

April 29, 2003

Ms. Jean Avnet Morse  
Executive Director  
Middle States Commission on Higher Education  
3624 Market Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19104-2680

Dear Ms. Morse:

In accordance with Commission guidelines, I am pleased to provide this Institutional Response to the Final Report of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education's Site Visit Team. The visit was conducted during the period March 23 through March 26, 2003, and the Final Report of the Site Visit Team was provided to the University on April 17, 2003.

The Site Visit Team was chaired by Dr. Cornelius M. Kerwin from American University and included distinguished colleagues from 12 other institutions. Both in preparation for the visit and in the organization and conduct of its work, the Site Visit Team was thorough and collegial in the best traditions of peer review. The resulting report reflects a remarkable understanding of our complex, multi-campus institution and its mission, achievements, challenges, opportunities and potential. The report is accurate, fair and balanced. It contains many insightful and helpful recommendations, which, along with the University's own Self-Study, will serve as a blueprint for the continued advancement of Long Island University over the coming weeks, months and years.

My colleagues and I were gratified that the Site Visit Team identified so many important institutional strengths and achievements, especially the following:

- That the institution "conducts its business honestly and openly"; that it supports academic freedom and "expression of contrary points of view"; and that the Site Visit Team found the Self-Study documents "to be of very high quality. . . (and that they) . . . were both comprehensive and honest." That "the team encountered no issue of substance . . . that the University had not highlighted and dealt with somewhere in the self-studies."
- That the University's mission of Excellence and Access, reaffirmed repeatedly over the years, "is clearly and consistently articulated. . ." and "is embraced by all significant institutional constituencies."

- That the University “has been successful in attracting and educating a remarkably diverse student body . . . and provides a broad and rich array of services, tailored to the needs of specific student populations.” That the team “found on each campus . . . a focus on the needs of individual students and a sincere effort to provide each student a personalized education . . . (due) in no small part to a faculty that is accessible to individual students.” And that the team found the University’s effort “to ensure that once students gain initial access they then proceed to their ultimate degree objectives” to be “quite impressive.”
- That the faculty of Long Island University “possess the credentials appropriate for the educational mission of the institution,” “are fully engaged as the primary authors of their curricula,” demonstrate “an ethic of service,” are “persistent in their efforts to ensure quality,” “enjoy the admiration of their students” and are the University’s “most important asset.”
- That “in addition to a strong faculty effort in this area, the student services staff of the institution also deserves mention. The Site Visit Team found student services personnel on all campuses highly professional and attuned to the special needs of their respective student bodies.”
- That the University’s educational program and curricula satisfy the standards for accreditation “in several ways.” That the team noted the “significant changes to educational programs and curricula on the Brooklyn Campus, with a major overhaul of the core curriculum”; and that the team noted that “different core curricula are being introduced at the C.W. Post and Southampton campuses, (with) much faculty effort having been devoted to all three variants.” That the team observed that “the fact that each campus has its own core curriculum, characteristic of itself and reflecting its own strengths, represents the kind of lively vitality that will surely bring about an evolution of the core.” And that the team found that “A major achievement of Long Island University’s curriculum is to maintain low class sizes, almost without exception, against the difficulties posed by being a tuition-driven institution.”
- That there is “a strong sense of service that characterizes the LIU librarians throughout the system and that is reflected in the multiple ways that they assist students, faculty, staff and members of the local and other communities.” That “the many recent and planned facility renovation projects in the multiple libraries appear to be carefully considered as a way not only to integrate digital requirements with traditional needs for reader spaces and collections, but especially to support learning and research through a focused, student-centered approach.”
- That “the University has made and is continuing to make a significant investment in its information infrastructure – the improved connectivity between the campuses and to the Internet, for example – that has changed and will change the way the libraries operate and the way information is accessed and managed.”
- That the University has made “significant progress in implementing outcomes assessment, . . . (which) is embedded in most academic programs and all of student affairs/services.” That the team found several “indicators of LIU’s commitment to Institutional Effectiveness and Outcomes Assessment” and that “the LIU administration is commended for taking . . . crucial actions to sustain and support the assessment initiatives at the residential and regional campuses.” That both the Brooklyn and C.W. Post Campus outcomes assessment programs were commended and that the team found “promising that the Southampton faculty cited the importance of assessment when approving the new core curriculum.”

- That “strategic planning for capital projects, and in particular recent major buildings to support academic and extra-curricular activities, appears to be well developed.” That “there appears to be a conscious and sophisticated effort to ensure plans for fund-raising that reflect the academic needs and priorities of the institution. . . .” And that “Given the importance and penetration of the mission in the life of the University, the roles of the various campuses and the commitment of various constituencies, the basic elements to produce . . . coherence are in place.”
- That “Long Island University’s financial condition is sound,” its enrollment prospects continue to be healthy, and that the team “was very impressed with the current state and plans for fund-raising. . . .” And that “at present, two of three residential campuses, Brooklyn and C.W. Post and all of the regional campuses have enrollments ranging from solid to excellent. They benefit from professional and aggressive recruitment programs.”
- That the matrix organization for the management of our University as a complex, multi-campus institution is working effectively. That “there is no evidence that the University suffers from any serious breakdowns in operations or services as a result of this organizational structure” and that “On the contrary, the Team finds that this mix of formal, informal and, even personal, patterns of management and communication is effective in balancing the current push and pull of forces that impact the institution.” That it has “prevented damaging fragmentation” and has “not lapsed into excessive centralization of authority that could, in the pursuit of efficiency, produce a degree of homogenization that would stifle the missions and appeal of the individual campuses.”
- That the team “found the faculty role in governance to be active and productive on the three residential campuses where senates or councils provide a venue for discussion of campus-wide issues and concerns.” And that “there appears to be a well understood and clearly defined demarcation of the role of faculty unions and these bodies on each campus.”
- That “the Board of Trustees of Long Island University (is) fully informed, highly engaged and deeply committed to the institution” and its members exhibit “their deep understanding of the University’s mission, its major priorities, issues, and problems that it currently confronts, its major functions and operations and, most important, their central role in providing the policy guidance and material support to secure its future.” That the team found “many aspects of the Board’s operations commendable, including the distinctive chancellor system.”
- That the team found “that since its last self-study Long Island University has been engaged continually in renewal and change.” And that the team has “absolutely no doubt that . . . it takes these matters seriously and understands better than most the need to adapt and adjust to changing circumstances.”

The University acknowledges that it also faces many challenges and that there are many opportunities for improvement, and my colleagues and I appreciate the many thoughtful and helpful recommendations offered in the Site Visit Team’s Final Report. While the University will address and act upon each of those recommendations, the following major actions will be given major priority:

- The institution will design and implement a more formal, University-wide strategic planning process and establish clear goals and objectives for its constituent units. This process will be developed in Academic Year 2003/04.

- The academic leadership at the University is, and will continue to be, engaged in refining a written policy statement on the assessment of teaching and will continue its teaching-learning initiatives.
- The University administration plans to take the steps necessary to ensure that the standards governing major faculty actions are clearly stated in the appropriate guidance documents and communicated to all individuals involved in faculty action processes.
- The institution remains firmly committed to securing a more diverse full-time Faculty and has developed aggressive affirmative action search guidelines for identifying and hiring new faculty from a diverse set of populations.
- The University will continue its efforts to study the use of adjunct faculty and develop a policy for appropriate use of full and adjunct faculty that is grounded in the academic framework that meets the University's mission and goal and that also is framed by the University's recognition of one of its key strengths, that is, classes of small size and substantive faculty-student contact.
- The institution will continue to develop and strengthen its Outcomes Assessment Program and will apply the results to improve policy and decision-making and further enhance educational programs and curricula throughout the University. Through the Associate Vice President for Program Review and Outcomes Assessment, the University will provide guidance in the development, implementation and continuous review of programs to maintain program integrity and further contribute to the evaluation of educational effectiveness. As part of its plan, the University will continue to direct its deans and the outcomes assessment committees at each of its campuses to take the steps necessary to ensure that a full program of outcomes assessment is implemented. A series of university-wide meetings are planned with the Office of Institutional Research, the Knowledge Warehouse Manager and Academic Affairs Liaison and the chairs of the campus outcomes assessment committees to address the data needs of the campuses. In addition, the University will strive to ensure that outcomes research informs the planning and resource allocation processes on all campuses and at University Center.
- The University will continue to seek ways to provide more "cross-campus interactions" and collaboration for both students and faculty "to serve as bridges to further integrate the institution."
- The institution will work with student groups and others to expand its services for commuter students and improve communication with them about Campus and University activities.
- The Board of Trustees and the University Administration will continue to address the University governance structure with the Brooklyn and C.W. Post Campuses. Meetings will continue to be scheduled with the Faculty leadership of the Brooklyn Campus to resolve any and all outstanding issues related to University Governance. At the C.W. Post Campus, faculty leadership will be encouraged to participate in on-going discussions to find an effective resolution of outstanding issues related to academic governance.
- The institution will continue its efforts to increase the diversity of its governing board membership, of its faculty and administration.
- The institution will continue to "take immediate and dramatic action" to address the enrollment and financial problems of Southampton College and continue efforts at transformation through a "planned renaissance" involving curricular reformation, development of a new core curriculum and improvements to the physical plant. The

Presidential Task Force for a New Southampton College, which includes trustees, senior administrators and faculty representatives, will lead this effort. Faculty development activities will continue to be formulated to facilitate the new pedagogical strategies that will drive the implementation of the newly devised core at the College commencing in Fall 2004. In addition, the College faculty has committed to the streamlining and strengthening of majors by Fall 2004. Ground will be broken for a new Library later this year, and the need for improved residence halls and student activities/recreation facilities will be addressed over the next several years.

- The institution will continue its efforts for planning, selecting and implementing “an integrated, institution-wide information system, termed ERP.” The University has already established an Ad Hoc ERP Oversight Committee of the Board, an ERP Steering Committee made up of University Officers and has organized technical and functional staff into an ERP Project Team. Further, the University has retained ERP and Business Advisory consultants from BearingPoint to assist in a review of all business, administrative and information systems and provide advice about the selection and implementation of an ERP solution. The University will expend approximately \$2.5 million of this effort during the coming year and is committed to a multi-year effort to implement a full ERP system.
- The institution will continue to invest in its physical plant on all of its residential campuses to improve basic facilities. A new library will begin construction within the year at Southampton College, construction will begin on a new wellness and recreation center at the Brooklyn Campus, and major renovations will improve science labs and classroom space at the C.W. Post Campus. Additionally, during the coming year the University will continue to expand its information infrastructure with the creation of a fiber optic ring connecting all six of its campuses on an Internet2-ready backbone.

During the past two years, Long Island University has engaged in an intensive and broad-based self-assessment as it developed the institution’s Self-Study and hosted the Site Visit Team. This process, which directly involved several hundred members of the University community, has been informative, inspiring and stimulating. Its results have already begun to be felt across the University as the learning that emerged from that process has been applied and as the University has recommitted itself to its historic and contemporary mission of “Excellence and Access.” On behalf of the entire Long Island University community, I wish to thank you and your professional staff, the members of the Commission and our colleagues from peer institutions who served on the Site Visit Team.

Sincerely,

David J. Steinberg  
President