Self Study for Accreditation 2010

Executive Summary

NOTE: The University is preparing to host the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (HLC/NCA) on October 18 – 20. This visit is part of CSU’s reaccreditation process which also includes one comprehensive and several ancillary reports. The following document summarizes these reports. The University welcomes feedback from alumni, community members, faculty, staff, and students on this Executive Summary and all other aspects of the Self Study for Accreditation 2010 process.

Overview

The Self Study for Accreditation 2010 process consists of over two years of preparation which included collecting, analyzing, and reporting of data from all corners of the campus. The reports to which this Executive Summary is written are evidence of CSU’s commitment to quality of service to its students, Cleveland, and the Northeast Ohio community. The process allowed the University to reflect upon its mission, its immediate past, and its overall culture. This was a collaborative endeavor with over 160 people contributing to the writing of the reports and hundreds more reviewing and providing feedback on these documents.

The comprehensive report is organized into six chapters: an introduction outlining the changes made in the past decade along with responses to the NCA’s 2000 report for reaccreditation, and one chapter for each of the HLC/NCA’s five criteria:

• Mission and Integrity
• Preparing for the Future
• Student Learning and Effective Teaching
• Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge
• Engagement and Service

In September 2008, CSU formed a Self Study for Accreditation steering committee to guide the process. It met monthly to help organize the collection of data and the writing or reports, as well as prepare for the site visit. The committee consists of faculty, staff, administrators, and students and has been instrumental in getting others across campus involved in this open, transparent process.

A team of trained consultant evaluators from institutions across the 19-state HLC/NCA region will visit the University on October 18 – 20, 2010 (actually arriving on Sunday, October 18). The team of 6 – 8 faculty, staff, and administrators will have read all reports related to the Self Study and will have had access to the Virtual Resource room which is stocked with literally thousands of documents pertaining to the process. The Self Study goal is for the team to have every opportunity to verify the reports as well as find how well we serve our students and the Cleveland/Northeast Ohio community.

To read the comprehensive and ancillary reports, go to the Self Study for Accreditation 2010 website at http://www.csuohio.edu/committees/selfstudy2010/.
Criterion 1: Mission and Integrity

The University’s commitment to quality of service is evident in this section. CSU’s goals regarding Mission Differentiation strongly support the values found in its mission statement:

*Our mission is to encourage excellence, diversity, and engaged learning by providing a contemporary and accessible education in the arts, sciences, humanities and professions, and by conducting research, scholarship, and creative activity across these branches of knowledge. We endeavor to serve and engage the public and prepare our students to lead productive, responsible and satisfying lives in the region and global society.*

The advent of the new Signature Themes and the subsequent Centers of Excellence expound upon the institution’s ability to “serve and engage.” Health and Sustainable Communities are crucial themes for the Cleveland and Northeast Ohio economy and lives of its citizens. It is incumbent upon the faculty, staff, and administration to be a beacon for the region through the programs and research will sustain these Themes and Centers.

*Vision Unlimited* is a collaboratively developed strategic plan that is to ensure the mission is met. Key Performance Indicators monitor the plan and provide excellent data to support the continuance of policy as well as indicate where change is needed.

Each chapter in the comprehensive report ends with Strengths, Challenges, and Self Recommendations. These allow the University to reflect upon what it does well, identify areas where it needs to improve, and generate ways to meet these challenges. This is done in the spirit of transparency and commitment to continuous improvement. Each of the strengths, challenges, and self recommendations are addressed in detail in the comprehensive report.

**Strengths:**

- The University is cognizant of the diverse population of Cleveland and Northeast Ohio, and embraces the challenges of educating all sectors of the community. It is a “school of opportunity.”
- CSU’s Mission and Vision Statements, coupled with the University-wide and College Strategic Plans, provide guidance for meeting its mission of providing a quality education to the region.
- The University’s governance is widely shared, with a plethora of committees and opportunities for students, faculty, and staff to participate in the operation of the institution as well as the direction it takes to meet its mission.
- CSU is a relevant university that graduates problem solvers needed for the 21st century economy and society.

**Challenges:**
• The economic conditions in Cleveland and Northeast Ohio will test the University in providing quality educational opportunities for its diverse population of constituents.
• The economic challenges of the region and state will force CSU to find alternative sources of revenue to meet its mission.
• The University needs to build upon what it knows it stands for (e.g., Signature Themes, a “school of opportunity”) and communicate this to the region and the nation—to “tell its story.”
• Student retention remains a concern.

Self-Recommendations:

• Continue to share governance with internal constituents so as to collaboratively work toward unified solutions to the economic challenges facing the University.
• Monitor the success of Vision Unlimited through frequent campus surveys (e.g., Key Performance Indicators).
• Continue to examine all possibilities to increase student retention; make this a priority.
Criterion 2: Preparing for the Future

During this time of economic uncertainty, CSU has used thoughtful and intelligent planning to allow it to maintain and improve upon quality of service. As evidenced by the many challenges listed below, finding sufficient resources to sustain quality will be crucial. The University has correctly initiated a multitude of changes to meet the ever-changing environment, but these changes can sometimes challenge its culture.

Planning took on a grass-roots tack with the establishment of the University Strategic Planning Committee (USPC) and its subsequent Strategic Planning University Reviews (SPUR). USPC through monitoring of Key Performance Indicators keeps the University aligned with its mission as well as the new State Strategic Plan for Higher Education.

Strengths:

- In 2008, the University adopted its new marketing slogan “Engaged Learning” in order to capture the essence of the institution in both its internal engagement with students and external engagement with the community.
- The strategic embracement of Mission Differentiation promises to bring new State and extramural funding resources to the University and to strengthen the regional community and State economy.
- The University’s response to a drop in State funding allowed it to maintain services and avoid layoffs of faculty or staff.
- The development of many initiatives to increase quality of service in a time of rapid environmental change.

Challenges:

- How to market the University utilizing the slogan “engaged learning.”
- Number of recent changes on campus—Vision Unlimited, MyTime, General Education reform, Ohio University System mandates, Engaged Learning—may lead to a sense of confusion and exhaustion among internal constituents.
- The changing role of CSU in the Northeast Ohio Universities College of Medicine and Pharmacy (NEOUCOM) has created a whole new set of implementation issues.
- Resources are finite due to re-appropriation of State funding, and a subsidy system that is in transition leads to challenges for implementation.
- Prevent a campus perception that Mission Differentiation will result in some “winners” and some “losers.”
- Raising money for the Signature Theme of Health will require grants with substantial matches on the part of the institution.
- Realignment of resources requires acceptance of an appropriate budget model based on guiding principles that support Mission Differentiation.
- External barriers exist that may impede change. For example, other Ohio system institutions continue to sponsor activities overlapping CSU’s assigned mission.
Self-Recommendations:

- Achieve Mission Differentiation by merging internal initiatives with those of the new Ohio’s Strategic Plan for Higher Education.
- Facilitate academic strategic planning to reach the goal of alignment of the Chancellor’s goals outlined in the State Strategic Plan.
- Integrate excellence and engagement into a single construct underlining all our efforts.
- Define areas of excellence within the University that correspond to the State Strategic Plan.
- Integrate the General Education curriculum to the Health and Sustainable Communities Signature Themes.
- Utilize programs for Undergraduate Research to promote the goals of the State Strategic Plan.

Criterion 3: Student Learning and Effective Teaching

This was an area that concerned the NCA in the 2000 re-accreditation report. Since that time, the University took great steps in providing a unified, coherent system of assessment. Crucial to these efforts was the establishment of the Director of Student Assessment and Learning.

What guides teaching and learning at CSU is the commitment to providing students with “a contemporary and accessible education in the arts, sciences, humanities, and professions” by means of a wide range of learning environments, opportunities, and support services designed to cultivate 21st century skills to be used efficiently in a diverse world. It is these sets of knowledge, skills, and dispositions that will ensure CSU graduates the satisfaction of gaining employment and exercising democratic rights and responsibilities in our contemporary society.

The University encourages faculty to take ownership of the curriculum, as well as supporting them in terms of professional development resources related to research-based pedagogies. In this light, student learning assessment represents a common thread in the teaching and learning process. Under these circumstances, the assessment culture on the CSU campus has become both participative and transformative in the following sense: a) it is a robust campus-wide assessment culture; b) it is a flexible process; c) it relies on increased administrative, faculty, staff, and student participation across campus; and d) it generates meaningful evidence of student learning whose analysis helps close the “assessment loop,” while meeting accountability requirements as well as promoting innovation and strategic planning.

Strengths:

- Faculty, staff, and administrators understanding and use of assessment (both as process and generated data) have increased significantly.
- The availability of and support for instructional technology has considerably increased over the past decade.
- The centralized structure responsible for the management and coordination of assessment efforts across campus have proven to be effective in communicating and assisting with various endeavors at the program/department/unit levels.
• Several academic programs and co-curricular areas are actively involved in redesigning their assessment plans and procedures aimed at proving a solid commitment to the evidence-based practice of continuous improvement.

Challenges:
• Programs, departments, units, and colleges have to identify appropriate resources (both financial and human) to sustain their involvement in assessment-related efforts.
• Assessing the newly implemented General Education curriculum requires constant communication with faculty, students, and administrators as a way to demonstrate a commitment to the principle of faculty-driven curricula while documenting student learning.
• Strike a balance between the teaching and learning of theory and the utilization of practical experiences such as internships.

Self-recommendations:
• Sustain the micro-and macro-level assessment efforts in a coherent and cohesive manner that keeps all stakeholders informed of student learning findings.
• Align assessment processes in academic programs and co-curricular areas in ways that evidence student growth and development in their studies.
• Continue to structure learning with practical/clinical experiences—but must strike a balance between theory and practice.

Criterion 4: Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge

As stated in its mission, Cleveland State University strives “to encourage excellence, diversity, and engaged learning by providing a contemporary and accessible education in the arts, sciences, humanities and professions, and by conducting research, scholarship, and creative activity across these branches of knowledge.” Chapter 4 demonstrates the University’s commitment to increased knowledge of faculty and students through rigorous research standards.

CSU, in support of its commitment to discovery and inquiry and to raising its research profile, established a new office in 2008: The Office of Research. This, along with Undergraduate and Graduate Studies, promotes faculty, and students’ efforts to increase their own knowledge as well as inform their fields of study.

One of President Berkman’s recently stated goals is to increase CSU’s presence nationally through high profile research. Although the University has taken great strides in recent years, as depicted in this chapter in the comprehensive report, CSU can and will become a global contributor in the areas of health and sustainable communities.

Strengths:
• The University has identified two Signature Themes (Health and Sustainable Communities) and three distinct Centers of Excellence (The Center for Gene Regulation in Health and Disease, The Center for 21st Century Health Professions, and The Next Generation Economy) which will guide research and extramural funding efforts.
• The Office of Research is poised to spearhead a new focus on discovery and inquiry, thereby positioning CSU to be a leader in the fields of health and urban communities.

Challenges:

• Make compensation of Graduate Assistants in line with other similar universities. The stipend has not increased in over ten years except to cover tuition increases.
• Workload policies for new and established research productive faculty need to be adjusted to be comparable to other high performing research.
• Research and individualized study is activity is not credited in the workload or rewarded.
• Secure a highly motivated, research-oriented person to fill the presently vacant Office of Sponsored Programs and Research Director position.

Self-Recommendations:

• Use the Signature Themes and Centers of Excellence as catalysts for student and faculty creative achievement.
• Continue to strive for national recognition in research, especially in the fields of health and urban communities.
• Re-examine workload credit and policies.
I think I am going to give you a trick answer here. I am going to say Cleveland State's campus. It has started to transform over the past few years. I believe if it starts to get more students to live on campus it can play a big part in Cleveland's revitalization.

Cleveland Cavaliers General Manager, Danny Ferry when asked what his favorite Cleveland landmark is, other than Quickenloans Arena.

Criterion 5: Engagement and Service

CSU has a long history of collaboration with Cleveland and Northeast Ohio. In response to the Chancellor’s call for Mission Differentiation, the University developed three Centers of Excellence (as described in Chapters 1 and 2) that exemplify its commitment to partnering with the community, providing innovative engines that will improve the area’s economy and the quality of lives of its citizens. The concepts of engagement and service are fundamental to CSU, from their inclusion in its mission and vision statements to their translation into action.

This chapter in the comprehensive report evidences how the University reaches out to both its internal (students, staff, faculty) and external constituencies (alumni, all sectors of the Cleveland and Northeast Ohio community) to learn how to increase quality of service.

Strengths:

- The thoughtful response to Mission Differentiation provides focus on and resources for community economic and civic needs.
- CSU is viewed as a pillar in the Cleveland Community (see textbox).
- The University is responsive to the needs of internal and external constituents.
- CSU has a strong influence in the development of the newly created Campus District.
- An increased sense of energy across the campus.
- Vast improvements made to the physical campus over the past decade make CSU an inviting place for students and the community.

Challenges:

- Ensuring University-wide coordination to promote community engagement especially with the advent of the two Signature Themes.
- Coordination of existing University-level community ties such as liaisons and boards.
Globalizing curricula and mindsets to meet the demands of present and future.

Self Recommendations:

- Continuing a strong presence in the newly created Campus District.
- Establish and maintain a comprehensive list of external partnership to avoid overlap.
- Collect a broad collection of data about community leaders’ perception of the value CSU brings to Greater Cleveland and Northeast Ohio.
- Increase access to Study Abroad program.
- Build communication paths across colleges and the entire campus and reward interdisciplinary structures in order to achieve a truly integrated university culture.

Summary

As evidenced by the multitude of data provided in the comprehensive and ancillary reports, the University maintains a high level of quality and is committed to increases its ability to meet the needs of the region’s economy and citizenship. CSU greatly appreciates all feedback regarding the issues these reports touch upon as well as any other aspects of its operation and mission.