

REPORT OF A VISIT  
TO  
UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI-SAINTE LOUIS  
St. Louis, Missouri

February 8-10, 1999

for the  
Commission on Institutions of Higher Education  
of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools

(also found at <http://www.umsl.edu/NCA/>)

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## SECTION 1-THE INTRODUCTION

### **A. Accreditation History**

The University of Missouri-Saint Louis, which was founded in 1963, began its operation under the accreditation of the University of Missouri-Columbia, becoming separately accredited at the baccalaureate level in April 1968. The North Central Association again accredited the institution in 1972, including selected graduate degree programs at both the master's and doctor's degree levels. In 1978 and 1989, accreditation was reaffirmed at the doctoral level. In 1994, UM-St. Louis was authorized by its governing board to establish educational centers in St. Charles County and Jefferson County, Missouri, and it also completed a merger with Barnes College of Nursing. A focused visit was conducted by NCA in March 1996 to assess the impact on the University of its merger with Barnes College of Nursing, and the on-site reviews of the two residence centers were scheduled to occur along with the current visit.

### **B. Scope of the Visit**

This document is the report of a comprehensive evaluation for continued accreditation at the doctor's degree-granting level that was conducted for the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education on February 8-10, 1999.

### **C. Summary of Team Activities**

Cooperation and cordiality typified the visit. Many group meetings and individual discussions were arranged for by the Self-Study Coordinator, including a dinner and luncheon with many impressive community leaders, several members of the Board of Curators, top administrators of the University System, senior administrators of UM-St. Louis, middle administrative managers, academic administrators at all levels, faculty members, staff, and students. Their praise of the institution and their strong commitment to its purposes were substantial. Clearly, the positive impact of the University on its many constituencies is appreciated greatly. The senior administrators drew special praise for the many partnerships developed between the University and the community.

Following a driving-tour of the campus and a briefing on its physical development, the array of campus interviews began, involving deans, associate administrators, directors, department chairs, faculty, staff, students, among others. Open meetings with groups of faculty, staff, and students were well attended with as many as 50-80 persons usually present. Participation was open and direct. One team member went off campus to visit the Residence Center at St. Charles County and conducted two-way audio/visual meetings with faculty, staff, and students at the Jefferson County Residence Center. Another team member spoke by telephone with the chief executive officer of the Coordinating Board for Higher Education, who also carries the title of commissioner, or head, of the Missouri Department of Higher Education. The NCA team was provided with a work room on campus and one in the hotel, both equipped with computers, printers, etc. and a complete array of information and files. Student and staff helpers in the campus work room were

quick to arrange visits, provide escort services, and secure any additional information requested by team members.

#### **D. Evaluation of Self-Study Process and Self-Study Report**

The Self-Study process was conceived and conducted well, and the Self-Study itself was particularly helpful in conducting the visit because it not only contained a great deal of necessary information, but also devoted considerable space to analysis and evaluation of the campus and its many activities. Discussions of mission, vision, direction, identity gap, benchmarking, and assessment were commonplace.

## SECTION 2: EVALUATION FOR AFFILIATION

### A. Institutional Response to Previous Concerns

Faculty salaries too low, without appropriate comparisons. The team agrees that significant progress has been made toward the average salaries of the Urban-13 comparison group, an appropriate target-group for UM-St. Louis.

Number of African-American faculty too low to seek increased enrollment of African-American students. The addition of tenure-track faculty lines to departments that are successful in recruiting African-American faculty has produced some positive results. The goal, however, continues to exist.

Number of awards and amount of external funds, especially in research, too low for UM-St. Louis' attainments and mission. Both the University System and UM-St. Louis have taken many initiatives to overcome this concern. In the past decade, grant and contract funding has tripled and research funding has more than doubled, but the goal of attaining Research II status in the Carnegie Classification System continues to rest in the distant future. There is justification for praise and room for continued concern.

Inadequate library funding, especially for journals. Substantial improvement has occurred.

No long range plan for academic computing. Planning and development have swept past this concern during the past ten years.

Internationalizing the curriculum and non-curricular student experiences. These concerns have been met.

Need for appointment of a new Graduate Dean with strengthened prerogatives of the office. A new dean of the Graduate School, with appropriate credentials and a readiness to act to safeguard quality, was appointed in 1991. The dean also carries the title of Associate Vice Chancellor for Research. The Office of Research Administration (ORA) reports to the dean, as do the interdisciplinary programs in Gerontology and in Public Policy Administration. The dean of the Graduate School and the graduate faculty have developed a reasonably complete set of rules and regulations for the conduct of graduate education.

Need for increased funding in annual maintenance and repair of physical plant. A modest increase has occurred, but it is important to note that the amount (1.5% of replacement value) is now part of the base budget.

Inappropriate annual budget for equipment and its replacement. The institution requires that at least 10% of the cost of current equipment be spent annually on maintenance, repair, and replacement—a step in the right direction—but the team still believes that this concern remains on the agenda for UM-St. Louis.

Inappropriate support of competitive graduate assistant stipends in new doctoral programs. The institution has embarked on a plan to increase over a period of years the stipends for graduate teaching and research assistants as well as the eventual waiver of residential and nonresidential fees, but to become competitive with other more mature doctoral campuses is a difficult assignment. Nevertheless, more dollars from the state Mission Enhancement funds are now going toward graduate student support than any other activity.

Need to improve academic advising. Important steps have been taken to plan and develop an effective advising system. Whether the efforts will be successful must at least wait for the opening of the new Student Center and its space for "one-stop" student services, including advising. The campus is, however, alert to the necessary steps yet to be accomplished.

Overall, the institution's response to the concerns of the previous NCA team has been thoughtful and effective.

## **B. The General Institutional Requirements (GIRs)**

Chapter Nine of the Self-Study Report documents how UM-St. Louis fulfills the General Institutional Requirements for accreditation. The team did observe that while the actual numbers of minimum combinations of high school rank and test scores required for admission to the University are available in other sources of information, the current University of Missouri-St. Louis Bulletin mentions the requirement but does not identify the numbers. The team believes that the institution, technically, meets GIR 22, but that including the cited information in the Bulletin would be helpful to applicants appraising their chances for admission.

## **C. The Criteria for Accreditation**

### **1. The institution has clear and publicly stated purposes consistent with its mission and appropriate to an institution of higher education.**

The evidence supporting this first criterion is both clear and accurate.

Articulation and clarification of the University System's mission, along with further explanation of the specific mission for the University of Missouri-St. Louis campus, appears in the UM-St. Louis Bulletin and is discussed in detail in the Self-Study Report. In fact, every college, school, and managerial unit of the campus has a clearly stated mission, set of operating principles, and vision statement in the Self-Study. In her opening remarks to the NCA team, the Chancellor emphasized various forms of continuous planning that have virtually characterized the institution since its inception. At the System level, the plan most recently completed was a five-year plan, implemented during the 1993-97 fiscal years. This plan addressed a number of System priorities: salaries, equipment and facility maintenance, libraries, and increased student financial aid.

UM-St. Louis adjusted its planning schedule to System requirements, but continued its own processes. Campus master planning, for example, addresses the physical environment and future land and building acquisitions. A campus strategic plan, developed by the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, addresses a wide range of program goals as well as the resources needed to support these goals. The document is relatively new, as is the Vice Chancellor, and it is still under construction, review, and revision-A University-wide technology plan was adopted in 1994 and is currently being implemented. In addition, five-year plans were developed in each academic unit

(colleges, schools, and departments), and many of these were available for the team's review. UM St. Louis is in the second year of its current five-year cycle. Units have an opportunity to update their plans annually for the remaining years in the cycle. Notwithstanding the extensive planning activities, there still appears to be a consensus that the University must find ways to develop new programs and that an investment must be made in this effort in order to address fully the campus mission. Issues and concerns remain for both faculty and students. For example, faculty workload, the increased use of "non-regular" or adjunct faculty, and the "aging" of the faculty are all concerns yet to be dealt with fully. For students, there remains a concern about developing a sense of "community" in an institution where many students are considered "non-traditional." The new Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs is well aware of student issues and is seeking to achieve an appropriate balance between such initiatives as residential housing, the Honors College, and the needs of commuter students.

Campus planning, most agree, is intended to be a "bottom up" process, which originates at the academic unit level and is supported administratively through the Offices of the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and the Vice Chancellor for Managerial and Technological Services (MTS). The major governance body advising the Chancellor on matters of planning and budgeting is the University Senate Committee on Budget and Planning, which meets regularly and includes representation from administration, faculty, and students. However, a significant difference exists between administration on the one hand and faculty and student committee members on the other with regard to when decisions are actually reached and how and when information is provided to the committee.

Recent budgetary reallocations, necessitated by the development of new University initiatives, appear to have exacerbated these differing perceptions. An examination of the committee minutes and supporting documents indicates that significant information on the preliminary and final budgets, as well as the Chancellor's annual report and other documents, are made available. What is not clear is when meeting agendas and attachments to minutes are distributed to members of the committee. In order for members of the committee to fulfill their advisory roles to the Chancellor in the areas of budget and planning, they should receive materials well in advance of the meetings at which related issues are to be discussed. To do otherwise, leaves the impression that planning and budgeting are "top down" decisions, not always consistent with the University's mission and goals. (Yet, we all know that some persons will never have sufficient information or time to make an informed decision.)

Essential to planning is an effective institutional research function. It appears that data gathering and analysis, where it exists at UM-St. Louis, is primarily decentralized. The Vice Chancellor for MTS indicated that data resides with the individual units that need to utilize and report it, such as for federal compliance. There is little indication of the existence of a centralized institutional research function, one that supports the decision making process and that provides information and guidance to academic units by institutional research professionals.

Nevertheless, a great deal of very good planning has gone on at UM-St. Louis. For example, six important goals that are derived from the University's mission and facilitated by campus strategic planning are worthy of identification in this report:

- Maintaining high quality, affordable undergraduate education.
- Enhancing and expanding nationally competitive graduate education for the St. Louis region.
- Contributing to the economic development of the St. Louis region.
- Building partnerships with educational and cultural institutions in the St. Louis region.
- Providing access to higher education through distance learning and educational centers.
- Becoming a Carnegie Research II institution.

**2. The institution has effectively organized the human, financial, and physical resources necessary to accomplish its purposes.**

The team affirms this criterion as being satisfied.

## **Administration and Governance**

### **University of Missouri System**

The University of Missouri-St. Louis is one of four campuses within the University of Missouri System. All of the key administrative policies under which the UM-St. Louis campus operates are determined by the System, as is the annual budget allocation of state funds. In the past, the System developed a budgetary plan with an annual target financial plan tied to performance goals, e.g., Mission Enhancement Plan. Currently, the new System strategic plan, developed by the President, four campus Chancellors, and System Vice Presidents, sets forth goals for all campuses: student success, research and service, program quality, and meeting state needs. It includes a set of performance-driven indicators and is the first time that the plan is academically driven. Campus plans will of necessity need to be reviewed to ascertain whether they are aligned with the System plan. If they are not, appropriate modifications will have to be made. These four goals, or priorities, will drive the annual budget development for the next several years. Campus requests for additional funding will be reviewed in light of these goals, and those approved will become part of the annual System budget request. Campus input is also given to System administration by the Intercampus Faculty Council, which consists of three faculty members from each of the four University of Missouri campuses.

### **Board of Curators**

The nine University System Curators, appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the state Senate, are the principal governing board for the University of Missouri System. They decide how to allocate the unitary budget by a process that relies too heavily on historical precedent and does not seem to sufficiently take into account campus differences, e.g., number of part-time students, whether courses are mostly upper division and graduate, etc. The percentage of the System budget allocated to UM-St. Louis has



been 12% since 1980. This allocation does not reflect the enrollment and program growth that has occurred over the last two decades on the UM-St. Louis campus.

### **Coordinating Board**

In addition to the University System oversight by the President and the Board of Curators, the Coordinating Board for Higher Education (nine members who are also appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the state Senate) is charged with the responsibility for statewide planning for all of post-secondary education, including differentiation of mission among institutions. The Coordinating Board makes a separate recommendation to the Governor on the System's budget and also has responsibility for approving new degree programs and for evaluating student and institutional performance.

### **University Administration**

It is important to note that in three key areas, the campus lacks autonomy: mission differentiation, program approval, and budget allocation. However, within these parameters, the campus through the Chancellor has the authority to operate the UM-St. Louis campus. The team believes that the campus is organized effectively to carry out its stated purposes and that the Chancellor and her staff are appropriately arrayed to oversee the major functions of the University.

Campus governance is vested in a combination of representative bodies. The most important one is the University Senate, which is made up of representatives of the faculty, staff, students, and administration. The Senate exercises legislative authority in matters of curriculum and academic policies and programs and is also empowered to offer recommendations to the Chancellor on other matters affecting the University. Other associations and councils that assist in governance are the Student Government-Association, the Staff Association, a Faculty Council, which is made up exclusively of faculty representatives from all academic departments, and a Graduate Council, which acts on behalf of the graduate faculty.

### **Human Resources**

The fact that 50-80 persons attended open meetings conducted by the team was very gratifying. Several team members observed that such attendance was a rather rare occurrence on other campuses they have reviewed. Separate meetings were conducted with faculty, staff, and students, all of whom presented their observations and opinions with great candor and energy. The team was impressed.

In the many meetings conducted on campus with deans, chairs, and directors, it was often documented that UM-St. Louis has recruited and retained a highly qualified faculty that is accessible to students and that is dedicated to excellence in instruction, research, and professional service. Similar comments were often made about the staff as well, that they are dedicated workers with a strong commitment to the success of the institution. Students we encountered were energetic, thoughtful, and candid. They often spoke with respect of the institution's programs and people, and several provided important assistance to the visiting team. While commenting on academic issues, they mentioned large class sizes, screening of TA's, evaluation of tenured faculty, additional course sections, increase of inter-Library loan program, and incremental grading. On student life

issues, they mentioned the cost and availability of parking, housing, and transportation. On governance issues, they seek greater cooperation with the administration and are concerned that the Senate is dominated by the faculty. And finally, on financial issues, they lamented the continuous increases in fees and the need for more scholarships for non-traditional students.

### **Student Services**

The student affairs division, in addition to providing a broad array of support services that complement the academic mission, provides leadership for the development and implementation of enrollment strategies. This latter function, which is critical to the University's success in the St. Louis metropolitan area, is accomplished in concert with academic affairs. The organizational model provides for an effective and efficient collaborative working relationship.

The student affairs division is headed by a relatively new vice chancellor, who is a member of the Chancellor's Cabinet and is responsible for providing short and long term planning for the area. The many units organized within the framework of student affairs have adequate resources to accomplish their stated missions; however, there are some functions, particularly in the enrollment area, that need to be reassessed to determine what their appropriate level of resources should be.

Clearly, the staff is committed to providing students with quality programs, services, and activities. A number of service areas have streamlined their processes to better serve students, and the staff has utilized a number of strategies to assess the needs of students and their level of satisfaction with their collegiate experience.

The current emphasis on enrollment management is driven by higher admissions requirements, shifts in program offerings, uneven demands for classroom space, changing demographics, intense market competition, and increased instructional costs. Student leaders generally expressed positive comments with regard to campus life, i.e., social, cultural, and recreational activities. They felt that the staff recognized their contribution, engaged them in building learning communities, and guided them in their personal and organizational development. Additional comments by students were summarized in the previous section on Human Resources.

Several functions that seem worthy of review include the necessary level of resources needed for effective enrollment management activities, necessary professional development for the staff to enhance and strengthen their technology skills, and helping student leaders find constructive ways to address issues of concern within the governance structure of the institution.

It is also important to note that Intercollegiate Athletics is a major student activity. The athletic program is a member of the National Collegiate Athletic Association, Division II, and participates in the Great Lakes Valley Conference. Offering five male and six female sports, the institution continues to make efforts to achieve gender equity. Naturally, the

level of competitiveness is probably related to the level of funding; the institution should adjust its levels of expectation accordingly.

### **Managerial and Technological Services**

Managerial and Technological Services personnel are involved in a full range of activities and services, including budget planning and institutional research, business services, finance, campus computing, and telephone services. Earlier comments were made on the need for additional professional services in institutional research, but the instructional and administrative computing facilities and programs are exemplary. A new computer every four years for every user is a remarkable goal. It is clear that the campus has made substantial progress in developing a campus-wide, technology infrastructure.

### **The Library**

The Library appears to be ready to meet the challenges of collection development at the same time that many changes are taking place in the ways academic libraries acquire, retain, and access material. The previous NCA report noted that Library funding was inadequate. Since that time, the Library's funding picture has changed. As a result of reallocations elsewhere in the University, the annual expenditures on collections have increased, and many resources are available to patrons in electronic form. The recent Lexis-Nexus agreement brings access to a vast collection of full-text on-line journal holdings.

Two other developments in the Library bring increased strength. First, the Library has played a central role in the development of partnerships, linking library collections among the St. Louis area colleges and universities, among the campuses of the University of Missouri System, and among academic libraries statewide. These databases are easy to use and include an on-line inter-library loan request system.

Second, one cannot miss the dramatic impact of the relocation of the St. Louis Mercantile Library to the UM-St. Louis Library, which occurred just months before the NCA visit. The presence of a beautifully appointed reading area, art works associated with the opening of the American West, display cases with exhibits of rare works in Americana, and a vast collection of monographs, manuscripts, newspapers and journals identify UM-St. Louis with its metropolitan context. The collection will not only enhance the possibilities for UM-St. Louis students to understand their local history, but it will also bring UM-St. Louis to the attention of the scholarly community and link academic resources to the cultural life of the city.

There are and will continue to be costs associated with this project in partnership. Physical space in the Library will be a premium as it appears that a portion of the collection will need to be moved into off-site storage. The process of bridging/linking the University Library with the Mercantile collection will require staff time and planning. The Mercantile Library has had a history of private support, while the University Library has little experience with fund raising and can benefit from Mercantile's established links.

This collaboration has made the Mercantile Library more accessible to its publics and has brought distinction to UM-St. Louis. Much remains to be done to develop these advantages and to build the interdependency of two collections with very different missions.

As a group, the advances made in the Library have made it possible to keep pace with the emerging needs of the University. As the University advances toward its goal to be a Research II institution, the Library will need to be a visible part of that process. The collection will need to focus on the areas in which the research identities of the University are developed.

### **Physical Resources**

UM-St. Louis' main campus is a beautiful facility, consisting of mostly modern structures. The purchase of older buildings from time to time has carried with it the need to plan for renovation and maintenance. The challenge increases when some of the buildings are of historic and local importance. The University needs to garner funds—public and private—to convert these facilities into usable academic space. Current space needs are being addressed with the construction of the new University Center and the planning for the new Performing Arts Center. In addition to providing a laboratory for students to practice their skills in music, the arts, and communication, the facility will also assist in developing partnerships with the St. Louis Symphony, the Muni Opera, and other arts organizations and provide a performance area not currently available in the region for local and visiting companies. Although some faculty members have expressed strong reservations about the resources to be spent on this venture, the team believes that the positive linkages in the fine and performing arts that can develop between the University and its metropolitan base justify its construction. The team does believe, however, that the University should continue to evaluate the ways in which this facility can augment institutional mission. Like the Mercantile collection in the Library, this opportunity will require careful thought and planning to maximize its fit with University programs.

### **Financial Resources**

UM-St. Louis is not unlike many other metropolitan universities that function within a statewide university system. While its total revenue budget is \$134 million, only 34.3 percent is derived from state appropriations; the largest source of revenue, 41.6 percent, is derived from student fees, the highest portion for campuses in the UM System. Given the six goals the campus has identified, it must endeavor to spend every dollar it has available to it in as cost-effective manner as possible. Balancing its many priorities with the resources available will afford its constituencies many opportunities to second-guess the decisions that are made. The University has, however, the necessary governance structures to bring together advice from all appropriate sources before making its most important decisions.

### **3. The institution is accomplishing its educational and other purposes.**

The evidence is clear that this criterion is being met.

## EDUCATIONAL STRUCTURE

### **College of Arts and Sciences**

The College continues to be the largest academic unit on the campus with 18 departments representing the humanities, social sciences, and sciences. Team discussions with faculty members in the humanities and social sciences yielded a picture of general strength. The Departments of Philosophy and History have developed proposals for graduate study which, if sufficiently targeted to the resources of the community and the opportunities available in the region, could help promote the research identity of the University. The Bachelor of Fine Arts in Art combines the particular strengths of the community college art programs with the professionalism and dedication of the faculty at UM-St. Louis. The appreciation of the quality of community college programs is evident in the success of the program. The Department of English, along with its major programs at graduate and undergraduate levels, is relied upon to provide writing instruction at the first year and junior levels for all students, with the possibility that additional course requirements might be added. The result is that they must rely on a rather large group of lecturers, who are on soft money, which needs to be pursued each year. There is no doubt about the importance of lecturers and the quality of their contributions in carrying out the academic program, but many uncertainties arise because insufficient funds are available at the department level to sustain instruction in composition and to allow for good planning.

The department chairs in the sciences and mathematics are energized by the University's new mission direction, namely progressing to a Research II designation. These departments have always expected their faculties to be involved in externally funded research and are supportive of modest growth in graduate programs. They understand the challenge fully and are concerned that they have sufficient resources to maintain their undergraduate majors at least at current levels of support as they expand graduate offerings.

Two general concerns surfaced. While sufficient funds appear to be available for outfitting new faculty, the 10% set aside for maintenance, repair, and replacement of equipment may not be adequate. In addition, the science facilities are in need of renovation to create more space for new hires and new laboratories, especially in biotechnology.

All chairs were clear that competitive fellowships were needed and that a critical mass of faculty was needed in key areas. Biology had already identified two areas of focus-tropical ecology and biotechnology. A third area, plant science, may well develop into a collaborative effort with Washington University and Monsanto and, therefore, might become a future growth area.

As new programs developed and the pace of grant activity increased, a fund for new faculty setup and for major equipment matching became necessary. The source of dollars

identified was to transfer 42% of the indirect cost (IDC) dollars received by the campus for external awards to Biology, Chemistry, and Physics and Astronomy to this fund. While the chairs agree that this is positive, they are still apprehensive about fewer IDC dollars being available to them to stimulate research activity of faculty in their departments. Both the outgoing and incoming deans of Arts and Sciences expressed concern about the College's expense budget and about the need for additional space as the faculty and research activities expand.

Both the deans and the science faculty also understand that they must play an important role in securing additional extramural funding and in working with area industry. The faculty in particular commented that the University has been supportive of finding ways to help them do their jobs-both in teaching and research. There is excitement, and yet some anxiety, in aspiring to a Research II designation. They do believe that the System Research Board program and the Intramural Research Award and renovation to create more space for new hires and new laboratories, especially in biotechnology.

### **School of Business Administration**

The faculty and administration of the School of Business Administration have had a continuing interest in achieving the professional reaccreditation of the AACSB for both their undergraduate and graduate programs. In 1995, the School received reaccreditation for a ten-year period, and it also became newly accredited in 1995 under separate standards established by AACSB for undergraduate and graduate accounting.

Recently, January 20, 1999, the School completed a strategic planning process. Each of six task forces developed a set of priorities for review and possible implementation. A new venture of special note is the creation of the Professional MBA On-Line, a 48 credit hour, specified curriculum to be completed in twenty-three months. The establishment of specialized minors in each of the School's academic disciplines may turn out to be an effective way to build new enrollments.

Areas of special strength in the School include computing technology, accounting, and global education experiences for all students. Its active participation in the University's Research II initiative may very well be enhanced by a new center in Transportation Studies.

### **School of Education**

The appointment of a new dean has stimulated some long range planning initiatives for the School of Education. Most notably, a task force composed of community leaders, faculty from the School and the College of Arts and Sciences, and some alumni have produced a report entitled, "Futures Document: A Plan of Action for the Future," which is providing guidance for shaping the future of the School. The plan is based on four challenges, all supported by the faculty: 1. Increasing field based experiences; 2. Building collaborative relations, 3. Focusing on technology; and 4. Emphasizing perpetual learning.

It is understandable that the many objectives that have been identified for the School, along with the rapid growth in doctoral education, have raised some statements of concern by the faculty. For example, some want antiquated instructional tools replaced, others want greater opportunities for professional development, especially in the area of technology, while others recognize a need to balance more effectively teaching loads and other expectations. Although limited resources are a fact of life for virtually everyone in higher education, the ten endowed chairs assigned to the School should provide some necessary relief.

On another positive note, the School of Education has the opportunity to provide national leadership in the development of a state-of-the-art Technology and Learning Center, the establishment of the Metropolitan Academy for Education Executives, and the creation of collaborative partnerships with the local community.

### **Engineering Program**

One of the most promising opportunities for an effective partnership occurred in 1992, when a formal agreement was signed between UM-St. Louis and Washington University, establishing a joint undergraduate engineering program. Briefly, about one half of the available programs are taken at UM-St. Louis, consisting of mainly the general education and pre-engineering components, and the second half of the programs are taken at Washington University, consisting of the courses in the major. The degree is conferred by UM-St. Louis. Several important benchmarks for evaluating the program will include enrollment growth, retention rate, and the ability to recruit and retain minority and women students. Both institutions deserve special praise for making these programs available in this form to the citizens of metropolitan St. Louis.

### **Evening College**

The UM-St. Louis Evening College provides undergraduate degree programs for students choosing to attend evening and weekend classes. Twenty-eight degree programs are offered through the evening college, which is housed on-campus. Providing access to education for approximately 1,900 working adults annually contributes to the economic development of St. Louis. This well-organized division offers student services four nights per week and has become such an integral part of the University that classes are part of the faculty's regularly assigned teaching load.

Outstanding characteristics include participation in the Beta Epsilon Chapter of Alpha Sigma Lambda (a national honorary scholastic society for evening college students), an Evening College student organization, plus scholarship opportunities for participants. Student satisfaction with the program appears high, due to a strong commitment to the adult learner.

### **Pierre Laclède Honors College**

The Honors College has grown in size and quality and has achieved a clear campus identity since the last review. It has also taken on the challenge to continue these

increases in the coming years. Both the quality of the students and the quality of the courses were confirmed in our campus conversations. The addition of administrative staff in the College, who also teach, promises to enhance the program as a whole. Especially noteworthy is the anticipated development of a writing portfolio by each student. Not only will this provide the program with narratives of student progress for program assessment, but it will also prepare the students to represent their knowledge and skills in an integrated way as they graduate. The program has attracted highly motivated faculty, prepared to take the extra steps necessary to offer innovative courses at what might be thought an inconvenient location. Several faculty spoke proudly of their involvement in the program. The quality of the students was recognizable in their admissions data. The students are proud of UM-St. Louis and proud of the Honors College, yet willing to critique both.

Significant increases in admissions are expected in the near term. Such growth will involve many challenges:

- Aggressive recruitment: At present, few applicants are denied admission; application numbers will need to increase to sustain quality.
- Adjustments in "community" concept: Maintaining the current richness of community will be more difficult with larger numbers.
- Additional faculty: More will be needed, especially in the sciences.
- Expanded facilities: Identity will need to be developed in a new location.

The College will need resources to sustain the quality of advising (now seen as exceptional), to develop the writing portfolio concept, and to continue to develop a rich array of challenging courses. Students in the program should not be overlooked as a resource in recruitment, mentoring, and instructional support; leadership opportunities can be provided within the program. As the University strives for Research II status, honors students can benefit from the increased research activity of the faculty and their involvement in it. The College should continue to link its programs and courses to the mission of the University.

### **Barnes College of Nursing**

Since the last NCA accreditation visit, the College has merged with and become the Barnes College of Nursing. The College offers bachelor's degrees and continuing education on its own authority, master's degrees in cooperation with the School of Nursing at UM-Kansas City, and the Ph.D. in cooperation with the Schools of Nursing at UM-Kansas City and UM-Columbia. Under new leadership, the College has engaged in strategic planning and has identified areas of special achievement and concern. Its eligibility for reaccreditation with the National League for Nursing is scheduled for 2000. It should also be noted that the College has the distinction of having the first endowed chair at the University.

Initially, a ten year financial commitment by Barnes Jewish Christian Corporation (BJC), beginning in 1996, was expected to ensure the College stability for many years. The commitment allowed the University to develop student housing and left the College as a non-line budget item. However, with changes in the health care field, undergraduate



nursing enrollments have dropped significantly, forcing the College to use its reserves to meet current costs. Additional negative outcomes include: requirements for clinical staffing for master's students to meet national accreditation/certification guidelines have not been fulfilled due to lack of funding; several faculty positions were lost last year; and the increasing tuition requirements of the University have been added to the \$150/hr surcharge for nursing courses that was part of the original BJC/University contract.

Some of the problems identified during the current visit include:

- The clinical ratio for master's clinical students is too high. Current and past figures are 1: 15 or more, while the national norm is 1:6. Failure to reduce this ratio may mean that students could be eliminated from taking national examinations for certification. Lack of tenure-track faculty at this level also limits the research/scholarly productivity of faculty and master's and doctoral students.
- The College absorbs a disproportionate amount of cost for its prelicense track of the BSN program. The program was brought to the campus in a partnership with Barnes Hospital and makes significant contributions to the hospital corporation, the University, and surrounding areas. In spite of significant and positive scholarship programs for the pre-licensure baccalaureate students, the partnership is now financially outdated because of significant drops in undergraduate students throughout the University. Reallocation of University resources to maintain and sustain this program may be needed within the next two years.
- The fee structure for graduate students in nursing needs clarification. Fee structures appear in different locations throughout the documents of the University, and the nursing fee is frequently either absent or not in the same materials as fee structures for other students.
- The College should be taking advantage of the many clinical opportunities offered through the University, e.g., the adult day-care center, the center for trauma recovery, and the children's advocacy center.

### **School of Optometry**

The School of Optometry is emerging from a five-year period of instability occasioned by the absence, for most of that period, of a permanent dean. The recent appointment (January 1, 1999) of a well-qualified individual for that position has already resulted in a great deal of optimism for the future on the part of faculty, staff, and students. One of the unique aspects of the School is that it provides the only optometric education in the state and the region. Though its St. Louis location is optimal from the standpoint of its clinical education component, its mission has a much wider geographical component. The mission of the School complements the mission of the University in that it includes an emphasis on graduate and professional education, community outreach, and public service.

The four-year professional program in optometry was designed for an entering class size of 40 students. For the past two academic years, the school has admitted 44 students to its entering class in order to help make up shortfalls in state appropriated funding due to

University budget reallocation. This mechanism, however, cannot continue due to current limitations imposed by the number of faculty and the physical facilities.

Increased scope of practice with an emphasis on the treatment and management of ocular disease has created an increased demand for resources. This has been partially met by increasing enrollment. In addition, the School's benchmarks call for increasing the use of alternative methods for teaching as well as supplementing optometry courses by using electronically supported formats. Initially, however, these approaches may require more, rather than fewer, resources.

Because of the recent instability in the deanship, the School is not as far along in its formal strategic planning as are other units of the University. Notwithstanding, the team notes that the faculty and administrators appear to have a very good grasp of present and future trends that affect enrollment, resource needs of the School, and the problems as well as achievements of students and graduates.

In addition to the four-year professional program leading to the Doctor of Optometry degree, the School provides graduate education in physiological optics at the M.S. and Ph.D. levels, residency programs that provide intensive one-year advanced clinical training to Doctors of Optometry, and continuing education for practicing optometrists from the state and the region. With regard to the latter, the expanding scope of practice of optometry has created the need for substantial programs of continuing education to enable existing practitioners to upgrade their knowledge and clinical skills.

Two major concerns were expressed by the faculty, administration, staff, and students. First, the contribution of the established educational fees to the relatively high educational cost to the student and the resultant debt level of graduates has been exacerbated over recent years by the mandated rise in educational fees. Optometry students also have, in addition to the usual living costs, substantial costs for instruments and books. Second, the physical facilities for the School have been described as "marginally adequate." This concern includes the maintenance of the present facility and the need to acquire improved facilities for the operation of its programs of didactic, laboratory, and clinical education and research. On the positive side, two new classrooms have recently been completed in Marillac Hall for use by the School.

The research effort of the School of Optometry has always contributed to the University's efforts to garner externally sponsored research. At present, data is not available to indicate what portion of their grants are externally funded and how much of those which are externally funded are from federal sources.

With regard to the graduate program in physiological optics, housed and supported by the School, the performance benchmarks call for a 200% increase in the number of doctoral students along with a 500% increase in externally funded research. This growth is consistent with the University's plans to increase the extent of graduate programs and to increase the amount of externally funded research. Such growth would also need to be supported, on an equitable basis, from those resources that the University is directing toward research and graduate studies.

The team notes that, aside from the dean, there are no full time administrative positions at the School. There is a need for such personnel at least in the areas of student affairs, clinical services, and development. The recent resignation of a financial aid advisor at the School has potentially serious implications if that position is not filled. Financial aid, including counseling and debt management, are essential to optometry students, potential students, and graduates. This relates to the concern that graduates with unmanageable debt cannot contribute to the visual needs of the population in an effective manner. High debt loads preclude students from practicing in areas of shortage and in modes of practice that provide the highest quality and availability of services.

The clinical services provided by the School contribute substantially to the University's mission of providing professional service to the St. Louis region. Its optometry clinics on campus, as well as those on the West side of St. Louis and in East St. Louis, provide services to a population that would otherwise not have access to eye and vision care. One seemingly anomalous situation is that the University's own health plan does not recognize its own Optometry Clinic as an approved provider.

In its portion of the Self-Study, the School of Optometry provided little or no data and no resource documentation to support many of the statements made. Additional material was made available during the visit, but it is apparent that effective planning, resource allocation, and assessment processes are yet to be developed.

### **Continuing Education and Outreach**

The mission of Continuing Education and Outreach (CE&O) is to facilitate lifelong learning to help improve the quality of life of the residents of the St. Louis metropolitan area and beyond. This is accomplished through the delivery of non-credit programs, offcampus credit courses, contract programs, consultation, and action research. This rapidly growing unit has a most unique and effective matrix structure. Led by the Associate Vice Chancellor, Associate Deans within each of the academic units of Arts and Sciences, Business, Education, Nursing, and Optometry are based within their respective academic units and have dual reporting to both their academic deans and to CE&O. Advantages of this organizational design are to establish visibility and responsibility for outreach within traditional academic areas, to maintain academic standards and rigor, and still profit from the focus and efficiency that a centralized unit can bring to such activities like marketing.

CE&O is a highly successful division of UM-St. Louis in several areas, delivering over 3,000 credit and non-credit programs serving nearly 93,000 participants annually. It is central to the main mission of a land-grant institution, committed to meeting the needs of non-traditional students within an urban setting. CE&O is a primary contributor to the economic development of the St. Louis region, is continuing to build partnerships with educational and cultural institutions in the St. Louis region, and is providing access to higher education through distance learning and education centers.

Economic development needs skilled human resources acquired through UM-St. Louis' numerous credit and non-credit learning opportunities in such areas as computer skills, teacher education and in-service, and the new Professional MBA On-Line. Further, the University provides health care resources through nursing education, an Adult Day Services Center, optometry clinics, and the list goes on.

Activities of the CE&O are accomplished through synergetic partnerships benefiting all. Partnering in 2 + 2 programs with local community colleges and high schools to deliver courses on-site and through telecommunication are further examples of how CE&O supports UM-St. Louis' mission.

CE&O is rapidly and responsibly increasing access to higher education via distance learning technology and educational centers. Since the last NCA site visit, the University has established baccalaureate completion centers in St. Charles and Jefferson counties. CE&O provides graduate and undergraduate credit courses at Lindbergh High School in St. Louis County, St. Charles West Senior High School, Fox High School in Arnold, plus the St. Charles County Community College and Jefferson College in Hillsboro. The centers provide the necessary student support services, including advising, registration, financial aid, library resource access, computer lab access, plus foster student-to-student and faculty-student interaction.

CE&O includes the Instructional Technology Center on campus, which provides audiovisual support, telecommunication and distance learning, video production, multimedia development, satellite down-link and up-link services, and the Video Instructional Program. Further, through partnerships with I-Net and BEC, computer-enhanced, broadcast, and two-way interactive programs are delivered.

Not only does CE&O contribute significantly to the educational mission of the University, it also generates major financial resources through its many activities. These dollars provide needed resources for the purchase of academic equipment, travel opportunities, and educational materials on and off-campus.

In sum, through capable and visionary leadership, knowledgeable personnel, creative partnering, and commitment to service, CE&O is a positive force, helping the University carry out its metropolitan mission. This unit is a model for others across the nation.

### **Center Activities**

The University has about twenty different centers functioning at various levels of activity. This report will not comment on all of them, but the team did express during its deliberations an apparent need for attention to the long term viability, quality, and centrality to mission of current and future research centers. Further, the development of new centers should be entertained only when the opportunities that arise can be clearly linked to institutional mission.

Of the three centers which were founded with the assistance of the science departments, the International Center for Tropical Ecology is the most developed and is already of national and international renown. The Ph.D. program in Biology, focused on Ecology, Evolution, and Systematics, is an integral component of the Center and a critical building block for the department, college, and university in reaching the degree target for a Research II institution. The Center has focused purposes-providing graduate education of high quality and increasing awareness of tropical ecology and preservation. The faculty define tropical ecology as a broader field than just the biological sciences and have developed over the past ten years a multidisciplinary center that includes economics, political science, and history, among others. In addition, the Center's education and outreach programs raise consciousness of the residents in this region to the importance of habitat preservation for the well being of current and, especially, future generations.

The faculty believe that the international students recruited and educated in the Center will return to their countries to raise awareness and provide leadership for conservation. These students also enrich the learning environment for American students, who have the opportunity to explore and understand differing views of the many issues involved. The key to the rapid success of this Center can be found in the partnership forged between UM-St. Louis and the Missouri Botanical Garden. The "Garden" brings 40 intellectual partners to the degree program, providing students with a broad range of study areas. They serve as advisors to some of the doctoral students, who in turn are given space at the "Garden" for their work; all graduate students connected with the Center have library privileges. Speakers, seminars, and visitors are shared among the two institutions, all of which benefit student learning, grant success, and growing reputation. Currently, 80 students (44 doctoral candidates) are involved in either the Master's or Ph.D. degree programs. They comprise about 95% of the graduate students in Biology. The Center also assists undergraduate students, inviting them to all forums and seminars, and finding them good internships throughout the world.

The Center Director believes that the Center would profit from having different space that would provide visibility on campus, and some small amount of additional space for international researchers who come to the University for 3-5 months of interaction and study.

The team believes that the University should be commended for its support of this partnership, and all involved should be commended for their efforts in establishing this true center of excellence.

The Center for Molecular Electronics and the Center for Neurodynamics are not nearly as developed as the Center for Tropical Ecology. Their roles within the University must be determined as the campus develops its strategies for achieving Research II status. The Center for Molecular Electronics has a substantial group of investigators-physicists, chemists, and engineers-from UM-St. Louis, Washington University, and local high technology corporations. Currently, the Center lacks organizational structure and focus. It has good space and is well equipped, but projects undertaken are individually proposed and funding, if awarded, goes directly to the Principal Investigator, not to the Center. PI's

continue to identify more with their academic home departments than with the Center, and they continue to identify the home department as the recipient of a share of the IDC, rather than the Center, leaving the Center without a source of funding for staff support. Some faculty have graduate students working for their projects, but the Center lacks an academic focus that provides the intellectual cohesion for student growth and development as teachers and researchers. There is clearly potential, but it is yet to be realized.

The Center for Neurodynamics is even less well developed. In fact, it is hardly a center at all. Two faculty members (one in Physics and one in Biology) are collaborating on funded research projects. The current support for the Center is in its fourth year and has only two years until it is completed. It is unclear whether or how the Center will continue beyond that period. It does not appear to be linked to a specific academic program or department or to have current ties to regional industries.

The University may wish to review both of these entities and make strategic decisions as to whether the "Center" designation should be retained. The current research underway in each one does not appear to be dependent upon having a center.

Ten years ago, the NCA team challenged the Center for International Studies to "internationalize" the University's curriculum and non-curricular student experiences. Since that time, the University has added personnel for development and grant activities and has based four endowed professorships in the Center, including Chinese, Greek, and Irish studies. A unique and very positive aspect of the Center is the twenty flexible arrangements for "buying" faculty time to pursue international endeavors. The team urges the Center to continue its long list of very positive developments.

The Adult Day Services Center is a unique and very successful health-care program for adults, established in 1985 as part of the University's Outreach and Extension services. Some of its positive outcomes include: developing a manual on all aspects of establishing a day-care center under the rules and regulations of the State of Missouri; meeting the needs of approximately 50 clients; developing a clinical site for students; and modeling a fine example of a partnership between the University and the community.

The Center for Emerging Technologies is another example of an exciting partnership. Participants include the University, the City of St. Louis, and the State of Missouri. This center is direct evidence of how UM-St. Louis is moving forward with its goals of establishing effective partnerships and of supporting and assisting in the economic development of the region. The three-fold purpose of this center is to incubate technology development for emerging technology-based businesses, actively facilitate commercialization of these technologies, and develop one or more large-scale technology initiatives. To date, over a half dozen organizations are operating in the center. The projects, conducted by excellent researchers from varied disciplines, have exciting potential for the creation of important new knowledge with commercial potential and positive human impact.

## **General Education**

The general education requirements have been based on a set of skills requirements, breadth of study courses in the humanities, natural sciences and mathematics, and social sciences, and a course in American history and government. In recent years, undergraduate enrollment at the first and second-year levels has declined, and transfer enrollment (especially from local community colleges) has increased. Thus, the role played by the institution in the general education of its graduates has declined. This situation has had a negative impact on the ability of the University to assess the general education of its students, and when coupled with the lack of explicit goals and philosophy to guide general education, assessment has been made even more difficult.

At the time of the NCA visit, the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs had assembled a Task Force charged with the review of general education. It was directed to redefine the, academic requirements to support an anticipated increased presence of first and second-year students and to address the fragmentation of the current approach. The Chair of the Task Force is the Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. While the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and the Dean of the Honors College are members of the Task Force, the faculty will necessarily play an important role in meeting the goals of the Task Force. We commend the University for naming a Task Force and note that it might build on the significant multidisciplinary activity that is already underway among departments.

The challenges for the Task Force are multiple. It would be appropriate to:

- articulate a philosophy and goals for general education that reflect the mission of the institution;
- create a program that is inviting and challenging for first and second-year students define course work appropriate to the philosophy and goals;
- consider general education objectives for the third and fourth years;
- consider such possibilities as service learning, practica, and research projects as valuable adjuncts to course work

The fact that past attempts to bring clarity and change to general education have failed brings some residual skepticism to the task. This can be counterbalanced by creating a sense of opportunity for faculty and students. Clear indications from the administration of the kinds of financial support that could be made available to implement the group's recommendations might provide a supportive context for their deliberations. Because general education involves more than simply a required course of study, those campus units that enhance the intellectual richness of the University, such as the Center for the Humanities ---and its potential corollaries---might be brought into the discussions as well.

## **Assessment**

UM-St. Louis was notified in 1993 that all five components of its assessment plan had been accepted by NCA. Within the wider category of assessment, which encompasses all of the institution's efforts to demonstrate that it is meeting its educational and other purposes, is the institution's program of evaluating student academic achievement in

order to improve teaching and learning. The University is addressing issues related to student learning in two major areas: assessment of its general education requirement and assessment in the student's major field of study. The development of stated goals for general education will provide the opportunity for improvements in the assessment of general education, now conducted through standardized tests that lack articulation with the University's mission. Related to the latter, thus far, is performance of students on national certifying or licensing examinations, such as those for students in nursing, optometry, and certain majors in the School of Education.

The institution uses the Academic Profile II exam for all freshmen and transfers and again with graduating seniors. Results have been generally inconclusive and have not resulted in major changes in the curriculum. The usefulness of this test, or any test for that matter, is limited because students are not individually-affected by test results, and students often approach the test without a mind set to do the best work possible. Both incoming and graduating students performed at or near national means. Interestingly, student scores on the Academic Profile II and on the ACT seemed to correlate.

Major field assessment indicates that, on average, UM-St. Louis-students perform at or above the 50th percentile. One possible concern is that for the past two years, the majority of Biology, Chemistry, and Psychology majors performed below the 50th percentile. The instruments used for major field assessment vary widely among schools and departments.

Of particular note is the functioning of the University Senate Committee on Assessment. This appears to be a cohesive and dedicated group that provides a forum for the discussion of issues related to the evaluation of student performance and the opportunity for the exchange of ideas among disciplines. Assessment of graduate studies is still on the agenda.

### **Graduate Programming and the Carnegie Research II Goal**

In its Self-Study Report, UM-St. Louis listed becoming a Carnegie Research II university as one of its six primary goals-During the course of this team's visit to the University, this goal was probably the subject of more discussion among team members and members of the University community than any other single topic. Institutions in the Research Universities II classification offer "a full range of baccalaureate programs, are committed to graduate education through the doctorate, and give high priority to research. They award 50 or more doctoral degrees each year. In addition, they receive annually between \$15.5 million and \$40 million in federal support."

UM-St. Louis awarded 28 Ph.D.'s in 1997-98 and received approximately \$4 million in federal research dollars. The Self-Study Report noted that the University of Missouri System, which views all four of its institutions as sharing the land-grant mission, decided to make a more vigorous effort to win federal research support. Campus officials believe that their Research II goal is consistent with the UM System's aspirations and also consistent with UM-St. Louis' progress in doctoral education and in winning external



grants and contracts. The team acknowledges that UM-St. Louis could seriously constrain its own future development if it did not pursue strategies most likely to maximize the funding it receives from the System and the state. For example, UM-St. Louis plans to dedicate a significant portion of new state money received through the state's Mission Enhancement funding program to this goal, specifically to the recruitment and support of graduate students.

It is reasonable to view the St. Louis metropolitan region as more than large enough to justify the presence of a public research university. However, advantages and disadvantages are in the Research II goal, and University officials must stay attentive to the full range of implications of pursuing Research II status. The Team would underscore several implications, some at the philosophical level, and others at the operational level.

At the philosophical level, UM-St. Louis could succeed in its quest for Research II classification and receive better funding as an intended byproduct. It could, at the same time, become a different kind of institution, less attuned to and engaged with its metropolitan region, as an unintended byproduct.

The University has successfully articulated a commitment to being a partner with its metropolitan region in tackling community problems, assisting in economic development, and enhancing the life of the community in a variety of ways. The team had opportunity to meet with a good number of community and business leaders, and the commitment by the University obviously resonates strongly with them, and they clearly want the commitment to continue. In fact, many of the newly endowed professorships have important partnership connections. As a rule, however, the faculties and the cultures that develop at research universities are not particularly congenial to outreach programs, applied research, and other forms of direct professional involvement of faculty in the local community. Faculty who become extensively involved in such forms of scholarship often diminish their prospects for tenure and promotion because they typically do less of the traditionally recognized forms of scholarship that are reported in peer reviewed regional and national journals. Moreover, prestige among a faculty member's disciplinary peers across the nation and a faculty member's prospects for being able to have a career path among several institutions of higher education are both enhanced by practicing traditional forms of scholarship. Also, grant reviewers and the guidelines they use in awarding federal research dollars generally favor scholars with strong records of traditional scholarship, who propose to undertake research on issues identified by national agencies. In short, the University may well find that its philosophical commitment to being Missouri's land-grant university with the urban mission is in tension with the goal of becoming classified as a Research II institution.

At the operational level, the Research II goal offers a significant advantage for planning. The effort is akin to the experience of an academic department or a college seeking specialized accreditation: the steps that need to be taken, the priorities for allocation of time and other resources, become self-evident, imposed in effect from the outside. The institution's educational focus will probably shift from undergraduate to graduate, with an increased investment of funds to attract and support graduate teaching and research

assistants. Faculty recruitment will emphasize hiring persons who already have established records of federal research funding.

The University is taking some of the necessary steps to become a Research II university. As indicated earlier, it is devoting the largest share of its state Mission Enhancement money to graduate student support. The institution has succeeded, through the state's endowed professorship matching program, in establishing some 25 endowed professorships, each one requiring a commitment of approximately \$100,000 of the University's own base budget dollars. The University has put in place a policy for sharing indirect cost income from grants with the principal investigator, department, college, etc. It also invests impressively in campus research grants and in start-up funding for science faculty. The University Senate Committee on Research makes recommendations with regard to these campus-based research awards. In the current academic year, 60% of the intramural Research Award proposals were funded, and 22 of 23 requests under the Small Grants program were approved. Despite all this activity, a clear set of strategies for achieving Research II classification through collaborative planning by faculty and administration is still lacking.

Meanwhile, the Carnegie Foundation is reviewing its typology of institutions, and UM-St. Louis should carefully evaluate its options when the revised typology is announced, which presumably will happen within the next one or two years.

**4. The institution can continue to accomplish its purposes and strengthen its educational effectiveness.**

The team affirms that this criterion is being satisfied. Although increases in its current, financial resource base could be justified and will be necessary to eventually accomplish its goals, the University is positioned well for the future. Building repair and maintenance funds are now part of the base budget, preparing the way for future enhancements. It has taken important steps to develop a structured assessment process, practices continuous strategic planning, and has a functioning governance system involving faculty, staff, and students. Its human resource base has great strength for the future.

**5. The institution demonstrates integrity in its practices and relationships.**

The team believes that the institution meets this criterion.

**Third Party Comment**

On November 9, 1998, the University invited public comment on its approaching periodic evaluation by the North Central Association by placing a Legal Notice in the classified section of the "St. Louis Post-Dispatch." Two responses were forthcoming, one from the current President of the Chancellor's Council and a second from the former President of the Council. Both were highly complimentary of the institution and its impact on the region.

## **Grievance Procedures**

A student grade appeal, that resulted in a grade change authorized by the then chief academic affairs officer, provoked a faculty grievance against the University administration. On January 20, 1999, the institution established a procedure for handling grade appeals, which the NCA Team regards as an appropriate policy.

The team was also given an extensive complaint prepared by a faculty member, alleging various improper actions and decisions by the campus administration. The team believes that current governance mechanisms provide ample opportunity for deliberation of the issues cited, and judging from the candid comments expressed at open meetings of the faculty, staff, and students, a climate for freedom of expression seems prevalent. Whether the institution should alter its current governance mechanisms is a decision for the institution to make and not a specific recommendation of the team. The team does believe that more timely responses by campus and system administrators to complaints and grievances could be beneficial to all concerned. Long delays seem to increase levels of anxiety rather than resolve issues.

## **ADA Compliance**

UM-St. Louis appears to be in substantial compliance with the requirements of the American Disabilities Act (ADA), that its programs and facilities are accessible to the disabled. The Director of the Office of Equal Opportunity serves as the ADA compliance officer and provides leadership to the campus in regard to access issues. The campus has the advantage of being relatively young, with most of its buildings constructed in recent decades. Therefore, it has faced a more limited need to renovate and retrofit its buildings than have many older campuses. However, because the University has recently acquired in the vicinity of the campus a number of older buildings that it intends to preserve and use, it must take the necessary steps, expensive in some cases, to make the buildings accessible to persons with disabilities. The University should regularly and frequently monitor the steps taken to provide access, so that it can act promptly whenever access is compromised by equipment failures, unwitting obstruction, or other causes.

The University is enrolling an increasing number of students with disabilities in virtually all categories-mobility, visual, hearing, learning, and psychological. During the spring semester of 1999, students identifying themselves with disabilities numbered 430. The University's Office of Disability Services assists students with disabilities and also administers the TRIO programs, which serve 150 students with disabilities, including a minimum of 50 low income students. The Director of the Office reported an increase, in particular, of students with psychological disabilities. Because the ADA is a permanent mandate of the federal government, the University should consider ADA issues whenever it is engaged in institutional planning and budgeting. Further, an institution of higher education should strive to be a model for its students and society in its commitment to accommodating persons with disabilities.

## **The Record of Student Complaints Log**

The University has established three locations for recording student complaints: the Chancellor's Office, the Office of Academic Affairs, and the Office of Student Affairs. Since September 1998, the institution has recorded sixteen student complaints. The log contains a file number for each complaint, the date filed, nature of the complaint, steps taken to resolve it, the final decision, and any external actions taken by the student. The team finds the institution in compliance with the federal regulation and NCA policy.

## SECTION III. STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES

### **Institutional Strengths**

- Strong support by many prominent, area citizens for UM-St. Louis and its administrative leadership.
- A highly qualified faculty, accessible to students, and dedicated to excellence in instruction, research, and professional service.
- A dedicated staff that is committed to the success of the institution.
- Many students who respect the institution's programs and people, and who participated actively in the NCA visit.
- Strong evidence of effective partnerships with area businesses, industries, and educational and cultural institutions, most notably evidenced by support for the endowed professorships.
- Impressive record of providing educational and professional services in continuing education throughout the St. Louis region.
- A carefully developed master plan for the strategic acquisition of land and the effective use of campus space and facilities.
- A growing Honors College, providing excellent opportunities for high ability students to build and to benefit from a shared learning environment.
- The availability of funding structures that support increased research and scholarly productivity of faculty, through campus funding of the Research Award program and the Small Grants program, and through University System funding of the Research Board program.
- Substantial progress in developing a campus-wide, technology infrastructure, including strong instructional technology on campus and effective distance delivery systems.

### **Institutional Challenges**

- The need for the institution to balance more carefully its pursuit of unanticipated opportunities with its articulated mission and strategic plans.
- The need for attention to long term viability, quality, and centrality to mission for current and future research centers.
- Differing perceptions among faculty and administration regarding the nature and locus of decision making and the information needed to facilitate the process.
- Insufficient physical and financial resources to achieve integration of specialized programs into the University, e.g., optometry and nursing.
- Lack of a clear set of strategies for achieving Research II classification, through collaborative planning by faculty and administration.
- The continued lack of an appropriate annual budget for new equipment, equipment replacement, and repair.
- The need to garner funds-public and private-to convert newly purchased facilities for university use.

#### SECTION IV: ADVICE AND SUGGESTIONS FOR INSTITUTIONAL IMPROVEMENT

Consider including in future *University of Missouri-St. Louis Bulletins* (and other appropriate publications) the actual numbers that are the minimum combinations of high school rank and test scores required for admission to the University. Such notification would bring the catalog and other documents in line with General Institutional Requirement 22.

Realize and reconcile the resource demands inherent in program expansion and research support.

Use the new General Education Task Force to define the philosophy and goals of a General Education program and develop appropriate assessment tools.

Having made good progress in responding to the assessment mandate of the North Central Association, the University now needs to focus more sharply on assessing student academic achievement (learning outcomes) in the major fields of study and the graduate program.

Review carefully student services connected with enrollment and disability services to assure that these areas have sufficient resources to accomplish their goals.

## SECTION V: THE TEAM RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE

The team's recommendations for action, including its recommendation to continue the accreditation of the University of Missouri-St. Louis, are shown on the attached Worksheet for the Statement of Affiliation Status. The team's reasons for its recommendations are:

- The University's response to the concerns of the previous NCA team has been thoughtful and effective.
- UM-St. Louis continues to fulfill the General Institutional Requirements of the North Central Association.
- The institution fulfills the criteria for accreditation. In particular, it has a clearly stated mission with six distinct goals. It has assembled the necessary human resources to pursue these goals, including a highly qualified faculty and dedicated staff. Its array of academic programs and physical resources is impressive. It has accomplished much with the financial resources available to it. Much of its success is related to the many partnerships the University has developed with educational, cultural, business, and corporate organizations in the St. Louis metropolitan area. The strong participation in the endowed professorship program is a very positive indication of the respect the community has for the University and the commitment the area has to the success of UM-St. Louis and its metropolitan mission.
- Similar to other fine institutions, this University's greatest promise may well be its greatest challenge, i.e., Goal 6-Becoming a Carnegie Research II University. Available resources will be pushed to their limits to accomplish this goal and, at the same time, try to maintain high quality undergraduate programs.
- Accomplishing all six goals of the University will call for a sustained effort by all constituencies, necessitating a collaborative approach. As unanticipated opportunities present themselves, the institution will need to balance pursuit of those opportunities with its articulated mission and strategic plans.
- Philosophical and operational tensions related to multiple objectives will also test the institution's governance structure. The doctoral level and federal research objectives of the Research II classification may be in direct conflict for resources with undergraduate education, partnerships, distance learning, and economic development. Maintaining a cooperative approach will be a challenge to all. Nevertheless, the future holds great promise and excitement for the University of Missouri-Saint Louis.

WORKSHEET FOR STATEMENT OF AFFILIATION STATUS

INSTITUTION: UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI-ST. LOUIS

8001 Natural Bridge Rd.

St. Louis, MO 63121-4499

TYPE OF REVIEW: Comprehensive

DATE OF THIS REVIEW: February 8-10, 1999

COMMISSION ACTION:

STATUS: Accredited (1960-.)

Institution Recommended Wording: RETAIN ORIGINAL WORDING

Team Recommended Wording: RETAIN ORIGINAL WORDING

HIGHEST DEGREE

AWARDED: Doctor's.

Institution Recommended Wording: RETAIN ORIGINAL WORDING

Team Recommended Wording: RETAIN ORIGINAL WORDING

MOST RECENT

ACTION: October 17, 1996.

TO BE CHANGED BY THE COMMISSION OFFICE

STIPULATIONS ON

AFFILIATION STATUS: None.

Institution Recommended Wording: NONE.

Team Recommended Wording: NONE.

NEW DEGREE

SITES: Prior Commission approval required.

Institution Recommended Wording: RETAIN ORIGINAL WORDING

Team Recommended Wording: RETAIN ORIGINAL WORDING

PROGRESS REPORTS

REQUIRED: None.

Team Recommended Wording: NONE.

MONITORING REPORTS

REQUIRED: None.

Team Recommended Wording: NONE.

CONTINGENCY REPORTS

REQUIRED: None.

Team Recommended Wording: NONE.

OTHER VISITS

REQUIRED: None.



Team Recommended Wording: NONE.

LAST COMPREHENSIVE

EVALUATION: 1988-89.

TO BE CHANGED BY THE COMMISSION OFFICE

NEXT COMPREHENSIVE

EVALUATION: 1998-99.

Team Recommended Wording: 2008-09.