

Final Report  
Site Visit Team for Long Island University  
Middle States Commission on Higher Education  
April 17, 2003

The following report summarizes the findings and recommendations of the Site Visit Team (SVT) that was assigned responsibility to consider the case for reaccreditation of Long Island University under the standards found in the Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education issued by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. The membership of the Site Visit Team is as follows:

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The site visit of Long Island University was conducted from March 23 to March 26, 2003. The site visit included interactions with administrators, faculty, students and staff on the three residential campuses of Long Island University -- Brooklyn, C.W. Post and Southampton, its three regional campuses -- Brentwood, Rockland and Westchester -- and six of the more than twenty "other locations" where academic programs of various sorts are offered. A complete schedule for the site visit is included in Appendix A of this report.

Based on an exhaustive review of the self-study documents and direct interactions with more than two hundred members of the institution's leadership, administration, faculty, students and staff during the site visit, the Team has arrived at a number of findings, offers a number of suggestions and makes a series of recommendations to further strengthen the performance of Long Island University in relation to the standards found in the Middle States Characteristics of Excellence. They are presented in the order found in the Characteristics of Excellence.

### **Institutional Integrity**

This standard requires that the institution conducts itself with integrity, broadly defined, in its interactions and communications with its constituencies and the public. We make a number of

observations and few recommendations related to this overarching standard in the sections that follow, but in general we find that Long Island University conducts its business honestly and openly with the members of its community and with external parties. We found no significant discrepancies between the published materials of the institution and the contents of self-study documents or interviews conducted during the site visit. We read or heard of no direct or indirect threats to academic freedom at the institution or suggestions that the faculty exercised such freedom in a manner that excluded or hampered the expression of contrary points of view. In particular, and as an important example of institutional integrity, the Site Visit Team found the self-study documents to be of very high quality. These documents were both comprehensive and honest. It is significant that the team encountered no issue of substance during the many site visit sessions we conducted on the various campuses and at the various sites that the University had not highlighted and dealt with somewhere in the self studies. The Team finds this commendable and impressive, especially in light of the size and complexity of the institution.

### **Mission, Goals, and Objectives**

The mission of Long Island University, stated in its most basic terms, “Excellence and Access,” is clearly and consistently articulated throughout the self-study documents prepared for the entire institution and the various campuses, as well as the other major reports reviewed by the Site Visit Team. There is strong evidence in the self-study documents and in the site visit interviews that Long Island University has, as is expected of an accredited institution, periodically revisited this mission to determine its ongoing value and pertinence to contemporary conditions. The University has, after these periods of reflection, repeatedly reaffirmed its commitment to “Excellence and Access” as the twin pillars of the institution’s mission.

The duration and clarity of communication of the University’s mission are significant but the Site Visit Team finds that the extent to which the mission is embraced by all significant institutional constituencies to be most impressive. Throughout the self-studies and frequently in the interviews conducted on site, members of the team observed how the commitment to excellence and access serves as a source of strength and inspiration, and as a touchstone for the University’s functions and activities.

The most authoritative refinement of the mission is found in the University-wide Self Study document on page U-11 in a section titled “The University Today.” There we find a more detailed discussion of what the institution seeks to achieve. This statement notes the institution’s commitment to diversity in the composition of its community, multiple campuses with distinctive identities and education offered at levels ranging from undergraduate through the doctorate. It notes its role in making private higher education accessible to students whose personal resources would normally preclude it as an option and its dedication to providing education that empowers people in all aspects of their lives. In pursuit of these elements of the mission the University dedicates itself to teaching, research and other forms of professional inquiry and expression and service.

The mission statement of Long Island University is, by the nature of such expressions, general. Even with the refinements found in various documents a need remains for greater specificity,

particularly in articulating goals and objectives related to the institutional mission for components of the institution. Accordingly, we recommend, based on the content of self-study documents and our observations, that Long Island University continue to draw upon the statement of mission to develop clear goals and objectives for all of its major constituent units. All appropriate decision making processes, including formal planning, should be employed for this purpose so that each campus and program are fully integrated into the University's commendable mission through articulated goals and objectives.

## **Students**

The Site Visit Team finds that Long Island University has been successful in attracting and educating a remarkably diverse student body. Further, the University provides a broad and rich array of services, tailored to the needs of specific student populations that are designed to help students in being successful in all pertinent aspects of contemporary higher education. We found on each campus we visited a focus on the needs of individual students and a sincere effort to provide each student a personalized education. To the extent this is accomplished it is due, in no small part, to a faculty that is accessible to individual students. Faculty expressed this as professional norm they share and, as important, both students and alumni who were interviewed shared a sincere and deep respect for faculty mentors who had taken a serious interest in their work and lives. From the Brooklyn campus, with its extraordinary diversity and sizable part-time student population juggling school, family and work, to C.W. Post's more typical comprehensive campus with full-time undergraduate students and a mix of graduate students, to Southampton with its focus on a traditional and intimate liberal arts undergraduate experience to the regional campuses with large numbers of students in professional masters degrees the ethic of "students first" was in evidence. Given the degree of tuition dependence one would reasonably expect that Long Island University would place the Middle States standard related to students in a special position of importance. However, the site visit team finds the commitment to individual students and their development as people and professionals goes well-beyond concern for credit hours. The approach to student service is a tangible example of the University's commitment to and understanding of "access" in its broadest sense.

While the admissions processes that have assembled this very large and diverse student body are quite impressive, equally impressive is the effort expended by the University to ensure that once students gain initial access they then proceed to their ultimate degree objectives. 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. Like the faculty, they shared a commitment to treat students as individuals and their progress as their highest priority. This includes developing and managing extra- and co-curricular programs that allow students to develop leadership skills and interests in varied contexts, providing safe and secure environments for students to live and study, encouraging student input on important issues and taking their views seriously, and making a serious commitment to outcomes assessment. In this latter instance there is conscious connection between the mission of the University and the measures used by student services staff to determine whether they are accomplishing things of value.

While the overall situation with regard to the student standard at Long Island University is positive there are aspects of the student condition in need of attention, and in some cases substantial improvement. As in most universities with a larger commuter population, those students report being occasionally out of the loop on important developments on some of the campuses. This view was expressed most clearly on the Brooklyn campus. On those campuses offering residences to undergraduate students there are issues with dormitory conditions and, in some instances, basic services. Issues related to the conditions of residence halls appeared to be the most significant on the Southampton campus. Similarly, concerns have been raised about the condition of classrooms and, in particular, laboratories and impediments to learning and student success. Funding for some important student programs, particularly those designed to provide special support to students at risk are depending on public funding. In the current budget environment this creates the possibility of funding cuts that could curtail or eliminate programs which, in turn, will impair the institution's ability to deliver on the access element of its mission. Finally, with all its diversity of people and programs, Long Island University has enormously rich and varied experiences for all students. But there are relatively few formal programs to present to all of them with all the institution has to offer at all of its locations. We recommend that the University take appropriate action to ensure that its communication systems effectively reach commuter students. Here, as a symbol of its commitment, the University might act on the recommendation presented to the team by a C.W. Post campus student calling for an electronic digital display board providing real-time updates on major activities or issues of interest to commuting students. Since it presents itself as a single University, Long Island University should do more, both formally and informally, to ensure that students enrolled on any one of its campuses have the opportunity to fully experience the benefits of the others. We do not presume to prescribe what forms these opportunities should take but the possibilities for further enrichment through such efforts are extensive. The matter of aging, inadequate facilities will be addressed in a later section of this report.

## **Faculty**

As already acknowledged in the preceding section, the faculty of Long Island University enjoy the admiration of their students. Given the central importance of teaching in the faculty section of the Characteristics of Excellence, this fact is an important indicator of the university's case for reaccreditation. The Site Visit Team finds the faculty members of Long Island University more than popular, however and, indeed, in light of the institution's mission and dependence on enrollment they are its most important asset.

Nearly 700 individuals hold full-time appointments on the faculty of Long Island University. Based on self-study reports, supporting documents made available by the University and interviews conducted during the site visit, there is ample evidence that faculty possess the credentials appropriate for the educational mission of the institution. The full-time faculty are aware of and committed to the key elements of the University's mission, access and excellence. These same sources of information confirm the faculty's dedication to teaching, broadly defined, and as we noted in the immediately preceding section of this report, their impact on student learning, personal growth and professional development is quite substantial. As we will note again in later sections, the faculty are fully engaged as primary authors of their curricula and take care to ensure that developments in their fields and relevant external environments are reflected in program

requirements and electives. The Site Visit Team notes with interest the transition that is underway at Long Island University with regard to the balance of teaching and scholarship and creative and other professional activities in careers of the full-time faculty. Of particular significance here is the creation of a nine credit hour per semester teaching option for faculty seeking to pursue more substantial research, creative or professional agendas. The Site Visit Team considers this a positive step for the University, since the active development of these components of the faculty role inevitably enhance the effectiveness of teaching, and teaching is so obviously crucial to the mission and future of the institution. The University should be self-conscious about the impact these changes will have on standards that govern major faculty actions, including tenure and promotion, and take steps outlined in recommendations outlined below to ensure these developing standards are clearly stated and widely communicated. There is an ethic of service among the Long Island University faculty that deserves mention. As we will note again in a different context below, this expresses itself in serious engagement in governance and other institution building and maintenance activities within the University. But, it is also evident in service to the larger community outside the University's wall. These many forms of service are evident in the self-studies and other documents we reviewed but also were particularly striking in discussions with alumni of the University who stated that the faculty's generosity of spirit with regard to service moved them to do the same in their own lives and careers.

The University has acknowledged that search processes and procedures, to date, have yet to yield a faculty possessing the diversity that they seek to achieve and one that matches their student population. Like so many other institutions, Long Island University faces challenges in this area but given its mission and the composition of the student body the Site Visit Team finds that this is an area of particular and pressing importance.

The physical characteristics of the University pose challenges to faculty collaboration and cooperation across its campuses. As we noted in the student section, the University needs to focus more time and energy on building the types of opportunities for cross-campus faculty interaction that will serve as bridges to further integrate the institution.

Long Island University also benefits from the work of a large adjunct faculty, many of whom teach substantial loads each semester. Given the degrees of presence and importance of adjunct faculty on many of the campuses, the Site Visit Team took particular care in assuring that we had ample opportunity to interact directly with them. We met with groups of adjunct faculty at each of the major residential campuses and each of the regional campuses. Based on these sessions we are confident that the basic mission of the University is understood and embraced by the adjunct faculty and they also share the commitment to students and high quality teaching. Efforts are made to integrate adjunct faculty into the departments and programs where they teach and they report feeling supported in their work. Nevertheless, the size of the adjunct faculty and the percentage of student credit hours taught by them raise significant issues, leading to recommendations that follow.

The Site Visit Team finds that Long Island University meets the standards for faculty set forth in the Characteristics of Excellence. That general assessment notwithstanding, the Team also recommends that the University takes the steps necessary to ensure that the standards governing major faculty actions are clearly stated in appropriate guidance documents and that these standards are communicated and understood by all persons substantially involved in faculty action processes. Further, we strongly recommend, within the bounds established in the law, aggressive efforts to further diversify the faculty. Finally, we strongly recommend, that the University proceed with a

serious and systematic assessment of the role of adjunct faculty in its many and various academic programs. We fully realize that presence of adjunct faculty is a complex, multi-dimensional issue and we do not presume to suggest that a single, or even set of formulae apply. Still, the University would benefit from a clear set of goals for its programs on the appropriate amount of student instruction that will be taught by full and adjunct faculty.

### **Educational Program and Curricula**

The standards for accreditation call for curricula to be dynamic, and to strike a balance between specialized areas and general education, according to an institution's missions and goals. The core curricula developed on the three campuses of Long Island University satisfy these requirements in several ways.

Since the last Middle States Review in 1993 there have been significant changes to educational programs and curricula on the Brooklyn Campus, with a major overhaul of the core curriculum that was approved in Spring, 2001. Changes that are now being pilot tested in Brooklyn include new content and new pedagogy. A new core seminar for lower division students (The Idea of the Human) will be offered in Fall, 2003 in 16 sections, with 16 more in the semester following. Multiple perspectives in philosophy, history, and writing will be examined in the Core, which also includes thirteen credit hours in math and science, 6 in social sciences, and 3 in speech. Students will be expected to produce a substantial body of written work in core courses as well as in upper division courses (Writing Across the Curriculum) offered by all departments on the Brooklyn campus. Students are also required to demonstrate basic computer skills prior to graduation. The same core seminar will be offered at satellite and outreach campuses (e.g., Bushwick and Bedford Stuyvesant).

Different core curricula are being introduced at the C.W. Post and the Southampton campuses, much faculty effort having been devoted to all three variants. 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. The Southampton campus effort, at the early stages of definition at the time of our site visit, is notable for a number of reasons and will be referred to in several subsequent sections of this report. With regard to educational programs and curriculum, the development of a new core curriculum on the Southampton campus is a good example of University leadership and faculty coming together to attempt to resolve a set of enrollment and financial problems that threaten the ongoing viability of the campus. They are doing so with a dramatic curricular and program effort that seeks to address the most pressing problems without sacrificing the mission of the unit.

Long Island University offers more than 500 degree and certificate programs at all levels, from the most basic levels of higher education through professionally accredited doctoral programs. The more advanced curricula are dominated by courses of study that lead to entry into professional programs such as pharmacy, business administration, education and public administration. The sheer number and scope of programming at the University defies all but the most general characterizations and challenges even the most experienced evaluator. That said, the Site Visit Team, based on self-study materials, official program descriptions and interviews on the campuses is confident that the

academic programs of Long Island University exhibit the basic characteristics of curricula, including range of coverage, currency and progression of requirement, at all levels of degree. Further, as noted in previous sections and will be emphasized again, the faculty of Long Island University are engaged with their programs and curricula and are persistent in their efforts to ensure quality.

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 private institution. A handful of the most popular survey courses were taught in lectures of over 100, but at Brooklyn, C.W. Post, and Southampton campuses, students rarely reported being in classes with more than 30 students. The Site Visit Team finds the ability of the University to offer classes of these sizes a key to maintaining contact between students and faculty and individualized instruction. At the same time, the means by which this is achieved in the context of a tuition dependent institution, and in particular the implications for the use of adjunct faculty mentioned above, should be a major focus of study and discussion for the leadership and faculty of the University for the foreseeable future.

### **Library and Learning Resources: Access and Utilization**

The mission of the Long Island University Libraries – the provision of access to knowledge and information, as well as the provision of resources and an environment for research and study – supports the University's mission of access and excellence and the goals of the individual campuses. Access is, in large part, supported through the Libraries' array of programs that seek to assist students in understanding and working with the new information resources and tools, and excellence, through the high quality of the resources made available and the professionalism, expertise, and service-mindedness of the librarians and staff.

The campus libraries have long been attuned to local needs, and students and faculty interviewed by the team conveyed their satisfaction with the new and expanded access to resources made available to them. Faculty commented favorably on the helpfulness of the librarians and on their willingness to provide instructional sessions for students. Many are involved in the development of the collections, some (particularly in Brooklyn) in collection evaluation, and they are instrumental in seeing that the resources are used.

The librarians on all campuses are aware of the complexity of the new information environment and of the consequent need to keep the academic community aware of the new and changing resources and services provided – the subject of a recent retreat for the librarians. They know that this need is and will be ongoing, and are committed to increasing faculty awareness of available services through initiatives such as the library liaison program, an array of instructional activities and workshops, an important web presence, other communication efforts, and the like.

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. The University will need to continue to attend to the accompanying and growing needs for more electronic information, i.e., the content (for the conduit). This will be particularly

important support for the graduate programs on the multiple campuses as they continue to gain in strength.

Great strides have been made in integrating information technologies into the Libraries' program of resources and services. These technologies have ranged from the implementation of an online catalog with the holdings of all of the libraries; the availability of full-text journals and databases, many available from remote locations; the implementation of an electronic reserves system that is used by many faculty in conjunction with their WebCt course management program; the initial use of the Ariel document delivery system; the automation of library functions; and the development of webpages that facilitate access to information.

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. They contribute to the cultural and educational life of the university with exhibits, speakers, and events, including (at C.W. Post) initiating a campus-wide program on nonviolence that led to participation in United Nations programs. The series of web-based exhibits on the Afro-American experience has continued to draw much attention.

There is high-level work being done throughout the Libraries on the clarification of the meaning of information literacy and, in partnership with the faculty, on its integration into the undergraduate curriculum. Information literacy modules have been and are being incorporated into the new core curricula (including the Core Seminar on the Brooklyn Campus) and the Writing-across-the-Curricula programs, as well as in the majors. On the C.W. Post Campus the librarians have contributed to a textbook used in a Reading I course and regularly teach multiple class sessions. On the graduate level, there is work being done on the integration of information literacy into the business curriculum. There is a library competency workshop and exam, and there are online tutorials. At Southampton, the work on the new Core presents opportunities for the Library, building on its longstanding instructional program, to participate further in the process. Much remains to be done to insure that all students attain information literacy, but the faculty and the Libraries are, clearly, moving ahead in seeing this literacy as a desired learning outcome.

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. There are new instructional and collaborative learning spaces, media facilities, and computing labs and wireless networks that enhance the capability of the libraries to participate in the university's teaching and learning programs. The new information commons at C.W. Post should be an inviting and open student-oriented center. The planned Southampton library should be a state-of-the-art facility that is high-tech, warm, and welcoming, a much-needed College and community resource.

There are strong linkages between assessment (including data gathering), planning, and the budgetary request process in use by the Brooklyn Campus Library as it begins to undertake a number of initiatives. This assessment/planning work should, over time, assist the Library and the Campus in the strengthening of many library programs, including insuring that its collections provide effective support for the curricula in accordance with the Campus' strategic plan. The collection analysis that has been done in education and business reflects these activities.

Despite these considerable strengths there are a number of ways the University can bolster its posture with regard to the standard associated with this Characteristic of Excellence. The Site Visit Team recommends improvement in the availability of library resources by, in part, insuring that the Libraries' inter-campus courier vans are able to pick up and deliver materials as frequently as possible. The timely receipt of information is critical to the work of many students at multiple locations, and attention needs to be directed at ways to reduce the time it takes to obtain needed materials. Paralleling the physical transportation of books, the full implementation of an appropriate web-based (article) delivery system needs to be addressed.

We recommend further that although there has been considerable growth in the number of full-text electronic journals that are now available for students and faculty, much more needs to be done to insure access to current information in this format throughout the University. Programs located in Southampton and the regional campuses rely heavily on this kind of immediate information access, and this reliance will, clearly, grow there - as it will in Brooklyn and C.W. Post. Attention needs to be directed to ways the Libraries can continue to address these needs on a system-wide collaborative basis.

The Team recommends that the process of building an understanding of what it means to be a part of a unified library system that shares resources and expertise in a way that is beneficial to students and faculty on all of the campuses continue. The process has begun, to a large extent, with the planning for and implementation of the Horizon system and has continued with the development of a set of shared values. The library-wide Steering Committee, in cooperation with the university's consultants, has coordinated efforts in this direction.

We recommend the development of a strategic plan for the libraries as a system that will give further direction to the Libraries. The focus can be on the digital – there is much to explore and contend with as the LIU libraries seek to provide new kinds of digital services in the years ahead. Or, it can be more general. What is important is that the LIU libraries build on its strengths as a system as it thinks through the development and implementation of a new and changing agenda of services.

### **Institutional Effectiveness and Outcomes**

As with other sections of this report, this summary is based upon the Long Island University self-study documents and interviews with the Vice President for Information Systems and University Planning, the Information Systems and Planning Leadership Team, the Associate Vice President for Program Evaluation and Outcomes Assessment, and the Outcomes Assessment Committees, department chairs, and student affairs/services staff from Brooklyn, C.W. Post and Southampton campuses. As with the Team's inquiry related to Library and Learning Resources, our effort with regard to institutional effectiveness and outcomes was two-pronged. First, and most important, our team assessment specialist visited each of the residential campuses and conducted a series of dedicated interviews with a carefully selected group of faculty, administrators and students. Second, the subteams conducting the broader reviews of these same campuses and the regional campuses supplemented the information gleaned from our team specialist's sessions with questions for each of the relevant groups with whom they interacted. The result, as was the case with Library and

Learning Resources, is a comprehensive and in-depth view of the status of outcomes assessment and its applications at Long Island University.

In response to the 1993 Middle States Accreditation visit, the residential and regional campuses of Long Island University (LIU) have initiated outcomes assessment activities. The campuses are addressing questions, seeking answers and improving procedures and curricula. As a whole, the outcomes assessment activities employ qualitative and quantitative data to assess the extent and quality of student learning. The creation of an Associate Vice President for Program Review and Outcomes Assessment, the reestablishment of Institutional Research, and the beginning of a process to establish a new information system that supports assessment efforts are indicators of LIU's commitment to Institutional Effectiveness and Outcomes Assessment. The LIU administration is commended for taking these crucial actions to sustain and support the assessment initiatives at the residential and regional campuses. Maintaining the responsibility for outcomes assessment at the program or unit level at each residential and regional campus, and the Associate Vice President for Program Review and Outcomes Assessment collaborative approach to the campuses will strengthen the outcomes assessment initiatives.

The outcomes assessment plans at the residential campuses are at various stages of implementation. The Brooklyn campus outcomes assessment matrix approach is commended for clearly delineating mission, goals, objectives, indicators, and responsibilities and making its progress on outcomes assessment public through its website. The C.W. Post campus is commended for implementing outcomes assessment throughout its academic programs and connecting outcomes assessment results to its planning process. The Southampton campus' "transformation process" is a challenge to its outcomes assessment efforts because of the new core curriculum and changes to various academic programs. It is promising that the Southampton faculty cited the importance of assessment when approving the new core curriculum. Despite this challenge, Southampton continues to monitor student satisfaction through periodic surveys and has made improvements in student services based upon this information. The regional campuses of Brentwood, Rockland, and Westchester are assessing student satisfaction to ensure that their services meet student needs. As the outcomes assessment initiatives continue, it will be imperative that all academic programs implement outcomes assessment.

These actions show significant progress in implementing outcomes assessment. Faculty and administrators report that assessment is embedded in most academic programs and all of student affairs/services. However, it is imperative that the deans and the Outcomes Assessment Committees continue their efforts to have all academic programs implementing outcomes assessment.

In the self-study process and during the interviews there were several issues that need to be addressed as the campuses continue to advance their outcomes assessment initiatives. Of primary concern is information on progress of graduates and alumni opinions. In addition, timely and accurate information on program enrollment and retention is needed. This information is helpful to faculty and program directors in their efforts to improve teaching and student learning.

As the outcomes assessment efforts mature on each campus, outcomes research should inform planning and resource allocation. The Brooklyn and C.W. Post campuses are beginning to make this connection between outcomes assessment and their respective planning processes. The

Southampton campus is also beginning to connect outcomes assessment to the planning and resource allocation process as a result of the faculty decision to use assessment to inform the implementation of their new core curriculum.

The findings and recommendations for Institutional Effectiveness and Outcomes can be summarized as follows. The regional and residential campuses have implemented outcomes assessment plans, albeit in varying degrees of detail and program coverage. The structures and systems for outcomes assessment are established on each of the campuses. However, to deal with the unevenness in the measurement of outcomes assessment and the development of effective feedback loops to other critical decision-making systems, such as institutional planning and resource allocation, the Site Visit Team recommends that the University direct the deans and the Outcomes Assessment Committee to take the steps necessary to ensure a full program of outcomes assessment is implemented for all appropriate University programs. The University should also take the steps needed to ensure the outcomes research informs the planning and resource allocation processes on all campuses and at the University Center. This will be facilitated by widespread communication of assessment results and best assessment practices throughout the entire University, with particular emphasis on the dissemination of timely and accurate information program enrollment, retention and alumni experience and opinion.

### **Planning and Resource Allocation**

The Site Visit Team finds the state of planning, and its linkage to resource allocation, to be decidedly uneven.

Strategic planning for capital projects, and in particular recent major buildings to support academic and extra-curricular activities, appears to be well developed. There appears to be well developed mechanisms to transform plans for capital improvements to budgeting and other financial instruments, including debt. Similarly, 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, constrained, of course, as all such efforts are by the interests of benefactors and donors.

At this point, non-capital, operational plans for the University as a whole and for the various campuses are at varying stages of development. The most coherent program of explicit strategic planning we encountered was on the Brooklyn campus. The C.W. Post campus engages in planning as well, and the Southampton effort described above will rise to the level of a strategic plan when all the pieces of that work are ultimately tied together. What is missing is a system that uses mission to drive planning from the bottom up, resulting in both a strategic plan for the University as a whole and a clear crosswalk to annual or multi-year budgets. 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 this level of coherence are in place. Two things are missing. The first is the integrated administrative information system (ERP) that will provide accurate and timely information to inform both planning and resource allocation. The second is time. Long Island University is an institution rapidly moving forward and the time it takes for reflection is limited. Implementation of the ERP will force some of this, to be sure, but the Site

Visit Team strongly recommends a program of formal strategic planning to ensure that institution drives the new system, and not the reverse.

## **Financial Resources**

Long Island University's financial condition is sound. Based on reviews of available external audits and admittedly brief interactions with the Board and representatives of the University, management closed the last fiscal year able to meet its expenditure obligations and make a modest contribution to reserves. The institution has, over time, used planned deficits and externally secured debt, often related to public programs, to make strategic investments in plant and programs that appear to have been beneficial to its ability to meet the access and excellence elements of the mission. Neither of these devices appears to have put the institution at significant financial risk.

Long Island University is heavily tuition dependent with a highly diverse student body that draws on dramatically varied resource bases to fund their education. The risks these factors present are obvious and deserving special mention in this report. Demographic shifts, loss of appeal among prospective students and competition from a number of institutions could lead to enrollment problems that would immediately translate into pressure on revenues and darken the institution's financial picture. 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. In these instances, the primary concern for the institution is retention. While persistence to graduation for students is an issue, particularly on the Brooklyn campus, the Site Visit Team is confident that the institution's leadership is fully aware of the issues related to retention and programs are in place to promote both student success and persistence. Indeed, the situation on the Brooklyn campus is a case in which conventional measures of retention and persistence, such as five or six-year graduation rates, must be used with great care. The Site Visit Team learned that while the performance of the Brooklyn campus might appear weak when compared to these conventional standards, the special characteristics of their student body require a redefinition of expectations. There, it is not uncommon for students to matriculate as their resources allow and a much longer horizon for ultimate success is appropriate. When this is taken into account the performance of the Brooklyn campus and its students is strong.

The institution's tuition dependence underscores the importance that must be placed on management of the current enrollment and a financial situation on the Southampton campus. For many years that campus, in a rural environment, largely undergraduate, and dedicated to a classical liberal arts model has suffered from persistent deficits. At this writing, the accumulated deficit had passed the \$50 million mark and stood at roughly \$5 million per year. While the budget of the campus and the enrollment constitute a small percentage of the overall University, the seeming intractability of these enrollment and financial problems, combined with the overall tuition dependence and leanness of the institution, constitute major problems that the Team believes require immediate and dramatic action. To its credit, the University leadership and the major constituencies of the Southampton campus agree. They have moved with admirable, indeed remarkable, dispatch to convene working groups to attack all relevant aspects of the problem. During the site visit the Team was briefed on a major overhaul of the undergraduate program that will result in a tight, coherent core curriculum, streamlining of other offerings, and efficiencies in

instruction that hold the promise for wider student appeal and reduced costs. The University has committed to a major public relations and outreach program to re-introduce the Southampton campus to potentially interested students. And, there is the promise of substantial financial support from the campus Chancellor and, possibly, other benefactors. This has already resulted in plans for a badly needed library facility. The effort is being approached with utmost seriousness and, in the view of the Team, it must be. The Site Visit Team strongly recommends that the various working groups move immediately to finalize plans for the reformulation of Southampton's curricula and programs. Important work has been done to date, leading to the core curriculum and public relations decisions. But, hard work remains in defining that curriculum, its impact on undergraduate majors, teaching expectations for the faculty and a myriad of other important details. The University should set clear benchmarks against which to measure the performance of the new Southampton program and clear goals for the reduction, if not outright elimination, of the deficits that constrain both the unit and the larger University.

Long Island University's dependence on tuition will not disappear any time soon but the Site Visit Team was very impressed with the current state and plans for fund-raising. Led by a highly qualified and deeply committed staff, the office of the Vice President for Development and Alumni Relations has recorded major successes on a variety of fronts. Given the potential for this area of the University's work, and the impact that the University and its faculty have had on many generations of alumni, the Site Visit Team suggests that fund-raising remain a high priority for the institution and that the function be amply supported.

### **Organization, Administration and Governance**

Long Island University is one of the largest private universities in the nation. It consists of central university offices, three "residential campuses," three regional campuses and more than twenty other locations where courses are offered. It is an understatement to say that, the institution is complex and the organizational structure and administrative arrangements are as well. The self-study documents acknowledge that working relationships are not easily captured in a conventional organization chart and that "dotted line" interactions are not uncommon and may indeed be typical. Perhaps most distinctive is the aspect of the management system in which deans on the various campuses report to the central Vice President for Academic Affairs, rather than the campus Provost. However, the provosts retain responsibility for the overall operation of the residential campuses, including bottom line financial performance. The Site Visit Team concurs with the characterization of this and other key aspects of the management system as being unusually dependent on trust, effective communication and strong but fluid informal relationships at all levels of operations. There is no evidence in the self-study documents or any information presented during the interviews that the University suffers from serious breakdowns in operations or services as a result of this organizational structure. 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. It has, at least to date, prevented damaging fragmentation of an institution that could easily lose focus due to the number and diversity of its components. It has also 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. The system is also currently characterized by widespread respect for the

current administration. While there are significant differences of opinion on serious matters there is also quiet confidence that they will be aired and dealt with appropriately. As with other members of the community there is no question that the mission of the institution is firmly embraced throughout the Long Island University administration.

While fundamentally sound, the management of Long Island University is beset by all the problems of a modern, complex institution of higher education. The Site Visit Team finds that unlike many universities of its size and sophistication, however, Long Island University is well behind the curve when it comes to information systems. Whatever its desired balance of central direction and local autonomy, the University cannot begin to realize the full impact of its management talent at all levels without the benefit of a modern information system. The team was pleased to learn that the institutional research function of the University was recently restored, but frankly surprised to learn that it had been disbanded in the first place. More important, the Site Visit Team strongly recommends that the University accelerate its movement to an integrated, institution-wide information system, termed ERP. While the transition will be painful and expensive, the exercise will call the question on a myriad of management, administrative, and information questions and ultimately empower all members of the community to do their work in a manner that is more fully informed and efficient.

With regard to governance, the Site Visit Team found, in general, that roles and responsibilities are well articulated. The role of the Board of Trustees is discussed in a later section. The views of students are actively solicited by University administration and taken seriously when they are expressed. We 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. There appears to be a well understood and clearly defined demarcation of the role of faculty unions and these bodies on each of the campuses. The one exception to the generally positive state of governance is the confusion that currently attends the role of faculty at the University-level. The Board of Trustees moved to disband a University Senate, expressing concerns about the quality of faculty input it was receiving, and created in its place a Faculty Executive Committee and system of representation on Board committees. At the time of our visit participation by faculty from the various campuses in this new system was inconsistent and the viability of the arrangement was unclear. The Site Visit Team recommends that all parties move with dispatch to resolve the remaining uncertainty regarding the faculty role in governance at the University level since the current situation is a distraction for some and stands in contrast with the governance functions on the campuses.

We will discuss again below the innovative system of chancellors for the residential and regional campuses. The Site Visit Team finds this an effective way to diversify the contact between the Board of Trustees and University community.

## **Governing Board**

The Site Visit Team finds the Board of Trustees of Long Island University fully informed, highly engaged and deeply committed to the institution. The Board is comprised of individuals of great personal accomplishment and talent. The Team's interactions with the Board confirm 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. We find many aspects of the Board's operations commendable, including the distinctive chancellor system in which one board member is appointed to perform that role for each of the residential campuses and the regional campuses as a group. As this system develops and matures the chancellors will serve both as advocates and resources for their campuses and as conduits of University-wide perspectives to their constituencies. The Board expressed their commitment to maintaining open, active dialogue with the University community. The working relationship between the Board, the University President and the senior management team is close and characterized by frequent and frank communication. The frequency of full Board and committee meetings and the explicit expectations of membership are unusual and demanding; the supervision of the institution by the governing body is, as a result, exacting.

Again, we are very impressed with the Board's grasp and dedication to the twin pillars of the University's mission: excellence and access. Board members exemplify excellence through their careers and many contributions to the community. They can further advance access by redoubling their efforts to diversify their own membership in order to create a Board that is, in all ways, a reflection of the reality and aspirations of Long Island University.

### **Facilities, Equipment, and Other Resources**

We noted above that the planning function for capital projects is well-developed. The Site Visit Team observed or learned about a number of major facilities projects on all the campuses that have or will soon improve the quality of the academic experience and general ambiance of the space for students, faculty and staff. Notable among these are projects on the Brooklyn campus, the sports center at C.W. Post and the new library planned for Southampton.

That said, Long Island University faces a number of facilities and equipment challenges now and as it looks ahead. We will not attempt a listing of all of the most pressing needs or long term concerns. However, it was evident to the subteam visiting Southampton that one element of its planned renaissance must be a comprehensive upgrading of many of its major facilities and the grounds. We did learn about the program for residence hall renovation but anecdotal information from students indicates that residence halls are not up to current expectations and that infrastructure problems are not uncommon. While the library will fill a major need, the building currently occupied by the business program and faculty is unacceptable and there are a number of other, less extreme examples. Beyond Southampton we learned that the condition of some, if not many, basic science teaching facilities, including laboratories, is woeful. Here, the facilities and equipment limitations impact directly on excellence since the quality of the instruction program is compromised. It is also quite possible that the ERP system implementation will require major hardware and software acquisitions for all categories of users, including faculty. The Site Visit Team recommends that the University continue to move forward aggressively on its program of facilities and equipment upgrading and replacement. While we would not presume to impose priorities on this effort the Team suggests that special attention be paid to residence halls and instructional facilities.

### **Catalogs, Publications, and Other Promotional Materials**

As one might imagine, the inventory of such publications for a university this size, diversity and scope of Long Island University is quite large. We reviewed samples of these various publications and based on these readings found that they were accurate and accessible.

### **Institutional Change and Renewal**

The purpose of inquiry associated with this standard is to determine whether the institution engages in a serious, systematic effort to respond to external and internal conditions in a manner consistent with its mission. The Site Visit Team finds that since its last self-study Long Island University has been engaged continually in renewal and change in a manner consistent with this standard. While we have indicated in preceding sections ways in which the University can improve in areas related to refinement of mission and planning, we have absolutely no doubt that the institution takes these matters seriously and understands better than most the need to adapt and adjust to changing circumstances.