

Report

to the

Faculty, Administration, Trustees, and Students

of

DELAWARE STATE UNIVERSITY
Dover, DE 19901

by

An Evaluation Team representing the
Middle States Commission on Higher Education

Prepared after study of the institution's self-study report
and a visit to the campus on April 1 – 4, 2012

Team Chair:

Thelma. B. Thompson, Ph.D.

(Former President, University of Maryland Eastern Shore)

1568 Star Stella Drive

Odenton, MD 21113

Members of the Team:

Dr. Julia A. Ericksen, Professor
Sociology Department
Temple University
Gladfelter Hall, 1115 Pollet Walki 7th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19122
julia@temple.edu

Dr. Patricia L. Francis, Associate Provost
Institutional Assessment and Effectiveness
State University of New York Oneonta
335 Netzer Administration Building, Ravine
Parkway
Oneonta, NY 13820
franci1@oneonta.edu

Dr. Joyce M. Jarrett
Endowed Professor of English
Hampton University
129 Chandler Court
Williamsburg, VA 23185
joyce.jarrett@hamptonu.edu

Dr. Anthony Jenkins, Vice President
Student Life and Enrollment Management
University of Maryland Eastern Shore
Student Services Center, Suite 2169
Princess Anne, Maryland 21853-1299
aljenkins@umes.edu

Team Chair:
Thelma. B. Thompson, Ph.D.
(Former President, University of Maryland
Eastern Shore)
1568 Star Stella Drive
Odenton, MD 21113
tbtcaspa@aol.com

Ms. Maria Krupin, Associate Vice President
Budget and Fiscal Affairs
Ramapo College of New Jersey
505 Ramapo Valley Road
Mahwah, NJ 07430
mkrupin@ramapo.edu

Dr. Kehbuma Langmia, Assistant Professor
Communications
Bowie State University
8154 Washington Boulevard Apt. 312
Jessup, MD 20794
klangmia@bowiestate.edu

Dr. Patricia Mosto, Dean
College of Liberal Arts Education and
Sciences
Rider University
Fine Arts 207C, 2083 Lawrenceville Road
Lawrenceville, NJ 08648-3099
pmosto@rider.edu

Ms. Cheryl Rollins, Director
Institutional Research
Morgan State University
13108 Whiteholm Drive
Upper Marlboro, MD 20774
cheryl.rollins@morgan.edu

Evaluation Team Associate:
Dr. Rolanda Burney
Special Assistant to the President
University of Maryland Eastern Shore
Suite 2107 J.T. Williams Hall
Princess Anne, Maryland 21853-1299
rcburney@umes.edu

This report represents the views of the evaluation team as interpreted by the Chair, and it goes directly to the institution before being considered by the Commission.

It is a confidential document prepared as an educational service for the benefit of the institution. All comments in the report are made in good faith, in an effort to assist Delaware State University. This report is based solely on an educational evaluation of the institution and of the manner in which it appears to be carrying out its educational objectives.

AT THE TIME OF THE VISIT

President/CEO:
Harry L. Williams, Ed.D.

Chief Academic Officer:
Alton Thompson, Ph.D.
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Chair of the Board of Trustees:
Claiborne D. Smith, Ph.D., Chair
Office of the President
Delaware State University
1200 N. DuPont Highway
Dover, DE 19901

I. Context and Nature of the Visit

A team of nine persons and one observer visited Delaware State University to conduct a Reaffirmation visit April 1-4, 2012.

Delaware State University is one of three public institutions of Higher Education in the State of Delaware. It is the only 1890 Land Grant institution. Other institutions are the University of Delaware (the flagship university), and Delaware Technical Community College. This university is experiencing unprecedented growth of 25% in 10 years with total 2011 Fall enrollment at 4,178 including graduate and undergraduate students. Retention rate from Freshman to Sophomore year reached 70% last year. The university offers 52 undergraduate majors, 26 Masters Degrees and 5 doctoral programs.

Delaware State University engaged in a Comprehensive Self-Study to seek Reaffirmation of its Regional Accreditation. The effort engaged representatives from each unit of the institution. There were research, reviews, and assessments as The Self-Study Steering Committee engaged the campus-wide community and navigated through the necessary channels of information to yield a well-written, clear and factual Self-Study Document.

The Self-Study process of itself proved to be very helpful to Delaware State University for in several instances, personnel stated that the experience assisted them to identify omissions and areas that needed strengthening. This process also inspired an expansion of the Mission Statement of the University to reflect more adequately the Scientific Research, STEM initiatives, and outreach activities of the university.

II. Affirmation of Continued Compliance with Eligibility Requirements

Based on The Review and verification of the Self-Study, the Certification Statement supplied by the university, and other institutional documents, Board of Trustees' and other interviews, The Visiting Team affirms that Delaware State University continues to meet Eligibility Requirements 1-10 set forth in Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education, p. xii – xiii.

III. Compliance with Federal Requirements; Issues Relative to State Regulatory or Other Accrediting Agency Requirements

Based upon the interaction with a representative of the State Department of Delaware Department of Education on the review of the Self- Study, other institutional documents and interviews with Trustees and Administrators, The Team affirms that Delaware State University's Title IV cohort default rate is within Federal Limits.

IV. Evaluation Overview

The Visiting Team studied and discussed the DSU Self-Study document by standards. Based upon the many questions that arose, the team set out to seek answers and clarification. After the campus visit, the Team received satisfactory answers and verified data through several means. The team was impressed with the high caliber of the Administrative team, the candid manner in which challenges were presented, and the progress the university had made in improving operations. The academic programs enjoyed priority and assessment has become a part of the culture at DSU.

An analysis of the findings revealed that the university has made significant progress in several areas:

1. The administrative functions are working well with shared governance and collective bargaining contributing to a new and positive spirit on the campuses.
2. The University exceeded its projections for enrollment.
3. The support that the State of Delaware is providing extends from new capital projects to special scholarship funds for workforce development. DSU has also restored the financial health of its Housing Foundation from a \$2.4 million deficit to a \$158,000 surplus. Faculty Research, grants and contracts revenue is up from \$5 million in 2006 to \$30 million currently.
4. DSU received reaffirmation of the A+ rating from Standard and Poor's with a stable outlook at a time when many institutions are seeing a decline.
5. The campus of DSU is updated and presentable with modern facilities and amenities to facilitate learning.
6. The university leadership team has promoted a transparent, collaborative, collegial and shared governance structure among administration, faculty and students. As a result of this leadership, the university enjoys the widespread support of alumni, the Dover community, state officials, and its congressional delegation.
7. The university operates upon the tenets of its Mission through a live Strategic Plan, practices an operational system and assessment that are outcomes-based.
8. Student support services bolster strong academic programs and provide supplemental activities to expose students to integrity, art, culture and other life skills.
9. The faculty and staff appear to be comfortable in expressing themselves and were energized to fulfill their respective roles.
10. The visiting evaluation team was impressed by the institution-wide focus on assessment to help in creating effectiveness in each area of this educational enterprise and commends the university on its inclusive Self-Study process as well as the honest, concise, and well written Self-Study Report that emanated from the effort.

V. Summary Compliance with Accreditation Standards

Delaware State University's Self-Study has 7 Chapters in which they address each standard in ascending order. This report, however, will be organized into 14 sections and addresses each standard separately.

Standard 1: Mission and Goals

The institution meets this standard.

• Summary of Evidence and Findings

Based on a review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

DSU recently revised its mission statement in 2011 to better address the needs of its university community especially in the areas of science, technology and globalization. Additionally, during the self study process, DSU recognized that its 1993 mission also did not fully capture the university's growth in key areas. The new mission was drafted by the Mission Review Team including widespread representation of the faculty, staff, students and alumni and other stakeholders. After several reviews

and revisions the final version was approved by the Board in December 2011 and received unanimous ratification by the faculty in January 2012.

The university is in the process of developing a new Strategic Plan with goals which reflect its new mission. The current strategic plan is based on the 1993 mission and was developed in 2006 by a broadly based Strategic Planning Committee which included representation of faculty, staff students, alumni and other stakeholders. The plan was approved by the Board in 2006. The strategic plan includes nine university goals and includes detailed objectives involving numerous university units. Each department and unit has developed its own mission and goals aligned with the university's.

DSU revised its 2003 Vision Statement in 2010, and created core values based on the recommendations of a Blue Ribbon Committee comprised of faculty, staff students, alumni and other stakeholders. The university's mission statement, vision statement, core values and strategic goals are widely publicized in the university undergraduate and graduate catalogs, in university promotional material and publications, and on the university web site.

The current nine goals of the university are consistent with its 1993 mission and focus on student learning outcomes and institutional improvement. Additional documents which support the mission and goals include the facilities Master Plan and the annual Information Technology work plan. University departmental and unit budgets are developed in alignment with university goals. Faculty development, scholarly, and research activity is well documented by faculty publications made available to the Middle States Team and through various communication throughout the campus community.

The university has also recently initiated several changes to support faculty achievement of program goals based on faculty assessment results. The university has four core student learning goals with which course objectives and student outcomes have to align. Assessment of student learning (Standard 14, Chapter 9) is conducted by the programs (including General Education), coordinated by the Assessment Office and supported by the Center for Teaching and Learning. Assessment results at the department level and university wide are used to improve student learning.

Institutional improvement also is conducted through the Assessment Office. Administrative units have used the results to increase unit efficiency, and program effectiveness.

Institutional goals are applied at different levels within the university through deans, department chairs, directors and unit heads who tie budget requests to department/unit goals and objectives which are aligned with university goals. The implementation of goals is coordinated through the university assessment process which requires each academic and administrative unit to develop goals and measurable objectives aligned with the university's goals, set targets, collect data, analyze and share results, and develop action plans for improvement. Based on interviews with the President and the Chair of the Board of Trustees, the university community has prioritized its strategic goals. The university has a process for revisiting and revising its strategic goals every five years.

- **Significant accomplishments, significant progress or exemplary/innovative practices**

The university revised and extended its vision, mission and core values which build upon its history while positioning the university to take a leadership role in higher education in the state, the nation and internationally. The university integrated its vision, mission and core values throughout the academic

and administrative units on campus. The entire university is engaged in assessment as a coordinated whole.

Standard 2: Planning, Resource Allocation, and Institution Renewal

The institution meets this standard.

- **Summary of evidence and findings**

Based on a review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

The university has been involved in a number of planning activities since 2006 with the development and ultimate approval of the *2007 Strategic Plan*. The 2007 strategic plan clearly identified nine institutional goals that tied directly to the mission. Individual departments develop their goals and objectives in alignment with the mission and institutional goals. The annual budget process and resource allocations are tied to the planning process through university policy. As evidenced by the annual budget development memo and budget policy, all Deans, Directors, Unit Heads and Budget Managers, are asked to provide and rank their additional needs in order of priority and explain how their requests will impact services currently provided. Through meetings and discussions funding priorities to be included in the budget are determined. The budget is then presented to the Finance Committee of the Board and subsequently to the full board for final approval. The University also submits a budget request to the State of Delaware outlining funding requests. The top priorities from this process that are aligned to the strategic goals form the basis for the state priority budget request.

The University uses various methods to assess progress. Assessment results have been used to make some significant improvements and changes within the University contributing to both improvement efforts as well as institutional renewal. For example, the Delaware State University Foundation was created in 2007 as a separately incorporated 501 C 3 Corporation in order to support the request of donors and their desire to donate funds to a Foundation structure. The newly incorporated Foundation is currently building an infrastructure to support a comprehensive campaign that will further support the mission and strategic initiatives of the University by providing funding for student scholarships, support services, and faculty development. Another example of renewal and improvements is the increased focus on research. Research funding has significantly increased from less than \$5 million in FY2006 to \$30 million in FY2011, a goal of the Land-Grant focus of DSU.

- **Significant accomplishments, significant progress or exemplary/innovative practices**

1. Significant improvement efforts have occurred as a result of the strategic planning process and assessment of institutional effectiveness as evidenced by the creating of the DSU Foundation and significant increase in grant funding and research.
2. There is a plan for all units including academic and administrative to utilize WEAVE online to define unit goals and objectives linking to the strategic plan.
3. Significant improvements have occurred within the Finance division to address the lack of infrastructure and reporting capabilities by adding resources and reconfiguring the Banner system.

- **Non-binding findings for improvement (“Suggestions”)**

Communicate more broadly the process used to allocate resources. It is unclear if the resource allocation process is transparent.

Standard 3: Institutional Resources

The institution meets this standard.

- **Summary of evidence and findings**

Based on a review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

The Office of Planning, Budget and Systems established in 2011, under the direction of the Executive Vice President of Finance & Administration/ University Treasurer provides oversight of budget management and resource allocation. The budget is developed from a ground up approach starting at the unit or departmental level. Each year deans, department directors, chairs, and unit heads submit budget requests for the next budget cycle. University policy requires that budget requests be tied to department or unit goals and objectives as well as to the Strategic Plan. Budget requests are forwarded to the appropriate vice president for review and then submitted to the Executive Vice President for Finance. The budgets are discussed with the Administrative Council that analyzes the merits of the budget requests. The Council then presents prioritized budget recommendations to the President for final decision on funding. The final budget is approved by the Board of Trustees. The Office of Institutional Research and Analysis, in conjunction with the Office of Planning, Budget and Systems recently implemented a project to effectively measure the cost of education. This process will provide for better planning and budgeting and will assist in academic reviews by introducing financial metrics as the University moves toward a performance-based budgeting process in the near future.

The annual budget is reviewed throughout the fiscal year, making revisions as necessary. For example in FY2012 as a result of increased enrollments, additional funds were allocated to Academic Affairs to cover the cost of additional faculty. Additionally, the University's budget process includes a reserve in order to provide a buffer during difficult financial times or for unforeseen or emergency events. At the onset of the internal budget process, a portion of the state-appropriated funds is set aside for contingencies. While the university monitors the budget annually, there is not a comprehensive budget process in place at this time that will forecast both revenues and expenditures out into multiple fiscal years.

In 2011 the President realigned the Finance division with the addition of a Consulting Vice President for Business Affairs. The Consulting Vice President is responsible for building an infrastructure in the Finance area and improving the efficiencies, and strengthening financial policies, processes and procedures. The University was challenged by the financial reporting system and structure in the Finance area. They continue to experience difficulty preparing accurate and timely financial statements. These issues were evident by the number and seriousness of the external management letter comments provided during the annual audit. The realignment and hiring of additional qualified staff was done in order to correct these deficiencies and to allow the Executive Vice President and University Treasurer more time to focus on aligning planning, budget and allocation of resources. The University has hired SunGuard Higher Education Management Services to provide an assessment of the current system as well as a plan to correct the deficiencies within the administrative computing system.

As evidenced in the financial statements and planning documents, the State of Delaware has provided reasonably good support from state appropriations. While the state has reduced the appropriation to the university for the past three fiscal years, federal ARRA stimulus funds were provided to make up the loss in the appropriation for two of those years. This fiscal year's reduction in appropriation was made up by additional revenue through a significant increase in enrollments. For FY2013, the Governor has recommended a flat appropriation. In addition to the state appropriation, the University also receives Federal funding as the sole Land-grant institution in Delaware. The University appears to have the resources necessary to carry out the mission and strategic planning initiatives as evidenced by the growth in enrollments, relatively stable state funding and the tremendous increase in research grant funding.

In addition, the University operates two self-supporting components units as well as auxiliary services. The component units include the DSU Student Housing Foundation and the DSU Foundation. An evaluation revealed there were significant issues with the DSU Student Housing Foundation in that they were operating at a significant deficit in addition to having issues with housing management. The University severed its contract with the existing housing management and terminated its interest rate swap agreements for fixed rate bonds. As a result, Auxiliary Services produced a surplus for the past two years.

Institutional Advancement has been under new leadership since 2004. Under this new leadership the University created the Delaware State University Foundation. The office was restructured and new administrative policies and procedures were implemented. Goals for the Foundation are derived from the Strategic Plan. In addition to enhancing overall giving, the Foundation is currently in the silent phase of the University's first comprehensive capital campaign for scholarships and instruction.

Human resources appear to be sufficient. The University has had good success in attracting well-qualified candidates for both faculty and non-faculty positions and facilities. Employees are encouraged to obtain professional credentials and licensing where appropriate. Most notably, the University relies mostly on full time staff and employs a diverse faculty.

The University has a healthy Capital Plan that enabled it to address deferred maintenance as well as to add new buildings. The University relies primarily on the capital appropriation received from the State to address deferred maintenance issues and bond financing for facility expansion. The University has recently entered into a guaranteed energy savings agreement which allows the University to address \$11.3 million in deferred maintenance through guaranteed energy savings. The University is currently renewing its facilities master plan that will align with the new strategic plan.

The senior management of Delaware State University learned from assessment that the institution has had difficulty for a number of years delivering effective and efficient technology services to its faculty, staff, and students. Recognizing this deficiency, the University engaged SunGuard Higher Education to perform an assessment of its technology services. The results of this assessment found that the University suffered from many broken mission critical business processes. In order to correct this situation the University has outsourced its technology function in order to meet the campus technological needs. The University created a multi-tiered governance structure to guide the technology efforts. The structure includes an Executive Committee, Administration Information Systems group and an Academic Computing Advisory Committee. These committees collectively evaluate and address the needs of the campus community in conjunction with SunGuard Higher Education.

- **Significant accomplishments, significant progress or exemplary/innovative practices**

1. Restructuring of the Finance area in order to improve financial reporting and fiscal management.
2. Restored the financial health of the DSU Student Housing Foundation from a deficit position of \$2.4 million in FY2007 to a surplus position of \$158,000 in FY2011, over a \$2 million turnaround.
3. Creation of the DSU Foundation to support fund raising efforts.
4. Reaffirmation of A+ rating from Standard and Poor's with a stable outlook at a time when many institutions across the country are seeing their rating and/or outlooks decline.

- **Non-binding findings for improvement (“Suggestions”)**

Implement the use of strategic financial ratios that would permit the institution to better assess its current financial position and financial health and assist in determining the affordability of strategic initiatives and tracking overall financial strength.

- **Recommendation**

Implement multi-year budget projections in order to facilitate institutional planning beyond the annual budget cycle.

Standard 4: Leadership and Governance

The institution meets this standard.

Summary of Evidence

Based on a review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

1. The governance of the university is summarized in the Board of Trustees By Laws, Faculty Senate Constitution, the AAUP Collective Bargaining Agreement, and the Student Government Constitution, and is shared among the Board of Trustees, the president, the administration, faculty, staff and students, and is based on open and frequent communication. The university operates within a governance model with clearly defined bodies for policy development and decision making. This model includes the Board of Trustees which is responsible for overall university compliance with state and federal regulations; the President who is the chief executive officer responsible for the operation and management of the university; the president's administrative cabinet; the Faculty Senate which oversees academic governance; the Student Government Association, and the Graduate Student Government Association. Additionally there are two foundations, the Delaware State University Foundation Inc., and the Delaware State University Student Housing Foundation, which generate resources to enable the university to meet its mission and strategic goals.

Roles and responsibilities of the university's governing bodies are well delineated; membership on governing bodies is fairly representative of the university's campus community. Meetings of the Board of Trustees are open to the public and are held regularly. The University faculty and classified employees adhere to collective bargaining agreements. Working conditions faculty workloads, the tenure and promotion process, and academic freedom for faculty are outlined in the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) Collective Bargaining Agreement.

The governing bodies have a procedure in place for the periodic objective assessment of their ability to meet stated governing body objectives. The effectiveness of institutional leadership and governance is assessed by the Board of Trustees through self-assessment, and assessment of Board of Trustee members by the Board Chair. The Board of Trustees assesses the President's performance, and President has a process for the performance assessment of his executive team.

- **Significant accomplishments, significant progress or exemplary/innovative practices**

The university's leadership team has promoted a transparent, collaborative, collegial and shared governance structure among administration, faculty, staff, and students. As a result of the transparent, collaborative, collegial and shared governance structure and leadership, the university enjoys the widespread support of alumni, the Dover community, state officials, and its congressional delegation.

Standard 5: Administration

The institution meets this standard.

- **Summary of Evidence and Findings**

Based on a review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

1. The lines of organization, authority and responsibility are clearly delineated and are appropriate (University Administrative Chart)
2. The Administrative Personnel understand and perform their individual duties, but work well as a collective body providing vision and leadership at various levels. (Interviews and Self-Study).
3. The Faculty, Deans, as well as the President and his cabinet are well qualified by education and experience and have the skills necessary to administer to the students and to the entire campus community, to meet the institutional goals, deliver the Mission and to plan strategically.
4. The administrative team has the support and technological aids to render effective services. (Interviews)
5. The Board of Trustees conducts biannual self evaluations, and then evaluates the President who evaluates the 5 vice presidents. They also accept shared responsibility for the fund raising and the effective leadership and operation of the institution.

- **Significant Accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices**

1. Development of Board of Trustee Self Assessment Form based on the Association of Governing Boards' criteria.
2. Producing an improved climate of progress, success, and confidence on the campus.
3. Restructuring and reorganizing, in a dynamic mode, the University's operational plan resulting in significant, transformative changes (enrollment and retention improvement) and in better delivery of services.
4. Highly respected Land Grant activities that focus on scientific research, community outreach, and workforce development to render DSU as a valuable contributor to the State of Delaware.

Standard 6: Integrity

The institution meets this requirement.

- **Summary of evidence and findings**

Based on a review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to these standards:

1. The university has a system of shared governance between faculty and administration. Faculty rights are protected by both the AAUP collective bargaining agreement and by the faculty senate. There are well established procedures for faculty, students, and staff to file grievances. Faculty grievances are handled by AAUP. Student grievances are handled by appeal to department chairs and deans. The Board of Trustees has a clear conflict of interest policy. Finally there is a policy statement holding faculty, students, and staff accountable for ethical conduct.
2. There is a fair and established student disciplinary procedure. Behavioral infractions are handled separately from academic problems. Faculty may be discharged for failing to meet scholarly and professional standards or for fraud or misrepresentation.
3. Factual information about the institution is available and the administration models ethical behavior in its own practices. From observation of faculty comfort in airing concerns and raising issues in front of administration, it is apparent that academic freedom is alive and well in the institution.
4. The university's success in developing its profile has led to increased enrollment. However, departments are finding it difficult to staff all needed classes without relying on overload even for junior faculty members.

- **Significant Accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices**

1. Under the current president and provost, the university has made significant strides towards greater shared governance. The president attends all faculty senate meetings. He is accessible to faculty and students on campus. The provost and the deans have an open door policy, and faculty are now involved in all appropriate aspects of decision making. Approximately 40% of qualified faculty participate in faculty senate committees.
2. The faculty and administration have worked hard to resolve current issues around tenure and promotion in order to streamline the process and clarify the criteria. The language about criteria for tenure in the AAUP contract does not match the faculty senate guidelines and both are considered to be vague. Junior faculty are unclear as to procedures. The provost has established an ad hoc committee to resolve these issues and hopes to have a new system in place by the time new faculty start in the Fall of 2012.
3. The president has appointed a new senior management team including deans and they are working hard to improve the climate at all levels of the university. They are currently developing mentoring plans for new faculty as part of the effort to clarify criteria for promotion and tenure.

- **Non-binding findings for improvement (“Suggestions”)**

1. The team suggests that deans become more systematic in developing mentoring plans for new faculty and that senior faculty in each department become involved in mentoring.

2. The team suggests that Delaware State institute a method to inform all faculty members of the new procedures and of the process of tenure and promotion at the university. This is particularly urgent given that 47% of the tenure track faculty are currently untenured.

Standard 7: Institutional Assessment

The institution meets this standard.

- **Summary of evidence and findings**

Based on a review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to these standards:

Delaware State University (DSU) has expended extraordinary time, effort, and resources in developing and implementing a comprehensive assessment process for evaluating its programs and services. This process encompasses the highest-level institutional goals stemming from mission as well as program objectives and course-level learning outcomes, and also addresses the effectiveness of academic programs as well as administrative units. All major stakeholder groups have participated in the process, helping to assure ownership across the campus community, and the institution has created an assessment infrastructure that permeates the University and makes it highly probable that these efforts will be sustained into the future.

For its 2007-11 Strategic Plan, DSU relied to a great extent on process indicators for monitoring progress on its strategic goals, and is wise to attend closely to the development of high-quality performance indicators to evaluate its next Strategic Plan. DSU is also encouraged to focus in particular on how assessment data can be used to inform decisions and to improve programs and services.

- **Significant Accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices**

1. Implementation and widespread use (and training in the use) of WEAVE and the Assessment Data Collection System
2. Identification of core learning goals for all students
3. Creation of a culture of assessment throughout the University
4. Success in obtaining external accreditations for academic programs as appropriate
5. Regular administration of institutional assessments including the National Survey of Student Engagement, the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement, and the Collegiate Learning Assessment
6. Participation in the Voluntary System of Accountability
7. Role of Student Affairs in the assessment of student learning outside the classroom
8. Role of Institutional Effectiveness Committee in providing collegial oversight of DSU's assessment processes
9. Strengthening its assessment processes through creation of a new staff line in Institutional Research and a new Director of Assessment position

- **Non-binding findings for improvement (“Suggestions”)**

1. The institution should develop a schedule for administering intensive institutional assessments that will allow the time necessary for careful review of results and the implementation of action plans likely to result in improved performance on those assessments.

2. The institution should continue its efforts at present to identify clear and reliable performance indicators for tracking the progress of its new Strategic Plan.
3. The institution should continue to work on “closing the loop” on the assessment cycle, making sure that actions are taken based on assessment data and that subsequent assessments are conducted to determine the impact of those actions.

Standard 8: Student Admissions and Retention

The institution meets this standard.

- **Summary of evidence and findings**

Based on a review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to these standards:

1. Admissions policies support and reflect the mission of Delaware State University (DSU). Under a University re-organization, the Admissions office was transferred from Institutional Advancement to Student Affairs. Under this new model, the University has exceeded its recruitment goals to enroll incoming cohorts whose interest, goals, and abilities mirror the University’s mission. Moreover, the Admissions office revamped its view book, website, and catalogs to better inform prospective students of the academic and co-curricular elements of Delaware State University. This has contributed to an increase in enrollment over the past 4 years.
2. The Enrollment Management Council appears to communicate effectively and share a commitment to reaching the University enrollment and retention goals. The installation of this team has resulted in revamped recruitment materials, effective communication across campus, clear roles, goals and linkages between various offices.
3. Student Affairs and Academic Affairs published and implemented policies and procedures regarding transfer credit and articulation agreement information that allows transfer students to calculate their academic credits prior to enrolling at Delaware State University.
4. Per the Admission’s website, prospective students and their parents seeking information may connect directly to the academic departments offering the major of interest.
5. The Office of Admissions works across campus to ensure accurate, timely, and comprehensive information regarding financial aid, scholarships, and tuition is provided to prospective and returning stakeholders via the University e-mail, website, social media, and newspaper.
6. The Enrollment Management Council has led the efforts to increase the frequency and clarity of communication on campus. The Enrollment Management Council has set-up weekly and bi-weekly meetings with units within the institution resulting in more accurate and timely information being shared and provided to stakeholders.

- **Significant Accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices**

1. Establishing an Enrollment Management Council, the team has created a more robust comprehensive approach to addressing the enrollment and retention needs of the campus. Retention efforts appear to be equally distributed across all classifications.

2. Shifting the University culture to adhere to deadlines and hold stakeholders accountable for complying with these policy changes.
3. Developing the Scholarship Leveraging Team. The implementation of the team has allowed the University to use more strategically, merit-based scholarships to attract top tier students from around the state and region, as well as assist those students with need-based aid. Such efforts have contributed to the University's increase in both enrollment and retention.
4. The Academic Early Alert system is a "proactive" effort designed to ensure the appropriate interventions are employed to aid students who may be in academic and/or personal distress.
5. The Division of Academic Enrichment's retention initiative aimed at improving the academic success, retention, and graduation rates of African American males is functioning effectively.

Standard 9: Student Support Services

The institution meets this standard.

- **Summary of evidence and findings**

Based on a review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to these standards:

1. The reassembling of the Division of Student Affairs has strengthened the foundational core of student life on campus. Student Affairs professionals have developed a host of co-curricular programs and services that complement the academic mission of the University, as well as meet the needs for both residential and commuter students. The Student Affairs professionals within the division are highly committed to the institution and appear to be willing to work across the University to serve the interest of students.
2. The Division has outlined clear measureable learning outcomes associated within each area. The University's core values and learning expectations are intertwined throughout all programs and services created by the staff and reflected in Student Affairs brochures, handbook, and website.
3. Athletic programs have a strong retention, and academic support component. The academic support efforts are housed in Academic Affairs. It is made quite clear to student athletes that positive academic performance is their primary responsibility while at Delaware State University. Students who are experiencing academic difficulty are referred to the Division of Academic Enrichment for additional support.
4. Student conduct procedures are outlined in the *Student Code of Conduct*, and on the Student Affairs website. The Judicial system adheres to the standards outlined by the ASCA, and due process is provided to each student and/or student group.
5. The reconstruction of New Student Orientation has provided an opportunity to assess student learning beginning in the summer and through the first-year experience seminar.
6. Residence Life staff members embrace their roles to have a profound impact on the lives of students living in campus housing. Their use of the assessment tool EBI to strengthen students' living environment within the residence halls is significant to them achieving this goal.
7. Career Services works with undeclared and undecided students is crucial in helping students determine their interest and suitable majors in which they have greater potential for success.

- **Significant Accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices**
 1. Units within Student Affairs have been successfully re-assembled to effectively enhance the educational experience of student across campus.
 2. Ongoing assessment and use of data yield from learning outcomes to modify, enhance, and develop student programs and services are effective tools at DSU.
 3. The Division has led the charge to ensure Delaware State University is a student-centered learning community, and that the environment is conducive to enhancing students' development academically, socially, intellectually, and spiritually.
 4. The 90% graduation rate of student Athletes is impressive.

Standard 10: Faculty

The institution meets this standard.

- **Summary of evidence and findings**

Based on a review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to these standards:

1. The faculty has the qualifications and professional dedication to both the quality of the educational programs and their role as advisors. Ninety-three percent of the full-time faculty have attained Ph.D. or other appropriate terminal degree. The faculty is fully involved in the development and delivery of curricula and academic programs—undergraduate and graduate—in support of the mission “to provide a meaningful and relevant education that emphasizes both the liberal and professional aspects of higher education.”
2. The faculty members are active academic advisors, and take a hands-on approach to student learning in the classroom and around the campus. The faculty are the major driving force behind curriculum development. All curricular changes and degree programs must be approved by the Faculty Senate, the full faculty body, and the Provost before its implementation. The process of shared-governance seems to be working well.
3. As in most institutions of its type, DSU has a large share of adjunct faculty, but academic departments take appropriate measures to ensure quality of their adjuncts. Adjunct faculty qualifications are the same as those for permanent faculty. The teaching effectiveness evaluation of adjunct faculty follows the same procedures in place for tenure-track faculty. Adjunct faculty are provided similar opportunities as those of tenured faculty on faculty development programs offered by the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) at DSU. There is different faculty: advisor ratios in different colleges. This discrepancy is being addressed by the Deans.
4. There have been a significant number of resignations among faculty, in part due to demographics, but the University has embarked on a solid recruitment program, and in the recent years, the majority of tenure-track searches have been successful. The Provost in conjunction with the academic deans determines the allocation of faculty lines based on enrollment data and research needs.

5. The University supports new faculty with an orientation program and professional development offered by the CTL. The CTL provides opportunities for faculty development and financial assistance for travel and research grants.
6. Full-time faculty is eligible to apply for academic enrichment grants and professional development awards. Also, sabbatical leaves are granted based on years of service. The Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) assists faculty members in a variety of ways in their research and scholarship endeavors.
7. DSU regularly evaluates the effectiveness of its faculty. Each year full-time faculty submit an annual review of her/his professional activity, including courses taught, teaching effectiveness, participation in professional meetings, publications, grants, and university service. Tenured faculty is evaluated every three years following the same procedure as non-tenured faculty.
8. Chairs have fair knowledge and control of departmental budgetary decisions. Chairs are fully involved in hiring, tenure, promotion, and post-tenure decisions. There is no any formal training and preparation for department chairs. Chair development is unevenly supported by the respective Deans of the Colleges and the Provost.

- **Significant Accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices**

1. DSU has excelled in its participation on the COACHE survey and the thorough repair of the weaknesses that led to proper actions.
2. DSU excelled in the regularly-scheduled evaluation of the effectiveness of its faculty, through the submission of each faculty member's annual review of her/his professional activity

- **Non-binding findings for improvement (“Suggestions”):**

1. The team suggests that DSU look seriously at a plan for creating new faculty lines to match the increase in enrollment trends.

- **Recommendation:**

The team recommends that before the hiring of the new cohort of faculty, DSU move to approve and put in place the new criteria for the P&T process, with workshops so that all faculty and chairs will be informed of the new process.

Standard 11: Educational Offerings

The institution meets this standard.

- **Summary of Evidence and Findings**

Based on a review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

1. The educational offerings comply with the demands of Middle States. The undergraduate and graduate major course offerings display expected learning outcomes. An assessment data collection system has been instituted for evaluating learning goals and outcomes. In alignment with its mission statement, the

university's educational offerings convey an integrated educational experience that combines content, skills, and reflective learning. Some professional degree programs, whether at the undergraduate or graduate level, have been approved by their respective accreditation agencies.

2. The self-study contains evidence for student community service as one of the requirements for students learning goal. The institution's mission statement, vision and core values emphasize community outreach. The students are expected, through the help of their respective department to engage in outside service. The students work can be seen in areas such as Delaware Center for Enterprise Development, Men on the Move community service at Fairfield Elementary School and Teachers in Progress community service. Also the institution has opened its wellness and recreation centers to the public as a gesture for community outreach
3. There is information literacy on campus and students and faculty have access to online library resources and Blackboard. There are provisions for students and staff to chat online on a real time basis with reference librarian on matters related to materials in the library.
4. Instructional technology and library resources support the educational activities. The DSU library is accessible to all students online, offering services 24 hours, 7 days a week. It has a balanced collection of print and non-print materials, with a growing electronic collection. The library resources and space are appropriate. The library staff provides support to faculty and students of both undergraduate and graduate programs. The library encourages active participation from all university constituents in building its collection. The library is officially designated partial depository for the US Government and Delaware publications. The Dean of the Library and her staff actively participate in professional meetings.
5. More attention is being paid to program reviews in this institution. The Assistant Vice President for academic affairs/Institutional Effectiveness working in conjunction with department heads to appoint external and internal reviewers for their programs. For example the Department of Psychology and the Department of Mass Communication have made an extensive curriculum reorganization of their program. The latter Department is preparing for its initial ACEJMC accreditation visit.
6. The self-study explains the institution's position on transfer of credits for national and international students. Courses that have less than "C" grades are not accepted for transfer and international students transfer credits to the institution must be evaluated by recognized U.S agents like World Education Service (WES), Educational Credential Evaluators (ECE) etc.
7. Co-Curricular activities on campus that involve out of class lectures, concerts, exhibitions, study abroad, opportunities for informal student faculty contact, and other student activities are vibrant. There is a plethora of student clubs, and students especially in Arts have exhibitions to demonstrate their skills and creativity. Additionally, the institution has instituted undergraduate and graduate research days where students display their research from respective departments. The university community and the public are invited on campus to see for themselves what the students can produce on their own.
8. The institution has adequate resources to support, evaluate and improve educational programs at the undergraduate as well as the graduate. Their 2013 draft strategic plan includes emphasis on strengthening existing programs and growing their graduate program.
9. The institution's course syllabi have some evidence of learning outcomes relative to the goals and objectives of the undergraduate programs. Assessment of student learning/program outcome relative to

the goals and objectives are routinely carried out. The Assessment Data Collection System (ADCS) has been designed in order to track student achievement of learning goals. Credit transfer policies are articulated and undertaken on the basis of course content and skill equivalencies. DSU has many articulations agreements with Delaware Technical Community College.

- **Significant accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices**

The university has a growing MBA program in Vietnam and is developing a cooperative program in Korea. The Vietnam program is on track to obtain full AACSB accreditation when there are two graduating classes and the data loop can be closed. Only lower level courses are taught by adjuncts. Delaware State University faculty members go to Vietnam, two at a time, to teach short intensive courses. All classes are taught in English and apparently the students in Vietnam are performing better than the students on the home campus. Additionally, an employee of the Middle States Commission visited the Vietnam Campus and had a positive assessment of the campus.

- **Non-binding findings for improvement (“Suggestions”)**

1. The syllabi for all departments on campus should contain learning goals, objectives and outcomes.
2. The team suggests that the University continue to invest in IT in the areas of hardware, software, and learning management systems.

- **Commendations**

1. The team commends the University for the focus on encouraging undergraduate research opportunities between faculty and students.
2. The team commends Delaware State University library for increasing their E-Books holdings that has exceeded 16, 280 in the last 5 years. The fact that the library continues to purchase deep backfiles of academic data packages is commendable.

Standard 12 – General Education

The institution meets this standard.

- **Summary of evidence and findings**

Based on a review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

The DSU General Education Program, through its core courses, breadth area courses, senior capstone experiences, and across-the Curriculum (A-t-C) Learning Outcomes, is “fundamental to all learning and basic to the mission of the University.” Evidence presented in the self-study, found in university documents, and gleaned through on-campus interviews supports the University’s claim that the program provides academic experiences designed to “produce within students the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that empower them to solve problems, clarify values, secure and sustain meaningful professions and careers, and embrace learning as a life-long process.”

- **Significant accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices**

1. Though a work in progress, the University has made significant improvements in the general education program.

In the self-study report, the general education program, revised in 1998 and updated in 2009 is presented as a model, reflecting the institution's early ability to close the assessment gap by (1) identifying goals and targeted outcomes, (2) measuring them, (3) gathering and analyzing data and (4) instituting changes that have yielded significant improvements to the general education program. Changes included raising the minimum passing grade to "C" for all core courses, integrating elements of general education into a capstone course, and having A-t-C Outcomes demonstrated in designated courses across the curriculum.

2. There is a genuine sense of shared commitment to and shared responsibility for the general education program—for its development, teaching, and assessment.

In addition to the broad range of disciplines involved in creating courses comprising the general education curriculum, there is also broad participation among those teaching the courses—tenured, tenure-track, and adjunct faculty. The interdisciplinary General Education Committee has the on-going responsibility for assessment.

3. Leaders are continuing to seek additional assessment means to measure effectiveness.

The self-study identified senior capstone courses as a primary means to measure general education effectiveness. However, closer investigation revealed that a multiple indices approach is used to measuring outcomes, to include (1) measuring student performance in core courses, (2) applying a standard rubric of General Education Learning Outcomes to A-t-C courses and (3) considering the development of an interdisciplinary sophomore course through which general education learning outcomes can be assessed earlier and linked more directly to the general education experience.

- **Non-binding findings for improvement (“Suggestions”)**

The university should continue the efforts being made to assess general education outcomes so that findings can be linked more directly to the general education experience.

Standard 13: Related Educational Activities

The institution meets this standard.

- **Summary of evidence and findings**

Based on a review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

1. The institution outlines and demonstrates how it is providing basic skills in Mathematics and English to help non-proficient as well as proficient students. The students are supported in this effort through learning communities, mentoring and other support systems. The institution does not offer certificate programs because they have not been approved by Middle States Commission to offer such programs. They offer experiential education. Students in Nursing programs take LPN license examination outside the university. Non-credit offerings are mostly in the area of Mathematic, Reading, and Writing. They were not offered from 1994 to 2004 and the University plans to more rigorously evaluate the data from 2005 to present. Courses offered at three locations (Wilmington, Georgetown and Hanoi) continue to grow.

2. For adult education, the institution has made a great stride at offering scholarships to adult learners who have been out of the university for five or more years. The OSHER REENTRY scholarship fund is offered to students pursuing their baccalaureate degree. This program is in line with the mission, vision and core values of the university.
3. The institution has distance education course offerings. There are three delivery modes utilized for instruction and a quality assurance checklist monitoring system for effectiveness. Distance Education is implemented through a rigorous scrutiny before being accepted for approval. The faculty, the chair and the curriculum committee examine the course proposal by going through the checklist designed through faculty and administrator input before being accepted for online. The institution verifies online identity by having passwords in Blackboard and by requiring some examinations to be proctored at various testing sites. The program is also password protected. Tests are deemphasized and projects are encouraged. Students upload their projects on Turnit.com feature embedded in Blackboard. The university is in the process of developing an online assessment tool to evaluate online instruction modeled after the current course evaluation instrument used for face-to-face courses.
4. The Office of Distance Education and Learning Technologies (ODELT) is in charge of delivering hybrid/online courses to students. Faculty members are trained through workshops and one-on-one tutoring for effective online course delivery and they are offered incentives to offer online/hybrid courses. Their courses must conform to the “Quality Assurance Checklist” and approved by the Director of ODELT and Provost before they are offered.

- **Significant Accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices**

1. DSU has doubled the number of connected degrees with Delaware Technical Community College (DTCC) from 8 in 2008 to 17 in 2011.
2. Permanent director of ACE was appointed in Fall 2011. He is working diligently with the registrar to include non-credit courses in the Banner and implement the data tracking system.
3. Collaborative and comprehensive marketing plan is ongoing in two Delaware locations.

Standard 14: Assessment of Student Learning

The institution meets this standard.

- **Summary of evidence and findings**

Based on a review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the team concluded that Delaware State University (DSU) has implemented multiple effective processes for assuring its students have knowledge, skills, and competencies consistent with institutional and appropriate higher education goals. Assessment of student learning at the institution is mission driven; all programs have student learning outcomes that are assessed regularly through program review. Some programs also have external accreditation; assessment reports demonstrate alignment between institutional mission and program outcomes. In addition, the institution offers many faculty development activities related to assessment through the Assessment Office and Center for Teaching and Learning, and the Institutional Effectiveness Committee provides important

oversight in its review of assessment plans and reports from academic programs. DSU has also responded adequately to concerns expressed earlier by MSCHE regarding the assessment of its Vietnam National University program. The campus was visited by a representative from the MSCHE.

DSU has relied heavily on the assessment of student learning in capstone courses, although academic programs have begun to incorporate an “across the curriculum” strategy that includes the assessment of student learning at earlier points in students’ tenure at the institution. This course-based approach to assessing General Education has not taken place to any great extent.

In addition, assessment has been less consistently applied at the graduate level, especially in programs not subject to external accreditation. Finally, DSU continues to collect assessment data that indicate its students are not performing at expected or desired levels (e.g. on the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) and PRAXIS, basic skills, quantitative reasoning). It is to the institution’s credit that it has responded to these results through the implementation of various initiatives (e.g., sending faculty to the CLA Performance Academy), but to this point results have not improved noticeably. Moreover, the university has been so focused on data collection that it has had little time to focus on analyzing data and closing the assessment loop.

- **Significant Accomplishments, Significant Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices**

1. Regular administration of direct and indirect assessments of student learning, including the Collegiate Learning Assessment and National Survey of Student Engagement, respectively
2. Participation in the Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education
3. Adoption of the VALUE rubrics
4. Role of Institutional Effectiveness Committee in providing collegial oversight of DSU’s assessment of student learning
5. Aggressive program for professional development activity related to assessment

- **Non-binding findings for improvement (“Suggestions”)**

1. The institution should implement a schedule for assessing student learning that allows time for careful review of results and the implementation of action plans likely to result in improved performance on those assessments.
2. The institution should develop policies and procedures that will ensure that all academic programs – at the undergraduate and graduate levels – are engaging fully in the process of assessing student learning.
3. The institution should increase its efforts at utilizing an “across the curriculum” approach to assessing student learning in all academic programs, therefore helping to ensure that meaningful assessment is taking place at all “appropriate points” of students’ academic careers.
4. The institution should maintain its support for the development of the faculty in both assessment practices and pedagogic innovation.
5. The institution should develop procedures and processes for consistently documenting the outcomes of academic assessments, linking those outcomes to specific change strategies, and administering follow-up assessments to evaluate the effectiveness of those changes.

- **Commendation**

The Team commends the University for its thoughtful and robust program in assessing outcomes of student learning, a process that should continue to evolve and lead to closing the assessment loop.