PART III – SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Chapter 10: Conclusion and Summary of Action Items

When the State College for Colored Students first opened its doors in 1891, the academic roots of what would later become Delaware State University were already forming. Today, more than 12 decades later, DSU adheres to its land-grant commitment to teaching, research, and outreach while concurrently transforming itself into a public, comprehensive University that provides a meaningful and relevant education to guide students to become productive and contributing citizens. DSU’s portfolio of 52 baccalaureate, 26 masters and five doctoral programs is strengthened through partnerships and collaborations with other colleges and universities, as well as with stakeholder organizations throughout the state, nation, and world. Although there have been shifts in the University’s guiding principles over the years, the core values have always included a commitment to instilling a sense of value and purpose in the students, to achieving excellence in a comprehensive range of academic disciplines, and to vigilantly seeking out solutions for pressing social and scientific issues through research and outreach programs.

An interdisciplinary team of administrators, faculty, staff, students, and trustees actively participated in this 2012 self-study. This inclusive process invited input and discussion from multiple constituencies at every level. Faculty and staff-led research groups explored all areas of the University, affirming broad evidence of institutional compliance with each of the Middle States Commission of Higher Education’s 14 accreditation Standards.

What resulted from this self-study process is remarkable in light of the multiple transitions in senior leadership, including three presidents and four provosts in the last five years. Throughout this self-study timeframe, including this transition period, this self-study demonstrates that DSU remains true to its Mission and intellectual tradition as an 1890 land-grant university. While continuing to embrace the principles of student access, opportunity, and a quality teaching and learning environment, Delaware State University has adapted its curriculum (general education and disciplines) to strengthen its academic core and foundation. Parlaying the intellectual aggressiveness of a talented faculty, Delaware State University has blended its academic and research programs resulting in $23 million in sponsored research funding and a multi-million dollar National Science Foundation STEM grant. This strategic blending of the academic and research enterprises has also resulted in institutional strengths in optics, physics, applied mathematics, movement science, health professions, business, and undergraduate research.

Summary of Action Items

**Culture of Accountability and Evidence**

- Continue to improve assessment of all administrative and academic units to enhance the delivery of services, improve learning, and maintain institutional integrity by the following:
  - Encouraging all units to embrace and aggressively pursue institutional effectiveness to measure outcomes and inform decision-making;
  - Strengthening the use of program reviews as a key component of continuous improvement;
  - Utilizing student learning data to develop action plans for program and student learning improvement, especially at the graduate level;
o Providing resources to improve the institutionalization of data-informed decision-making including training and accountability components implemented at the program and university levels to analyze current practice and justify change;
o Maintaining institutional budgetary support, including human capital, to ensure a continuous, systematic, and coordinated process of conducting student learning outcomes assessment across all undergraduate and graduate programs.

Culture of Quality

- Continue improvements to IT including budgeting for equipment maintenance, improvements to the University’s infrastructure, bandwidth and content management capabilities, and installation of Wi-Fi access on all parts of the campus;
- Continue to set priorities for the development of new space, renovations of existing space, and space allocations within units (colleges, departments, divisional offices) and to include these in the new Master Facilities Plan and University Strategic Plan;
- Continue to improve the teaching and learning environment, including commitment to facilitating high-impact teaching practices through professional development, facilities and technological improvements, and a more detailed explanation of and formal recognition for high-quality teaching in the promotion and tenure process;
- Develop and implement an advisement plan that includes professional advising based on best practices as articulated by the Association of American Colleges and Universities/Liberal Education and America’s Promise (LEAP);
- Thoroughly evaluate the adequacy of the first-year placement instruments;
- Allocate resources to match demand for academic support programs;
- Continue to review program curricula for sufficient content, breadth and rigor;
- Develop a strategic plan, a business plan, and a marketing plan for the additional locations;
- Work with each college to set college enrollment goals in order to continue to grow overall enrollment strategically and to help guide resource allocations;
- Continue training for effective use of Banner modules in student service areas including launching financial aid literacy planning for returning students and their families.

Culture of Transparency and Open Communication

- Continue to improve communications to empower individuals to voice their concerns, ideas, and suggestions, and to participate meaningfully in decisions that affect the operation and future of the University, including providing organizational staffing, responsibilities, and profiles for easy viewing on the web;
- Continue to invest in presenting assessment data (other than in the College Portrait) in a form that is easily accessed and understood by various constituencies so that relevant stakeholders may easily find and interpret assessment data specific to their responsibilities and needs.