%
10%	Professional Development and Achievement	30%
5%	Service	25%

Teaching faculty/librarians are rated on each of the roles using a five point scale: 5.0 (outstanding performance), 4.0 (above average expectations), 3.0 (meets expectations), 2.0 (below expectations), and 1.0 (unacceptable performance). Even though there are general University guidelines as to the type of activity that merits a particular score, each administrative department or division might set guidelines as well, consistent with or exceeding the general guidelines.

CHAPTER SIX

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

Standards 11 & 13

Educational Offerings

FSU's educational offerings include instruction in skills and content that is congruent with the university's mission. The guiding elements in the academic program include student learning goals and objectives, balanced with requirements of the University System of Maryland, accreditation standards, and student preparedness. Frostburg State University offers 43 different undergraduate majors and two engineering majors offered in collaboration with the University of Maryland, College Park. These programs are taught by faculty in three colleges: the College of Business, the College of Education, and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. The university, as a public institution within a state system, must meet programmatic needs of the local community, the region and the state. FSU has actively sought opportunities to collaborate with other USM institutions, in order to increase offerings available to students and to further demonstrate accountability for the public funding it receives. In addition, an increasing need for students to live and work within a culturally diverse world is considered at all levels of programming.

Learning Outcomes

In order to effectively deliver and monitor academic programs, FSU places particular emphasis on learning outcomes in all three colleges and all programs. As programs are created and reviewed, student learning outcomes are defined and evaluated for current status and projected progress. Program and instructor objectives guide the development of programs of study. The shift to student outcomes rather than objectives has engendered a major initiative by the University to ensure that all programs develop learning outcomes. This initiative has also included the adoption of a set of institutional learning goals. The more recent attention being given to student learning outcomes is discussed in greater detail in Chapter Seven (General Education and Assessment).

Academic Program Reviews

Review of educational offerings is fundamentally the responsibility of the academic departments and multi-department steering committees that are responsible for specific academic programs. While departments and steering committees may undertake program review and revision at any time, they are required to do so as described below. A review may result in minor changes (such as revision of a single course description) or in comprehensive changes (such as revision of major and minor requirements).

Academic degree programs are reviewed every five years through the University System of Maryland's (USM) Periodic Program Review process [Exhibit 6-1]. Since 2001, programs under review share the self-study with an expert outside evaluator, who also conducts a site visit and prepares an independent evaluation. The self-study and outside evaluator's report

form the basis for recommended program improvements, which are formally reviewed with the College Dean and the Assistant to the Provost; a summary is then forwarded to the USM Board of Regents. Student learning outcomes have become a more significant part of the review process since 2003.

The department or program conducts a self-study that includes an evaluation of the quality and currency of the program's curriculum, effectiveness and productivity, student learning outcomes (including alumni satisfaction and success), student technology fluency, application of technology to instruction, and the adequacy of facilities and library holdings. Program review and revision is guided at all levels by assessment data on program effectiveness, and decisions are made about more effective allocation of resources. External reviewers also provide recommendations for program revisions and areas in need of funding.

Since departmental operating budgets have changed very little in the past two decades, it has been difficult to allocate funds to programs with strategic needs consistent with the University's mission. The University does take great effort to allocate new funds to departments for programs that support university initiatives, however. During the self-study for program review in the Department of Chemistry, for example, faculty realized that they needed a biochemist. A faculty member was added to the department as a result of this process.

Accreditation and Academic Programs

The accreditation of the University's teacher education programs in the College of Education by the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and the accreditation of the College of Business by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) have had considerable impact on the academic programs within those two Colleges and on the university as a whole. These two processes are discussed in detail in the chapter that examines Standard 14, Assessment of Student Learning. In addition to the accreditation of the two Colleges cited above, the following programs have earned specialized accreditation in recent years since the 1996 Middle States re-accreditation process was completed.

- B.A./B.S. in Athletic Training: Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP)
- M.S. in Counseling Psychology: Master's in Psychology Accreditation Council (MPAC)
- B.A./B.S. programs in Electrical and Mechanical Engineering, in collaboration with the University of Maryland College Park: Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET)
- B.A./B.S. in Recreation and Parks Management: National Recreation and Park Association/ American Association for Leisure and Recreation
- B.A./B.S. in Social Work: Council on Social Work Education (CSWE)

[Exhibit 6-2]

Many departments follow standards for a discipline where accrediting organizations exist, although those departments are not themselves accredited. The Music major program, for

example, follows the standards of the National Association for Schools of Music (NASM) for curriculum and assessment, even though the Division of Performing Arts-Music is not an NASM accredited program.

Graduate Program Review

FSU follows the USM policy for systematic program review of existing programs at the graduate level every five years. Additional accreditation processes, such as NCATE and AACSB, ensure that programs undergoing such reviews are scrutinized for effectiveness and currency. Programs that were reviewed prior to 2003 have not been evaluated with respect to student learning outcomes. These include the graduate programs in Biology and Computer Science. Graduate programs in Recreation, Human Performance, and Athletic Training are undergoing program reviews at this time. The MBA program is also preparing for AACSB accreditation and it will have to meet the new Assurance of Learning standard (related to student learning outcomes) once it achieves accreditation.

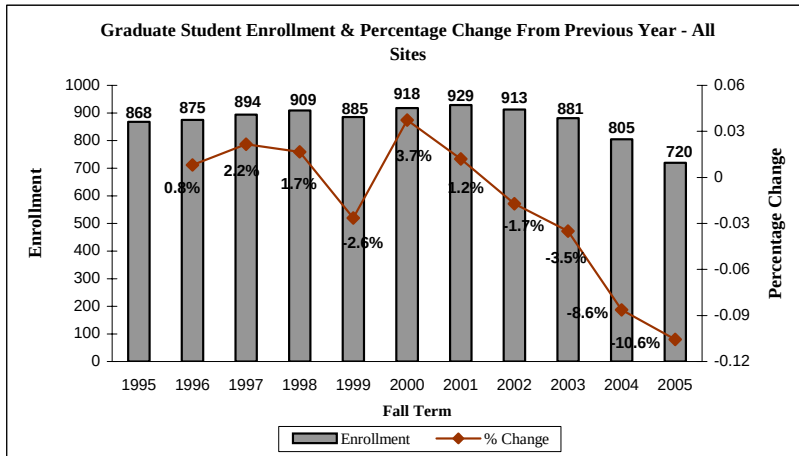
Graduate Education Task Force

During the 2005 spring semester, the Provost created the Graduate Education Task Force to review graduate education at the University and make recommendations in the following areas:

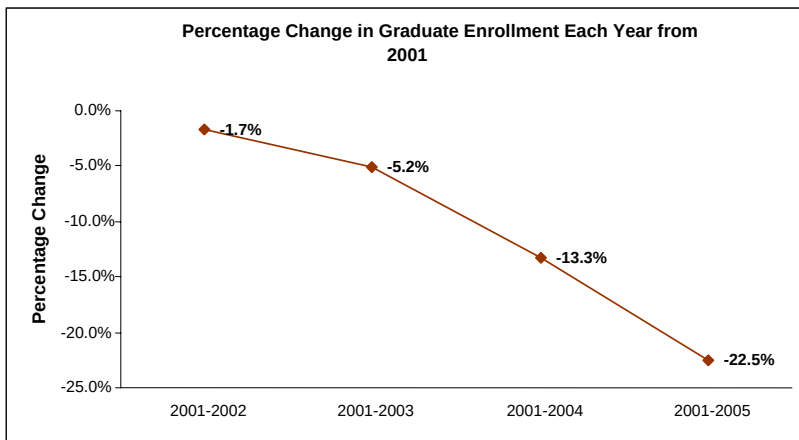
1. The mission and purpose of graduate education at Frostburg State University
2. The number and types of new graduate programs the University can and should support
3. Graduate education academic standards and outcomes assessment
4. Graduate student recruitment and admissions
5. The recruitment and retention of international students in graduate programs
6. The current organization of responsibility for graduate program administration, services, and marketing
7. Graduate processes that affect prospective and current students, program coordinators, and program faculty
8. The number and distribution, duties and assignments, and stipend amounts of graduate assistantships
9. The integration of graduate education more into the life of the institution

The Decline in Graduate Enrollment

The University has not experienced the growth in graduate school enrollment enjoyed at other Master's granting institutions throughout the nation. While graduate enrollment grew 2% nationally between 1986 and 2003, FSU's current enrollment has fallen to a ten-year low. The most dramatic decline occurred in the fall of 2005 when enrollment fell by 10.6% from the previous year, as is illustrated in the following chart:



Overall, graduate enrollment has steadily declined since 2001, culminating in a 22.5% drop in enrollment between 2001 and 2005.



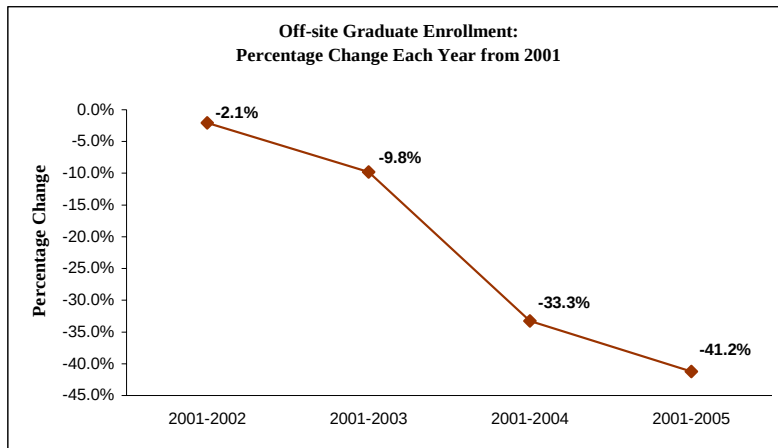
Graduate enrollment at the main campus grew between 2000 and 2004, but dropped significantly in 2005. At the same time, there has been a steady decrease in graduate enrollment at FSU's off-site locations.

Declining Graduate Enrollment in Hagerstown and Frederick

Declining enrollment in programs offered in Hagerstown by FSU (formerly at its own center and now at the University System of Maryland at Hagerstown- USMH), as well as the closing of the Frederick Center in 2004, accounts for the overall decline in graduate enrollment at the University over the last four years. With the loss of the Frederick Center and the decrease in FSU graduate enrollment in Hagerstown, off-site graduate enrollment has fallen 41% since 2001.

Graduate Student Enrollment by Site

Site	Fall Term										
	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
FSU Campus	489	503	497	496	438	461	490	483	485	512	462
Hagerstown	217	209	250	257	273	277	311	304	305	242	258
Frederick	162	163	147	156	174	180	128	126	91	51	0
Total	868	875	894	909	885	918	929	913	881	805	720



The overall decline in graduate enrollments at Frostburg over the last several years, along with the failure to develop comprehensive strategic and marketing plans for FSU graduate education, may require a change in how it is administered at the University.

Office of Graduate Services

The present Office of Graduate Services (OGS) was established in the summer of 2000 when the former Office of Assessment, Graduate Services and Special Program was dissolved, with its functions being assigned to other administrative units on campus. The OGS presently performs many important administrative functions including admissions, registration, degree audits, and the certification of degrees. It also is routinely involved in the recruitment of students to the University's nine graduate programs. The office is presently staffed by a full-time Director of Graduate Services and a single, contractual administrative assistant.

Although the Office of Graduate Services performs extremely well with limited staff and resources, it is not charged with directing and advocating for graduate education at the University. Rather, it plays a modest coordinating role focused primarily on admissions and student services. The University does not have a central office headed by a single individual who is administratively responsible for graduate education and who can work carefully with faculty, college deans, and the provost on a daily basis to ensure the quality, integrity, and future viability of graduate studies at the institution. The absence of such an office and individual at Frostburg is contrary both to the recommendations of the Council of Graduate

Schools and the practices of many of Frostburg's peer and University System of Maryland institutions. [Exhibit 6-3]

Recommendation 6.1: Create a new entity administratively overseen and led by a senior administrator to replace the present Office of Graduate Services. This individual should serve as the chief academic officer for graduate education at the University, report directly to the Provost, and be a member of the Deans' Council and President's Cabinet.

Development of New Academic Programs

The Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) evaluates current programs by a single productivity standard: the number of degrees granted. Undergraduate programs with fewer than five graduates in the most recent year or a total of fifteen graduates in the last three years and master's programs with fewer than two graduates in the previous year and six graduates in the last three years are designated low productivity programs whose continuation must then be defended. The possible bases for continuation were narrowed considerably in 2004, and the USM Board of Regents took the position that they would not support low productivity programs. Three FSU programs have been discontinued in the last two years primarily as a result of this process: the M.A. in modern humanities and the B.S. programs in actuarial science and business education.

The development, review, and approval of new academic programs follow established policies and procedures set by the University System of Maryland Board of Regents and the Maryland Higher Education Commission. Programs most often are initiated by academic departments and are reviewed at the College-level by the Dean and/or a curriculum committee. The Institutional Priorities and Resources Committee of the Faculty Senate reviews all new programs for consistency with the institutional mission and for resource requirements, while the Graduate Council or the Academic Affairs Committee focus on the strength and currency of the proposed curriculum. The Faculty Senate, the Provost, and the President must then approve all new program proposals.

There have been significant improvements in the responsiveness of statewide program review processes since "the ponderous pace" bemoaned in the 1996 Middle States self-study. The Larsen Commission, appointed by the Legislature to review the higher education organizational structures that were created in 1988, recommended that the University System of Maryland have more autonomy in program review. A shorter program proposal format is allowed in cases where the proposed program is consistent with the institution's mission statement and can be implemented through reallocation of existing institutional resources.

Master's Theses and Research Papers/Projects

The Graduate Catalog 2004-2006 (pp. 22-23) outlines the registration and procedures required for a Master's Thesis or Capstone Research Paper/Project. A Master's Thesis or Research Paper/Project is specified for Master of Science in Human Performance, Master of Science in Park & Recreation Resource Management, Master of Science in Applied Computer Science and Master of Education degree programs. A thesis is a requirement for the Master of Science in Applied Ecology & Conservation Biology and the Master of Science in Wildlife/Fisheries Biology.

MAT candidates complete School Improvement Projects that encompass research and implementation of a project designed to meet the needs of the placement school. These projects require analysis and evaluation of school test scores, a School Improvement Plan, and a literature search of research-based programs to identify possible solutions to the school's needs. At the secondary level, MAT candidates work independently on projects that will enhance the teaching profession. All University policies on research apply to these projects.

Courses are varied in the MBA, MAT, and M.Ed. programs, so there is no one best method used to foster independent thinking. There are, however, some techniques commonly used by many faculty members.

1. Student-led class discussions.
2. Case study method, many led by individuals or small student teams.
3. Community based group or individual consulting projects and field research.
4. Individually-proposed research projects and presentations.
5. Assessment analysis.
6. Analytical evaluations of project implementation.

Special Academic Programs

Learning Communities

Learning Communities are undergraduate programs created to provide students with integrated knowledge and skills in the areas of education, science, literacy, medicine, arts, performance, business, and a variety of other liberal arts disciplines. Some Learning Communities are developed to assist under-prepared students in developing necessary skills for academic success, while others are focused on areas of interest such as volunteer service or wellness. The support networks provided by the Learning Communities have been shown to increase retention rates for first-year students and offer the opportunity to engage in an in-depth exploration of a theme, a career or a major. [Exhibit 6-4] Courses and faculty are linked with the required Introduction to Higher Education (ORIE) course at the center of each Learning Community. Learning Communities play a part in the university mission by providing programs and services to a diverse population; studies have demonstrated that minority students in learning communities are more likely to be retained at FSU than those minority students who do not participate in one of these communities.

The Honors Program

The Honors Program at FSU is a course of study that offers honors students opportunities for critical and creative thinking through a variety of course offerings and honors projects. Students participate in a series of honors variants of general education courses, interdisciplinary honors seminars, and undergraduate research opportunities. Honors faculty have also been among those to offer learning communities for first-year students. Students may choose to reside in Honors housing. Integrated courses, innovative instruction that emphasizes active learning, and faculty mentoring are cornerstones of the Honors Program. Exhibit 6-5 documents the increase in the number of students graduating with Honors in General Education.

The Library

Library Staff/Services

The Library staff includes 10 professional librarians and 15 clerical staff. In addition to an ALA accredited library degree, four librarians hold additional masters degrees in subject areas, and two librarians hold doctoral degrees in academic fields.

The Library maintains a website of information about library holdings and services at <http://www.frostburg.edu/dept/library/>. Students may send online questions to *Ask a Librarian* and receive a response in 24 hours. Faculty may request instruction sessions using an online form. Library faculty serve academic departments as liaisons for different academic subjects. Liaisons develop and maintain online subject guides that list print reference titles and links to websites for appropriate information. Liaisons also collaborate with faculty to develop the library's print and electronic resources. Library instruction sessions are conducted in a teaching center in the library that is equipped with an instructor's workstation, video projector, overhead projector, and 24 individual PC's, all of which provide the opportunity for active learning experiences. Other computer labs on campus have been utilized when multiple requests are received for the same time period.

In 2004, teaching librarians conducted 147 subject specific class sessions for 2,601 students. They also provided library instruction to 692 first-year students enrolled in 44 sections of Introduction to Higher Education (ORIE 101). Library staff completed 1,546 instructional transactions, 2,833 informational transactions and 184 research transactions at the public service desks and answered 225 online questions.

Library Resources That Support Academic Programs

In addition to the print resources available in the Lewis J. Ort Library, Frostburg State University (FSU) is one of 16 institutions participating in the University System of Maryland and Affiliated Institutions (USMAI) Consortium of Libraries. The combined holdings of the consortium totaled 7,220,178 item records on June 30, 2004. The Library Information Management System (LIMS), a collaborative initiative of the consortium for managing access to the USMAI libraries holdings, is currently comprised of two unique information and document delivery systems, Catalog USMAI and Research Port. These are described in the appendix.

The Library and Assessment of Technology Fluency and Information Literacy

The Library has been actively involved in assessing technology fluency and the information literacy goals identified by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education in its publication, *Developing Research and Communication Skills: Guidelines for Information Literacy in the Curriculum*. The growing importance of information literacy also received considerable attention in the curricular reforms that resulted from the Undergraduate Education Initiative (UEI). The library was represented on both the steering committee of the UEI and the Technology Fluency Subcommittee in 2002-2003. Library faculty are currently serving on the Implementation Working Group for Information Literacy.

The Library identified support of a dynamic instruction program and collaboration with the Maryland Information Literacy Institute as objectives in the 2004 Library Strategic Plan

[Exhibit 3-3]. In its 2005 Strategic Plan, the Library identified as a goal the incorporation of information literacy into the academic curriculum, and set out to articulate the competency levels of information literacy and fluency.

Information Literacy Student Learning Goals

1. Students will frame a research question and identify main concepts and corresponding keywords that can be used during the search process.
2. Students will learn to understand the differences between information sources.
3. Students will learn to use catalog USMAI (the online catalog of the University System of Maryland and Affiliated Institutions) to identify appropriate books and items within the library and the University system.
4. Students will learn to use Research Port to identify and find appropriate articles for their research.
5. Students will learn to efficiently and effectively access information and identify credible sources, including information from the World Wide Web.
6. Students will understand that there are different documentation styles for citing sources.

Information Fluency Student Learning Goals

1. Students will learn to articulate a focused research question.
2. Students will learn to identify and select the most appropriate research tool to answer the question.
3. Students will learn to develop effective search strategies to find the best sources.
4. Students will critically review the information retrieved in order to modify and focus subsequent searching.
5. Students will understand the value of documentation with research publications to identify additional information sources for a specific research topic.
6. Students will understand the ethical parameters affecting the use of information that may include copyright, plagiarism, censorship and privacy.

An information literacy survey [Exhibit 6-6] created to assess first year students was completed in fall 2003; data were collected, analyzed and reported with the Student Learning Outcome Assessment Report in July 2004. That report was further revised as the MHEC Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Report (SLOAR) [Exhibit 6-7] in September 2004.

Library faculty have been active participants in campus workshops that focus on various issues of assessment. A library faculty member delivered a presentation in collaboration with the Center for Teaching Excellence that introduced the concepts of information literacy to the campus community. As a result, the presenter was successful in negotiating the incorporation of a library instruction session for students of English 101 (Freshman Composition) classes. This expectation was included in the accepted syllabus for English 101 for the spring 2005 semester.

Library faculty prepare library instruction sessions for academic subject areas, and also participate in library instruction for first year students enrolled in the Introduction to Higher Education course. In addition to teaching the traditional library sessions on identifying and evaluating information sources with demonstrations, hands-on exercises and a follow-up

assignment, the library faculty also participated in an information literacy project initiated and coordinated by Programs for Academic Support and Studies (PASS). An information literacy survey, designed by the teaching librarians, was administered to first-year students through the Introduction to Higher Education 101 course in December 2004. After analyzing the data collected, the UEI Implementation Group concluded that about 50% of the first year students tested in 2004 did not exhibit basic competency levels of information literacy. In order to develop an information-literate student body, the Implementation Group recommended embedding the eight principles of information literacy across the curriculum.

Increasing faculty awareness of the goals for information literacy and fluency and the techniques for assessing student learning for all academic programs is essential if these goals are to be met. An initial presentation through the Center for Teaching Excellence in 2004 was followed by a session that stressed strategies for including information literacy in general education courses and in major programs. Library faculty continue to collaborate with teaching faculty to design instruction sessions that will promote both information literacy and fluency.

Recommendation 6.2: The emphasis on information literacy is placing additional demands on the faculty in the library. Restoring positions to the library as soon as it is feasible to do so must be given a high priority.

Related Educational Activities

Beyond the strong foundation of academic programs at Frostburg State University, students have additional opportunities to meet their goals at this institution through the benefits of related educational activities. Whether students need additional help to succeed, access to special certifications, non-credit offerings to supplement their experience, off campus opportunities, or education in partnership with other institutions, Frostburg provides additional resources to assist students in reaching their goals.

Assessment and Developmental Courses

All first-time college students and transfer students who do not transfer freshman composition and/or a college-level mathematics course must take tests in the three basic skill areas of reading, writing, and mathematics prior to enrollment. Students who score low on the reading and/or writing tests are required to enroll in ENGL 105 (Critical Reading), reading intensive sections of ENGL 101 (Freshman Composition), or smaller sections of ENGL 101 taught by instructors trained in developmental writing. Students scoring below college level on the mathematics placement test are required to enroll in DVMT 095 (Pre-Algebra Mathematics). Students whose scores suggest they are not ready to enroll in College Algebra, but who desire to major in an area that requires higher-level mathematics, are required to enroll in DVMT 100 (Intermediate Algebra). Neither of the developmental mathematics course counts as credit towards the baccalaureate degree.

Learning Communities for Underprepared Students

Programs for Academic Support and Study (PASS) houses the developmental math courses and coordinates the English developmental offerings with the English Department. PASS also offers learning communities that link developmental reading or writing with sections of ORIE

101 (Introduction to Higher Education) and with specific sections of General Education Program (GEP) courses, and provides supplemental instruction for all students in the linked GEP course.

PASS evaluates both the classes and the supplemental instruction and has developed a number of benchmarks: for student satisfaction with the course or service; course pass rates; later performance in a college-level mathematics course or reading/writing intensive courses; academic standing (whether students are placed on academic probation or dismissed); retention; and for graduation rates for students who first enrolled with basic skills below the college level. The benchmarks are ambitious, with the goals in most cases requiring that students who entered college with poor basic skills will achieve the same level of performance as those students whose skills were at the college level at entrance. These goals and benchmarks are included in the appendix.

Assessment results are mixed (*Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Report* [SLOAR], July 2004). In those areas where benchmarks are not achieved, PASS uses the data to revise and improve the services offered. For example, not satisfied with the pass rates in the first college-level course for students who successfully completed Pre-Algebra, the staff is evaluating the content of the Pre-Algebra course to see whether it adequately covers the skills required for success in each of the first college-level math courses. Special sections of two beginning college-level math courses (MATH 104 and MATH 209) have also been developed for Pre-Algebra graduates; the PASS staff provide direct support for students enrolled in these sections.

Certificate Programs

Frostburg State University offered its first credit-bearing certificate programs in the fall of 2001. There are eight undergraduate and three graduate certificates now offered. Credit-bearing certificate programs are approved through the normal curricular approval process, starting in the sponsoring department or program and then undergoing curricular review by the college in which the program resides. The Institutional Priorities and Resources Committee of the Faculty Senate reviews all new proposed programs, including certificates, for consistency with mission and resource implications. The Academic Affairs Committee or Graduate Council then reviews the proposed curriculum, and submits a recommendation to the Faculty Senate. The Senate, Provost, and President must approve all offerings.

In addition to FSU procedures, new certificates within approved programs must be reported to, and stand-alone certificates must be approved by, MHEC and the Board of Regents. The University's offering certificate programs qualified as a significant change and was approved by the Substantive Change Committee of Middle States.

Learning Credits

Learning credits are credit hours awarded for life experiences, such as structured internships, work, and other life experiences, that are substituted for required courses or viewed as valuable additions to a student's academic program. FSU only awards credit for experiential learning that has the prior approval of the department, that is supervised by an FSU faculty member, and that requires a product or products documenting learning achieved.

Additional Locations and Other Instructional Sites

The University's mission statement reflects a strong commitment to offering programs to the surrounding region. Frostburg State University began offering programs at its Hagerstown Center in 1988. These programs are now offered, as of January 2005, through the University System of Maryland Hagerstown Center, which is operated by Frostburg State University. The University's center in Frederick offered the MBA program; the Frederick Center closed in 2004. This program is still available at the USM Center in Hagerstown. In addition to the degree programs offered at the Hagerstown Center, a portion of the Recreation major is offered at Catonsville Community College.

Over the last five years, several new graduate education programs have been added to the Hagerstown location. The Master of Education program offered only Curriculum & Instruction in Hagerstown at the outset. All courses leading to Master of Education degrees in Administration & Supervision, Special Education, Interdisciplinary, and most of the Reading program are now offered in Hagerstown. A Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT): Elementary program was added to the Center beginning in 1999. This program is unique because it is offered only at this Center and not on the main campus in Frostburg. The MAT: Secondary program began at the USM Hagerstown Center in the summer of 2005.

FSU offers the third and fourth year curriculum of several bachelor degrees at the new USM Hagerstown Center. The program in Technical and Professional Studies in Criminal Justice is based on articulation agreements with Frederick Community College and Hagerstown Community College. The Hagerstown location also offers the third and fourth years of bachelor's degree programs in Liberal Studies, Business, and Sociology.

Providing adequate library services has been an ongoing problem in Hagerstown. Library staff from the main campus travel to Hagerstown to provide students with information on gaining access to online documents. The new USM center has plans for a library specialist to ensure that quality of programs will not suffer without expert staff to assist students in research and learning resources. Technology has been developed over the years to support academic programs in off-campus facilities. Two computer labs and several freestanding computers throughout the Hagerstown Center provide students with the opportunity to use them when needed. The new USM center is equipped with wireless capability, and several computer labs will be available for students and for instruction. Computer overhead projectors and document cameras are available to instructors in many classrooms. Still other classrooms have electric outlets and phone line connections at the students' tables.

Distance Learning

Online Education at Frostburg

The principal mission of online education at Frostburg State University (FSU) is to enhance student access to the University's academic programs. Online education allows FSU students to pursue their degree requirements outside of the traditional classroom setting and can accelerate or enhance their time to degree. The University's online courses are especially

important to those FSU students who cannot attend on-site classes because of work commitments or family obligations

Online courses at FSU have most of their class materials (other than textbooks) available electronically and use the web as the primary means of communication. These courses may require some on-site contact between students and the instructor (e.g., an orientation session or proctored testing), but regular on-site class attendance cannot be a course requirement. Frostburg State University's online courses are open to all eligible students who are prepared to learn in an online environment

The University launched its online program during the 2003 Summer School by offering 21 online courses and enrolling 277 students. As of July 2003, enrollments in online courses during the summer and Intersession terms have grown to 2,350.

The success of FSU's online initiative is directly linked to the effort made by the University to help prepare its faculty to teach effectively online. With the help of a major Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) grant in 1999, FSU established the *whytech* program to encourage and train faculty to incorporate technology and new pedagogy into their teaching. Because of the training they received through *whytech*, many FSU faculty members began to offer "web-enhanced" versions of existing courses. These same faculty members were the first to develop Frostburg's first fully online courses.

Online education courses are approved in a manner somewhat different from other courses. Faculty who wish to teach a course online for the first time will usually select a regularly offered course and propose to offer it online for the first time during the summer term. New online faculty receive a professional development stipend in addition to their summer school salary, and may receive further incentives to teach the same course during the regular academic terms.

If the course is approved by the chair and accepted as part of the summer offering, the faculty member must attend scheduled workshops conducted by the Center for Instructional Technologies (CIT). The workshop focuses on online teaching strategies, use of the Blackboard Learning System, and the development of effective online course materials. In addition, the CIT works one-on-one with faculty whose online course development needs require special technical assistance.

Presently, the University's online efforts remain principally focused on Summer School and Intersession. However, the institution plans to offer students more online educational opportunities during the regular academic terms. As part of this effort, 12 "blended" courses will be taught during the spring 2006 courses. Blended courses are those in which significant portions of the learning activities occur online and time spent in the classroom is significantly reduced by not eliminated.

Over the last four years, the University has invested well over \$500,000 in online education. This investment of funds, along with the support of its faculty and the work and commitment of its staff, has allowed FSU to establish high-quality online courses that have attracted large

numbers of students. However, the continued growth of online education at FSU will undoubtedly require the commitment of additional financial and staff resources by the University in support of its efforts.

Interactive Video Instruction

FSU offers courses via the Interactive Video Network (IVN) between the Frostburg campus and the University System of Maryland System Center at Hagerstown. All courses and programs offered as part of this arrangement are developed, approved, and evaluated according to the same university procedures for courses and programs offered in regular classrooms.

Training for instructors of distance courses is mandatory and includes legal and regulatory requirements. FSU maintains a fully qualified full-time faculty in both locations: principally from the Colleges of Education and Business. These faculty are fully participating department members who collaborate with colleagues to offer a large array of interactive video courses in both graduate and undergraduate programs.

In support of interactive video instruction, the Center for Instructional Technologies (CIT) provides workshops, regularly scheduled presentations, and one-on-one assistance regarding course and materials design. CIT offers also a wide range of services to support faculty who wish to convert materials. Workload incentives offered to faculty who teach via interactive video during the regular academic terms.

CHAPTER SEVEN

GENERAL EDUCATION AND ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING

Standards 12 & 14

General Education

One of the principles that guided Frostburg State's recent reform of undergraduate education was that a program of general education should have outcomes-oriented learning goals that can be assessed in a meaningful and systematic manner. Led by the Assistant to the Provost, the steering committee for the Undergraduate Education Initiative (UEI) [Exhibit G-27] presented its final proposal for curricular changes in September 2004. This proposal included the University's first substantive change in its general education program since 1988. These changes reflect an increased understanding by the university community that assessment is a key component in the process of teaching, learning, and curricular reform. Most of the changes in curriculum, approved by the Faculty Senate in February 2005, took effect in fall 2005; other changes are being phased in. This phase-in provides opportunities for assessment of student learning and using the results of that assessment to further refine curricular offerings.

Motivated by a belief that an institution's general education program should support broad goals for undergraduate education, the faculty members and administrative staff responsible for the UEI encouraged the University to adopt a set of Institutional Learning Goals. These goals focus on five specific areas of student learning.

1. Liberal Knowledge and Skills of Inquiry, Critical Thinking, and Synthesis.
2. Core Skills
3. Acquisition and Application of Specialized Knowledge
4. Values and Social Responsibility
5. Appreciation of Cultural Identities

These goals, passed by the Faculty Senate in December 2003, also identify the specific skills and dispositions that students are expected to attain.

After providing an analysis of the efforts that are in place to assess the new general education program, this chapter will discuss other assessment activities, including the specific initiatives within each of the three Colleges: the College of Education, the College of Business, and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. The assessment of the student learning taking place in the co-curriculum was discussed in Chapter Four.

The Goals for the Program of General Education

Frostburg State University's Goals for General Education reflect the mission of the University and its Undergraduate Institutional Learning Goals through a focus on four specific areas of student learning. Both sets of goals are included in the appendix; the specific student learning outcomes that have been identified for each of these areas are also described in the appendix.

Assessment of the General Education Program

A comprehensive plan for the assessment of the new general education program was a centerpiece of the Undergraduate Education Initiative. The *Revised Final Report* of the UEI and its companion piece, *Guide to Implementation* [Appendix], provide a detailed description of the new initiatives for the assessment of general education. Excerpts from these documents are included in the discussion that follows.

Faculty Planning Groups and Core Skills

The Maryland Higher Education Commission has mandated that all Maryland institutions establish specific benchmarks for college-level proficiencies in seven basic skills. These benchmarks are to be assessed on a regular basis and reported to MHEC every three years, beginning 2007. In addition, Middle States accreditation standards specifically state that an institution's program of general education must be designed "so that students acquire and demonstrate college-level proficiency in general education and essential skills, including oral and written communication, critical analysis and reasoning, technological competency, and information literacy."

Recognizing that the involvement of the faculty is integral to the success of the revised curriculum, the University established faculty planning groups to develop recommendations of the UEI related to the following core skills: 1) Quantitative Reasoning, 2) Scientific Reasoning, 3) Critical Thinking, 4) Information Literacy, 5) Technology Literacy, 6) Written Communication, and 7) Oral Communication. Each group created a working definition of its core skill and outlined assessment strategies and standards, including the creation of a narrative rubric for each skill. These are included in the exhibits [G-27]. With the approval of Faculty Senate, in February 2006, of these recommendations (with the exception of Critical Thinking, which was submitted separately), pilot assessments began in the spring 2006 semester. The *Guide to Implementation* provides a charge to each of these groups. Groups are expected to develop assessable goals and appropriate assessment strategies. In addition, most groups are expected to develop grading rubrics and benchmarks.

Technology Literacy

In response to the University System of Maryland policy on technology literacy, one of the planning groups began its work prior to the approval of the UEI. New students entering the University under the 2005-2007 and subsequent catalogs must acquire or demonstrate mastery of ten *Basic Student Information Technology Skills* by one of these methods: (1) passing the *Test of Basic Information Technology Skills* developed by the University [Exhibit 7-1]; (2) successfully completing Introduction to Computer Science (COSC 100/110) with a grade of C or better; or (3) successfully completing (with a grade of C or better) an FSU course that both provides instruction in the basic technology skills identified by the University and requires students to demonstrate proficiency in these skills. The courses that have been identified by the University Undergraduate Curriculum Requirements Sub-committee of the Faculty Senate include Educational Technology Labs I, II, and III (EDUC 346, 447, and 448); Graphic Design (ART 207); and Introduction to Spatial Analysis (GEOG 275).

Additional Faculty Planning Groups

In addition to these faculty planning groups that focus on core skills, planning groups have been established for the following topics:

- The First-Year and Advanced FSU Colloquia
- Capstone Courses/Experiences
- Honors Initiatives in the Majors
- Co-Curricular Learning Experiences
- Student Learning Assessment

Specific charges for these groups, including timelines, have also been developed and are outlined in the Undergraduate Education Initiative's *Guide to Implementation*.

Assessment of Student Learning

Student learning is the principal activity of higher education. Definition of learning expectations and assurance that graduating students achieve learning expectations are key features of any academic program. To the extent that institutional faculty, staff, physical, and technological resources exist principally to facilitate and advance student learning and achievement, a fundamental question that every institution of higher education must be able to answer is: "is student learning occurring and, if so, what is the evidence?" The Middle States Commission on Higher Education, in *Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education*, states that "assessment of student learning demonstrates that the institution's students have knowledge, skills, and competencies consistent with institutional goals and that students at graduation have achieved appropriate higher education goals." Any appraisal of student learning should examine whether measurement of student achievement is consistent with articulated learning objectives, and whether these objectives are aligned with institutional learning goals. The University's commitment to the inculcation of a "culture of assessment" is reflected in several accomplishments in the past three years.

The Institutional Plan [Exhibit G-12], the University's strategic planning document, announced in its 2003-2004 edition the elevation of student learning assessment and institutional assessment to one of nine major institutional goals. In response to the establishment of assessment as an institution-wide commitment, the University collected and published in May of 2003 a "status report" of assessment activities, not only in student learning, but in all divisions of the University. As the preface of this report states, "This inventory of current assessment practices performs a dual purpose. First, its contents confirm that assessment as an institutional strategy for continuous improvement is well-established in many areas of the institution. Second, the report serves as a "baseline" from which future University assessment initiatives can be built." Later that fall, the University also adopted its first-ever roster of Undergraduate Institutional Learning Goals. These were approved by the Faculty Senate.

The 2004-2005 academic year witnessed several advances in student learning assessment. Chief among these was the successful passage of the Undergraduate Education Initiative; the significance of this act is detailed earlier in this chapter. The Center for Teaching Excellence

also partnered with the Office of the Provost to present a year-long series of assessment workshops, and preliminary work began on the development of an institution-wide student learning assessment plan. The creation of institutional definitions and assessment strategies for seven basic proficiencies in general education also began in earnest. The summer of 2004 saw the submittal to the Maryland Higher Education Commission of the Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Report [Exhibit 6-7], in which FSU chronicled, for the first time, its assessment of basic skills in general education. In this document, the University also committed to a three-year plan of action (with reports being submitted, along with all other Maryland post-secondary institutions, on a three-year cycle).

In the spring of 2005, the Provost directed all departments/divisions to develop program learning goals and to assess at least one of these goals. The College of Business and the College of Education easily responded to this mandate, due to the work they had done in response to their respective accreditation requirements. However, some departments/divisions in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences were particularly challenged, having never really engaged in any substantive form of assessment before.

The importance of assigning administrative responsibility for student learning assessment has also been recognized. As of July 2005, the Provost re-aligned his professional staff, charging the Assistant to the Provost with the express responsibility for coordinating, in collaboration with faculty, the University's student learning assessment initiative. As a result, the student learning assessment plan and related activities will benefit from administrative support, thus assuring greater effectiveness in developing, tracking, and reporting assessment activities. The Assistant to the Provost will also serve as an ex officio member of a faculty-driven student learning assessment committee, developed as an adjunct to FSU's faculty governance system.

Assessment within the College of Business

The University received notice in early January that the College of Business earned accreditation from AACSB International – The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business. This action followed a candidacy visit in mid-October, 2005. The AACSB accreditation confirms that the College of Business has developed and implemented a plan intended to meet the twenty-one (21) AACSB standards that ensure high quality of management education. Documentation and analysis of assessment efforts in the area of student learning are driven predominantly by relevant AACSB standards; these assessment efforts are still in the relatively early stages of development, however. College faculty have agreed upon and established a list of desirable learning goals and objectives that students should be able to achieve as they progress through various courses and programs. The assessment of these activities assists the College in measuring the effectiveness of its programs.

The College of Business seeks to achieve consonance with and support for the University Learning Goals as it determines the basic educational objectives. The College has identified a "common body of knowledge", courses that are required in all of its major programs. It has also articulated a set of competencies in each of six areas.

1. Communication and Information Technology Skills (Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening, and Technological Fluency)
2. Analytic and Reflective Thinking Skills (Critical Thinking)
3. Leadership, Team Work and Collaboration
4. Personal Responsibility: Ethics, Values, Multicultural and Diversity Understanding
5. College of Business Core Knowledge
6. Practice & Application

Details on the specific learning objectives associated with each of the above areas of competency are available in the Exhibits [7-2]. In addition to the above competencies for all College of Business graduates, faculty in each of the identified programs (Accounting, Economics, Finance, Management, and Marketing) at the undergraduate and graduate (MBA) levels have developed detailed program objectives that seek to meet the unique needs of the profession, while supporting the goals established at the College and University levels.

The MBA Program offers an opportunity to develop and enhance the managerial skills necessary to succeed in various organizational settings, be it in the corporate, small business, public, or not-for-profit sectors. The MBA program curriculum is common to all students and there are no electives. The curriculum consists of a 16-course (three credits each, or 48 hours total) package.

Outcome Measuring Processes

Numerous outcome measures are in place and are monitored to ensure program adequacy in terms of the mission and stakeholder needs. Further, outcome trends are assessed to determine the need for corrective action. While course-embedded assessment mechanisms pervade all courses, the College additionally uses several curriculum assessment and outcome measuring processes and/or instruments.

Student Satisfaction

Student satisfaction is measured in several ways. In addition to the regular course and instructor evaluation surveys by semester and periodic alumni surveys, the College uses the annual Educational Benchmarking Incorporated (EBI) survey results [Exhibit 7-3] as well as Career Services survey results [Exhibit 7-4].

EBI Surveys: Annual EBI surveys of the College of Business students measure a number of satisfaction factors and allow for comparisons of FSU business students' perceptions to those of other schools. Comparisons are made to other institutions at three levels: a "Select 6" group of closely related peer institutions, all schools in our "Carnegie class", and all institutions in the annual EBI sample. The outcomes allow us to not only rank the College's own strengths and unmet challenges, but also to compare itself against these other groups. Considering the College of Business scores on their own, student satisfaction is high in such factors as: small class sizes; faculty responsiveness; learning outcomes in areas such as communication, team skills, critical thinking, and leadership; and advising. While students note these as strengths, they also note challenges the College must meet to win their support in career placement, facility and computing resources, and student organizational activities. These results are included in the exhibits.

Alumni and Current Student Surveys: The Office of Career Services (“Career Services”) conducts an annual survey of select alumni. The survey indicates results by category of major. Alumni are asked about employment: average salary, job satisfaction, whether job is related to academic major, and length of time to find position after commencement. Career Services publishes and distributes an annual summary of the survey results.

Periodic surveys of accounting alumni have been taken and are reported. Prior to the curriculum study and revision process for the graduate MBA program, a large survey was undertaken of MBA alumni and of current students in the program. From almost 2,000 surveys sent out for the MBA program study, 500 were returned and were usable. The results are available for inspection at the College of Business.

University Program Reviews

USM Policy dictates that every five years, each academic program will undergo an extensive program review that examines all facets of a program. College of Business departments are scheduled for their next reviews in academic year 2006-2007.

Assurance of Learning Committee

Oversight of the assessment processes in the College of Business resides with the Assurance of Learning committee. This committee has developed a number of programs and procedures to aid in the process of identifying effective methods in student assessment. The Assurance of Learning committee has identified learning objectives for important milestones in the learning of a College of Business student and rubrics by which students can be evaluated. The appendix includes a more detailed description of the work of this committee.

Summary

A significant and comprehensive effort is underway at all levels within the College of Business to establish a “culture of assessment,” beyond that needed to meet AACSB standards. This is concomitant with, and in many respects, catalyzed by the “climate” of assessment at the institutional level as spearheaded by the UEI effort. In addition, College faculty members have acknowledged the importance of identifying student learning goals and learning outcomes at both the program and course levels. This has served as an impetus for improvement in the content and design of pedagogy, which should serve to enhance student learning.

Given the relative newness of assessment processes in the College of Business, there is little available data or evidence to evaluate whether faculty are using the results of assessment efforts to make systematic improvements in teaching and learning.

While the assessment mechanisms in the College are being developed internally at this stage, assessment efforts of the College may be strengthened by utilizing external assessment devices, such as Major Exams administered by the Educational Testing Service, in order to permit more reliable and robust cross-sectional comparisons of student achievement with those from peer institutions.

Recommendation 7.1: Within the College of Business, a clear and systematic linkage between assessments of student learning and improvements in teaching and student learning needs to be established. A specific timeline for evaluation of innovative and unique approaches to pedagogy should be developed.

Assessment within the College of Education

The Educational Professions Unit within the College of Education oversees programs for the initial and advanced certification of teachers and other school personnel. The University's education programs were reviewed by the National Council on Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) in 2002, and became one of the first in the nation to meet the new, more rigorous, performance standards of the accrediting agency. Several specific programs within the College of Education have also received separate recognition and commendation by national professional accrediting agencies. These include all three elementary education programs (by the Association for Childhood Education International, in addition to NCATE), and our graduate program in Administration and Supervision, one of only 42 programs nationwide to receive this recognition from NCATE.

A conceptual framework, designed with the assistance of faculty in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, represents a vision for the preparation of quality educators. This framework is utilized as a guide for planning, and instruction. It also serves as a guide for assessment of the knowledge, skills and dispositions of a teacher candidate from the College of Education.

Consistent with and guided by the University and College mission statements, as well as the newly created Institutional Learning Goals, the conceptual framework clearly and consistently communicates learning outcomes through the FSU catalog, admissions brochures, as well as college and department websites and publications. This conceptual framework is based on faculty beliefs about those attributes that were already evident in excellent students completing the teacher education program and what additional attributes and outcomes would make already strong students into excellent professionals. A framework was developed that reflected a collective professional judgment about what graduates should know, be able to do, and be disposed to do in order to insure the learning of the students they will be teaching.

The six distinguishing attributes of a Frostburg State graduate in teacher education include the following: 1) Dedicated Professional, 2) Instructional Leader, 3) Continuous Assessor, 4) Educational Advocate, 5) Collaborative Bridge Builder, and 6) Reflective Decision Maker. This conceptual framework, with the theme "Linked Hands, Heads, and Heart: Building Powerful Learning Communities," has been consistently used by faculty members in the teacher education programs as a guide for redesigning the programs, syllabi, assessments, early field and intern evaluation forms.

The College of Education has developed a comprehensive five-year assessment plan. This plan may be found on the College of Education website and within the exhibits available to the visiting team.

Outcome Measures

All programs within the College of Education have identified learning goals that relate to professional standards, state content standards, and student learning outcomes.

Programs utilize a variety of assessments to measure outcomes: standardized tests, comprehensive exams, internship evaluations, entrance and exit interviews, creation of integrated and concept units, service learning projects, developmental and showcase portfolios, as well as a number of other measures.

All programs within the College of Education have undergone substantial revisions, based on the results of on-going assessment activities. Use of the evidence of student learning has improved over the past five years. Course projects and exams have been revised, rubrics and other assessment tools have been refined or developed, course sequences have been rearranged, and outcomes and indicators have been reviewed and revamped to improve the learning goals and activities of courses or programs. Attention to the impact that a teacher candidate has on student learning has recently become an integral measure of the candidates' effectiveness in internships. Teacher candidates must now demonstrate their impact on student learning as an exit requirement.

Perhaps the most visible change that has been made in the teacher education programs has been in the requirements for both entrance into and graduation from these programs. Changes include a more rigorous mathematics requirement (i.e., completion of either MATH 102, College Algebra, or MATH 209, Elements of Applied Probability and Statistics), a passing score on the Praxis II Subject Assessments for the major, and a portfolio exit interview.

Course Assessments

Course assessments across programs provide evidence that all candidates can demonstrate each of the six attributes included in the conceptual framework. All course syllabi within programs of the College of Education follow a specific format. This ensures uniformity in the communication of student learning outcomes, congruence with the conceptual framework, and assessments of each course outcome. Rubrics are utilized for a majority of course assessments. Course assessment data and course/faculty evaluations are continually utilized to revise syllabi.

Alumni Surveys

One year after graduating from a College of Education program, alumni are sent a "Follow-Up Questionnaire" [Exhibit 7-5] to evaluate their preparation as an educator. The surveys enable the College to seek suggestions and recommendations to improve programs, to demonstrate how well practices follow the conceptual framework and unit outcomes, and to share aggregated results with leadership teams and advisory councils. Surveys are also distributed to principals of first year teachers to assess their perceptions of the College's preparation of teachers.

Using Assessment Results

Faculty members utilize candidate assessment results, course/faculty evaluation data, and current research to continually revise course goals and requirements. State and national

standards, as well as course and program mandates from the Maryland State Department of Education, are integrated within courses and across programs.

The College of Education continues to use and review the conceptual framework as a basis for strengthening all programs. Faculty submit aggregated data for two assessments from each course to measure student learning; these data assist faculty in their efforts to improve teaching. Leadership teams and advisory councils meet regularly to review programs and devise action plans. Since 2001, several ad-hoc committees have been formed to review the outcomes and the related indicators. Appropriate recommendations will be presented to the faculty for consideration prior to the NCATE visit in 2006.

The College of Education is currently in the process of identifying six key assessments for all undergraduate and graduate education courses. These will be collected, evaluated and aggregated utilizing Task Stream, a software program that provides a collection of web-based tools to organize, assess, and showcase learning. All Phase I and Phase II undergraduates were required to utilize Task Stream in the spring of 2005. College faculty members are being trained in how to make the most effective use of this technology in the assessment of programs. Task Stream should assist the College of Education faculty in its efforts to measure student learning in a more consistent manner.

Professional Development

In addition to Task Stream training, the College of Education has sponsored workshops on the use of work samples for assessment and development of rubrics and scoring tools. Faculty members have attended assessment seminars sponsored by the Center for Teaching Excellence, as well as regional and national conference workshops on assessment.

Summary

The introduction of a conceptual framework has resulted in the development of more coherent programs within the College. Faculty from the College regularly attend, and often present, a variety of assessment workshops, seminars, and conferences. The Task Stream software has become an effective tool for the aggregation of course assessment data.

Recommendation 7.2: The College of Education needs to make more systematic use of the results of its extensive assessment efforts to improve teaching, and to recognize excellence in teaching. Assessment results should be shared with the campus community.

Assessment within the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS) consists of sixteen departments and one division (encompassing the three performing arts majors of dance, music and theatre). Unlike the College of Business and the College of Education whose assessment activities are focused on meeting the standards set by specialized accrediting agencies, most of the programs within the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences have both the challenge and advantage of making choices in how they will assess student learning. The assessment activities within two departments, the Department of Physics and Engineering and the Department of Social Work,

are influenced by standards set by their specialized accrediting agencies, Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET) and the Council for Social Work Education (CSWE).

Many of the faculty within the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences have been involved in the various faculty planning groups that have been formed to implement the Undergraduate Education Initiative. Most of the courses within the University's general education program are taught by faculty in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

Program reviews submitted to the University System of Maryland represent the most systematic and long-standing efforts to assess student learning within the College. Departments have employed a variety of assessment strategies in completing these reviews. Examples of such strategies include outside consultants, performance on standardized exams, admission of students to graduate and professional schools, interviews with internship supervisors, and surveys of both graduates and employers.

The Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences provided an opportunity during the spring of 2005 for department and division chairs to consult with Linda Suskie, a nationally recognized expert on assessment. Ms. Suskie provided guidance to chairs about the construction of departmental learning goals. This was done in an effort to align departmental goals with Institutional Learning Goals and to create more consistency in the assessment of student learning within the College,

The steering committee found inconsistent evidence that departments in the College have used the results of assessment efforts to improve academic programs. Faculty in biology created a new major in Interpretive Biology and Natural History, for example, after examining attrition in the Wildlife-Fisheries major. The new major meets the needs of students interested in careers within the national park system, and in other careers that do not require the research skills necessary to complete the wildlife-fisheries major. Another example is found in the department of chemistry. Concerned about the number of students not passing Chemistry 101, faculty instituted a higher math prerequisite for the course. This change has resulted in an increase in the percentage of students passing this course with a C or better. English uses portfolios to assess individual performance and course/program activities and learning goals. Performing Arts and Visual Arts make extensive use of actual performances, such as juries, recitals, concerts, and shows to assess individual performance and progress as well as the effectiveness of learning activities and learning goals.

Recommendation 7.3: Given the size and complexity of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, the Dean should establish a College-wide assessment council to create goals and concomitant guidelines, deadlines, and procedures that align with the Undergraduate Institutional Learning Goals and with the campus-wide activities in student learning assessment.

Summary

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences has made significant, but inconsistent, progress in its efforts to develop specific learning outcomes for its programs. Departments need to continue to identify meaningful assessment strategies that will measure student learning; in addition, departments need to demonstrate that they are using the results of these assessment efforts to enhance student learning.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE UNIVERSITY AND THE COMMUNITY

Special Emphasis

Frostburg State University is an integral part of western Maryland and the region. Because of its strong academic programs and talented students, faculty and staff, the University serves as an important catalyst for regional economic and educational development. The University also fosters a high level of community service and volunteerism in the region and serves as an important center for the cultural arts.

This chapter examines closely existing relationships between FSU and the community. It focuses on five areas: economic development, educational outreach, community service and volunteerism, town gown relations, and cultural arts. Special meetings have been held with private citizens, educators, government officials, and business leaders in the region; ideas and suggestions generated in these discussions helped to form the basis for recommendations regarding steps the University should take to build on its successful record of community involvement. Although this chapter includes specific recommendations for each outreach area discussed, it also offers in its Conclusion important summary statements regarding the present status of the University's community outreach programs.

Regional Economic Development

Frostburg State University has long been committed to its mission of stimulating regional economic development. The University contributes to the City of Frostburg, Allegany County, and the region of western Maryland as a major employer; its students, parents, alumni, and guests infuse the area's economy far beyond that of any other single regional institution; and its resources, in terms of both human talents and physical facilities, are extraordinary. In monetary terms, FSU's economic impact on the tri-state region is estimated at \$366 million: FSU's \$77 million operating budget has a \$308 million impact (using an economic multiplier of 4); other activities such as Commencement, Family Weekend, Homecoming, and conferences/events contribute \$16 million to the local economy; and over 5,000 students infuse \$41.6 million through off-campus housing and local spending.

For at least a decade, the University has been working very closely with business and community leaders, as well as with appointed and elected officials from western Maryland and elsewhere in the state, to form partnerships that will help the regional economy and also support the educational mission of the institution. These efforts have intensified over the past couple of years with new facilities and faculty expertise now in place that can be shared with the business community. A business incubator has also been established for startup companies to develop a presence in the region. Currently, these initiatives are being coordinated primarily by the Vice President for Administration and Finance, the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and the President. The rapid growth in these activities requires a full-time coordinator.

The Allegany Business Center and the Tawes Science/Technology Business Incubator

When FSU completed construction on the new Compton Science Center in the summer of 2003, Tawes Hall (the University's former science building) was left vacant. The University then earmarked about a quarter of the 40,000 square foot building for an incubator designed to build the county's base of technology-related businesses. The first tenants included the Department of Natural Resources and the Mountain Maryland Field Office of the United States Geological Survey (USGS).

During the fall of 2004, the University hosted the Western Maryland Technology Showcase in which technology-related businesses throughout the state were invited to come to FSU and learn about faculty expertise and facilities that could benefit their companies. Following this event in November 2004, Spectrum BioScience moved into the Tawes facility, and in March 2005, the Geographical Information Systems (GIS) firm VARGIS became the fourth tenant of the incubator. Leading Edge Design and Systems (LEDS), moved into Tawes Hall in December 2005. LEDS provides system integration products and services to the federal government, intelligence community, commercial and high-end residential customers to help them index, manage, and share their information. All tenants in the Tawes incubator are employing students, engaging faculty in collaborative research and testing, and attracting professional employees to the area.

With Tawes Hall scheduled for demolition in 2009, the University hopes to grow the incubator over the next four years, with the "incubated" companies graduating into new buildings in a campus technology park. The infrastructure for the park is already in place, with 56 acres designated for use on the edge of campus (Allegany Business Center at Frostburg State University - ABC@FSU); this \$1.3 million project was funded by the Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development, the federal Economic Development Administration, and the Appalachian Regional Commission.

New Facilities

New facilities on campus help to attract companies to the business incubator by providing modern laboratories where collaborative research with University faculty can be supported. These facilities also provide an opportunity for advanced skills training for employees of local industry or other educational institutions in the region. Facilities projects completed within the last ten years include renovation of Gunter Hall as well as construction of the Compton Science Center, the Performing Arts Center, and the Appalachian Laboratory (a separate facility of the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science located on the FSU campus). Construction of a new Center for Communications and Information Technology on the site of the current Tawes Hall is planned for 2010.

Community Service

Faculty and staff at FSU have played an expanded role in community organizations within the past ten years. Among the many local organizations with University representation are the Allegany County Chamber of Commerce, the Western Maryland Health System, Cumberland Theatre, Leadership Maryland, The City of Frostburg Economic Development Committee, the Western Maryland Business Roundtable Network, the Maryland Symphony, the Allegany

Arts Council, and the Allegany County Public Schools Business Education Program Advisory Committee.

Assessing Community Views on the University's Role in Regional Economic Development

To determine the future of FSU's role in regional economic development, the University solicited feedback from members of the local community by organizing focus group meetings with representatives from Allegany, Garrett, and Washington counties. Included were individuals from each county's Chamber of Commerce, as well as economic development officials and local business leaders.

During the discussions, the focus groups praised FSU for having a positive impact on local economic development in a number of ways. The presence of the University was cited as a major factor in attracting more diverse, high-tech companies to the region. The focus groups noted that the local economy benefits when FSU students patronize local businesses and serve as a partial workforce for the area. The University and the City of Frostburg have benefited from a sharing of utilities as well as emergency and maintenance services. Focus group participants from Hagerstown praised FSU's active participation in the new University System of Maryland at Hagerstown, noting that FSU brings a number of programs to a region that lacks a four-year university.

Future Directions

The focus groups identified some areas where improvement is needed to promote future economic growth in the region. The four main categories mentioned were: (1) more effective publicity of the programs and services that FSU offers to the community; (2) enhanced collaboration with local K-12 school systems; (3) improved collaboration/more involvement by FSU faculty in Garrett and Washington counties; and (4) expanded program offerings through collaboration with regional community colleges and local employers.

Recommendation 8.1: Appoint a Coordinator of Regional Economic Development Outreach who would report directly to the President and work to publicize more effectively FSU's activities and programs to the local business community. This individual should also work with state and regional economic development agencies to promote and market the Allegany Business Center at FSU.

Educational Outreach

Frostburg State University offers a variety of outreach services, events, and programs in the tri-state region. These activities provide training, educational events, and direct assistance for individuals and area organizations and businesses. They serve preschool through high school students, senior citizens, business executives, entrepreneurs, aspiring writers, and a host of other individuals.

The College of Education

Through the departments of Educational Professions and Health, Physical Education, and Recreation, the College of Education provides community-based teaching internships,

enrichment activities for local children, a major literature conference, various literary seminars, and opportunities for professional collaborations in the tri-state educational community.

All Department of Educational Professions undergraduate teaching internships are assigned under the auspices of FSU's Professional Development Schools (PDS) Network. A PDS is a partnership between the University and an area school for the purpose of internship placement, K-16 faculty development, school improvement, and research into best practices that serve all learners.

For more than two decades, The Children's Literature Centre at Frostburg State University, sponsored by the Department of Educational Professions, has championed the cause of reading by offering a variety of seminars, literary enrichment activities, and a nationally recognized conference. The Centre also collaborates with area schools, the Allegany County Library System, and the Main Street Program of Frostburg.

The Department of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation (HPER) also offers a variety of outreach activities. For example, HPER students offer a weekly motor development clinic in the FSU Cordts Center for special needs students in Allegany County schools. For the past seven years, youth from the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services and Allegany County's Alternative Schools have received regular instruction in team challenges, water safety, and outdoor education.

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS) at FSU offers a wide range of educational outreach programs that are designed for local educators and their students and for the community at large.

In the summer of 2005, the Frostburg Center for Creative Writing offered a week-long day camp in creative writing for area high school sophomores, juniors, and seniors. In partnership with the College of Education, CLAS has developed a specialized program designed to enhance the skills and knowledge of local K-12 math and science teachers.

The College also works to build the interest and skills of middle school and high school students in science and mathematics through summer educational programs held on the FSU campus. As part of the Maryland Summer Centers program sponsored by the Maryland State Department of Education, two programs are offered: 1) the Physics and Engineering Department offers a summer program in robotics for high school students, and 2) the Mathematics Department hosts fifth through seventh graders for a one-week program to develop their computational skills. In addition, a series of three other Math Camps for fourth through seventh graders are offered by the Mathematics Department in the summer.

Finally, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences also works with the Upward Bound program, the Regional Math/Science Center, and the Health Careers Opportunity Program (HCOP) to bring regional high school students to FSU for residential summer programs. During these six-week programs, students complete science and mathematics courses while

working on projects requiring an interdisciplinary approach to problem solving. During the summer of 2004, there were 60 participants in the Upward Bound program, 49 students in the Regional Math/Science Center program, and 19 HCOP participants.

The College of Business

The College of Business is active in substantial ways as evident in the foregoing discussion of economic development programs and initiatives, including the Center for Regional Progress, the Center for Community Partnership, and the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Center. A complete listing of these programs may be found in the exhibits [8-1].

The Center for Regional Progress analyzes and disseminates economic development information for the tri-state area. It acts as a clearinghouse for economic ideas, statistics, data, and services, including research, analysis, and forecasting for government agencies and businesses. The Center for Community Partnership at FSU was founded in 2001 with a grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission. The Center offers skills training sessions for community businesses and individuals on topics such as Microsoft Office software applications and grant writing. Through the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Center, upper-level students in the FSU College of Business provide free help to community members in preparing federal and state tax returns.

Improving the University's Educational Outreach Efforts

A number of challenges facing the University's educational outreach efforts have become apparent in the course of this study: (1) the lack of a University office or individual charged with working with local school districts to identify and prioritize the educational outreach needs in area schools; (2) the need to improve evaluation of University outreach programs for K-12 that are not associated with the College of Education; (3) the need to improve communication of the availability of outreach programs through the University; and (4) the lack of incentives for FSU faculty to develop or participate in educational outreach programs.

Recommendation 8.2: Establish a University committee to study the scope and effectiveness of its educational outreach efforts and determine how these efforts should be coordinated, publicized, and evaluated. The Committee should also consider how faculty and staff should be recognized for their participation in outreach programs.

Community Service and Volunteerism

The University's Center for Volunteerism and National Service provides opportunities for Frostburg students and faculty to engage in effective and needed community service, volunteerism, service-learning, and national service activities in western Maryland. Established in 1993, the Center is an initiative of the University's Office of Student and Community Involvement and is located within the Division of Student and Educational Services. In 2004, Maryland's Governor Robert Ehrlich and Lt. Governor Michael Steele publicly praised the University for successfully meeting important community needs through effective partnerships with public and private entities. The University Community Outreach

Partnership Center (COPC) program, which is among several initiatives described in the exhibits, was also selected for a Maryland Association of Higher Education Distinguished Program Award in 2005.

The Center for Volunteerism and National Service has also earned a national reputation for the University in these important endeavors. In 2000, FSU was awarded the very first Corporation for National and Community Service CEO's Service Leadership award. In 2002, the University was recognized by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) as a national model for civic and community service programs as part of its Public Engagement Project. In 2003, AASCU also chose FSU as one of only five universities nationwide as a model for "Stepping Forward as Stewards of Place."

AASCU recognized the University again in January 2005 by featuring its COPC program on the organization's website as a "Place of Promise." FSU is one of the first institutions in the nation to receive this special recognition and is one of only seven schools that have been so honored by the AASCU.

Programs of the Center for Volunteerism and National Service: Meeting Regional Needs

The Center for Volunteerism and National Service presently operates the following five community programs that are designed to help ameliorate economic and educational conditions in the region. Although the region is now showing some evidence of economic recovery and growth, it has historically lagged behind the nation and the rest of the state on several important socio-economic measures. Over \$600,000 yearly is raised through grants and foundations to help support these important regional programs. Detailed descriptions of these community programs are located in the Work Group report.

The Community Outreach Partnership Center Program

In February 2003, the University launched its Community Outreach Partnership Center program in the cities of Frostburg and Cumberland, Maryland. The program is funded through a three-year, \$383,709 grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The COPC program provides students and faculty with service-learning opportunities that include enhancing the effectiveness and viability (i.e., capacity) of community organizations and revitalizing neighborhood housing in Cumberland. The activities of the COPC program in Frostburg are discussed below in the Town-Gown Relations section of this chapter.

The Institute for Service-Learning

The Center's Institute for Service-Learning is dedicated to creating and supporting quality service-learning experiences at FSU, in local K-12 school districts, and throughout the community. It assists both experienced faculty and those who are new to the concept of incorporating service-learning into their classes by providing training, resources, individual assistance in service-learning curriculum development, and community placement.

A STAR! in Western Maryland (Appalachian Service Through Action and Resources)

Established in 1994 as an AmeriCorps program funded through the state of Maryland, A STAR! sponsors twelve full-time AmeriCorps members assigned to service sites throughout

the tri-county region. Through their direct service, members address the socio-economic needs of the region. A STAR! and its partners leveraged over \$900,000 in funds and resources for community programs and services from 1993 to 2003. Non-profit, community, and faith-based agencies' in-kind contributions for operating expenses have totaled over \$100,000.

HallSTARS! and the AmeriCorps Educational Award Program

The HallSTARS! program is a living-learning-serving community for freshman students focusing on volunteerism and reflection. It is funded in part by an AmeriCorps Educational Award grant from the Corporation for National and Community Service. Through this program, students participate as part-time AmeriCorps members and receive an educational stipend for their service. Students perform up to 300 hours of community service and share interdisciplinary coursework that complements their service experience.

The Student Center for Volunteerism

The Student Center for Volunteerism, a recognized on-campus organization, provides meaningful one-time volunteer opportunities for FSU students. In 2004, two HallSTARS! were recognized as "Outstanding Volunteers for the State of Maryland" at the Governor's Volunteer Awards. Only 36 volunteers were recognized in the state and the FSU recipients were the only university students to be recognized by the Governor.

Recommendation 8.3: Develop partnerships between the Center's Hagerstown office and area non-profit, faith-based, and community organizations to secure funding through grants and foundations that would allow USM students and high school students to participate in outreach and volunteer activities in the Hagerstown area.

Town-Gown Relations

The University and the city of Frostburg have worked together over the years to address difficult issues relating to the presence of the University in the city and to ensure that Frostburg citizens have a strong voice in how these problems are addressed. Over the last two years, these efforts have intensified with new organizations formed to solve problems and foster improved relations between the Frostburg residents and merchants and the University community. The most important of these organizations include the Town-Gown Committee, the Community Outreach Partnership Center Program, the Historic Main Street Committee, the Frostburg Business and Professional Association (FBPA), and the Frostburg Neighborhood Association.

Local Issues and Concerns

Issues associated with off-campus student housing have long concerned both University and city officials. The mix of student housing and single-family homes in areas close to the University has resulted in tensions between students and local residents, and complaints by Frostburg homeowners regarding neighborhood parking, underage drinking, noise at student parties, trash, pets, and undesirable conduct.

Tensions between students and local residents are also often attributable to the fact that many students are from urban centers, accustomed to anonymity and not freely speaking to strangers. Local residents often interpret this behavior as disrespectful and hostile. Students, in turn, sometimes come to believe that local residents do not want them as neighbors and often feel that they are viewed by residents as undesirable outsiders.

Local businesses are also often disappointed that members of the University community do not frequently visit downtown Frostburg to shop and dine. The inability to routinely attract members of the University community to the city's business district has been a source of frustration and concern for local merchants and Frostburg civic leaders.

Working Together to Find Solutions and Build Community

The Town-Gown Committee, the Community Outreach Partnership Center program, the FBPA, the Historic Main Street Committee, and the Frostburg Neighborhood Association are important partnerships between the University and the city of Frostburg that bring members of the University community and Frostburg residents, civic leaders, and local merchants together to discuss concerns and identify effective solutions to community problems.

The Town-Gown Committee

The Mayor and City Council of Frostburg created the Town-Gown Committee in February of 2003. The purpose of the committee is to recommend programs and policies to the city and the University that will improve relations between city residents and the university community. The Town-Gown Committee (composed of representatives from both the community and the University) has considered a number of important issues, including neighborhood parking, traffic safety, and off-campus student behavior.

Community Outreach Partnership Center (COPC) Program

The University's COPC program in the city of Frostburg has worked to build positive relations between FSU students and local residents. In September 2003, COPC joined local groups and the Allegany County United Way to hold the first annual Day of Caring and Sharing. In 2004, the event attracted 300 participants, including 150 students. The Day of Caring and Sharing focuses on neighborhood clean-up and beautification projects, particularly in the student residential district adjacent to campus.

The Community Outreach Partnership Center in Frostburg also initiated the Listening Project during the 2003-2004 academic year. Students from FSU's Social Work and English departments conducted in depth one-on-one interviews with a wide cross-section of the Frostburg community, including business owners, city officials, and residents of different ages and religious faiths. The Listening Project is designed to create a better understanding of the experiences of Frostburg residents and their views on the impact of the University on the local community.

The Frostburg COPC program has also been involved in sending FSU students to Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training. Community Emergency Response Team training enables individuals to assist law enforcement, fire departments, and civil defense

officials in times of emergency. Once trained, student CERT members each are registered through Campus Police and can be activated through the 911 emergency service.

Frostburg Neighborhood Association

The Frostburg Neighborhood Association attempts to build positive relationships between residents and students living off-campus. It works in concert with the Town-Gown Committee to address off-campus housing and local economic issues that negatively impact on the quality of life in the neighborhoods surrounding the University. The Association is presently working to address a number of important community issues, including littering, residential parking, city code enforcement, and public safety.

Other Cooperative Initiatives and Activities

In addition to the work done by the Town-Gown Committee, the COPC program, and the Frostburg Neighborhood Association, other important initiatives are in place to help build a positive relationship between the Frostburg community and the University. In cooperation with the city and the University, the FBPA holds an annual Block Party on Main Street in Frostburg at the beginning of the school year each fall as a way to bring together the campus and city communities and to familiarize FSU's students with the businesses in Frostburg.

City Place is a historic commercial space owned by the City of Frostburg that has been renovated into a public meeting space large enough to hold 300 person events. It is located in the heart of downtown Frostburg and available to the public for meetings. The University's Frostburg COPC office is housed in this building, with the space donated to the University by the city of Frostburg. In addition, discussions between University and City officials are exploring the potential of a partnership to increase the University's presence in the main business district.

Focus Group Suggestions

A focus group of community leaders and University officials met in the spring of 2005 to discuss town-gown issues and review activities and programs presently underway to address them. The focus group's suggestions dealt with the need to improve the quality of life in city neighborhoods where off-campus housing is located and initiatives to attract students and faculty to downtown businesses. Members of the focus group also noted that some individuals in the city either feel removed from the life of the University or believe that they are adversely affected by its presence in the community.

Recommendation 8.4: Establish a task force in the College of Business to study how the Frostburg downtown business district can attract FSU students and faculty. This study should also focus on the status of transportation to the business district and the establishment of an FSU educational presence downtown.

The Cultural Arts

Frostburg State University lays claim to its rich history in serving as a cultural foundation and arts incubator that has had a significant impact on the tri-state region (western Maryland, south central Pennsylvania, and the eastern panhandle of West Virginia). The scope of the

University's performing and visual arts programs, educational outreach, and public service initiatives has grown exponentially in the past five years since the institution wrote its interim Middle States report. The subsequent economic impact of the University's cultural initiatives upon the tri-state region is both significant and evident. At the core of this arts incubator one finds the Division of Performing Arts (Dance/Music/Theatre), the Cultural Events Series (CES), the Visual Arts Department, the Department of English, the Department of Student and Community Involvement, and the Diversity Center.

Celebrating the Performing and Visual Arts

The University's diverse performing and visual arts programs feature both student and faculty artists as well as professional artists from across the region and the globe. This comprehensive effort produces hundreds of events annually, attracting thousands of patrons attending performances in theatre, music, dance, international film, poetry, literary readings, and the visual arts.

Educational Outreach

The tri-state community is emerging as an increasingly arts-appreciative audience thanks to the ongoing production of fine and performing arts events coupled with hands-on educational programs and outreach for all ages. The FSU Cultural Events Series (CES) and the Division of Performing Arts, among others, lead the University's educational outreach activities and together strive to promote an appreciation for the fundamental value of the arts. Drawing primarily upon support from visiting professional artists, FSU faculty members, and teaching artists from throughout the region, the University's educational outreach programs welcome the community to become active participants in the arts. Special effort is made in establishing relationships with neighbors within the tri-state community so that they might consider themselves to be regular "cast members" in the plethora of experiential workshops, commissioned works, meet the artist sessions, creative residencies, and other events that pull the spectator into the artistic process.

Public Service

The University fulfills its public service mission in the cultural arts not only through its programs, but also by providing access to campus facilities, and the sharing of its human resources with the University's tri-state educational and non-profit collaborators. The Performing Arts Center (PAC) as a performance venue is in great demand by both campus groups and the external community, represented primarily by local non-profits and educational institutions. The PAC is the only full-service performing arts facility of its type west of Frederick, Maryland.

External arts organizations continually look to FSU for both support and leadership. Many arts related questions and requests for advice about producing events are directed to FSU from individuals in the region. The Division of Performing Arts/Theatre regularly lends costumes, props, and other theatrical accoutrements to local high schools to produce their own plays and musicals.

Underserved populations also benefit from the University's artistic presence. Adjudicated youth from Maryland Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) centers visit the campus

frequently throughout the school year to attend workshops and performances, and to work backstage on arts programs. Approximately 800 youth have benefited from the FSU/DJS connection in the past five years.

The Cultural Arts as an Economic Engine

Frostburg State University serves as the “conductor” for the economic arts “engine” in the region. In western Maryland (Allegany, Garrett, and Washington counties), the arts industry spent \$32.8 million in 2003, which generated in turn a total of 367 part-time and full-time jobs. The Division of Performing Arts invests thousands of dollars each season in support of its annual programming. The Cultural Events Series working budget for FY 2005 exceeded \$350,000; over \$14,000 was spent on local housing and meals while \$25,000 was disbursed in local and regional marketing. The annual attendance figures for FSU cultural events exceeded 25,000 patrons for FY 2005.

Frostburg State University also continues to serve as a catalyst in seeking and acquiring grant funds from state and federal agencies, private foundations, and corporate sponsors in order to support its art initiatives both within and beyond the traditional boundaries of the campus community. Among the most prominent organizations supporting the cultural arts at FSU are the National Endowment for the Arts, the Appalachian Regional Commission, and the Mid-Atlantic Arts Foundation. A more detailed listing of supporting agencies and organizations appears in the exhibits.

Focus Groups

Two focus groups were convened in Allegany County and Garrett County to discuss the University’s arts initiatives in the community. These groups were composed of arts management professionals and other representatives from local arts, educational, and municipal organizations.

The focus groups provided a reaffirmation of the success and variety of FSU’s arts programming. Both groups commented that FSU provides a critical mass of what is available culturally in the tri-state region, and often in out-of-the-ordinary forms that would otherwise be unavailable in a rural region. The focus-group participants also commented that the community benefits greatly from the University’s willingness to collaborate, share resources, and foster future connections.

Although focus group members noted that a number of FSU faculty and students are involved in local arts organizations, they want to see more participation. The increased infusion of FSU student interns into the community was mentioned as a necessity. The creation of a summer camp in the visual arts, theater, and dance that would serve local schoolchildren was also suggested as a way to introduce students to FSU and encourage the development of educated student artists in the area. Finally, the focus groups seemed eager to find ways to develop new connections with the University. Participants were excited to hear about the new folklorist engaged through a Maryland State Arts Council/Maryland Historical Trust *Maryland Traditions* grant. Educational representatives stated that they would be quite interested in developing a solid relationship between the folklorist and their school systems.

Recommendation 8.5: Establish a placement coordinator for student interns in the fields of music management, business, marketing, and for other appropriate internships that might benefit the arts community.

Conclusion

The following summary statements are offered regarding the present status of the University's community outreach programs.

- Due to their high level of external funding and to the support provided internally, the University's community outreach efforts are extensive for an institution of its size. The number, size, and impact of outreach programs have grown significantly over the last ten years.
- FSU community outreach programs are intended, in part, to improve communication between the University and the community and to make the institution more accessible to citizens of the region. All current programs, including those associated with regional economic development, promote these objectives and have fostered stronger links between FSU and the surrounding community.
- Many of the University's community outreach programs provide educational opportunities for FSU students through internship opportunities and community service placements, while other programs actively encourage and prepare local youth to attend college after completing high school. Still other FSU programs are designed to foster a greater understanding of and appreciation for the cultural arts within the region. Because the advancement of education and learning is central to the mission of any university, an important evaluative standard for Frostburg's community outreach programs must be their educational value to FSU students and to the people of the region.

To maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of many of the University's community outreach programs, it is necessary that they be better coordinated, promoted, and assessed. This need can be met through the work of a university-wide office that would facilitate the development, administration, promotion, and evaluation of the University's outreach efforts.

CHAPTER NINE

CONCLUSION

This self-study has provided members of the University community an opportunity to examine both the strengths and challenges of the institution at a critical time in its history. This comprehensive analysis of Frostburg State University has included an examination of the results of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), the faculty survey conducted by the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA, and locally constructed surveys of faculty, students, and staff. The analysis of the results of these various surveys and other data has revealed an institution that is much stronger than some members of the campus community appear to realize.

In spite of recent budgetary challenges, prompted by both cutbacks mandated by the state and shortfalls in enrollment, students surveyed reported a deep sense of appreciation to both faculty members and staff for the efforts made on their behalf. It is also clear that Frostburg State University has matured during the past decade and is now fulfilling all three dimensions of its mission – teaching, community service, and economic development.

The survey of students conducted as a part of this self-study confirmed that Frostburg State University students are deeply appreciative of the commitment that faculty and staff have demonstrated to create meaningful learning experiences – both inside and outside the classroom. Comparing the perceptions of FSU students with students nationwide reveals a student body that is more engaged in learning than perhaps would have been predicted by various campus constituencies. These results serve as a powerful reminder that an institution's quality should not be measured by inputs – SAT scores and GPAs alone – but rather by the impact that the institution has on its students. Frostburg State University has much reason to be celebratory about the accomplishments of its graduates; there are many whose success would not have been predicted at the time of their admission to the University.

One of the most significant accomplishments of the past decade is the strong partnership that the University has forged with the western Maryland region. These achievements are described in the preceding chapter and provide evidence of the noteworthy contributions that the University has made to the region in the areas of economic development, community services, and the arts. In addition to attracting new businesses to the area, the economic development initiatives are creating research opportunities for faculty and internship placements for students. As a result, the learning process is being informed by these experiences. The community service programs have achieved national distinction, and the University has become the cultural center for the region as a result of the leadership provided by the Cultural Events Series and the Division of Performing Arts.

The increased diversity of the student body is one of the University's success stories. Surveys of the faculty conducted for this self-study have echoed FSU's commitment to diversity. In free responses, many faculty members praised the University for its diverse student body and identified it as one of the strengths of this rural institution. The University

needs to closely examine why the high retention rates for minority students are not resulting in similarly high graduation rates for this population.

Students' comments on the survey conducted for this self-study serve as a reminder of the powerful impact that experiential learning – internships, study abroad, leadership development programs, undergraduate research, community service – can have on students. Deepening our commitment to create ways for students to be actively engaged in, and responsible for, their own education will serve both our students and the institution itself.

The recommendations that focus on improving recruitment, marketing, and retention efforts are among the most important in this self-study. The importance of providing members of the campus community the opportunity for greater involvement in the planning process is also emphasized. This study has also identified a significant concern among faculty regarding the level of institutional support for faculty development, a challenge during a time of cost containment. In addition, both faculty and staff expressed the need for strengthening the dialogue between administrators and the campus community.

The University has made significant progress in developing a culture of assessment. The College of Business and the teacher education programs in the College of Education have achieved accreditation by the Association for the Advancement of Collegiate Schools of Business and the National Council on Accreditation of Teacher Education, respectively. The assessment activities within these colleges have focused on meeting the rigorous standards set by these specialized accrediting agencies; with the exception of some departments (e.g., engineering and social work) most programs within the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences have both the challenge and advantage of making choices in how they will assess student learning. Assessment within this College will be strengthened by the recent reform of undergraduate education. The faculty have been deeply involved in identifying institutional learning goals and the student learning outcomes for these goals.

Making more systematic use of the results of assessment provides a great opportunity for institutional improvement. A recent example of decision-making informed by the use of assessment results is the creation of the Advising Center. After examining data that indicate that both transfer students and undeclared students have lower retention rates than other students, the University identified funds and redeployed administrators to staff the Center. In addition to serving the above student populations, this Center will serve as a valuable resource for those students who are questioning their majors. More consistent linkages between assessment, planning, and resource allocation will serve the institution well. The development of the Institutional Assessment Plan, which is in progress, has the potential to strengthen both planning and assessment.

The accomplishments of the past decade are considerable. The steering committee hopes that this study reflects and celebrates them. We are also encouraged by the efforts that are being made to identify challenges and make institutional improvements. The faculty and staff have demonstrated a remarkable commitment to the University and its students. The depth of this commitment will shape the future.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

MISSION, PLANNING AND RESOURCES

- 1.1** The University should explore ways to more fully engage the broader campus community in the planning processes that take place at the divisional and institutional levels.
- 1.2** All colleges and academic departments, as well as each non-academic unit within the University, should participate in an annual review of revision of the Institutional Plan, particularly those portions that have an impact on the college, department, or non-academic unit.
- 1.3** Develop an approach that integrates curricular, fiscal, and organizational needs and activities with assessment and incorporates the assessment process in a systematic fashion into annual and long-term planning activities linked to the University's mission and institutional priorities, goals, and objectives.
- 1.4** The University should determine those activities within grant-funded programs that are most integral to the mission, and develop strategies for identifying resources that will enable these programs – and the students they serve – to be supported through regular and reliable funding, in the event that a grant is not renewed.
- 1.5** The University should systematically assess the impact that cost-containment measures have had on departments and offices. A plan, consistent with university priorities, should be developed to restore funding to these areas.

GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

- 2.1** Greater efforts should be made by current faculty leaders to encourage the active involvement of more faculty in the governance system of the University.
- 2.2** University leaders should collaborate with the Student Government Association to increase student awareness of the role of SGA, its authority for the allocation of student activity fees, and the educational benefits of participation. In addition, the opportunities for student involvement in governance committees should be more effectively communicated to the student body.
- 2.3** The University should further investigate what factors are contributing to a minority of faculty describing their relationship with the administration as satisfactory. For example, serious consideration should be given to providing faculty members an opportunity to evaluate all senior administrators. The results of such evaluations may provide further insight into the nature of faculty concerns and an opportunity to address them in a constructive manner. The evaluation process should be designed to distinguish substantive concerns from those that focus on style or personality.

- 2.4 The Provost should conduct a formal review of the chair's role, compensation, contract, appointment, and evaluation in order to more clearly define the position of the chair.

INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT

- 3.1 Establish a university-wide institutional assessment/planning entity that reports to the president, is part of the governance system, is provided administrative and technical support, and has a dedicated budget for assessment activities and professional development.
- 3.2 Develop an institutional assessment plan that includes a definition of assessment, and demonstrates a clear linkage between assessment, planning, and resource allocation. Such a plan should serve to educate the campus community about the important contribution that assessment can make towards institutional improvement.
- 3.3 Coordinate other institutional planning cycles (e.g., at the division or departmental level) with the Institutional Plan to assure continuity of planning and engagement of the University community. Clearly identify how the goals in the Institutional Plan will be assessed.

THE STUDENTS

- 4.1 The University should engage in an in-depth analysis of the enrollment issues facing the institution. The results of this analysis should be widely circulated. Efforts should be made to engage the campus community in exploring ways for offices and departments to assist in recruitment and retention efforts.
- 4.2 The University should re-examine its marketing activities and develop strategies to increase the recognition of Frostburg State University in the mid-Atlantic area.
- 4.3 The University should develop and implement a comprehensive retention plan with assigned leadership responsibilities. The plan should contain specific goals to obtain meaningful data concerning student enrollment and student withdrawal. Retention studies should examine the reasons for lower minority student graduation rates following reasonably high second year retention rates. Additional retention studies should examine important student factors, such as academic profile, reasons for withdrawal, and first-generation status.
- 4.4 The Council on Retention should identify strategies for retaining students who are performing well academically. Additional efforts should be made to celebrate student achievements.
- 4.5 The academic advising program should more clearly delineate the responsibilities of various programs and personnel involved in advising, provide ongoing training, and assess the student learning outcomes of academic advising. Particular attention should also be paid to the declaration of major process and the transition of students from the Introduction to Higher Education course to the major department.

- 4.6 All student services should develop assessment plans that focus on student learning outcomes yet include other indicators of program efficacy to inform policy and planning.

THE FACULTY

- 5.1 The University should increase the stipend paid to adjunct faculty and continue to identify strategies to more fully integrate these faculty members into the University community.
- 5.2 The University should explore ways to increase funding to support professional development activities of faculty members.
- 5.3 The University should increase its efforts to both recruit and retain minority faculty and staff. In addition to the recommendations identified by the Committee on the Recruitment and Retention of a Diverse Faculty and Staff, efforts should be made to more fully understand the reasons for the attrition of minority faculty and staff.

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

- 6.1 Create a new entity administratively overseen and led by a senior administrator to replace the present Office of Graduate Services. This individual should serve as the chief academic officer for graduate education at the University, report directly to the Provost, and be a member of the Deans' Council and President's Cabinet.
- 6.2 The emphasis on information literacy is placing additional demands on the faculty in the library. Restoring positions to the library as soon as it is feasible to do so must be given a high priority.

GENERAL EDUCATION AND THE ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING

- 7.1 Within the College of Business, a clear and systematic linkage between assessments of student learning and improvements in teaching and student learning needs to be established. A specific timeline for evaluation of innovative and unique approaches to pedagogy should be developed.
- 7.2 The College of Education needs to make more systematic use of the results of its extensive assessment efforts to improve teaching, and to recognize excellence in teaching. Assessment results should be shared with the campus community.
- 7.3 Given the size and complexity of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, the Dean should establish a College-wide assessment council to create goals and concomitant guidelines, deadlines, and procedures that align with the Undergraduate Institutional Learning Goals and with the campus-wide activities in student learning assessment.

THE UNIVERSITY AND THE COMMUNITY

- 8.1** Appoint a Coordinator of Regional Economic Development Outreach who would report directly to the President and work to publicize more effectively FSU's activities and programs to the local business community. This individual should also work with state and regional economic development agencies to promote and market the Allegany Business Center at FSU.
- 8.2** Establish a University committee to study the scope and effectiveness of its educational outreach efforts and determine how these efforts should be coordinated, publicized, and evaluated. The Committee should also consider how faculty and staff should be recognized for their participation in outreach programs.
- 8.3** Develop partnerships between the Center's Hagerstown office and area non-profit, faith-based, and community organizations to secure funding through grants and foundations that would allow USM students and high school students to participate in outreach and volunteer activities in the Hagerstown area.
- 8.4** Establish a task force in the College of Business to study how the Frostburg downtown business district can attract FSU students and faculty. This study should also focus on the status of transportation to the business district and the establishment of an FSU educational presence downtown.
- 8.5** Establish a placement coordinator for student interns in the fields of music management, business, marketing, and for other appropriate internships that might benefit the arts community.