

FOCUSED VISIT REPORT

*In Response to the 2010 Comprehensive Evaluation
Visit Report by the Higher Learning Commission
Prepared by
Southern Illinois University*

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Because so many members of the university community contributed to the foundation of this report, there will be, almost inevitably, errors and borrowings from public sources, despite the best editorial oversight. All readers are invited to identify these problems so they can be corrected and posted to the university's accreditation homepage, where an updated version of the focused visit report may be found and where its sources are indexed for consultation:

<http://ncaaccreditation.siu.edu>

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION SITE VISIT

On March 22-24, 2010, a team of consultant-evaluators from the Higher Learning Commission (HLC)'s North Central Association of Colleges and Schools visited Southern Illinois University (SIU).¹ During their visit, the team met with individuals and groups of various compositions, including faculty, staff, students, and administrators. From these discussions and from the institutional self-study, the team identified a number of concerns regarding institutional priorities and resource allocation.² The primary recommendations made by the team for each of the *Higher Learning Commission Criteria for Accreditation*, still in effect in 2010, were:

Criterion One: Mission and Integrity

- Revisit the mission statement in view of the perceived competing cultures of student access and research

Criterion Two: Preparing for the Future

- Develop broad-based practices of assessment to guide resource allocation
- Begin strategic planning to address specific issues (detailed below)
- Submit a Progress Report on financial planning by August 15, 2011

Criterion Three: Student Learning and Effective Teaching

- Consider development of university-wide advisement principles or goals
- Fill the vacant position of Director of Assessment and Program Review

Criterion Four: Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge

- In the recommended strategic plan, redefine the goal of becoming a top 75 research institution
- Allocate additional resources to expand the current space available for research

Criterion Five: Engagement and Service

- No recommendations; criterion has been met

In their June 2010 report to the institution, the team also recommended that a focused visit on planning take place in the spring of 2013. In that report, the consultant-evaluators note, "The university has failed to make progress with respect to several of the priorities and now finds itself nearly rudderless during these turbulent economic times."³ They also encouraged SIU to "begin long-term planning" to revise the institution's current strategic plan. Six areas of concern were specifically identified that needed to be addressed by the strategic planning process. To quote the HLC report, these areas are:

- a) Budget. It [the university] must align to mission and to economic conditions. Part of this

¹ NB: Except in direct quotations from HLC documents, the university will be referred to as Southern Illinois University, or SIU, throughout the Focused Visit Report.

² The Higher Learning Commission, "Assurance Section" in Report of a Comprehensive Evaluation Visit to Southern Illinois University Carbondale, June 9, 2010: <http://ncaaccreditation.siu.edu>, Phase 3. (All weblinks were still active as of the submission date for this report.)

³ Ibid., p. 20.

issue is also related to enrollment.

- b) Student Access. SIUC has a special mission to students of low- and medium-income families. There was discussion whether SIUC should continue to enroll 40 percent special admits. Is this a viable alternative for the future?
- c) Enrollment Management. SIUC should develop a strategic goal for student recruitment and retention.
- d) Research Mission. SIUC needs to determine and plan for its research mission. Tensions between research and effective teaching and research and student accessibility need to be resolved. Realistic goals need to be set. Research infrastructure needs to be addressed.
- e) Marketing and Branding. SIUC has a dual mission of being accessible to “underserved” populations and to be a major research university. This theme has potential for special “branding” as a type of institution that cares about students, yet contributes basic and applied research to benefit and improve the state, region, and beyond. Planning should address how this theme may enhance the university’s ability to recruit a diverse student population and promote fund raising.
- f) Employee Relations. It was apparent that a gulf existed between faculty and staff and the administration. This has led to a plethora of unions and has diverted attention from important decisions. Strategic planning should address working relations, communication development, and well being of the Institutional community, as these are important foundations for Institutional effectiveness.⁴

The following chapters address these six core areas of concern and provide evidence that SIU is thoughtfully and appropriately addressing the issues raised by the HLC evaluation team. Each chapter follows the same organizational scheme: the brief introduction of a concern raised by the consultant-evaluators’ report of June 2010, the relevant HLC’s revised criteria which are now being used by member institutions to reaffirm accreditation, and a much longer discussion and analysis of Current Issues and Progress. The last chapter sets these concerns in the context of the university’s recent strategic planning and explains how the university has met the HLC’s older accreditation criteria under the terms of the last site visit in 2010. In short, this report makes the case that SIU has taken seriously its charge to act now, as well as to plan for its future, in matters of vital interest to the university community.

⁴ Ibid., p. 21.

CHAPTER 2: BUDGET

INTRODUCTION

The consultant-evaluation team for the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), which conducted the comprehensive visit for continued accreditation by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, voiced concerns about SIU's finances. It noted that the institution needed to reassess its financial situation in light of "decreased enrollment and timely payments from the State of appropriated funds."⁵ Further, the team indicated that the recommended strategic planning process undertaken by the institution must address the issue of aligning the budget "to mission and to economic conditions."

The HLC team requested a progress report on strategic planning to address SIU's financial condition, due August 15, 2011.⁶ That report was issued on time and accepted by the HLC on August 23, 2011.⁷ The consultant-evaluation team also requested long-term planning to revise the university's strategic vision, *Southern at 150*. In so doing, it must specifically address budget, student access, enrollment management, research mission, marketing and branding, and employee relations. On the budget, the consultant-evaluation team stated that the new plan must be aligned to the university's mission, economic conditions, and enrollment; that there should be a centralized planning process aligned with unit planning; and that a concurrent process should link academic planning to budget and financial planning.

This chapter will describe the progress made in aligning the budget to the mission, economic conditions, and enrollment since the Progress Report filed in August 2011. It will also describe the financial planning process and how it is linked to academic and unit planning. The last section will describe financial issues arising since the August 2011 Progress Report.

RELEVANT HLC CRITERIA

This chapter has been assembled with the following new HLC criteria (*Higher Learning Commission New Criteria for Accreditation*) in mind as they pertain to budget and fiscal planning at SIU:⁸

- 1.A – mission is broadly understood within the institution and guides its operations
 - 1.A.3 – institution's planning and budgeting priorities align with and support the mission
- 1.D – mission demonstrates commitment to the public good

⁵ The Higher Learning Commission, Assurance Section- Report of a Comprehensive Evaluation Visit to Southern Illinois University Carbondale, June 9, 2010, available at <http://ncaaccreditation.siu.edu>, Phase 3, p. 21.

⁶ Southern Illinois University Carbondale, Financial Progress Report for the Higher Learning Commission, August 15, 2011, available at http://chancellor.siu.edu/common/docs/Financial_Progress_Report_HLC.pdf.

⁷ Letter from Mary Breslin, B.V.M., Vice President for Accreditation Relations, Higher Learning Commission to Dr. Rita Cheng, Chancellor, Southern Illinois University Carbondale, August 23, 2011, available at http://www.chancellor.siu.edu/common/docs/HLC_Analysis.pdf.

⁸ See <http://www.ncahlc.org/Information-for-Institutions/criteria-and-core-components.html>.

- 1.D.1 – actions and decisions reflect an understanding that in its educational role the institution serves the public, not solely the institution, and thus entails a public obligation
- 1.D.2 – educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests
- 2.A – institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions
- 3.C – institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services
 - 3.C.4 – institution has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles; it supports their professional development
- 3.D – institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching
 - 3.D.4 – institution provides to students and instructors the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning (technological infrastructure, scientific laboratories, libraries, performance spaces, clinical practice sites, museum collections, as appropriate to the institution's offerings)
- 5.A – institution's resource base supports its current educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future

CURRENT ISSUES AND PROGRESS

State Budget

The university continues to be impacted by the economic condition of the state of Illinois.⁹ Appropriation funding levels for all state institutions of higher education were reduced between 5.98 and 6.24 percent for FY2013. SIU's appropriation was reduced by \$9.65 million or 6.23 percent. The Carbondale campus' share of the appropriation decrease was \$6,891,000. The university will mitigate the financial impact of this reduction through identified savings factors, including the reorganization or elimination of certain functions; open positions, some of which are the result of a record number of retiring employees; and the assessment of additional service expense (overhead) to self-supporting units.

During the 2011 spring legislative session, the state of Illinois adopted performance-based funding. The Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) was charged with developing the methodology for allocating performance funding among the state's public universities and community colleges. It formed a steering committee with representatives from public education, including SIU Chancellor Rita Cheng and other stakeholders, who spent more than six months developing the

⁹ Institute for Illinois Fiscal Sustainability at the Civic Federation, Press Release Announcing Study-Illinois FY2013 budget starts to pay down multi-billion dollar backlog of unpaid bills, Oct. 8, 2012, available at http://www.civicfed.org/sites/default/files/event/PressRelease_StateofILFY2013EnactedBudgetAnalysis.pdf.

methodology. Under the initial performance metrics, utilizing a carve-out of half percent of the state appropriated budget, the university saw a reduction of \$140,400 in state appropriated support for FY2013. The steering committee met in January 2013 to consider refinements to the methodology proposed by an IBHE-invited performance-funding committee without offsetting the factors related to the university's mission students from low- and middle income families. It is expected the carve-out will be 1 percent of the state appropriated budget for FY2014.

Cash Flow

University staff continues to closely monitor unrestricted cash balances. The time required to receive reimbursement from the state improved slightly during FY2012. The university was owed \$59.4 million at June 30, 2012, compared to \$72.5 million at June 30, 2011. The state statute was again amended to extend the lapse period (the time allowed to pay prior year bills) from August 31 to December 31, 2012. The final cash reimbursement owed for FY2012 was not received until early December 2012. Cash reimbursements for FY2013 are being made as the state's financial position appears to be getting better. A think tank estimates that the state's backlog of unpaid bills should be reduced in FY2013 by roughly 14 percent, but warns that pension costs and any unachieved Medicaid cost reductions may threaten the overall backlog reduction.¹⁰ The university continues to maintain a contingency reserve of \$4.1 million, or about 2 percent of the operating state budget. The funds are held centrally and help provide some cushion for cash flow issues that result from delayed state reimbursements.

Veterans Programs

The Illinois Veterans Grant (IVG), National Guard and MIA/POW programs are still not fully funded by the state. The unfunded amount totaled \$2.4 million in FY2012. The state budget for FY2012, however, included partial funding for IVG. The university received \$1.5 million as full payment for the summer 2011 semester and partial payment for the fall 2011 semester.

Pensions

Over 400 employees retired from the university during FY2012, more than twice the number who retired in the prior fiscal year. The increase in the number of retirees was attributed to a change in the annuity calculation, which became effective July 2, 2012, and the general uncertainty surrounding the state's pension liability.

The stability of the state's pension program continues to be a concern. The General Assembly adjourned for the summer without enacting pension reforms, and a special legislative session called by the Governor on August 17, 2012, did not result in legislation. As a result, Standard & Poor's lowered the state's bond rating from A+ to A. The A rating matched Moody's A2 rating issued in January 2012. Moody's called the failure of the special session a negative credit factor.¹¹ However, discussions concerning the future of pension funding are expected to continue

¹⁰ Mark Peters and Kelly Nolan, "Illinois Suffers Credit Downgrade," *Wall Street Journal*, Aug. 29, 2012.

¹¹ Karen Pierog, "Illinois Credit Rating Lowered Again: S & P Cuts State's Bond Rating over Pension Inaction," *Reuters*, Aug. 29, 2012, posted on *Huffington Post*: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/08/29/sp-cuts-illinois-bond-rating_1840052.html.

in the coming months. One proposal would result in the university contributing a portion of the employer's share of the pension cost, up to 12 percent. That cost shift could mean the university would be liable for about \$3 million for each percent. Just over one-half of that amount would be for positions funded by state appropriations.

The Illinois legislature's veto session in November and December of 2012 did not produce any pension reform. There was a short lame duck session scheduled in early January 2013, but no pension reform legislation was passed. Consequently, comprehensive pension reform will not occur until the regular Spring 2013 legislative session. In mid-December 2012 Moody's downgraded the state's credit outlook to negative from stable. While the A2 rating was retained, Moody's commented that the passage of any reforms stands a good chance of being challenged in court on the basis of strong state constitutional protections for pension benefits. "Political pressures, coupled with the threat of litigation, may mean that any reforms enacted have only a marginal effect on liabilities." The university will continue to closely monitor pension funding and the potential impact on the university's finances and its employees.

Credit Rating

Despite the downgrades to the state's bond rating, the university's long-term credit rating continues to be A2 (Moody's Investors Services) and A+ (Standard and Poor's). In April Moody's moved SIU from A2 (watch list) to A2 (stable). The university issued \$44.7 million in revenue bonds in December 2012. The proceeds will be used for HVAC modifications at the Student Recreation Facility, demolition of the Triads housing units, and partial refunding of nearly all of the 2003A and 2004A series bonds. The detail is as follows:

Demolish the Triads	\$2,825,000
Recreation Center HVAC	\$5,365,000
2003A Bonds	\$5,660,000
2004A Bonds	<u>\$30,850,000</u>
Total	\$44,700,000

The university plans to issue approximately \$30 million of Certificates of Participation (COPS) in late spring 2013, to be used for deferred maintenance projects.

Tuition and Enrollment

The Board of Trustees, for FY2013, approved a tuition increase of 4.8 percent for incoming undergraduates and 7 percent for new graduate students. Consistent with state-wide trends, SIU's enrollment declined by nearly 1,000 students to 18,847 for the fall 2012 semester. Two on-going areas of growth, however, are the freshman class – auguring well for future enrollments – and distance education. Over \$6 million in tuition revenue was generated by distance education courses in FY2012. The growth in distance education can be traced to the relatively new responsibility-based budgeting model that provides incentives to colleges for the development and expansion of online courses and programs. Colleges with substantial distance education offerings saw their off-campus students increase between 9.7 and 76 percent. Only one college experienced a drop in the number of off-campus students (-5.9 percent). It is expected that an eighth online program, the BS in Industrial Technology, will debut in fall 2013.

The university's marketing and branding initiative enters its second full year and has resulted in updated recruitment materials and communications and an aggressive advertising campaign. One of the core challenges is to reposition the university's reputation in the mind of consumers as an option. In its initial year, applications for fall 2013 were up 12 percent through mid-December 2012 and the highest level in history in January 2013. A sustained strategy over several years should dispel longstanding myths and unwarranted perceptions about the university and result in increased market share. Renewed focus has also been placed on student success and retention to help ensure that students progress to graduation. The aggregation of student-support services and resources and of efforts in University College should provide students with connections to their college and the university early in their academic career and increase the likelihood that students will be retained and persist through completion.

Chancellor's Planning and Budget Advisory Committee (CPBAC)

The CPBAC continues its active role in the planning and budgeting process. All agendas and meeting minutes of the CPBAC are available on the Chancellor's webpage. Membership is a combination of Chancellor appointments (most of the vice-chancellors and other members of the top financial team) and constituency group representatives (Faculty Senate, Graduate Council, Civil Service Council, Dean's Council, Undergraduate and Graduate Student Governments, Auxiliaries and A/P Council).

Topics considered during FY2012 included state performance funding, pension and health care issues, budget reduction plans, strategic planning, non-academic program review, and changes in fiscal officer designations. The Other Revenue Sources subcommittee prepared a report outlining specific ideas for new revenue sources for the university. In an effort to reduce administrative costs, another subcommittee prepared reports on certain business functions, including accounting services, procurement services, and human resources, with the goal of moving towards shared services and increased operational efficiencies.

These reports are being acted on. For example, one of the recommendations was to move to electronic retrieval services for as much of payroll services as possible. On October 5, 2012, a notice was sent to all campus employees notifying them that:

Employees will receive their last printed copy of their statement of earnings on November 30, 2012. While not mandatory for employees, we encourage you to consider the many benefits to having this available to you online. Your statements of earnings are always available to you; anywhere you have access to the Internet seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day. There is no wait for the statement of earnings to arrive at your workplace and it eliminates the excessive paper for printing. If needed, a form to opt out and request a paper statement of earnings is available at the Payroll Office. However, only compelling reasons for an exception will be considered.¹²

The end of FY2012 addressed the on-going structural budget deficit, which resulted from

¹² On SIU's new Human Relations Self-Service portal, see <http://hr.siu.edu/html/selfservice.html>.

enrollment declines in previous fiscal years, permanently. As the university moves into FY2013 and beyond, shortfalls will be addressed on a permanent basis, instead of short-term measures that do not address the underlying causes. The FY2013 budget shortfall considered by the CPBAC was as follows:

FY2013 State Budget Shortfall:

Appropriation decrease 6.14%	\$(6,891,000)
*Performance based funding	(103,500)
Tuition shortfall	(91,200)
Salary increases 1% FY13	(1,354,539)
Faculty promotions FY13	(538,242)
Salary increases 1% FY12	(1,585,174)
Faculty promotions FY12	(532,305)
General cost increases- TEC utilities	(1,000,000)
Need based scholarships	<u>(775,000)</u>
REQUIRED REDUCTION	\$(12,870,960)
State funding	(6,994,500)
Income Fund	<u>(5,876,460)</u>
REQUIRED REDUCTION	\$(12,870,960)

*Carbondale campus only

Several strategies were employed to handle the FY2013 budget shortfall. First, a salary sweep of all FY2012 employee separations was used to mitigate budget reductions that would be assessed to individual units. Second, Pulliam Pool was closed, eliminating the need for pool tenders; and the Ombudsman office's duties were assigned to the Dean of Students. Both closures resulted in savings. A reallocation of the cost of group health insurance freed up funds on the Carbondale campus, as did an increase in the service expense paid by self-supporting units. In addition, the School of Law began paying an overhead expense on its retained tuition revenue. Third, salary and promotion increases were allocated to the units. Approximately \$1 million of deficit was assigned to the colleges using a formula that weighted fall 2012 credit hours attempted and new students for fall 2012. Those colleges with an overall positive score had additional funds allocated to them, while those colleges with an overall negative score saw additional budget reductions.

Looking forward to FY2014, it is expected that salary commitments and faculty promotions in FY2014 will require an additional \$1.9 million. No additional state appropriations are expected, but it would not be surprising if additional appropriation reductions were made. A shift of the costs for state pensions could begin in FY2014 with each 1 percent shift equal to about \$1.6 million for state supported salaries.

Two initiatives out of the Provost's Office are under way as a result of the Program Changes

Review Committee Report, issued in March 2012, which may yield significant savings.¹³ First, there are a number of programs under review as a result of low enrollment, low graduations, or excessive costs. The program review teams will ultimately accept a program improvement plan, or make a recommendation the program be consolidated, restructured or eliminated. In addition, a Complementary Practices and Academic Efficiencies task force is working to identify efficiencies in the university's academic offerings. The task force is investigating whether there are programs that could be combined administratively to eliminate redundancies, whether there are redundant courses that could be offered more efficiently, and whether all degree programs require no more than 120 hours for a bachelor's degree. Moreover, the task force is inquiring whether or not programs would be better suited in another college. The college Deans are involved in a process that parallels the task force's charge concerning realignments.

Financial Reports

The hard work and sacrifices made by the university community to right the financial ship are beginning to be reflected in the university's financial condition and results of operations. A study by Bain and Company identified the SIU system as financially sound (only 20 percent of all colleges and universities studied were classified as financially sound) based on an examination of the expense ratio and the equity ratio from FY2006-10.¹⁴ The FY2011 financial report for the Carbondale campus showed an increase in net assets, the difference between total assets and total liabilities, of \$40.2 million, or over 10 percent, year over year. Unrestricted assets of the university increased \$8.7 million. An unaudited Statement of Net Assets and a Statement of Revenues, Expenses and Changes in Net Assets for the Carbondale campus only are available in the appendix. A copy of the audited financial statements for the SIU system, including Carbondale, Edwardsville, and the system administration offices, accompanies this update.

Ratios - The Financial Data Worksheet is prepared for the HLC each fiscal year, following the completion of the audited financial reports. The Primary Reserve Ratio, which measures the financial strength of the institution, showed further improvement, moving from 18.29 percent at June 30, 2010, to 27.6 percent at June 30, 2011. This ratio is primarily a factor of the increase in net assets.

The Net Operating Revenue ratio also improved from 4.87 percent at June 30, 2010, to 8.2 percent at June 30, 2011. This ratio is a primary indicator of how the surplus from operating activities affects the behavior of the core ratios.

Finally, the Return on Net Assets ratio improved from 10.46 percent at the end of FY2010 to 18.32 percent a year later. This ratio is used to determine whether the institution is financially better off than in previous years by measuring total economic return.

The FY2012 audited financial report is currently being prepared. A cash basis interim statement of revenues and expenses as of June 30, 2012 indicates that FY2012 net income will show an

¹³ Program Changes Review Committee Report, January 2012 (revised March 2012), available at http://pvcaa.siu.edu/pdfs/Program_Changes_%20Review_Report.pdf.

¹⁴ Jeff Denneen and Tom Dretler, "The Financially Sustainable University," *Bain Brief*, July 6, 2012: <http://www.bain.com/publications/articles/financially-sustainable-university.aspx>.

increase over the prior fiscal year, resulting in an increase in the net assets of the university at June 30, 2012.

Aligning the Budget to the Mission

The university's unique mission of providing access and opportunity and being a nationally ranked public research university required several adjustments to the historical incremental budget approach that had dominated the budgetary planning for many years.

First, the structural deficit had to be addressed. At the start of FY2010, the university faced a structural deficit of \$13 million, resulting from enrollment declines in previous fiscal years that were partially covered with non-recurring funds. That structural deficit was down to \$5.7 million at the beginning of FY2012. The structural deficit was lowered in FY2011 with 4 percent recurring base reductions in academic units and 5 percent in non-academic and support units. In addition, non-recurring reductions (a four-day non-paid administrative leaves for all university employees, a hiring freeze, postponed equipment and commodity purchases, and limited travel) were employed to mitigate the recurring base reductions. By the beginning of FY2013, the structural deficit was gone, and the budget was in balance. Centralizing all empty lines and limiting hiring eliminated the structural deficit.

Part of the strategy in centralizing salary lines required all units to submit hiring plans to the Chancellor. All units reporting to the Provost submit their annual and longer-term hiring plans to him and the Chancellor. This allows the Provost to adjust unit plans to reflect demand and need. Subsequent hiring requests had to be in compliance with the short and long-term plans and goals submitted by the unit. Similarly, the Provost formed a faculty advisory committee to screen hiring requests and to recommend recruitment priorities. That process continues in FY2013.

Second, accumulating the various student support units for freshmen and transfer students into a University College reinforced an emphasis on student success. The units transferred into the University College included the University Core Curriculum, the University Honors Program, and the Saluki First Year, which oversees New Student Programs, Exploratory Students (formerly Pre-Major Advisement, and the Center for Academic Success), First-Year Advisement (using the total in-take model), Student Support Services, Supplemental Instruction, Career Services, and the Suder First Scholars Program. All new freshmen entering the university as of fall 2012 are now required to take UCOL 101, which teaches academic survival skills, helps students identify resources, establish connections with the university and their college, and create a solid academic foundation in their first semester.

Increasing the amount of institutional aid available to students is also a priority. As part of our mission of access and opportunity, the university identified \$2.5 million of additional institutional aid in FY2012, more than doubling the \$2.45 million available before FY2011. In FY2013 an additional \$775 thousand of institutional aid will be made available to help students with the cost of attendance. Moreover, beginning in fall 2013, the proceeds from an exclusive soft-drink pouring rights contract will be dedicated to student aid to fund more merit-based scholarships for high-achieving, out-of-state students.

In pursuance of our mission of access and opportunity, the new distance education (DE) revenue sharing model has spurred new initiatives in online courses and programs offered to students unable to attend residential programs due to financial or life issues. The DE model allows programs to reach out and bring quality programs and courses to those students. Online enrollments went from 991 for fall 2011 to 1,927 for fall 2012. There are now three bachelor's programs, four masters programs, and a certificate program offered online. These numbers are expected to rise as more colleges embrace the financial model as a means of providing quality programs and generating revenue that can be used to support students and faculty.

Third, significant investment in classroom and teaching labs was needed to provide our students with the best learning spaces available. Over the past year, 20 new smart classrooms have been created, and 60 general classrooms and 15 teaching labs will be renovated. In addition, research labs are being upgraded and the McLafferty Annex will be converted into cross disciplinary research space now that the library books have been moved into the lower floor of Morris Library. An increased share of research indirect costs being allocated to the Chancellor's office funds much of these rehabilitation efforts. When the sixth and seventh floors of Morris Library are finished, there will be flexible learning spaces with computer labs, tutoring spaces and small group study areas that will cement the library as the central learning hub on campus.

CHAPTER 3: STUDENT ACCESS

INTRODUCTION

The consultant-evaluation team for the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), which conducted the comprehensive visit for continued accreditation by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, voiced concerns regarding SIU's ability to "maintain its dedication to student access and continue to develop its research profile."¹⁵ The team also asked that, in light of our "special mission to students of low- and medium-income families," the institution consider whether accepting as many low-income and first-generation as we currently do is a "viable alternative for the future." This chapter will address these concerns and summarize the progress that SIU has made on many fronts relative to student access and student success.

RELEVANT HLC CRITERIA

This chapter has been assembled with the following new HLC criteria (*Higher Learning Commission New Criteria for Accreditation*) in mind as they pertain to student access at SIU:¹⁶

- 1.A – mission is broadly understood within the institution and guides its operations
 - 1.A.1 – academic programs, student support services, and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission
 - 1.C.1 – institution addresses its role in a multicultural society
- 2.B – institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public with regard to its programs, faculty and staff, costs to students, control, and accreditation relationships
- 3.B – exercise of intellectual inquiry and acquisition, application and integration of broad learning and skills are integral to its educational programs
- 3.C – institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services
 - 3.C.6 – staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising, and co-curricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained, and supported in their professional development
- 3.D – institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching
- 4.B – institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning
- 4.C – institution demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing

¹⁵ The Higher Learning Commission, Assurance Section- Report of a Comprehensive Evaluation Visit to Southern Illinois University Carbondale, June 9, 2010, available at <http://ncaaccreditation.siu.edu>, Phase 3, p. 21.

¹⁶ See <http://www.ncahlc.org/Information-for-Institutions/criteria-and-core-components.html>.

attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs

CURRENT ISSUES AND PROGRESS

Our Commitment to the Students We Admit

We have recently begun to strengthen our student profile by attracting and admitting students with higher ACT and class rank scores. Nevertheless, we remain true to our mission, which is to serve first-generation and low-income students. We assess a number of factors to identify the potential strengths and weaknesses of incoming students in order to provide resources for those who may be weaker in some areas. Since most of the identified weaknesses of incoming students are in the broad foundation skills covered by the University Core Curriculum (e.g., composition, mathematics), we provide these resources through the University College.¹⁷

Free tutoring services are already available in a number of subjects.¹⁸ But some students are unable to utilize these due to job or family responsibilities or due to costs incurred in traveling to these sessions. So distance tutoring through Skype will be developed for some Core courses. Other areas of assistance under consideration are specialized advisors to guide these students through the curriculum, supervised study sessions in which students are assigned to smaller study groups, and a centralized website with links to free study guides, tutorials, and sample tests in certain subjects. For strong students, each college will develop a Student Leaders program whereby those in excellent academic standing qualify for internships, externships, research, or scholarly activities that provide professional experience and a network of student and faculty colleagues.

It is recognized that some of our freshmen students have weak academic discipline, study and communication skills, academic self-concept, and emotional control. As a consequence, it is important that we are also committed to supporting the life skills and developmental needs of our students. Colleagues in University College and elsewhere across campus are addressing the needs of our students in the recently instituted success seminar required of all first-year students, UCOL 101: The Foundations of Inquiry.¹⁹

We are in the process of preparing a financially sound strategic plan to support our first-generation and low-income students.²⁰ The Chancellor's Planning and Budget Advisory Committee is identifying the source(s) of these funds and ensuring that any proposed plan is sustainable. Because many of our students require financial assistance, these funds must be offered on a competitive basis, not simply "first come, first served."

For both merit-based and need-based scholarships, each college focusing on alumni giving and other gifts specifically for scholarships will initiate a sound and tenable development plan. Although some colleges have such plans in place, the university, through the SIU Foundation, is

¹⁷ See <http://www.universitycollege.siu.edu>.

¹⁸ On the Center for Learning Support Services, see <http://tutoring.siu.edu>.

¹⁹ For course descriptions, see <http://www.universitycollege.siu.edu/students/ucol-101-foundation-of-inquiry.html>.

²⁰ On the university's strategic planning, see <http://strategicplanning.siu.edu>.

providing advice and guidance for those units whose plans are lacking, unsuccessful, or out-of-date. For the University College, one such initiative is the First Scholars Program generously funded by the Suder Foundation for five years (2012-17), after which the University Foundation will support its continuation.²¹

Finally, the Provost office is working on ensuring that university policy concerning course syllabi is followed. Consistent with HLC accreditation assumed practices, the SIU Board of Trustees requires each instructor to prepare syllabi for the courses they teach.²² To that end, above and beyond the provision of the required textbook posted on the Banner student-information system, each course instructor must provide copies of the syllabus to his or her program director or department chair before the semester begins. The outcome of this directive is to support academic student success.

Recent Initiatives

SIU has responded to the HLC's concerns within the framework of the "New Criteria for Accreditation: Guiding Values." With reference to these guiding values, we subscribe to the following:

A focus on student learning encompasses every aspect of students' experiences at an institution; how they are recruited and admitted; costs they are charged and how they are supported by financial aid; how well they are informed and guided before and through their work at the institution; the breadth, depth, currency, and relevance of the learning they are offered; their education through co-curricular offerings; the effectiveness of their programs; what happens to them after they leave the institution.²³

In addition, SIU provides "support for student learning and effective teaching" that matches our students' needs, provides appropriate advisement, guides them into courses for which they are reasonably prepared, and strives to put into place an infrastructure that supports effective teaching and learning. Described below are five initiatives that demonstrate our commitment to the students we admit.

1) Saluki First Year: Exploratory Students

SIU provides help for at-risk students via the Saluki First Year (SFY), a program that integrates support services for all Exploratory Students.²⁴ In serving at-risk students, the SFY applies the lessons we have learned over the years in Pre-Major Advisement and the former Center for Academic Success (CAS) for special admission students. For example, according to data collected across five years, the retention rate on average was

²¹ On the First Scholars Program, see <http://firstscholars.siu.edu>.

²² See HLC Assumed Practices item C.5 at <http://www.ncahlc.org/Information-for-Institutions/assumed-practices.html> and Policies of the SIU Board of Trustees Section 2.C.1.c.4 at <http://bot.siu.edu/leg/policies.html>.

²³ Quoted from "A Focus on Student Learning" at <http://www.ncahlc.org/Information-for-Institutions/guiding-values-new-criteria-for-accreditation.html>.

²⁴ See on the departments in support of the Saluki First Year program in University College, see <http://www.universitycollege.siu.edu/departments/index.html>.

61.4 percent for CAS students and 68.8 percent for non-CAS students. This comparison suggests that, though CAS students were at-risk (i.e., do not meet the admission criteria based on ACT scores along with high school GPA and rank), their retention rates were not that much lower than those for regular admits.

The Dean of University College reviews all applications and considers the following criteria in reaching a special admission decision: class rank, high school GPA, high school subjects passed, and level of coursework. All students who are determined to be eligible for admission are mailed contracts stipulating the strict conditions of their enrollment. After students return their contracts, the Office of Undergraduate Admissions sends copies of student information to the SFY office where student files are maintained.

SFY and other university staff conduct an orientation program for students and their parents before the start of classes. The orientation consists of an overview of the program and an introduction to the staff. The services provided by the SFY include, but are not limited to, academic advisement, academic coaching, computer-assisted placement and instruction, mid-semester grade reporting, a first-year experience course, and peer mentoring. SFY also provides at-risk students with individualized tutoring/academic coaching, group tutoring, learning-style assessment, parent/guardian involvement, special topics speaker series, and career counseling.

2) Online Placement and Computer-Aided Instruction In Mathematics

Developmental mathematics courses represent a critical gateway for student success at the college level. The SIU Department of Mathematics is helping to increase student success in these courses by implementing two important initiatives: Online Math Placement and Computer-Aided Instruction (CAI).

Online Math Placement

The first step to improving student success is making sure that students are placed correctly into courses they are ready to take. The Math Department has created a three-tiered online math placement system which tests student's content knowledge up through pre-calculus.²⁵ The online system permits students to produce "created-response" questions to chosen math topics. This aspect has been found to be critical for properly assessing student content knowledge because traditional multiple-choice questions, we know, are not predictive of student success in mathematics at the college level.

Since spring 2012, the created-response math placement system has been available for students entering SIU. This online testing permits accessibility that today's students expect, and it is offered at no charge. Initial results indicate that students are indeed placed in courses where they have a much greater chance of success than previous self-placement procedures. The first success/retention data for this new system will emerge from the fall 2012 semester.

²⁵ On Online Placement, see <http://www.math.siu.edu/mathplacement/placementexams.html>.

Computer-Aided Instruction in Developmental Mathematics

The three main gateway courses in mathematics are Intermediate Algebra (Math 107), College Algebra (Math 108), and Contemporary Mathematics (Math 101). The fall 2012 semester is the first to offer all three courses in a CAI environment.²⁶ Over 1800 students were enrolled last fall.

Each week, classes met twice for traditional lectures and once in a computer lab. During the computer labs, both instructors and Graduate Teaching Assistants were available for one-on-one tutoring help. Moreover, the CAI website was accessible for them at any time of the day. The website hosted the math homework assignments, an electronic version of the textbook, and CAI support material such as video help from instructors and instructor tips for solving the assigned problems.

Providing SIU students both the advantages of face-to-face traditional instruction with the convenience of the online CAI support provides an optimal setting to enhance student success. Starting in the spring 2013 semester, students in Math 107 and 108 have the option to “parachute” into Math 101 before the end of the fourth week without losing their financial aid. The timely results of student progress and the identification of problem areas made this registration switch possible to enhance student success in math.

3) Innovative Flex Syllabus for English Composition

The Department of English developed a pilot program in English 101 and 102 to target at-risk students.²⁷ This effort was prompted by the Complete College America initiative and the state of Illinois’s Performance-Based Funding for higher education. The English Department developed a “Flex” syllabus, which allowed instructors to move through English composition at a pace consistent with student success. In other words, the Flex syllabus treats the entire academic year as the learning cycle for writing skills that are otherwise allotted to two separate semester-based grading cycles.

In this way, at-risk students who attend class and otherwise participate in course work may take longer than a single semester to reach the minimum expectations of English 101 without facing the negative prospect of a grade lower than the requisite “C” for advancement to English 102. When students in English 101 syllabus receive a D/F/W grade, they must repeat English 101 in its entirety the next semester, a potentially demoralizing spiraling backward of any academic gains. The Flex syllabus allows instructors to take longer than one semester, if necessary, to ensure that students reach the minimum standards of performance to merit advancement.

The Flex sections were defined along the following lines:

²⁶ On Computer-Assisted Instruction in mathematics, see http://tutoring.siu.edu/math_tutoring/index.html in the University College and <http://salukimathlab.siu.edu> in the Department of Mathematics.

²⁷ Proposal for Developing a Flex Syllabus Approach to Teaching At Risk Students in Freshman Composition at SIUC (July 2011)

- Enrollments are capped at 15 students each semester with the same instructor in each section throughout the academic year.
- Classes are offered on MWF at 11:00 a.m. to enhance the likelihood of student attendance and participation, avoiding early morning tardiness or afternoon conflicts with nonacademic activities. They also allow group activities, co-curricular activities, or uniform assessment sessions.
- Students can earn grades of A, B, or C for the fall semester; other students requiring additional time earn appropriate deferred, changeable grades. These marks are changed when the students meet the minimum expectations of English 101 during the following semester. The syllabus is structured in such a way that students receive grades incrementally (e.g., assignments for specific sections) to help monitor progress as well as to recognize improvements in writing skills. These measures provide continuous feedback to the student but also to the instructor and the mentor.
- Instructors modify English 102 assignments during the spring semester based on time and student skill level to cover at least the minimum requirements for a passing grade in the course by the end of the spring term.
- Students attending a Flex section also receive support currently available on an optional basis for students in other sections of English 101 and 102. Data on DFW grades in English 101 indicate a high correlation between lower grades and poor attendance. Therefore, students in Flex sections who miss a class will be required immediately to complete additional work, beyond making up work for that class period, in an effort to demotivate chronic absenteeism.

As an assessment, a recent pilot program entailed five specifically defined sections of English 101 and 102 for the fall 2011 and spring 2012 semesters. The syllabus, the student, and the available resources distinguished the sections in an effort to determine if the Flex syllabus approach had any impact on student success and, if so, what features were required to achieve maximum effectiveness. Students were assigned randomly to all pilot sections. Their success with available resources indicates what could constitute co-requisites in the future. The five pilot sections of English 101 and 102 profiled five variations:

- 1) Test group, no Flex syllabus
- 2) Flex 10 + 10: The class is comprised of 10 at-risk students with 10 students considered not at risk, all randomly assigned, in order to create a model heterogeneous section.
- 3) Flex + technology
- 4) Flex + mentoring
- 5) Flex + technology + mentoring

The results of the pilot program are encouraging.²⁸ The success rate (“C” grade or better) for pilot sections was 78.6 percent compared to 72 percent for Exploratory Students generally. Additionally, computer sections showed a significant increase in success over other sections (88 percent vs. 71 percent for Exploratory Students generally).

Thus, the program offering a Flex syllabus for English composition identifies concrete steps that instructors can take to improve the attendance and performance of at-risk students. The Department of English is requesting support to expand the pilot project to all Exploratory Students enrolled in freshman composition next fall.

4) First-Year Seminar UCOL 101: The Foundations of Inquiry

In an effort to assess the learning in the University College, a total of 237 students enrolled in the SFY101 and UNIV101 seminars during the fall 2010 semester participated in a study, the latest and most thorough examination of student learning in freshman success seminars before UCOL 101 was required.²⁹

A set of 32 items was administered to the seminar students in class during the first and last weeks of the semester, while a different set of 20 items were administered via a web-survey (coupled with the MAP-Works Transition and Check-up Surveys) during the first and last months of the semester. Students’ instructors encouraged them to take the surveys, and incentives were given for their completion. The response rates for the pre-post 32 items were excellent (n = 223, 94.1 percent at pre-test; n = 183, 77.2 percent at post-test), while those for the 20 items were also very good (n = 187, 78.9 percent at pre-test; n = 103, 43.5 percent at post-test). In addition, the set of 20 items were administered to a comparison sample of University Housing students who were not enrolled in the seminars (n = 520). Of these 520 comparison students, 287 (55.2 percent) responded at pre-test, and 121 (23.3 percent) at post-test.

Knowledge. There were significant gains from pre-to-post in course-content knowledge. Moreover, post-test knowledge scores were positively correlated with course GPAs, indicating that the content items were valid (i.e., those who scored higher on knowledge also earned higher grades).

Academic Motivation. There were no significant changes in internal or external motivation, but amotivation (i.e., not knowing why one is in school or what major to pursue) increased significantly from pre-test to post-test. This increase in amotivation likely reflects a natural awakening process where students are beginning to re-think their future major and career choices. Unfortunately, higher levels of amotivation at post-test were negatively related to course grades.

²⁸ [Michael Molino], Interim Report for English 101/102 Flexibility Pilot Program, Fall 2011 (May 2012); Tara Hembrough, A Spring 2012 Report on Factors Influencing SIU Students’ Retention, GPAs, Persistence, and Attendance (January 29, 2013)

²⁹ Meera Komarraju and Jane Swanson, Teaching and Evaluating a Career Planning Course for Psychology Majors. Symposium conducted at the Midwestern Psychological Association, Chicago, IL, 2011.

Knowledge and Familiarity with Campus Resources. There were significant increases on two knowledge and familiarity items, and a marginally significant increase on an additional item. Specifically, students grew significantly more confident in using the library resources and in knowing whom to approach if they face personal problems. They also grew slightly more confident in knowing whom to approach if they have roommate problems. Importantly, seminar students evidenced slightly greater gains in their confidence in using the library resources and in knowing whom to approach if they face personal problems than students who were not taking the seminar. As expected, confidence at post-test about knowing whom to approach about schoolwork or personal problems was associated with achieving higher course grades. Knowing whom to approach about schoolwork was also associated with fewer class absences. Similarly, those who reported knowing whom to approach about dropping a course and those who reported knowing the date to withdraw from a course without receiving a failing grade were less likely to miss class.

Comfort Interacting with Minorities. Seminar students reported significantly more comfort at post-test than at pre-test in being around those of a different race or ethnicity and people with disabilities. In addition, seminar students showed greater gains in these areas over the course of the semester than did non-seminar students. Those who reported being more comfortable around people of a different race or ethnicity, religion, country of origin and those with disabilities were less likely to miss class. Moreover, students who reported greater gains over the course of the semester in their comfort being around others of a different race or ethnicity were also less likely to miss class than those reporting smaller gains.

Diversity-Related Growth. Seminar students were slightly more likely to report openness to diversity-related issues at post-test than at pre-test. In addition, seminar students reported greater gains over the course of the semester than non-seminar students in their openness about diversity-issues and in “hanging out” or studying with students who were different from them. Seminar students who reported growth in these latter two areas were also more likely to get better course grades than those who reported less.

Better course grades were also more common among those who indicated at post-test that they: (a) felt prepared to interact with a wide range of people after they leave college; (b) had taken advantage of opportunities to expand their knowledge and awareness of diversity-related issues on campus; and (c) had reported socializing and studying with students who were different from them. Students in the latter category were also less likely to miss class.

Further, it was also found that:

- Students who had a higher course grade had a lower number of absences and lower level of motivation (defined here as questioning attending college or what major to pursue).
- Course grade was positively associated with content/knowledge scores; course content included knowing whom to approach when facing problems with school

work, knowing whom to approach when facing personal problems, taking advantage of opportunities to expand knowledge/awareness of diversity issues, and hanging out/working/studying with students from diverse backgrounds.

- Students who had more knowledge of course content were more confident about problem solving.
- The more the students learned in the course, the more confident they were about navigating the campus.
- The more absences students had, the less likely they were to gain knowledge about drop dates and when to withdraw and being comfortable with others from a different background.

These assessment data from the UCOL 101 course suggest that efforts to improve student's knowledge about the university, awareness of campus resources, comfort in interacting with students from diverse backgrounds, and confidence in problem solving were successful.

5) Saluki Cares

Saluki Cares facilitates and coordinates a university-wide program of care and support for students in distress.³⁰ By working closely with faculty, staff, students and their families, SIU displays a culture of caring and demonstrates to our students and families that they are an important part of the community.

Saluki Cares is an early-alert initiative composed of professionals from different areas of campus life who work with students on a regular basis: Academic units, Student Life and Intercultural Relations, New Student Programs, International Programs and Services, Counseling Center, Public Safety, University Housing, University College, Wellness Center, and others. All concerns remain confidential. Referrals are made from faculty, staff, parents, other students, or by the student him/herself.

Saluki Cares offers students a supportive and encouraging partnership by linking them with appropriate resources. This partnership affords students opportunities to overcome personal and educational barriers encountered on their path to success.

Students are referred to Saluki Cares via a phone call or email, while resources are provided digitally on a website. Otherwise, for emergencies, students or individuals making referrals can call 911 or contact the SIU Department of Public Safety.

The Saluki Cares team offers help to students with issues surrounding, but not limited to adjustment, academic performance, homesickness, finances, deaths of friends or family, extended illnesses, general welfare, and stress. The program also provides limited financial assistance through tuition waivers (\$17,900 in FY2012) and book stipends (\$43

³⁰ Saluki Cares Report to Chancellor, FY12. See also the webpage: <http://salukicare.siu.edu>.

hundred in FY2012). In total, Saluki Cares handled 456 cases in FY2012, two-thirds of which concerned students who continued their studies at SIU.

This early-alert system has been effective in bringing together professionals from across campus to provide critical services to students who may otherwise have found it difficult to overcome obstacles and might have left the university. Saluki Cares also connects with instructors and teaching assistants to help students access the resources they need.

The five examples above (Exploratory Students, Online Placement and Computer-Aided Instruction, Flex Syllabus for English Composition, First-Year Seminar UCOL101, and Saluki Cares) offer concrete evidence of specific ways in which SIU accommodates the needs of its student population and what could be done to increase their motivation and performance. SIU is an opportunity school and admits a substantial number of students who are at-risk. However, it does not simply admit them, but provides resources to improve the retention and success of these and other students.

Other special efforts that SIU has made to facilitate the academic success of its students include the Creation of a University College, improved academic advisement (see *Chapter Four: Enrollment Management*), fall semester orientation, peer mentors, early warning feedback in entry-level Math courses, and mid-term reports in entry-level University Core Curriculum courses. Preliminary data indicate that students taking UCOL 101, for example, actually return to the university for their second semester at a much higher rate than students who do not: 86.5 percent of UCOL 101 students vs. 55 percent of non-UCOL 101 students.³¹

The expanded University Honors Program and new Center for Undergraduate Research help students gain experience in laboratories, internships as well as externships also highlight the ways in which SIU engages all its students in classroom and practical, hands-on learning.³²

Financial worries, holding down more than one job, and the price of required textbooks concern the majority of our students, who are bogged down by economic hardships. SIU is offering more financial aid via scholarships, locking down tuition rates and student fees to help students afford college.

One promising pilot project – one funded by a partnership with Microsoft, Dell, Intel and Internet2 this spring – is putting e-textbooks into 300 students' hands at a small fraction of the retail bookstore price.³³ Each student is provided Dell Latitude 10 tablet at no cost. As a consequence, students now have more affordable access to required textbooks. Lessons learned from this initiative will be applied to next fall's rollout of tablets for all incoming students, whose costs for textbooks will be dramatically lower than even online purchases.

Finally, SIU attracts a very diverse body of students. More than a third of incoming students are of color. Consequently, the university has taken steps to meet their cultural and social needs by combining and focusing resources on diversity. Two programs in particular, the Center for

³¹ See "Freshman Programs Show Positive Results," *The Saluki Times* (January 29, 2013): <http://news.siu.edu/2013/01/012913tew13002.html>.

³² On the University Honors Program, see <http://honors.siu.edu/>, and on the Center for Undergraduate Research, see <http://ospa.siu.edu/student-research/undergraduate.html>.

³³ See "SIU Launches Campus-Wide Tablet Initiative," *The Saluki Times* (January 23, 2013): <http://news.siu.edu/2013/01/012313cjm13009.html>.

Inclusive Excellence and the Student Programming Council, oversee a wide variety of programs and events to engage students and provide opportunities for social integration and ultimately for success.³⁴

³⁴ On the Center for Inclusive Excellence, please see <http://inclusiveexcellence.siu.edu/>.

CHAPTER 4: ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT

INTRODUCTION

The evaluation team for the Higher Learning Commission, which conducted the comprehensive visit for continued accreditation by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, voiced concerns about SIU's enrollment management, noting that the institution needed to "develop a strategic goal for student recruitment and retention."³⁵ This chapter addresses this concern and outlines our institutional response to the challenges of enrollment management.

RELEVANT HLC CRITERIA

This chapter has been assembled with the following new HLC criteria (*Higher Learning Commission New Criteria for Accreditation*) in mind as they pertain to enrollment management at SIU.³⁶

- 1.A – mission is broadly understood within the institution and guides its operations
- 2.B – institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public with regard to its programs, faculty and staff, costs to students, control, and accreditation relationships
- 3.B – exercise of intellectual inquiry and acquisition, application and integration of broad learning and skills are integral to its educational programs
- 3.C – institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services
 - 3.C.6 – staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising, and co-curricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained, and supported in their professional development
- 3.D – institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching
- 4.C – institution demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs

CURRENT ISSUES AND PROGRESS

Integration of Operational Practices

With a focus on improving degree completion, a number of practices have been reviewed recently. As a result, we are improving the way curricula are presented in the undergraduate catalog; we are moving to a common template that corresponds to the degree audit application

³⁵ The Higher Learning Commission, Assurance Section- Report of a Comprehensive Evaluation Visit to Southern Illinois University Carbondale, June 9, 2010, available at <http://ncaaccreditation.siu.edu>, Phase 3, p. 21.

³⁶ See <http://www.ncahlc.org/Information-for-Institutions/criteria-and-core-components.html>.

available on our Banner student information system. This change is supported by a conversion to XML-enhanced Curriculum, Advisement and Program Planning (CAPP) system that makes possible degree evaluations for student and staff use. With the completion of this functional enhancement in AY2013, the university is ready to connect with u.Select, a state-supported transfer search application available to prospective students; they will now be able to find the right university for a seamless transfer in a given field of study.³⁷ Additionally, the catalog provides curricular guides, along with specific course requirements in appropriate semester sequence, for all baccalaureate degree programs.

In conjunction with Associate Provost for Academic Programs, the Office of Transfer Student Services has offered faculty and staff an integrated view of the process to change course and degree requirements in the undergraduate and graduate catalogs.³⁸ Annual workshops provide opportunities for open discussion designed to achieve a better understanding and use of Banner technology with an eye to improved program design. Maximizing the use of Banner and registration practices will minimize the problems that students encounter and that require subsequent interventions and accommodations to correct.

Undergraduate Admissions has implemented new freshman admission criteria and redefined recruitment territories to better cover Illinois and its border states (whose high-achieving students are now receiving in-state tuition rates).³⁹ The university has better-targeted recruitment events, such as the Leaders and Scholars Reception for high-achieving students and the Legacy Preview for legacy parents and Transfer Previews at local community colleges. Moreover, new student send-offs in Chicago and St. Louis were hosted for students preparing for SIU in the fall.

The Office of Undergraduate Admissions has been reorganized and divided into document-management and decision-processing units. A position in customer relationship management was created recently to support recruitment efforts. Assistant Directors of Processing and Transfer Relations were also appointed on support of the recent admissions initiatives.

Payroll Process

To help student employees with managing their money, Enrollment Management assisted the Payroll Office with converting the payroll process to mandatory direct deposit. This transition included changing forms and offering Saluki Cash Cards for student pay. Communication for students and staff was improved with the synchronization of Banner and Administrative Information System addresses. Similarly, the Bursar collaborated with Information Technology to implement online enrollment for direct deposit, thereby establishing a seamless process for students and eliminating manual data entry. We continue to improve collection on accounts and to focus on decreasing our cohort rate for Perkins Loans, keeping it well under 10 percent; the rate for FY2012 was 5.94 percent, the lowest ever, down from 6.32 percent in FY2011.

This year we implemented procedures necessary to comply with the Payment Card Industry (PCI) security standards for credit card acceptance; departments across campus were assisted with compliance. The packaging policy in the Financial Aid Office was changed to better utilize the limited amount of institutional financial aid. Institutional aid is awarded to students who have

³⁷ See <https://www.transfer.org/uselect/>.

³⁸ On Transfer Student Services, see <http://transfer.siu.edu>.

³⁹ On Undergraduate Admissions, see <http://admissions.siu.edu>; and on the Bursar office, see <http://bursar.siu.edu>.

a 2.0 GPA or higher. A new financial aid protocol has been developed for FY2014; it will include algorithmic packaging to optimize utilization of limited financial aid funds. This protocol will make better use of increased funding for institutional need-based and merit-based aid programs.

Financial Aid and Transfer Student Services

The Financial Aid and the Bursar offices have addressed a number of student and family financial needs.⁴⁰ A few of the more significant and successful solutions include parent/third party access to student account information on SalukiNet. Besides a third-party installment payment plan, an electronic billing for students and parents generated savings of over \$130,000 annually. Producing our own IRS 1098-T statements for taxable student assistance resulted in a savings of another \$30,000 a year.

The Financial Aid Office (FAO) continued to promote the number and value of merit-based scholarships for 2013-14. For example, the FAO administers the Undergraduate Assistantship Program (UAP), which offers students opportunities in research and creative work. These opportunities enhance student success by providing para-professional positions with a faculty member in the student's academic discipline or potential career interest. Thanks to the UAP, more than 125 students a year are funded to work 10-20 hours per week at \$10 per hour.

The FAO also implemented a new telephone system that increased the percentage of calls answered by an Automatic Call Distribution. This system has significantly decreased callers' wait time. A mandatory direct deposit for student refunds now provides a safer and more convenient method of payment and refunds for students. This more processing of payments promises a potential cost savings of \$27 thousand annually.

Specifically for veterans and military reserve students, the new Veterans Center has created a centralized interface for appropriate support services.⁴¹ Recognized for the past four years by *G.I. Jobs* magazine as one of the most military-friendly universities in the United States, SIU is making the transition from active duty to the classroom much easier.⁴²

The Office of Transfer Student Services, in partnership with Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), is conducting a transfer-student study of the top ten feeder colleges. The idea is to facilitate and improve Illinois student transfers, above and beyond what the Illinois Articulation Initiative makes possible and what the curriculum guides in the Undergraduate Catalog do to help transfer students map out their programs. College-specific reports with recommendations will be presented to each participating community college.

Program Articulation has been centralized under Transfer Student Services to help academic units and to provide reports to the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE). More than a dozen formal agreements have improved working relations between SIU faculty and area community colleges while providing better educational opportunities for transfers.

⁴⁰ On the Financial Aid Office, see <http://fao.siu.edu>.

⁴¹ On the Veterans Center, see <http://veterans.siu.edu>.

⁴² On SIU as a military-friendly campus, see <http://www.militaryfriendlyschools.com/search/profile.aspx?id=451032>.

Enrollment, Marketing, Branding

The Office of Enrollment Management oversees all recruitment publications to ensure compliance with branding, visual style, and audience suitability. The Coordinator of Communications also reviews Enrollment Management communications to assure a consistent and factual message originating in academic units on campus. Similarly, the University Communications office coordinates production and distribution of publications designed to promote SIU to prospective students seeking an educational home. These efforts have included initiatives to bring prospective students to college fairs, transfer events, open houses, and other public gatherings designed to promote the university.

New recruitment materials, focusing on academic opportunities and research have been developed with close collaboration with the University's image consultants, Lipman Hearne (see *Chapter Six: Marketing and Branding* in this document). All communications have been branded to provide messaging consistent with the university-wide marketing campaign. Additionally, an expanded search campaign and outreach plan has been developed and implemented, expanding recruitment beyond Illinois and the border states. Students in other market areas are qualifying for alternate tuition rates. Re-enrollment and re-recruitment campaigns are contacting recent admits and formerly enrolled students to encourage enrollment at the university.

Thanks to the recent purchase of Hobson's Recruit software, the university has created a more effective communication flow directed at prospective students. Admissions staff, students, and faculty outreach now reinforce the coordinated sequence of e-mail, print mail and telephone calls. The result is a much better correspondence with a much larger pool of prospective applicants, now served by a more focused admissions operation.

Academic Advisement

SIU is both a research university as well as an access public university. One segment of our student population is well prepared for our complex curricula, whereas another segment is not. Both segments present challenges, but the total-intake model of academic advisement best serves both types. At the recommendation of NACADA Consultant Dr. Lynn Freeman, the total-intake model is being implemented campus-wide.⁴³ The academic advisement now provides the following benefits to student success:

- Exploratory/freshman are advised in centralized office for better quality control.
- Academic and career advisement are now integrated.
- Academic and student support services are better coordinated.
- Students are prepared for transition to their major and for interaction with the faculty.

SIU recognizes that academic advisement is critical to student success because it maximizes the impact of all other services necessary to ensure timely degree completion and a quality educational experience. With this in mind, the University College is administering the academic

⁴³ See Lynn Freeman, "Academic Advising, Southern Illinois University, Recommendations and Action Steps," October 2011. In response to the Freeman report, the university has created a new webpage-resource for academic advisers as well as students: <http://advisement.siu.edu>.

advisement of all first-year students, whatever their major, starting with a staff of 12 in Spring 2013.

An important component of this reform of academic advisement, the university has created an Advisory Council of faculty, staff, and advisers, chaired by an Advisement Champion. Their mission is to oversee academic advising as a teaching and learning process dedicated to student success; their function is to help and support students and other stakeholders in the university community. As the new webpage states,

[Academic Advisors](#) at Southern Illinois University are:

- Educators and mentors
- Interested in the academic and professional development of students
- Knowledgeable about University, College, and departmental policies and procedures
- Referral agents to help students access relevant campus resources
- Accessible to advisees via office hours, telephone, and e-mail
- Exhibiting the importance of lifelong learning to students
- Problem solvers

Southern Illinois University provides academic advisors with:

- Professional development programs
- Academic Advisor website
- Access to academic records and relevant technology
- Electronic degree audit system

Academic Advisors encourage their advisees to:

- Be proactive in pursuit of their education
- Take personal responsibility for their decisions and actions
- Seek, comprehend and follow policies and procedures related to graduation requirements by consulting their academic departments, Colleges, and the University Catalog
- Integrate degree requirements with co-curricular, leadership, and career development opportunities

Academic Advisors work collaboratively:

- To educate students about their roles in the advising process
- To educate the campus community about the advising process⁴⁴

The results, we expect, will indeed be a greater measure of student success, thanks to better coordinated, better trained, more professional, more engaged advisement effort at SIU.

Beginning in fall 2013, academic advisers in three colleges (Business, Education and Human Services, and Engineering) will have access to the Education Advisory Board's Student Success

⁴⁴ Ibid.

Collaborative database.⁴⁵ With this new tool, many of the university's professional academic advisers will pilot predictive models of student success in their chosen majors. Once the database has been beta-tested by AY 15, it will provide all academic advisers on campus the resources they need to increase students' likelihood of finishing their degrees in a timely manner. This initiative, we feel, will offer better-informed advisement for all undergraduate students.

Transfer Student Center

Seven full-time service center coordinators have been appointed to southern Illinois community colleges. Their purpose is to expand relationships and to increase leads and yield among local transfer students. This effort is a collaboration between Undergraduate Admissions and Transfer Student Service to better serve the transfer student. A Transfer Student Center was established in the Admission Reception Center and provides student-focused assistance specifically for transfers; it connects the SIU Service Center Coordinators from each of the southern Illinois regional community colleges to the logistical support of Transfer Student Services.⁴⁶

A program advisor, who coordinates the program articulation between community colleges and our academic programs, staffs the Center and an evaluator, who processes all military, international, and Dual Admission Program (DAP) student transfer work. The Individualized 2+2 Program established almost twenty years ago has been updated and replaced by a Dual Admission Program. Networking opportunities, enhanced benefits, and a dual enrollment component are fundamental improvements. A significant element of the DAP is an online transfer orientation course designed to connect future transfer students to SIU; it also locks-in tuition prior to matriculation, a major financial benefit to students.

Center for International Education

The Center for International Education is responsible for coordinating a campus-wide initiative to increase international student enrollment.⁴⁷ The Center has established an aggressive, yet attainable goal of increasing the international student population to 10 percent of the total student population by the year 2015. This number mirrors populations at peer and aspirational peer institutions. Activities to achieve this goal include:

- Development of a comprehensive, integrated international student recruitment/marketing team, involving all campus-wide stakeholders
- Creation of the Center for International Education (CIE). Changing the name of International Programs and Services to the Center for International Education will more accurately describe the unit's organization structure, and establish a crisp, clear identity worldwide

⁴⁵ For more information about the EAB Student Success Collaborative, see <http://www.eab.com/National-Collaboratives/Student-Success-Collaborative>.

⁴⁶ On the staffing for this service, see http://transfer.siu.edu/common/documents/pdfs/staff_directory.pdf.

⁴⁷ On the Center for International Education, see <http://cie.siu.edu>.

- Updates of all marketing materials, including the CIE website, to support the new mission and image of the Center
- Development and implementation of a fiscal-year strategy, budget and calendar for recruiting initiatives
- Conducting extensive research regarding enrollment trends and emergent markets

The items listed above have already begun to show positive returns, witnessed by a 16 percent increase in the number of international undergraduate students for the fall 2012 semester.

CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH MISSION

INTRODUCTION

When the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) consultant-evaluation team visited campus in March 2010, it identified a few key concerns pertinent to the research mission at SIU. In its discussion of mission, the team identified what it felt to be “competing mission priorities” at our institution, which strives to provide broad student access while raising our research profile. Elsewhere in its report, the team noted that the goal of achieving the status as a top 75-research school (a major goal as identified in *Southern at 150*, a strategic plan implemented in 2003) seemed unrealistic, as it did the Washington Advisory Group, consultants who reviewed the plan.⁴⁸

In the portion of their report devoted to “Acquisition, Discovery and Application of Knowledge” (Chapter 4), the HLC consultant-evaluation team reiterated its concern with the top 75 goals, and identified some more specific areas pertinent to research at SIU. In particular, the team cited statistics on the glaring lack of adequate research space, questioned the strength of academic support services including finances to sustain the library, and in general called attention to research funding and infrastructure issues.

This chapter will address these concerns (competing priorities, top 75 research institution goal, and research infrastructure, with particular attention to research space and support services). These problems need to be addressed in light of the HLC site visit report and in long-term planning.

RELEVANT HLC CRITERIA

This chapter has been assembled with the following new HLC criteria (Higher Learning Commission New Criteria for Accreditation) in mind as they pertain to the mission of research at SIU:⁴⁹

- 1.D – mission demonstrates commitment to the public good
- 2.E – faculty, students and staff acquire, discover and apply knowledge responsibly
- 3.B – exercise of intellectual inquiry and acquisition, application and integration of broad learning and skills are integral to its educational programs
- 3.E – institution fulfills its claims for an enriched educational environment

⁴⁸ The Higher Learning Commission, Assurance Section-Report of a Comprehensive Evaluation Visit to Southern Illinois University Carbondale, June 9, 2010, available at <http://ncaaccreditation.siu.edu>, Phase 3, p. 21.

⁴⁹ See <http://www.ncahlc.org/Information-for-Institutions/criteria-and-core-components.html>.

CURRENT ISSUES AND PROGRESS

Research Support and Funding

SIU's ranking by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching as a "high-research activity" institution puts us in the upper tier of all U.S. institutions.⁵⁰ There are many indicators of our continued success in the area of research, including levels of funding, patent disclosures and awards, and national honors. Receipt of external funds and contracts has continued to be strong, amounting to over \$79 million in 2011. This included over \$37.5 million in research grants, \$8.1 million in training grants, and an additional \$33.2 million in public service and other forms of funding.⁵¹

Our faculty have continued to be successful in getting grants from many federal agencies (e.g., National Institutes of Health, National Science Foundation, Department of Defense, Department of the Interior, Department of Energy, Department of Education, and Department of Agriculture), state agencies (e.g., Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, and Illinois Department of Public Health), as well as private foundations and industry. The *St. Louis Business Journal* ranked SIU in the top three research universities in Missouri and southern Illinois, along with the University of Missouri Columbia and Washington University.⁵² In addition, SIU was also placed among the four primary university start-ups in the Illinois Innovation Index, along with the University of Illinois, Northwestern University and the University of Chicago.

External funding supported more than 328 faculty, staff, and students on campus and is critical in the continued growth and quality of our graduate students. Funding averaged \$100 thousand per funded faculty member last year; funding opportunities from the grants and faculty reputation help recruit graduate students and enhance the reputation of the institution. This year, the *U.S. News & World Report* ranked SIU's Graduate School in the top 100 among public universities in the nation.⁵³ SIU has been recognized for innovative graduate training approaches, including the NSF-IGERT funding for interdisciplinary Watershed Science and Policy that is now welcoming its third cadre of students. Earlier this year, a group of engineering and science graduate students earned national recognition from the Environmental Protection Agency for their P3 program (People, Prosperity, and the Planet) for novel uses of coal combustion by-products. Thus, despite an increasingly competitive funding climate, our faculty (and students) continue to be successful in securing external funding.

The faculty take very seriously their dual commitment to research and teaching, integrating these well and working very closely with both graduate and undergraduate students in their research. In fact, in the 2010 research climate survey, faculty on the whole felt we had reached a good

⁵⁰ On the research mission of the university, see the webpage for the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Dean: <http://vcresearch.siu.edu>.

⁵¹ See Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Dean, Research Profile 2012, at <http://vcresearch.siu.edu/profile.html>.

⁵² Nick Ledden, "St. Louis' Top Commercial Real Estate Firm," *St. Louis Business Journal* (May 27, 2011): <http://www.bizjournals.com/stlouis/blog/2011/05/st-louis-largest-commercial-real.html?page=all>.

⁵³ "Top Public Schools. National Universities," *US News and World Report* (2013): <http://colleges.usnews.rankingsandreviews.com/best-colleges/rankings/national-universities/top-public/page+4>.

balance between teaching and research. SIU has long been perceived as more “personal” than universities with much larger enrollments, an institution “with the brains of a national research university and the heart of a small college.”

This reputation derives from more extensive interactions between faculty and students, effective mentoring, and increased opportunities for research for all levels of students, as highlighted by alumni who were surveyed about their former faculty mentors.⁵⁴ We have an excellent record of providing undergraduate research opportunities, including REACH (Research Enrichment Academic CHallenge), Saluki Research Rookies, McNair Scholars (recently awarded our third renewal for five years), and the Undergraduate Assistantship Program. In order to further encourage undergraduate research and track the success of these undergraduate researchers, a Center for Undergraduate Research is planned to bring all of these opportunities under one roof; the search for a director is in progress.⁵⁵

To enhance campus efforts to bring in external funds, the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research has reorganized the Office of Research Development and Administration (ORDA). At the end of 2011, the position of the Associate Vice Chancellor for Research (AVCR) and Director of ORDA was split into two separate lines to provide additional support and expertise for research. ORDA, renamed the Office of Sponsored Projects Administration (OSPA), is now overseen by a professional research administrator, as is typical at peer institutions.⁵⁶ OSPA is redoubling its efforts to help faculty, staff, and students secure funding for their research by, among other things, emphasizing staff training in ever-changing federal and state regulations, enhancing faculty and graduate student training opportunities in grantsmanship, investing in new software (*Grant Forward*) to identify funding opportunities, providing new compliance training modules, and establishing new conflict of interest policies. This office has redesigned and updated its website to provide a more user-friendly, extensive portal to all things related to proposal writing and grants administration. In order to provide preliminary data for proposals, the Faculty Seed Grant Program awarded \$285,000 for 15 proposals in 2012, and the NSF-style review process generated crucial feedback to the faculty members that will help them be even more competitive when they submit their proposals externally.

Since 2010, we have resolved to find better ways to celebrate our research culture and publicize its benefits to students and the regional community. For the past few years, we have annually placed a sizeable insert in the *Southern Illinoisan* newspaper highlighting research and creative endeavors everywhere on campus.⁵⁷ Other venues for research include the inaugural Author’s Day in 2012 and the annual Research Town Meeting (RTM) and the Tech Expo, both of which offer sizeable opportunities to showcase the fruits of student research. In 2012, the RTM featured over 285 posters and other displays, and \$1 thousand in student awards, while the Tech Expo featured the inaugural Saluki Idea Competition for sustainable business, which saw eighteen student entries. In these and other ways, faculty are enriching our communities, and faculty and students together are modeling research as a career skill crucial to the learning process.

Interdisciplinary Research

⁵⁴ The latest survey of SIU alumni is available at <http://www.irs.siu.edu/webroot/AlumniSurvey/survey1.htm>.

⁵⁵ On undergraduate research at SIU, see <http://ospa.siu.edu/student-research/undergraduate.html>.

⁵⁶ For more information about the Office of Sponsored Projects Administration, see <http://ospa.siu.edu>.

⁵⁷ The *Southern Illinoisan* Research Insert is accessible at <http://issuu.com/thesouthern/docs/siu-research-opt?mode=window&viewMode=doublePage>.

Interdisciplinary research offers exciting opportunities to faculty and graduate students and is seen as a potential growth area for external funding. One success story from 2011-12 is the *Antarctica: Imagined Geographies* program.⁵⁸ This multi-disciplinary effort brought together researchers, from the humanities to the social sciences and natural sciences, and established itself as a model for interdisciplinary research on campus.

Following on the success of last year's interdisciplinary program *Imagined Geographies*, a Taskforce on Interdisciplinary Enhancement (TIE) was established to develop future interdisciplinary research foci. TIE, funded by the Chancellor's Office, will identify significant, campus-wide research areas that relate to challenges and resources within the local community and the region. We now call them *Super Challenges*. It is hoped that this activity will form the basis for enhanced interdisciplinary research and signal the importance of this type of endeavor on campus.

Laboratory Renovations

Since 2010, recognizing the urgent need for research space renovation, the Chancellor and her administration have engaged in an exhaustive survey of research space, established priorities, and initiated the Chancellor's Classroom and Laboratory Renovation Initiative.⁵⁹ Some renovations, including psychology laboratories in Life Sciences Building II, have already been completed. In July 2012, the Board of Trustees approved phase I of renovations for the McLafferty Annex, formerly a storage facility for the library during its recently completed renovation. This project will begin the process of converting the annex to flexible laboratory space, following a model established at other universities, to foster interdisciplinary collaborations.

The university continues to look to enhance research and laboratory space and to provide more institutional support for research endeavors through university offices. In addition to plans to convert McLafferty Annex to flexible, interdisciplinary research space, several research labs have been identified as top priorities for renovation, including labs in Neckers, Agriculture, and Life Science II. These latter renovations are planned for this spring. Renovations of the basement and the sixth and seventh floors of the library will be completed in FY2014, providing better facilities and technology for research on the many databases available online.

Library

The major renovations of Morris Library are nearly complete.⁶⁰ Books from the McLafferty Annex are now back on their original shelves. The balance of the state allocation of \$12.7 million has been released to complete renovations (including new equipment and furnishings) for the sixth and seventh floors. Two mathematics classrooms and labs and Learning Support Services, which offers a comprehensive program of individual and group tutoring sessions as

⁵⁸ For more on Antarctica: Imagined Geographies, see <http://antarctica.mcma.siu.edu>.

⁵⁹ SIU Board of Trustees action on authorizing and allocating budget for the remodeling of the McLafferty annex for research purposes appears at <http://bot.siu.edu/meetings/2012/0712mclaffannrenoc.pdf>.

⁶⁰ On Morris Library, see <http://lib.siu.edu>.

well as the campus testing lab, are to be housed here. Technology-rich, but completely flexible classrooms, group study and collaboration clusters, casual seating, and book stacks will promote undergraduate student success. Additional collaborative and technology-enhanced areas will be incorporated into the first floor of Morris Library, as well. New technology is now located throughout the library, and research and writing rooms have been added for the faculty. Additional, recent policy changes now encourage student access to group study rooms, and funds have been made available to provide 24/5 access to Delyte's Cafe, study space, and first-floor computer labs. Collections have been enhanced, including video, e-books, and online holdings, in part through cancellation of low-use subscriptions. And for the past three years, the library has hosted OpenSIU, the university's open-access, research repository.⁶¹

Ambitions for Research Mission

The new SIU strategic plan provides the university a direction for the future. The committee devoted to research for the plan discussed at length the ambition, stipulated in *Southern at 150*, that we be a top 75 research university. We solicited feedback from the campus community on this issue, and learned that although many people found this goal to be unrealistic, they nonetheless praised the aspiration, noting that it was important to know the university places a high value on research. Responding to these observations, in both the "values" section of the new strategic plan and in the portion of the plan devoted to research, we stipulate our goal of maintaining and enhancing our national ranking as a Carnegie Research University (High Research Activity), while not tying our success to a specific number. The strategic plan outlines specific ways by which we will achieve this goal, including the use of Academic Analytics to monitor research productivity across colleges and departments, hiring faculty with ambitious research agendas, enhancing interdisciplinary research, and the like.

Competing Mission Priorities

In the strategic planning process, we thought seriously about the ways in which our research and teaching missions overlap and enhance one another. As the plan points out, as the only Carnegie Research institution in our immediate region, we have a unique opportunity to engage our students in both intellectual inquiry and job training through research, to pass onto them the skills that our faculty hone in the library, archive, performance hall, and lab.

As such, a major part of our research vision moving forward will be to find yet more ways to engage undergraduates and graduates in research and mentoring relationships with faculty. In short, we firmly believe and will endeavor to show that research experience for undergraduates immeasurably enriches the learning experience. As part of this goal, we now have hired a new Associate Director of the Graduate School and hope to have a new Director of Undergraduate Research by spring 2013.

We also will look for ways to better publicize and celebrate research and creative activity in all its forms on our campus, to help challenge the perception held by some, here as at many public institutions, that research and teaching somehow compete for our attention. Further, we are committed to a public relations campaign that illustrates to our community, the regions, the state

⁶¹ Access OpenSIU is available at <http://opensiuc.lib.siu.edu>.

and beyond, the tangible benefits of our research for the public good.

Future Research Administration

To follow up on the reorganization of OSPA, additional steps are being taken to improve research grant administration on campus. For example, to mention two examples, the Electronic Research Administration (ERA) is being evaluated as a means to streamline proposal submissions and grant management; and staff assignments at OSPA are being adjusted to improve service. The long-term goal is to provide more efficient proposal submission and grant administration procedures and more training opportunities for researchers on campus.

CHAPTER 6: MARKETING AND BRANDING

INTRODUCTION

The consultant-evaluation team for the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), which conducted the comprehensive visit for continued accreditation by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, voiced concerns with SIU's marketing strategy at the time. The team members noted that our dual mission "of being accessible to underserved populations and to be a major research university" has the potential for "special branding as a type of institution that cares about students, yet contributes basic and applied research."⁶² The team recommended that institutional planning should address how "this theme may enhance the university's ability to recruit a diverse student population and promote fund raising." This chapter addresses this concern and outlines the new marketing and branding initiatives undertaken by SIU.

RELEVANT HLC CRITERIA

This chapter has been assembled with the following new HLC criteria (*Higher Learning Commission New Criteria for Accreditation*) in mind as they pertain to marketing and branding at SIU:⁶³

- 1.A – mission is broadly understood within the institution and guides its operations
- 1.B – mission is articulated publicly
- 3.E – institution fulfills the claims it makes for an enriched educational environment

CURRENT ISSUES AND PROGRESS

New Marketing Initiative

SIU has improved considerably in its marketing and branding efforts since the HLC March 2010 self-study. This report will summarize those efforts and demonstrate a university commitment to addressing those concerns in numerous ways. One point, however, is paramount: "We have not been standing still!"

In the summer of 2010, our recently appointed Chancellor, Rita Cheng, commissioned a thorough review of our external and recruitment-related communications and our university's staffing model for communications. Recognizing that we did not have the internal resources to overcome marketing and branding challenges on our own, the university issued a Request for Proposals to outside marketing firms who specialized in the marketing of higher education

⁶² The Higher Learning Commission, Assurance Section-Report of a Comprehensive Evaluation Visit to Southern Illinois University Carbondale, June 9, 2010, available at <http://ncaaccreditation.siu.edu>, Phase 3, p. 21.

⁶³ See <http://www.ncahlc.org/Information-for-Institutions/criteria-and-core-components.html>.

institutions. Lipman Hearne, a leading marketing firm that specialized in non-profit organizations and educational institutions, was chosen.⁶⁴

Headquartered in Chicago and led by an SIU alumnus, this partnership has been an important one for our university. Since fall 2010, Lipman Hearne has performed a variety of qualitative and quantitative assessments of the SIU brand. Moreover, the firm created a vibrant new platform for SIU, centered on the brand slogan “Big Things are Within Reach.” To illustrate SIU's commitment to the marketing and branding initiative, Lipman Hearne was awarded a contract in FY2012 for the first of a five-year plan to implement a sustained effort to tell our story and to build enrollment.

In August 2011, we saw the first tangible results of these initiatives: a fully integrated marketing campaign in southern Illinois, Chicago and St. Louis. The overarching theme of our new brand identity, communicated via multiple marketing channels, is “With all the brains of a nationally ranked research university and all the heart of a small college, SIU is where you want to be. You’ll find the hands-on opportunities, top-ranked programs and indispensable resources you need to develop intellectually and professionally, and a collaborative, supportive community that enables you to thrive.”

Marketing and Branding Activities

The messages we developed with Lipman Hearne are being disseminated on campus, the community, and our target market. In 2011, SIU released contemporized university identity standards and logo, and wrote related identity guidelines to be consistent with our mission. From the mission, we created a competitive positioning statement, along with brand personality, payoff, and pledge, culminating in our new slogan. Moreover, the new brand book communicates our brand within 30 seconds – the elevator speech – with the following statement:

*Southern Illinois University has all the brains of a nationally ranked research university and all the heart of a small college. Which means that we continue to focus on teaching and mentorship even as we pursue tier-one research. Our faculty are some of the most cited experts in their fields, and they still give students the personal attention they deserve. It’s these relationships that propel us and shrink the distance between where we are and where we want to be. And why, at SIU, big things will always be within reach.*⁶⁵

Examples of this branding essence are reflected in the following chart of our organizational strategy based squarely in the university’s plan to reposition itself in higher education.

⁶⁴ See <http://lipmanhearne.com>.

⁶⁵ See <http://brand.siu.edu/understandingthebrand/ourbrandstory/>.



Consistent with the HLC criteria of establishing the public nature of our efforts, almost every piece of printed marketing collateral, including billboards and online advertising, campus signage, and SIU gear, is viewable by the general public at our new website.⁶⁶ There one can also find the 57-page brand book.⁶⁷ There is now visible signage with our new logo and phrasing all over campus, on street signs around the city, and on large billboards around St. Louis, Chicago, and the southern Illinois region. This new branding effort has already become part of the campus conversation and campus life. It would be difficult to find interested stakeholders who do not know about our new marketing efforts or have not heard the phrases "This is SIU," "Initiative Rewarded," or "One Destination for Every Journey," in addition to our brand essence of "Big Things are Within Reach."

⁶⁶ See <http://brand.siu.edu/creativeexpression/>.

⁶⁷ See http://universitycommunications.siu.edu/common/documents/SIU_Brandbook_032012.pdf.



The “This is SIU” strategic advertising campaign’s goal is to improve SIU's reputation and get the attention of key prospective student audiences. With the Lipman Hearne partnership, we created a new ad concept, developed all ads, and negotiated and placed all media buys to launch the new brand initiative to key external audiences (prospective students, parents, other influencers, and the general public). The advertising focused on Chicago, southern Illinois, St. Louis, and border states.

As of July 2012, the campaign generated 183 million impressions across online and offline media channels evident in the “Changing the Story” examples depicted above (paid search, online advertising, radio, billboards and in-school advertising and community college newspapers) and increased traffic to www.siu.edu. In addition to paid radio advertising, SIU also received several “value-added” placements, including radio spots, print publications, outdoor billboards, and digital impressions. Finally, outside of the Lipman Hearne relationship, SIU created a new relationship with Home Team Marketing, the #1 high school platform in America that specializes in marketing and public relations using high school athletic teams.⁶⁸ Home Team Marketing communicates the SIU message across 27 Illinois high schools with attendance of 472,000 students.

In addition to print and mail pieces, the new marketing initiative was taken online to digital resources, as well. The old SIU website (siuc.edu) was moved to www.siu.edu for more consistent branding and improved traffic. The look and feel of the website are consistent with all new branding efforts. Navigation was substantially improved, a new home page was created, key vertical templates were incorporated through our pages, and new admissions content was added. Moreover improved call-to-action flags were integrated throughout the website. A new template for college websites was designed and can be seen in the first college to implement it, the

⁶⁸ See <http://www.hometeammarketing.com>

College of Business.⁶⁹ Additional colleges and units continue to adapt their websites. The university's implementation of Google Analytics was enhanced in ways that will allow SIU to have improved measurement of its web activity, in order to optimize its efforts and make continuous improvements.

Finally, we have substantially changed how we use social media to communicate our brand and messages since 2010. Although we had already created a presence on social media networks, such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, after a social media audit was conducted by Lipman Hearne, we spread our message across numerous other channels, as well, such as Instagram, Google+, Tumblr, and Pinterest. We recently created an administrative position of Social Media (SM) Strategist to coordinate university efforts across those channels. In addition, the SM Strategist has a graduate student and several student workers who assist her in communicating our brand across these channels. Having student voices involved in the social media activities lends authenticity to our messages for our stakeholders. In 2011, a committee of faculty, staff, and students was charged with creating a social media policy for the university, which will be formally adopted and communicated to the internal community very soon. A September 2012 review by Lipman Hearne noted many significant improvements in our social media activities since the initial audit. Our marketing partner has provided additional suggestions, especially with regards to handling crisis situations on campus.

Commitment to our Target Students

The marketing communications are used to make SIU distinctive to two audiences in the prospect pool. Using tailored messages in the intro and guiding the prospects to selected pages that fit their strengths, two versions of the viewbook were created: one for high-achieving students who need to know that SIU has what it takes to meet their ambitious goals and another for those who want to know that they will be supported every step along the way.

This distinction is crucial to boosting the caliber of the entering class while maintaining our mission of access for those with the potential of developing into accomplished scholars. SIU has always been noted for its commitment to first-generation and underrepresented college students. Our marketing materials reinforce that idea, through the comfort statement of "The brains of a research university with the heart of a small college," making first-generation and underrepresented potential students feel welcome and not overwhelmed with the size of our university. Students are drawn to specific pages in the viewbook, which demonstrate what they will experience at SIU; these pages also suggest opportunities for students interested in campus organizations to join.

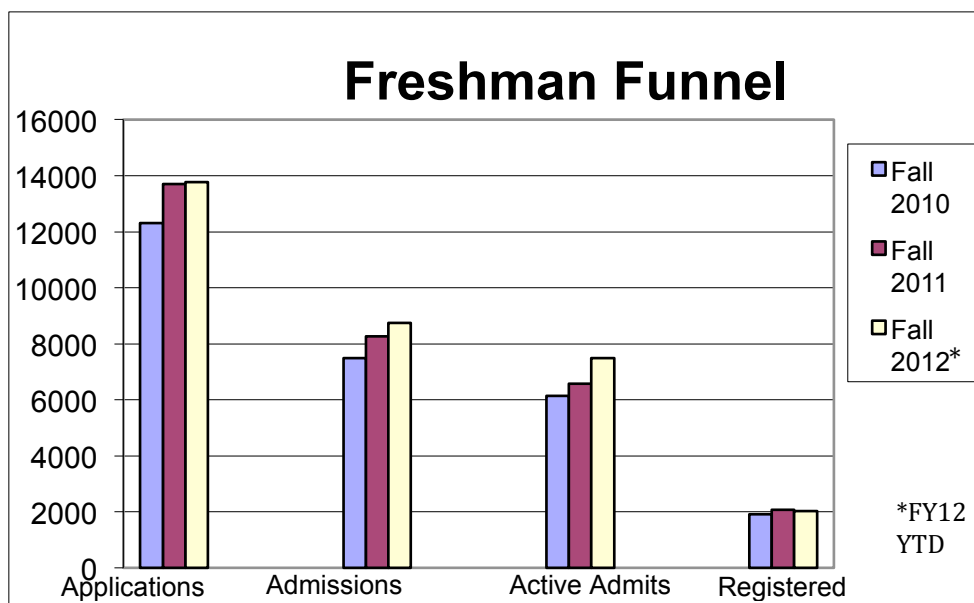
Early Results of Marketing and Branding Initiatives

Recruitment materials generated from the branding efforts led by Lipman Hearne began distribution in July 2011. For the FY2012, almost 900,000 pieces of recruitment materials – brochures, viewbooks, welcome packets, search letters, and postcards – were distributed to prospective and admitted students. The entire university, especially the Office of Enrollment Management, is tracking the results of what is called the enrollment funnel: how a student moves

⁶⁹ See the College of Business webpage: <http://www.business.siu.edu>

from an uncertain prospect, to a positive responder, to an applicant, to an admitted and, finally, an enrolled student.

The early results of our branding and marketing activities are marked. We see an 8 percent increase in visits to the www.siu.edu website, with unique visitors up 17 percent. We see more visits to the admissions and “Apply Now” websites (up 3 percent and 9 percent, respectively), and we see a large increase in organic online searches for “Southern Illinois University” (24 percent) and “SIU” (14 percent). From Fall 2010 to Fall 2012, as seen in the chart below, SIU has seen marked increases in freshman applications (12 percent), admissions (21.9 percent), and registrations (6.5 percent). SIU has also experienced four straight semesters of new student growth, as measured by freshman enrollment (Spring 2011 to Spring 2012).



Internal Marketing and Branding Efforts

We have extended the brand message to all parts of the university. SIU developed on-campus messaging to convey the new brand to internal audiences by such means as banners hanging on light posts all over campus and “Inspiration Struck Here” pride-point signage that welcomed people to campus in August 2011. The inspiration campaign highlighted achievements of faculty and staff; and it placed sandwich boards in front of buildings all over campus where those faculty/staff worked. The brand book also serves as a guide for internal communicators when departments and colleges create new communications materials. The office of University Communications has been vigilant in insuring a consistent look and message across all university communications, including website and digital communications, since 2011.

Our marketing and branding activities have affected every unit on campus, but one we can highlight in particular is the SIU Admissions Office, which has been substantially altered as a result of our marketing approach. We have increased the number of prospective student mailings to grow the pool of prospects and applicants, which now numbers more than 600,000 prospects. All prospective student letters and emails have been rewritten to reflect our key messages, and

prospective student mailings are now sent to high school juniors, specifically targeting high achievers in Illinois and border states with direct mail. We follow that up with email blasts targeted at all Illinois rising seniors. The university's admissions efforts have been improved by working closely with Enrollment and Admissions leadership on day-to-day student recruitment procedures, strategies, and tactics to increase yield/enrollment for Fall 11 and Fall 12. Among other initiatives have been a campaign to improve Fall 13 enrollment in several key degree programs, the list-buy strategies to obtain mailing lists of key target markets, the improved use of the university's CRM system, and the emphasis on regular reporting and analytics.

We also worked with the SIU Alumni Association and the SIU Foundation in establishing a consistent, strong message and image. We conducted an audit and analysis of all alumni communication and created recommendations for improvement. The School of Law conducted research to understand the perceptions of SIU among prospective law students and why they were or were not considering the study of law at SIU. This professional school developed a new positioning and brand messaging, wrote a new marketing plan, developed a new website, and is preparing new prospective student collateral, all consistent in look and feel with our global branding efforts.

An internal campaign was launched to assure that key staff audiences understand and are able to correctly communicate the key tenets of the new brand messaging. A brochure and letter were sent to campus faculty and staff in January 2012 in order to share with them our new brand campaign. We are helping to improve staff capabilities and internal capacity through numerous workshops and training sessions. We conducted multiple Brand training sessions for University Communications and university communicators (those in individual departments, schools, and colleges). We held several writing workshops on "Writing for the Web for University Communications and University Communicators" and instituted a Brand message training session for Admissions.

As we anticipated, the necessary increase in investment and coordination in our recruiting messages and branding has not been without some criticism. This is certainly true when budgets are under pressure. However, marketing specialists and scholars, including those on campus, understand the dedication and time that are needed to create a new brand perception in people's mind. Moreover, they understand that too much discussion and too many opinions regarding the brand would have wasted precious time needed to turn around enrollment declines. Understanding and addressing these concerns, we continue to work on institutional branding efforts, partnering with the Brand Management online MBA course in Fall 2012 to develop new internal marketing and branding education materials for internal constituents.

Maintenance, Evaluation, and Improvement of Marketing and Branding Activities

After many years of inaction by previous university leaders, the Chancellor proposed a \$2 million marketing budget for FY2013, representing 0.33 percent of SIU's total budget.⁷⁰ This first installment on a longer-term project anticipates more substantial investments until the university reaches a level comparable to other Carnegie research intensive institutions. In the

⁷⁰ See "[Chancellor Marketing Communications Report, 2012](#)"

future, plans are to increase marketing to at least 1 percent of our operating budget, which would currently equal approximately \$6 million. Our FY2013 Work Plan, as highlighted by the Chancellor in her Marketing Communications plan to the Board of Trustees, includes the following activities, many of which have already begun:

- Continuation of enrollment strategies, consultation, management;
- Advertising development and media placement;
- Brochures, templates, research reports;
- Graduate School recruitment materials;
- Law School ads, creative development, web development;
- College specific recruitment and web strategies;
- Alumni Association and Foundation brand framework and messaging;
- Social media strategy and assessment;
- Local school strategy;
- Distance Education strategy;
- International recruitment strategy; and
- Continue work with City of Carbondale.⁷¹

The chancellor has kept the campus updated on these initiatives with e-mails, presentations to constituencies, campus leaders, and the Board of Trustees.

⁷¹ The new Carbondale Chamber of Commerce website, launched October, 2012, is consistent in look and feel with the “This is SIU” campaign. In fact, several university administrators are on the City of Carbondale and Carbondale Chamber of Commerce boards to assist in the connection between the city and the university: <http://www.thisiscarbondale.com>

CHAPTER 7: EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

INTRODUCTION

The consultant-evaluation team for the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), which conducted the comprehensive visit for continued accreditation by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools in March 2010, voiced concerns over some aspects of employee relations at SIU, noting that "trust issues between faculty and staff and the central administration hinder institutional progress."⁷² The team summed up the situation: "It was apparent that a gulf existed between faculty and staff and the administration. This has led to a plethora of unions and has diverted attention from important decisions. Strategic planning should address working relations, communication development, and well being of the institutional community, as these are important foundations for institutional effectiveness." This chapter addresses this concern and outlines our response.

RELEVANT HLC CRITERIA

This chapter has been assembled with the following new HLC criteria (Higher Learning Commission New Criteria for Accreditation) in mind as they pertain to employee relations at SIU:⁷³

- 1.A – mission is broadly understood within the institution and guides its operations
- 1.B – mission is articulated publicly
- 1.C – institution understands the relationship between its mission and the diversity of society
- 3.E – institution fulfills the claims it makes for an enriched educational environment
- 5.B – governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the institution to fulfill its mission
 - 5.B.1 – institution has and employs policies and procedures to engage its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff, and students—in the institution's governance
 - 5.B.3 – institution enables the involvement of its administration, faculty, staff, and students in setting academic requirements, policy, and processes through effective structures for contribution and collaborative effort
- 5.C – institution engages in systematic and integrated planning
 - 5.C.3 – planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups

⁷² The Higher Learning Commission, Assurance Section-Report of a Comprehensive Evaluation Visit to Southern Illinois University Carbondale, June 9, 2010, available at <http://ncaaccreditation.siu.edu>, Phase 3, p. 21.

⁷³ See <http://www.ncahlc.org/Information-for-Institutions/criteria-and-core-components.html>.

CURRENT ISSUES AND PROGRESS

Surveys and focus groups on campus climate provide some support for the conclusion drawn by the HLC about a widely perceived “gulf” between administrative leadership and some employees at SIU. Among the bargaining-unit faculty and staff, there are a number who believe that decisions for the campus are made in secret, with little opportunity for real or meaningful input by those who are most affected by the decisions or policies. One might argue that this problem, so noted by the HLC in June of 2010, culminated in the brief faculty strike in November of 2011 during protracted negotiations between the Board of Trustees (BoT) and four labor unions, including two representing non-tenure track and tenure-track faculty. Negotiations with three of the four (representing non-tenure track faculty, clerical civil service staff, and graduate assistants) were successfully concluded, leaving negotiations with the Faculty Association (FA) unresolved. A brief strike involving 144 FA members out of more than 700 FA-represented faculty preceded a settlement on similar terms.

Defining the Gulf between Administration and Faculty/Staff

To describe this organizational rift, we must consider the forces contributing to the feeling of disconnect among those who express discontent with their employment experience at SIU. Past campus climate surveys report some levels of distrust, exclusion, marginalization, and devaluation. The 2011 Campus Climate Lens Committee Report in particular noted that there is a “long-standing culture of adversarial and confrontational relations between members of the academic community.”⁷⁴ Some of this climate may well be exaggerated by the lack of stable administrative leadership and the ill effects of harsh budgetary times facing the university for the past several years.

This progress report and the site visit present us with a fresh opportunity to address working relations between faculty, staff and administration. Evidence-based techniques and short-term interventions suggest two paths to positive, measurable outcomes. Further study may well show that the discontent is more a matter of perception than reality. Rumor and reputation do a lot to fuel misunderstanding. Closer inspection of the evidence may show that reality differs from the chronically negative depictions of employee relations. Besides a more diverse cross sampling of sub-populations (administrators, faculty, staff, and students), larger participant pools will be needed in future focus groups.

As part of the university’s Strategic Planning Initiative, the Campus Climate Lens Committee issued its tentative conclusions.⁷⁵ Relying heavily on an earlier survey in 2008 – summarized in the 2010 re-accreditation self-study *Southern at 140* – their report refers to certain dimensions to employee relations: diversity, student development and opportunity, leadership, shared governance, salary competitiveness, and departmental atmosphere. Based on the 2008 results, the Campus Climate Lens Committee conducted a series of focus groups to learn more about employee perceptions of the campus climate and the factors behind them.

⁷⁴ Campus Climate Report Lens Committee Report (July 2011) available at <http://strategicplanning.siu.edu/documents/lens/Campus%20Climate%20Lens%20Report.pdf>.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

In response to the question of trust, respect and cooperation between faculty, staff, students, and administration, the Lens Committee report states:

It is too simplistic to say that the conflict lies between administration and everyone else. There are some faculty who distrust administration and some faculty distrust (or express dissatisfaction with) other faculty, staff and students who vocally oppose administration and other forms of leadership. While some are disillusioned with the unions and perhaps feel that the presence of a faculty union is inconsistent with the functions of shared governance, others defend the union and the gains it has made for faculty and others, including better faculty governance. Some feel that the unions have created an adversarial climate, but others attribute that equally to the administration. On the other hand, the disregarding of shared governance and the perceived arbitrariness of the administration promote campus anxiety and unionism. Similar divisions can be found among civil service staff and among non-executive A/P staff. Civil service and A/P staff expressed frustration and lack of trust with both administration and faculty, due primarily to the lack of clear and consistent communication.

In a number of other salient points relative to employee relations, this report concluded:

- There is frustration and dissatisfaction with the divisiveness that pervades our public discourse. The current climate of mistrust and anxiety concerning the financial future of the university and the actions by administration and union leadership to stake their positions in the context of financial uncertainty is indicative of our longstanding culture of adversarial and confrontational relations between members of the academic community.
- Civil service and A/P staff, administrators, and faculty alike speak highly of their devotion to students and to the mission of serving at-risk students such as first-generation and economically and culturally disadvantaged students, but there is a concern that we admit students who are not prepared for a university education.
- We tout our achievements in diversity especially among students, but underrepresented minorities feel isolated and invisible.
- SIU harbors a culture that distrusts leadership in many capacities: central and division-level administration, unions, and student government. That distrust is linked to the concern that shared governance is decreasing or non-existent at SIUC.
- There is a call for more and better-shared governance but because distrust is so ingrained, efforts at shared governance are often futile or are seen as disingenuous.
- Despite these contradictions and diversions, the SIU community is passionate about the university's distinctive qualities.³

The 2011 Lens Report also lists a number of goals concerning employee relations and strategies for achieving them. The parallels between employee relations generally and minority relations in particular are suggestive. The better we address the campus climate for one, the better we address the campus climate for the other. For example:

Goal 2: Change misconceptions that conflate diversity initiatives and student quality.

Goal 2 Strategy 3: Implement training and other university practices to increase cultural competency for all University members.

As a 2008 report to the SIU President notes, “There is little diversity among faculty, staff and administration. Second, although we do *contain* diversity on campus as a whole, there is a widespread belief, especially among underrepresented minority students and faculty, that we are not fully integrated both structurally and socially. Underrepresented minorities express frustration with not being heard, appreciated, understood, or even noticed.” It continues, “Similar observations have been made about the structural integration of women through all ranks of faculty and administration.”⁷⁶

Goal 8: High administrative positions connected to academic affairs, and those who have served as faculty, have the appropriate highest terminal degree, e.g. Ph.D., and hold the rank of Professor should occupy academic programs.

Goal 8: Strategy 1: Require significant experience in faculty position for all academic affairs non-support administrative positions through chancellor (i.e., chair/director; dean/associate dean; provost/associate provost; chancellor [a goal that has largely been achieved]).

Goal 12: The university shall nurture a climate where ethnic/racial minority and female students, faculty, staff and administration feel welcome and where retention rates of such groups (either as students or as employees) match that of white men.

Goal 12 Strategy 1: Develop effective feedback mechanisms (both formal and informal) whereby ethnic/racial minority and female students, faculty, staff and administrators can express their concerns regarding campus climate. These should include but not be limited to: online anonymous comment mechanism, regularly scheduled “check in” sessions between minority community members and diversity officers (e.g., Associate Chancellor for Diversity), diversity training sessions open to the entire university community, informal social events to build campus relationships, etc.

Goal 12 Strategy 2: Develop effective support services to address concerns over discrimination or marginalization or other related campus climate issues.

Goal 12 Strategy 3: Develop a regular, ongoing series of effective training sessions and other activities and discussions for the campus community to increase attention to diversity issues.

Goal 13: The university shall foster a culture where all social identity groups (e.g., whites, racial-ethnic minorities, disabled, international, men, women, sexual minorities) express positive attitude toward inclusiveness, support, and satisfaction with the university.

⁷⁶ Peggy Stockdale and Michelle Miller, Report to the President’s Office, 2008.

Goal 13 Strategy 1: Regularly monitor through campus climate surveys and other means attitudes of all employee groups toward inclusiveness, support and satisfaction (along with other climate-relevant factors). Report findings by social identity group.

Goal 13 Strategy 2: Report results of campus climate to the Chancellor, Associate Chancellor for Diversity, and all recognized constituency groups. Develop and act on action plans as a result of survey findings.

Well before this report was completed, the LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender) and UWPA (University Women's Professional Advancement) offices formed their own campus climate task forces back in the 1990's as part of their own strategic planning initiative.

Common Themes from the Climate Reports of 2008 and 2011

The Lens report listed some common questions and themes that emerged from discussions with stakeholder groups that the committee interviewed:

- (1) There is a lack of shared governance or a consensus on what shared governance means and what the primary entities for shared governance are. Is shared governance something that everyone on campus participates in; is it organized by elected constituency bodies, such as the faculty senate, graduate council, civil service council and so forth?.... Moreover, what are the domains and boundaries of shared governance among various groups?
- (2) More communication is needed and greater transparency and clarity of process [are] demanded. Members of all of our focus groups agreed that more meetings like our focus groups need to be held all around campus so that people really have a chance to talk and to listen to one another.
- (3) Campus leaders (in all respects: administration, faculty, students, staff, unions) need to use democratic decision-making processes; that is, they need to routinely and fairly gather feedback and input from their constituents and to make decisions that reflect those opinions; and
- (4) Greater interpersonal consideration is needed when broad-sweeping (typically negative) decisions are implemented.

Positive Approaches

The area of employee relations is usually connected to an institution's office of labor relations. Private industry takes this matter very seriously, and some corporations have sophisticated programs in place to assure workforce learning and development with special attention to human communication.

Accordingly, the School of Industrial and Labor Relations at Cornell University offers an expensive training in human capital development that promises the following outcomes:⁷⁷

⁷⁷ On the initiatives at the Institute on Labor Relations at Cornell University, see <http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/hcd/>.

- Incorporate employee relations competencies and techniques;
- Identify and learn how to address employee concerns;
- Practice coaching, counseling, and progressive discipline strategies; and
- Demonstrate effective communication.

Again, the emphasis is on communication and enhanced contact and interaction between employees and supervisors. Constant feedback, a system of rewards, and continuous improvement are common features of a positive approach to employee relations. Much of this positive approach applies here.

While many universities ensure compliance to federal and state law through the application of policies and procedures related to hiring, disciplining and discharging employees, some of them also ascribe to the practices of “positive employee relations,” despite the hard economic times in higher education.

A clear and understandable mission statement as well as a positive approach to employee relations will do much to help the university with problems related to morale, or at least the perception of such problems, which is exacerbated by budgetary stress. Beginning in August 2012, the Chancellor’s weekly listening sessions with small groups of randomly chosen faculty members and researchers is providing an opportunity to clarify the necessary elements to that effort.

How the New Strategic Plan Addresses Employee Relations

The focus group data as well as the self-study questionnaires indicate that there is frustration with the divisiveness that exists on campus. A perceived culture of distrust seems to cut across all employee groups. From the focus group data, there also appears to be a need for better communication, feedback, and inclusivity, such as what the Chancellor inaugurated in fall 2012: weekly lunch-and-listening sessions with randomly chosen faculty members. These informal meetings complement the Chancellor’s town-halls, state-of-the- university addresses, frequent e-mail communications to the entire university community, Facebook page, and regular participation in constituency meetings. In a more focused way, the new strategic plan directly addresses these communication efforts by framing the following objectives:⁷⁸

- Manage and monitor the climate on campus to ensure that all students, faculty, staff, and administrators feel welcome, satisfied, included and supported;
- Encourage and nurture effective campus discourse;
- Strengthen shared governance; and
- Provide every member of the university community to be heard and respected.

⁷⁸See strategicplanning.siu.edu/documents/strategic_plan_web_DRAFT.pdf

Diversity is defined as a *core value* at SIU. In 2003, an addendum to the university's strategic plan, entitled *Strengthening Our Commitment to Diversity*, declared, "Diversity is not a department, nor an office, but rather a way of thinking and behaving in a civil, just, and democratic culture."⁷⁹ Since then SIU has made real progress.

In keeping with the enrollment of under-represented groups – up from 17.6 percent of the total in 2002 to 29.7 percent in 2011 – the institution was recently honored with an inaugural Higher Education Excellence in Diversity award from *INSIGHT into Diversity* magazine. The commitment of our institution to diversity and inclusiveness is apparent in the leadership provided by the Associate Chancellor for Institutional Diversity, the Office of Diversity and Equity, and the newly created Center for Inclusive Excellence.

The Office of the Associate Chancellor for Institutional Diversity (OACID) supports this commitment and educates the campus community on the need for diversity resources and services. Programs in place or under development include the Underrepresented Tenure Track Faculty Program (UTTTFP) through which assistance with travel and research is provided. The OACID also promotes minority recruitment as only one piece of the equation; retention is another. The university can and should take the same approach to employee relations. Inclusiveness deserves to be effected more broadly to engage all faculty and staff and thereby to develop a much stronger sense of a comity among everyone at SIU.

Action Steps, Benchmarks, and Timelines

It is apparent that the university has already made strides in strengthening campus community, one of the six areas driving the new strategic plan. At the Spring University Leadership meeting in February, three working groups considered what SIU has already accomplished to manage and monitor campus climate, to encourage and nurture discourse, to strengthen shared governance, and to provide every member of the university community opportunities to be heard with respect. Here, too, some notable progress is evident.

The university now has stable and coordinated leadership in the offices of the Chancellor, the Provost, and the College Deans (with the exception of two interim deans – in Science and in Mass Communications and Media Arts). For the first time in several years, faculty and staff now know who is engaging them in decision-making for the long-term. The marketing and branding efforts are helping create new perceptions about the institution and what it does for students, thereby establishing a closer sense of communal commitment and the trust it engenders. Social media – Facebook, Twitter, and revamped interactive webpages – have provided new channels for communication as complements to the town hall meetings, addresses, and listening sessions. The Chancellor and the Provost are now regularly attending the Executive Committee meetings of the university's major constituency groups to keep them informed and to solicit their input on important matters.

Further steps will require setting priorities in managing and sustaining the dialog with a wider network of university opinion leaders beyond deans, chairs, and directors. The central

⁷⁹ For more information about the *Southern at 150* addendum on diversity, see news.siu.edu/s150/092203diversity.html

administration's own network will also need to be coordinated with those at work in the colleges and the programs of importance to a still wider swath of the university community. Retreats with chairs and directors on the best ways to implement the strategic plan will engage a substantial portion of faculty and staff as they wrestle with the implications of collaboration and reorganization necessary to work more efficiently and effectively to achieve the plan's ambitious goals.

In matters of campus climate, it is very difficult to set benchmarks and measure progress. Surveys and focus groups will provide some indications of appropriate changes in levels of trust and respect. Similarly, certain perceptions will shift and make decisions easier to explain and effect. The same can well be said of timelines. There are no fixed deadlines in institutional relations; communication is a constant; shared governance is an institutional practice; and civility and recognition are woven into everything we do together as a community. Better employee relations are an outcome of improved operations in which we all take pride. And that's the pledge we make to each other on behalf of our students' success.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

Shortly after receiving the Higher Learning Commission Consultant-Evaluation Site Visit Report in June 2010, SIU began the strategic planning process.⁸⁰ The following fall, a Strategic Planning Steering Committee was developed, which included two faculty co-chairs and seven committee members. After several weeks of preliminary planning, this committee held its first meeting on December 10, 2010, during which Chancellor Rita Cheng gave the committee its charge.

In part, the Chancellor's charge was to re-examine existing strategies and goals using the current plan, *Southern at 150*, as a starting point and to craft a strategic plan that takes into account a changing environment and incorporates realistic and attainable goals, as recommended by the HLC Accreditation Report. The Steering Committee was asked to review the NCA accreditation self-study report, the final accreditation report, *Southern at 150*, IPEDS, other institutional reports and a variety of other reports from outside accreditors and agencies. The Steering Committee was to then to develop a framework for the strategic planning process.

On January 24, 2011, the Strategic Planning Steering Committee hosted a retreat with numerous members of the campus leadership. The agenda included briefings on research, enrollment management, student success/Saluki First Year, academic and student affairs, fundraising and alumni relations, library resources, and financial outlook and resource challenges. The Steering Committee members were also charged with leading one of six Lens Groups that, using the Evaluation Report recommendations as a guide, would examine six specific institutional priorities and develop goals for these priorities. The Lens Groups were identified as:

- Research, Innovation and Creative Activities
- Teaching and Student Success
- Campus Culture, Climate and Engagement
- External Relationships and Partnership Building
- Finance and Infrastructure
- Future Trends/Environmental Screening

Shortly following the retreat, the six Lens Groups were established and six individuals were identified as members of each Lens Group. The nine Strategic Planning Steering Committee members would serve as group leaders with an additional seventeen constituency representatives and ten additional appointees. The constituency representatives consisted of three individuals selected by the Faculty Senate, three from the Graduate Council, two from the A/P Staff Council, two from the Civil Service Council, two from Dean's Council, one from the Undergraduate Student Government, one from the Graduate and Professional Student Council, one from the

⁸⁰ The strategic planning process, participants, and products are all available for review in greater detail at <http://strategicplanning.siu.edu>.

Foundation Board, one from the Alumni Board, and one representative of the City of Carbondale.

In early February 2011, the Lens Groups began their work to develop a strategic plan using their specific Lens perspective (i.e., the six identified above) to address issues related to:

- Budget
- Campus enrichment
- Distance education
- Employee relations (climate)
- Enrollment management
- Faculty excellence
- Graduate education
- Inclusiveness (e.g. diversity, internationalization)
- Leadership
- Library
- Marketing and branding
- Research and creative activities
- Research/teaching mission alignment
- Resources
- Service
- Student access
- Undergraduate academics
- Whole student

Near the end of May 2011, the Lens Groups submitted their reports to the Chancellor and the Strategic Planning Steering Committee. Their reports focused on ten questions at the core of the strategic planning initiative:

1. What is the mission of SIUC?
2. How can we express our commitment to student access and affordability?
3. What should be our research and creative activity mission and goals? And what should the balance of teaching and research be at SIU?
4. What is our commitment to diversity?
5. What should be our undergraduate student profile?
6. How can we build trust between faculty, students and administration?
7. What should be our commitment to serve and community outreach/development?
8. Where are our opportunities for revenue growth and how do we plan for our revenue threats?

9. How should we prioritize competing pressures for resource utilization, including new buildings, deferred maintenance, academic activities, technology, athletics, etc.?
10. How do we develop and manage our public image and, in particular, how shall we incorporate the research and conclusions of our marketing consultants about how our external (and internal) audiences view our institution; and what fairly immediate changes we will be making in our messaging?

These Lens Group reports formed the foundation from which the first drafts of the strategic plan arose. On September 30, 2011, a day-long campus strategic planning retreat was attended by 65 people from across campus during which a draft of the strategic plan was evaluated by assigning each table of six attendees to one section of the plan. The retreat attendees made additional recommendations that were incorporated into another draft of the strategic plan.

A Spring Leadership Meeting was held on February 21, 2012, that focused on the draft of the strategic plan that incorporated the ideas and suggestions made as a result of the fall 2011 retreat. Another 125 people attended that meeting from across campus. Each table of eight attendees had an appointed discussion leader who led a roundtable discussion on a specific section of the plan. A scribe, assigned per table, was made responsible for summarizing the table's discussion and sending those notes to the co-chairs of the Strategic Planning Steering Committee. These notes were collated, and items from the roundtable discussions were subsequently incorporated into a near-final draft of the strategic plan. This draft was released to the entire campus community on the Chancellor's website during the spring 2012 semester.

The web release of the plan took advantage of the interactivity of Blackboard. Viewers were encouraged to submit their impressions and comments, which were all read and considered by the co-chairs of the Strategic Planning Steering Committee in consultation with the Chancellor. In late spring of 2012, the final draft of the strategic plan, the synthesis of the notes from the Leadership Summit, the Lens Group reports, and other materials were released to the entire campus community on the Chancellor's website.⁸¹

EVIDENCE THAT ISSUES RAISED BY THE HLC WERE ADDRESSED

The primary recommendation of the HLC consultant-evaluation team that SIU begin long-term planning to revise the institution's current strategic plan has been met. The bulk of this document describes the evidence addressing the six areas of concern: budget, student access, enrollment management, research, marketing and branding, and employee relations. These issues were the focus of the two-year strategic planning process and form the foundation of the new strategic plan for SIU. The influence of the HLC concerns on the plan content is evident in the major sections presented in the plan:

- Student Success
- Research, Scholarship & Creative Activity

⁸¹ <http://strategicplanning.siu.edu/synthesis.html>.

- Diversity and Inclusiveness
- Campus Community
- Community Relations
- Finance, Infrastructure, and Resource Allocation

Other issues raised by the HLC, as evidenced in the Evaluation Report submitted to the institution in June 2010, are either addressed in the strategic plan or through institutional activities that have taken place since the comprehensive visit. What follows is a point-by-point analysis of these issues and the venue through which they have been addressed by the institution.

Criterion One: Mission and Integrity

- Revisit the mission statement in view of the perceived competing cultures of student access and research.

In the course of the strategic planning process, SIU's mission statement was revised to better reflect our commitment to our dual culture of student access and research. During this revision, consideration was given not only to the content of the mission statement but also to its length so that a shorter, more concise statement can become part of the campus discourse.

The new mission statement reads:

SIU embraces a unique tradition of access and opportunity, inclusive excellence, innovation in research and creativity, and outstanding teaching focused on nurturing student success. As a nationally ranked public research university and regional economic catalyst, we create and exchange knowledge to shape future leaders, improve our communities, and transform lives.

This replaces the old mission statement, which reads:

Southern Illinois University Carbondale, now in its second century, is a major public higher education institution dedicated to quality academic endeavors in teaching and research, to supportive programming for student needs and development, to effective social and economic initiatives in community, regional, and statewide contexts, and to affirmative action and equal opportunity. Enrolling students throughout Illinois and the United States and from a large number of foreign countries, SIUC actively promotes the intellectual and social benefits of cultural pluralism, encourages the participation of non-traditional groups, and intentionally provides a cosmopolitan and general education context which expands student horizons and leads to superior undergraduate education. Seeking to meet educational, vocational, social, and personal needs of its diverse population of students and helping them fully realize their potential is a central purpose of the University. Emphasis on accessibility and regional service which creates distinctive instructional, research, and public service programs also gives SIUC its special character among the nation's

research universities, and underlies other academic developments, such as its extensive doctoral programs and the schools of medicine and law. Committed to the concept that research and creative activity are inherently valuable, the University supports intellectual exploration at advanced levels in traditional disciplines and in numerous specialized research undertakings, some of which are related directly to the southern Illinois region. Research directions are evolved from staff and faculty strengths in keeping with long-term preparation and planning. Even as the University constantly strives to perpetuate high quality in both instruction and research, it continues a long tradition of service to its community and region. Its unusual strengths in the creative and performing arts provide wide-ranging educational, entertainment and cultural opportunities for its students, faculty, staff, and the public at large. Its programs of public service and its involvement in the civic and social development of the region are manifestations of a general commitment to enhance the quality of life through the exercise of academic skills and application of problem-solving techniques. The University seeks to help solve social, economic, educational, scientific, and technological problems, and thereby to improve the well being of those whose lives come into contact with it.

Criterion Two: Preparing for the Future

- Develop broad-based practices of assessment to guide resource allocation

SIU is currently participating in the HLC's Academy for Assessment of Student Learning, as the evaluation team noted in its Assurance section. Over the past three years, a culture of assessment is based on an Academy student learning project – the Saluki First Year experience in the University College – which has been integrated into the assessment tools and protocols developed for the University Core Curriculum. Moreover, recent substantive program reviews guided by the performance-based funding metrics, as outlined by the Illinois Board of Higher Education, are being used to shape effective use of institutional resources.

- Begin strategic planning to address specific issues

The strategic planning process is in its final steps. Documentation of the plan and other material can be found on the Chancellor's website

- Submit a Progress Report on its financial planning by August 15, 2011

The Progress Report, outlining our current financial issues and the measures underway to address our financial challenges, was submitted to the HLC on August 9, 2011, and accepted by the HLC in a letter from Dr. Mary Breslin, Vice President for Accreditation Relations, on August 23, 2011.

Criterion Three: Student Learning and Effective Teaching

- Consider development of university-wide advisement principles or goals

With the anticipated completion of the new Student Services Building on the SIU campus,

the university is establishing a central advisement office. This office will serve as a liaison between unit-based advisors and first-year, transfer, and undeclared students. A central advising office for this student population will provide greater consistency in advisement and convenient access for these students to the variety of student service centers that will be housed in the new building. In effect, the Student Services building symbolizes the revamping of undergraduate academic advisement at SIU, which now focuses more effectively on student success.

- Fill the vacant position of Director of Assessment and Program Review

A Director of Assessment and Program Review was appointed in March 2011. The Associate Provost for Academic Programs, whose roles and responsibilities encompass the entirety of the assessment and program review processes, however, now supersedes this position. The Associate Provost works closely with a full-time Assistant Director of Assessment and Program Review to administer the activities of a re-structured Campus-Wide Assessment Committee, whose sub-committees in each college review plans and reports on student learning as the basis for faculty and staff development, including participation in the HLC's Assessment Academy's annual roundtables.

Criterion Four: Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge

- In the recommended strategic plan, redefine the goal of becoming a top 75 research institution

In the Research, Scholarship & Creative Activity section of the strategic plan, two goals are outlined: 1) to enhance research, scholarly and creative activity productivity to the benefit of students, community and other university stakeholders; and 2) to enhance our reputation for providing cutting-edge graduate and undergraduate research opportunities. Under Goal 1, one of the objectives is to strengthen our status as a Carnegie Research University (High Research Activity) institution, thus redefining our previous goal of becoming a top-tier research institution.

- Allocate additional resources to expand the current space available for research

Using reallocated indirect cost funds, SIU recently began a long-term project to renovate both research and teaching laboratories. Spaces requiring renovation were prioritized during the summer of 2012 and several laboratories were targeted for renovation in FY2013. Some of these projects are currently underway with a goal of completing renovation of top-priority spaces by July 2013 at which time another round of renovations will begin.

In addition, in the fall of 2012 the Chancellor assembled a fifteen-member task force from across campus to develop plans for the renovation of the McLafferty Annex (approx. 59,000 ft²) to support interdisciplinary research. Phase I of that project is expected to be completed in early 2014.

Implementation of the Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan is now ready for presentation to the SIU Board of Trustees at its February 28

meeting. The plan is expected to be approved by the Trustees, authorizing the university's leadership to begin implementation, much of which, as this report has demonstrated, is well underway.

The next phase of the strategic planning process is to define specific action steps, benchmarks, and timelines for achieving those benchmarks. This phase began during the Spring University Leadership meeting February 8, 2013, when groups of participants were assigned two or more objectives to discuss with an eye to what has already been accomplished, what remains to be done, what measures of progress should be applied, and when these measures ought to be met in the near-term (1 year), medium-term (2-4 years), and long-term (5 years and more). With the discussion results in hand, the Chancellor's office is now sorting, inventorying, and studying the groups' brainstorming.

An implementation addendum to the Strategic Plan will be produced in spring 2013. It will be based in large part by this report, which documents how much of the strategic planning to date has addressed the major concerns raised by the HLC in spring 2010. But the addendum will also need to elaborate on the advice of the HLC Focused Visit Team. Its report and recommendations will provide valuable, independent analysis of the on-going efforts to frame and to effect the goals and objectives outlined in the Strategic Plan.