STANDARD II: PLANNING AND EVALUATION

Description

Introduction

From the mid-1970s to the mid-1980s, the University's planning activities were supported by the efforts of ad hoc financial planning committees of the University's Board of Trustees. Between June 1975 and August 1984, eight of these ad hoc Trustee committees met and each issued a report that developed, refined, or reaffirmed commitment to principles for the planning and management of the University. Generally, the principles adopted focused on quality and size, Vermont considerations, and financial considerations. As such, they provided a direction for the University's planning as it passed through the phases of establishing a stable financial basis, the first phase of the demographic decline, and management of the "public ivy" phenomenon. A summary of the key principles is outlined below:

Quality and Size

- Maintenance of quality is preferable to maintenance of enrollments if the demographic trends threaten quality.
- Commitment to quality.
- Level enrollment.

Vermont Considerations

- Admission and tuition preference to Vermont students.

Financial Considerations

- Zero growth of the budget in constant dollars.
- No new programs or program improvements except through internal reallocation or increased external support.

University of Vermont Planning Principles for the 1990s

The strategic planning and operating principles developed between 1975 and 1984 were thought to have served the University well. However, the report of the 1984 ad hoc Financial Planning Committee (August 1984) noted in a review of the work of their seven predecessors that most of the principles adopted were "designed to contain, to discipline, to control, to limit," and in a sense were thus "negative and restrictive." The 1984 Committee believed "the time had arrived for the University to move toward more positive and comprehensive long-range planning." In 1984 the Trustees therefore stated that:

... the fiscal condition of the University is vastly improved, that its financial disciplines are well established, and that a foundation has been laid for a more
positive thrust where Board involvement can be centered around a continuing, long-range planning process that transcends financial planning.

The process of moving to this “continuing, long-range planning process that transcends financial planning,” began in June 1988 and ended in August 1990 with the adoption of a new set of strategic planning and operating principles for The University of Vermont. This new planning effort occurred around the time of the University’s last Self-Study exercise. While the process was led by the Board of Trustee’s Finance and Budget Committee, a number of discussions were held among the Trustee Committees on Educational Policy and Student Affairs, as well as the full Board. The principles were also reviewed and discussed by the Faculty Senate, the Staff Council, the Cabinet of Deans, and the Student Association.

The Strategic Operating Principles that were adopted in May 1990 include both general planning principles and operating principles. The general planning principles were intended to represent general goals and objectives as they related to the University’s mission in effect at that time. The operating principles were intended to represent specific policies to be followed in order to achieve the goals and objectives identified in the general planning principles.

In addition to paralleling the University’s mission, the Principles also embrace the 1955 legislative action that designated The University of Vermont and the State Agricultural College as an “instrumentality of the State.” The University of Vermont and the State Agricultural College were “joined together” as a single corporation in 1865. The “compact” of this union identified “access for Vermont students at a reduced tuition level” as one of the principal areas of important service to the State. It also recognized the State’s responsibility through financial appropriations. These Principles continue to incorporate the long-standing policy of admission preference to Vermonters.

The goals and objectives incorporated within the general planning principles focused on six areas: quality, scope, service to the State, student life, programs, and several general goals and objectives. A summary of the key goals and objectives are as follows:

**General Strategic Planning Principles, Goals, and Objectives**

*Quality*

- The University of Vermont shall strive for excellence and leadership in all its programs.
- Undergraduate and graduate programs should have the competitive features of the very best institutions with which we vie significantly for students, faculty, and resources.

*Scope*

- Some programs at the University are designed to fill a regional mission, while others fill a national need.
Service to the State

- UVM shall offer high quality, broadly based, affordable undergraduate education to every qualified Vermonter.
- UVM shall provide selected undergraduate and post-baccalaureate programs of particular value to Vermont.

Student Life

- The UVM campus environment shall enhance the learning opportunities of all students.
- The University shall continue to support the growth and sustenance of cultural diversity in all aspects of campus life; there shall be an increased international perspective in all UVM activities.

Programs

- The University of Vermont shall sustain and continually strengthen its historic commitment to provide a high quality undergraduate education in the setting of a comprehensive university.
- Proposals for new programs shall be evaluated for their potential impact on existing programs, on other opportunities for new programs, on their financial impact, and on campus priorities.
- When the University has a choice between doing fewer things well or more things at a lower level of quality, it shall choose the former route. Excellence must be developed and nurtured in all programs, even when this means that weaker programs must be discontinued.
- The University shall regularly evaluate and monitor its academic programs.
- Each academic unit shall be viewed as part of the whole and will be evaluated on the basis of its contribution to the entire University educational enterprise as well as to its own students. UVM will encourage high quality interdisciplinary activities across the University.

General

- Collegiality across academic units and disciplines within the campus community shall be continually fostered. Collaborative interactions among faculty, staff, and students should be encouraged and supported.
- The University shall regularly evaluate the mix of income sources and develop a diversified and balanced financial base among all such sources. Reliance on particular sources (i.e., state support, tuition, Federal funds, endowment, annual giving, and others) should be the result of realistic analysis of the long term potential and adequacy of those sources.
The strategic operating principles that were to provide the direction for the strategic planning principles, goals, and objectives were grouped into five areas: enrollment; financial; faculty, administration, and staff; programs, facilities and related services; and student life. A brief summary of these goals and objectives includes the following.

**Strategic Operating Principles**

*Enrollment*

- There shall be continued admission preference to Vermonters.
- Enrollment targets for undergraduate, graduate, medical, and non-degree students will be reviewed regularly based upon demographics and enrollment preferences of potential students, the adequacy of physical facilities, and the availability of highly qualified faculty for these courses.
- The University’s overall enrollment objectives will need to be translated into enrollment and teaching load objectives at the college, school, and program level.
- The University will continue to set a high standard for entrance to all of its academic programs. If the quality of applicants for admission should fall below that standard, enrollment will be allowed to decrease rather than allow the quality of enrollments to decline.
- While there is continued admission preference to Vermonters, the importance and value of a strong out-of-state representation in the undergraduate enrollment is acknowledged and encouraged.
- The University will continue to strive to increase the diversity of its student body with respect to race, nationality, and gender within and across all academic units.

*Financial*

- In the absence of significant change in the composition of the student body, every effort will be made to restrain the rate of increase for in-state and out-of-state tuition, while adhering to the planning principles.
- Budgets for new and expanded activities shall be accompanied by identified sources of revenues or available funds — either currently available or genuinely expected in future time periods. All costs, including direct and support costs, must be identified.
- The University shall not budget deficits.
- The institution must reduce its dependence on tuition revenues by increasing other sources of operating revenue, including State appropriations and keeping total budget growth at a reasonable level.

*Faculty, Administration, and Staff*

- There shall be continuing efforts to increase the proportion of qualified women and minority persons in the faculty and staff at UVM.
• An appropriate year-to-year measure of UVM total compensation shall be developed and measured against compensation in the marketplace. For staff, this requires that the classification system and its salary schedule be reviewed periodically and compared to market conditions.
• Faculty and staff development and professional growth shall receive strong support and sufficient resources for their accomplishment by the University.

Programs

• There shall be a regular evaluation of all programs, including instruction, research, service, and support. Such evaluation will include the examination of value and quality, and will measure expenses of the program in relation to service to the State, contribution to University mission and goals, and revenues.

Facilities and Related Services

• The University of Vermont is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for students, employees, and visitors.

Student Life

• Recognizing the central academic mission of the University, student life beyond the classroom should include a full range of programs that complement the educational purposes and develop the total individual. These programs shall include, among others, public and community service, cultural and artistic endeavors, and a broad-based set of athletic, wellness, recreational, and student activity programs.
• Residential life programs and facilities should be of the highest quality to contribute to a healthy community that supports the educational purposes of the University.
• There should be a continuing emphasis on establishing a campus environment that fosters a sense of belonging in a community that challenges students intellectually and personally while supporting them to become informed decision-makers. In addition, that environment shall continue to value respect for the rights of individuals and care for diverse students, faculty, and staff.

It is important to note that these planning principles have guided the University’s planning efforts during the decade of the 1990s. And, more recently, they have been reviewed, updated, and adopted to point the way for the University’s future. As UVM moves toward developing and improving its Areas of Emphasis, these principles will be reviewed, discussed, updated, and revised by the entire campus community.
The University of Vermont’s Planning Activities in the 1990s: The Planning Council

The major pressure for our planning efforts from 1975 to 1984 was a concern about the effects of the decline in the traditional high school population upon The University of Vermont. The scope of that planning included not only the projection of enrollments but also the allocation and reallocation of resources in anticipation of student and program demands. These analyses were then closely integrated with all other budgetary and program discussions.

By the late 1980s and early 1990s, however, the issues to be faced by the University had become more complex. In addition to competition for quality students, the institution was feeling the increasing pressure of changing demographics, a changing economy, declining levels of state support, and demands for more resources to address campus issues surrounding competitive salaries, program development, financial aid, and diversity.

The adoption of the Strategic Operating Principles in August 1990 coincided with the arrival of a new president, George H. Davis. Shortly after his arrival, President Davis concluded that:

... The University of Vermont was overextended, that UVM’s level of expenditures and abilities to generate revenues to cover those expenditures were strained to the maximum, and that changes would have to be made if UVM was to sustain its level of academic excellence into the 21st century.

To address these concerns, the President convened a Strategic Planning Council composed of UVM faculty, staff, and students in December 1990. This Council was charged to conduct a self-study of the University’s current programs and practices in order to “develop a better understanding of what we are now, and of what we should be in the future.”

The Planning Council identified the following realities that faced The University of Vermont:

- The educational costs per student at UVM were low in comparison to other New England land grant institutions even though its tuition is the highest; i.e., UVM uses its resources efficiently. [Note: our high level of tuition results from a comparatively low level of state funding.]

- The University has four principal revenue streams that accounted for 79 percent of its FY91 operating budget: state appropriation, tuition, extramural funding, and UVM fundraising. With costs rising faster than increases from these four revenue streams, the maintenance of program quality becomes a major concern.

A thorough review of these four revenue streams concluded that major increases were not forthcoming. As a result, the Planning Council identified three approaches to solving the University’s problem:
1. The University can cut costs; to do so will require personnel and program reduction.

2. The University can maximize revenues. However, the size and economy of the State, the already high resident and non-resident tuitions, and the uncertainty of how much extramural funding and UVM fundraising efforts could be enhanced, appeared to limit this alternative.

3. The University could ask “fewer people to do more with less” (a focus on organizational, operational, and faculty/staff efficiencies and productivity enhancements).

The Planning Council began its task by reviewing reports from each academic and administrative unit on campus in order to gain an understanding of their role, mission, goals, and future plans. In addition, the Planning Council met with each dean and division leader. To evaluate each unit, the Planning Council used the following six criteria (adapted from the University of Minnesota):

- Quality
- Centrality – contribution to the mission of the University
- Comparative Advantage – an assessment of the unique characteristics of departments and programs that make them particularly appropriate to UVM
- Demand – the magnitude and direction of the change in demand for each program over the short- and long-term
- Efficiency and Effectiveness
- Cultural Diversity.

Finally, the Planning Council studied the reports of six Task Forces that were appointed to investigate in detail the following six areas:

1. Undergraduate Education
2. Graduate Education
3. Research and Scholarship
4. Outreach and Service
5. Support Services
6. Campus Community.

The Task Forces – also composed of faculty, staff, and students – held meetings and hearings, performed and requested additional analyses, and developed and refined their reports and recommendations during the winter and spring of 1991. When all six reports were completed, they were made available to both the Strategic Planning Council and the entire campus community.

To guide its work the Planning Council: a) spoke with Task Force chairs and members; b) reviewed the University mission statement and Board of Trustees Planning Principles; c)
gathered data from the Office of Institutional Studies, the Office of Financial Planning and Analysis, and the Office of Sponsored Programs; d) read letters from campus community members; and e) drafted a Vision Statement. This Vision Statement encompassed undergraduate education, graduate education, research and scholarship, outreach and service, the campus community, and management and fiscal principles.

On the basis of all these efforts, the Planning Council framed a series of preliminary general recommendations, as well as recommendations about which programs should be enhanced, maintained, downsized, consolidated, or eliminated. In essence, the Council concluded that:

...resources must be reallocated within the University through reorganization and realignment, as well as through reductions. Some activities will have to be eliminated or phased out as we continue to strive for excellence. Resources recouped through thoughtful reductions and consolidations and new or enhanced revenues will enable us to build better programs and continue to offer our staff and faculty a high quality workplace and our students a superior education.

The draft report of the Planning Council was distributed to the campus community in mid-October 1991. In addition to a description of the process and methodology it employed and the Vision Statement, the report included 31 draft General Recommendations, 25 draft Specific Recommendations for academic and administrative programs and services, and five Recommendations for Which Further Actions Were Required.

Of the total of 61 recommendations made by the Planning Council, there was one recommendation that immediately stood out and affected the entire planning process. The specific program recommendation to “eliminate the College of Engineering and Mathematics, with a home to be found for the department of Mathematics and Statistics and Computer Science” became the immediate focus of spirited discussions across campus and in meetings with Trustees.

While there were a number of other recommendations that called for rigorous review, restructuring, downsizing, or elimination, it was the elimination of the College of Engineering and Mathematics, the elimination of the Engineering programs, and the reassignment of the Department of Mathematics and Statistics and the Computer Science Program that elicited the most vigorous response. Shortly after the release of the Planning Council report and a meeting of the University’s Board of Trustees, the President resigned from the University. The Planning Council report did not go beyond the “draft” phase. However, a number of their recommendations were eventually acted upon, either immediately or as part of the next major planning effort that began prior to the appointment of the Interim President.

The University of Vermont’s Planning Activities in the 1990s: The President’s Commission on Critical Choices

While the Planning Council ceased to exist, the need for planning remained. Shortly after the publication of the Planning Council Report, a new strategic planning structure was created.

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In January 1992, the Board of Trustees charged the Interim President, Thomas P. Salmon, with the task of developing a strategic plan which was to “articulate the institution’s fundamental priorities and define the broad critical choices facing the University, and thereby provide the basis for the allocation of scarce resources.” This new structure became the President’s Commission on Critical Choices (PCCC). Furthermore, the Board stated its belief that “the University must become a leaner institution of continued high quality, must become more responsive to its constituents, and must establish a sustainable balance between revenues and expenditures.”

To meet the charge of the Board, President Salmon asked the PCCC to review the Vision Statement developed and presented by its predecessor, the Planning Council, and to identify the University’s fundamental principles and priorities as well as to identify the critical choices facing the University.

The PCCC had broad institutional representation in that its membership included faculty, students, staff, administrators, alumni, and trustees. The PCCC’s first order of business was to identify and analyze the important internal and external forces — including the changes in demographic, economic, cultural, and fiscal environments — facing higher education and The University of Vermont.

To assist the Commission, seven subcommittees for strategic planning were formed. Each subcommittee was asked to prepare and present a report to the PCCC in their area of concern on the central issues facing the University. In addition, the subcommittees were asked to “clarify appropriate criteria for the evaluation of all programs and administrative units, and to discuss structural and programmatic changes within the University.” The seven subcommittees were:

1. Financial Performance subcommittee
2. Enrollment Management subcommittee
3. External Relationships subcommittee
4. Human Resources subcommittee
5. Academic Programs subcommittee
6. Student Support Services subcommittee
7. Administrative, Research and Academic Support Services subcommittee.

The factors in the external environment that were identified by the PCCC as playing important roles in the critical choices the University faced included:

- Shifts in demographics
- Economic forces which included declines in state appropriations, changes in federal financial aid policies, and a recession
- Technological changes
- Increasing regulatory oversight
- The changing nature of extramural funding and fundraising.
Several factors affecting the *internal environment* were also identified:

- Financial issues including the projections of increasing deficits
- The size and residency mix of the undergraduate student population. At this time, the University had defined a “central tendency” fall-spring average of 7,850 undergraduates. This number was determined to reflect both the financial needs of the institution and the “carrying” capacity of our physical plant. Unfortunately, this undergraduate enrollment level had become both the University’s operational ceiling and its financial floor. Increases over that level were limited by physical capacity. Decreases from that level had significant implications for tuition revenue. In addition, a one percent shift in the residency mix had an impact of $450,000 on tuition revenues.

The PCCC identified several dominant *institutional priorities*. These priorities were foreshadowed in the previous planning efforts.

- The University must provide a high quality education for all of its students
- To provide all students with a high quality education, its students must be both excellent and diverse
- The University must establish an enhanced relationship with the State of Vermont and its citizens
- To recruit a high quality, diverse student body, the University must be a broadly defined and revitalized approach to enrollment management
- The University must establish a sustainable financial base, with the expectation that growth in general fund supported activities will occur only through reallocation and substitution.

Finally, the PCCC concluded that The University of Vermont faced a number of critical choices in the following areas:

- High Quality Academic programs. All programs must be central to the University’s mission, of high quality, and efficient. We must build on our “centers of excellence.” Resources will need to be allocated or reallocated to those programs that meet these criteria.
- Student Quality. All efforts must be made to maintain, and if possible, improve student quality. The University may decide to enroll fewer students in order to maintain quality with the resulting adjustment to tuition revenue.
- Administrative and Support Services. All administrative functions must be central to the University’s vision, efficient, and lacking in unnecessary redundancies.
- Student Support Services. Student support services must assist, enhance, and enrich the academic experience of all students.
• Human Resources. The University must have an excellent and diverse workforce; it must be in proportion to institutional needs and financial resources. Compensation must be competitive. Sound human resources management practices must be practiced campus-wide.

• State Support for Vermont Students. The State must provide the University with an appropriation sufficient to fulfill its commitment to Vermont students.

• Student Financial Aid. The University must find significant new or reallocate resources to financial aid.

Based on their work, and the work of the Planning Council, the PCCC articulated the following planning principles:

1. The University of Vermont is, first and foremost, an intellectual community engaged in the creation and dissemination of knowledge.

2. The education of students is the primary mission of the University; excellence in teaching, research and scholarship, and the integration of these comprise the University’s foundation.

3. Service to the State of Vermont is an important facet of the University’s mission and helps fulfill a joint responsibility between the State and the University to promote a common well-being.

4. Undergraduate education and graduate academic programs must prepare students for the complex world of the 21st century.

5. Each of the major academic units will contain recognized centers of excellence.

6. The colleges, schools, and divisions cooperate in the implementation of interdisciplinary teaching and research programs to provide educational opportunities for students and faculty that make the University greater than the sum of its parts. Interdisciplinary programs may span more than one major academic unit, and will be recognized for their excellence.

7. The University will maintain a diversity of programs yet strive to provide the benefits of a small college including close faculty/student contact, student involvement and initiative, and a cohesive campus community.

8. The University will maintain high student quality and adjust enrollment levels accordingly.

9. Students will receive quality advising and mentoring, and teaching that engages them in the process of learning.

10. The University embraces a spirit of hospitality and pluralism in which all its diverse members feel respected, valued, supported, and safe. The University will recruit, retain, and support students, faculty and staff of differing racial, cultural, ethnic, religious, and economic backgrounds from the national and international community.

11. Courses, degree programs, advising, and support services will be readily available to non-traditional students.

12. UVM will foster a strong sense of community and involvement in the University, including involvement by alumnae, alumni, and emeriti/ae.
Some Outcomes of Previous Planning Efforts

The work of the PCCC, the Planning Council, and the earlier Trustee ad hoc financial planning committees (including their development and articulation of strategic planning and operating principles, their establishment of institutional priorities, and their identification of the internal and external factors affecting the University) provided the framework for the planning and budgeting decisions that occurred from 1993 to 1998.

In March 1993, the University prepared a four-year budget plan for FY94 to FY97 in order to create a sustainable budget, i.e., bring ongoing expenses in line with anticipated revenues. This was part of the first recommendation made by the Planning Council in 1991 when it called for the President to “put in place an effective mechanism for on-going academic and fiscal short- and long-range planning, for implementation by July 1, 1993.”

This decision was made so that the University would no longer look to tuition increases, lower annual salary pools, or accepting more students from a declining pool to balance the budget. As a background to this budget plan, the administration identified several themes consistent with the strategic and operating principles that had come before, underscoring their importance in strategic planning:

\[\ldots\text{UVM cannot continue to do everything tomorrow we are doing today. UVM must become smaller yet, at the same time, better. Quality must become the cornerstone of our programs. The campus must concentrate on providing a quality education, efficient and effective support services, and basic and applied research and service to the community, the state, nation, and the world. For the first time we are presenting a four-year budget plan to the Board. This plan brings expenses into line with our sustainable revenue by the end of that four-year period. This plan is an essential ingredient of strategic planning.}\]

At the time, the single most important reason behind the decision to reduce the expenditure budget was the forecast for declining undergraduate enrollments. For the University not to sacrifice incoming student quality for quantity, enrollment projections estimated that overall enrollment projections would fall to the fall-spring average level of 7,200 to 7,300. As part of the planning process, the effects of different university, college, and school enrollment scenarios were modeled to assess the impact on teaching loads, as measured by full-time equivalent students and resources (general fund FTE faculty).

With the release of the report of the President’s Commission on Critical Choices and the four-year budget plan, the Faculty Senate Executive Committee appointed the ad hoc Strategic Planning Oversight Committee (SPOC) to report to the faculty on a timely basis on four interrelated planning areas: 1) the implications of the report of the PCCC for tactical planning; 2) the goals and objectives of the Provost in implementing the principles contained in the PCCC Report and in the development of the enrollment and budget targets for each College and School; 3) the actions of the individual colleges and schools with respect to planning, the mechanisms by which each unit is addressing its own planning, and how the proposals for the various Colleges and Schools fit together; and 4) examining, as necessary,
the relationships between any program changes proposed and the procedures of the Faculty Senate.

This planning effort had several outcomes that can be traced back to the planning efforts of five years previous. At the same time the four-year budget plan was being developed, a task force was named to look at the establishment of a formal enrollment management function and structure. Their report, issued in July 1993, resulted in the establishment of an enrollment management structure that brought the Admissions, Financial Aid, and Registrar offices together and reporting to the newly created position of Vice Provost for Enrollment Management.

In addition, enrollment management could include the working or coordinating activities with other areas such as Orientation, Residential Life, Public Relations, etc. It should be noted that the 1991 Planning Council recommended that the Provost establish “a vigorous, coordinated effort in enrollment planning to attract, recruit and retain a diverse and well-qualified student body.”

Other University actions that have taken place, or are in process, that can be traced back to the earlier planning recommendations include:

- The development of a program review process for graduate programs; the first program reviews are in process
- A “pool” of identifiable dollars available from research should be developed to support research in general
- The accounting system must track indirect cost reimbursement
- Development efforts shall follow the priorities of the University’s vision statement and be coordinated with the academic units
- The personnel classification system should be reviewed and revised in order to improve recognition of special skills and quality in all grade levels, to develop career ladders for employees, and to save cost through staff stability
- The University must support and encourage corollary planning efforts of the Institutional Diversity Committee (or its successors)
- A University-wide facilities utilization plan must be developed and implemented centrally, that regularly reviews and allocates space for instruction, scholarship, administrative services, student support, etc.
- Implementation of a plan to assure campus-wide accessibility of facilities and programs to differently-abled people
- Aggressive effort to connect the campus via an electronic network that is efficient and secure
- Centralizing certain administrative core functions
- Changes in benefit packages to deal with escalating costs, especially in medical benefits
- A “buy out” or “phase out” program to cover the costs up front for reducing the number of faculty and staff
• Allow “internal borrowing” during the period of implementation of any of the recommendations
• Consolidation of several programs and departments in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
• Elimination of the two-year Nursing program; study the feasibility of merging the Schools of Allied Health Sciences and Nursing
• Eliminate existing mandatory foreign language requirements; has effect of reducing course offerings taught by non-tenure track faculty
• Maintain level enrollment target for the School of Business Administration
• Improve the strength of the Computer Science program
• Make technology investments in units needing upgrades, e.g., Human Resources, Financial Aid, Registrar, Admissions, Libraries, etc.
• Greater coordination and consolidation of campus public relations, communications, and marketing
• Develop a stronger Technology Transfer program.

Current Planning Efforts

With new leadership and the preparation of the Self-Study, the University community has been involved with a reassessment of its vision, mission, goals, plans, and strategies for its future.

In February, a University team led by the Provost participated in a session at The Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania. The working session focused on the affirmation of “teaching and learning as institutional priorities and on building support for excellence in teaching and learning.” Their work at The Wharton School has resulted in the creation of The University of Vermont’s Center for Teaching and Learning. The Center became operational in fall of 1998.

The proposed goal of the Center for Teaching and Learning has been stated as the creation of an environment for faculty development that:

• Brings together faculty and staff committed to developing new approaches to instruction, creating partnerships for exploration of ideas, and innovation in teaching and learning;
• Furnishes the resources to develop skill sets required to move course content into innovative formats, including distributed learning pedagogies, synchronous and asynchronous learning, video-based technology, and computer-based technology;
• Supports the development of assessment mechanisms to measure the impact of teaching methods and technology enhancements on student success; and,
• Builds a core cadre of faculty who can effectively teach to diverse learners using a variety of learning technologies, both in campus classrooms and through the distance learning network.

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The Center is also seen as a mechanism to move forward the University's efforts in developing a strong program of outcomes assessment.

In February and March 1998, 25 members of the campus community including faculty, staff, students, administrators, alumni, and trustees participated in several Campus Roundtables as part of the Knight Higher Education Collaborative held at the University. The participants are part of a national effort on 150 campuses to work on defining and implementing best practices for strategic change in higher education. The effort at UVM, along with discussions held by the Faculty Senate and Staff Council, are bringing the issues of the University's mission to a broad spectrum of the campus community.

Building upon the discussions and activities of the Knight Collaborative roundtables, The Wharton School workshop, and the work of the Faculty Senate and Staff Council, the University held three University forums over a two-week period in April 1998. Each forum dealt with one of the following issues:

1. UVM and Its Students in the 21st Century
2. UVM and Its Faculty and Staff in the 21st Century
3. UVM, Vermont, and the World in the 21st Century

The three April forums have been followed by six roundtable discussions focusing on the Six Areas of Emphasis, more fully explored in the second part of the University's Self-Study. These roundtable discussions explored:

1. UVM and Its Students in the 21st Century
2. UVM and Its Faculty and Staff in the 21st Century
3. UVM, Research, and Scholarship in the 21st Century
4. UVM, Vermont, and the World in the 21st Century
5. The Measurement of Quality and Effectiveness at UVM in the 21st Century

As discussion proceeded, it became apparent that Quality and Effectiveness and Strategic Budgeting were integrally related topics, and that topical integration will be reflected in their inclusion in a combined Area of Emphasis.

As if to come full circle, in April 1998 the administration stated that the annual budget will be built upon the following core principles:

- The budget must include investment strategies to achieve academic excellence and institutional integrity
- The budget should be constructed both to cover current costs and provide for strategic reinvestment
- The budget must be balanced on an annual basis, and be sustainable into future years
- The University must explore new approaches to doing business to free up existing resources

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• The University should carefully monitor its contingency/reserve policy to ensure that unit, college, school and university goals can be achieved through careful planning
• Tuition and fees should be adjusted annually to ensure an increasingly competitive and high quality applicant pool
• Budget planning and development should not only be grounded in careful analysis of relevant data, but should also include assessment and accountability measures to gauge progress toward achieving the University’s goals
• Admission preference for Vermonters will be maintained
• Compensation will remain a high priority.

Many of these core budget principles can be traced back, either directly or indirectly, to the strategic and operating principles that have preceded them. The University is also currently revisiting and discussing all the planning principles developed over the past ten years in order to determine their relevancy and adequacy for The University of Vermont today.

As this budget planning process moves along, performance measures and indicators will be developed for the purposes of accountability, assessment, and overall institutional effectiveness. Plans call for the development of indicators at the university, college/school, and department/program levels.

The University of Vermont has devoted significant resources and efforts in extending its planning and evaluation activities in line with its strategic planning principles. It is essential that it do so. For many years, the leadership of the University has recognized the importance of maximizing the use of all its resources in maintaining a high level of quality. In 1980, when laying out his five-year plan for The University of Vermont, then President Lattie F. Coor wrote:

... Many organizations state a belief that all choice must be well-informed and conscious. All too often institutions of higher education, given their diffuse decision structure and management style, make decisions by default, or with very limited information. The University of Vermont simply cannot endure as a high quality institution if it does not gain maximum results from every resource it uses. It is too thinly funded to accomplish the goals of being a high quality, distinctive university without ensuring that maximum benefit is gained from every activity. Hence the necessity of conscious choice.

This challenge to The University of Vermont remains as current today as it did almost 20 years ago.

Evaluation

Those assessment and evaluation activities presented below identified with an asterisk (*) are procedures performed on a regular semester or annual cycle. In this way we can monitor and evaluate changes in student perceptions, attitudes, opinions, backgrounds, interests,
expectations, enrollment patterns, retention, graduation and success rates, and so on. In addition to serving the planning and evaluation needs of the University, many of these activities also have played an important part in the University's annual review and internal budget processes.

The following is a brief summary of the major evaluation activities that are in progress or have been completed in the last few years. A number of these efforts will be discussed in more detail in other sections of the Self-Study report. Some description has been included for those activities not self-explanatory.

1. Inquiry Pool and Retention Surveys. Working with an external consultant in Spring 1995, the University conducted over 800 interviews with prospective students, enrolled students, and students who had dropped out from the University to ascertain their perceptions and opinions about the University's image in hopes of better positioning itself in the higher education marketplace. The 800-plus interviews were completed within the context of two separate but related surveys. The inquiry pool survey interviewed students from the University’s prospective applicant pool, with the research focusing on how prospective students approach their selection of a college and evaluating UVM’s image in the context of its competitors.

The questions investigated by the inquiry pool survey included the following:

- What is most important to inquirers in choosing a school?
- What is the ideal college environment for inquirers?
- An examination of influential information sources
- Prospective students' evaluations of The University of Vermont’s image.
- UVM’s “fit” to the scenarios and statements describing the University’s environment by prospective students
- Who are UVM’s competitors?
- What is the University’s competitive position?
- Are the perceptions of UVM different between prospective students and UVM faculty staff?

The retention study surveyed current and former students to ascertain their concerns about the University and the reasons they chose to leave the University. Many of the research foci paralleled those addressed in the inquiry pool survey.

- What was most important to UVM students in choosing a school?
- An evaluation of UVM’s image by its current and former students
- An assessment of UVM’s strengths and opportunities
- What is the ideal college environment for UVM’s current and former students?
• UVM’s “fit” to the scenarios and statements describing the University’s environment by current and former students
• What are the educational goals of UVM students?
• The student’s achievement of educational goals at UVM
• What are the curricular and social preferences of UVM’s students?
• Quality of curricular and social options at UVM
• A profile of former students.

The findings of these two surveys provided valuable information that resulted in a major re-thinking and re-design of undergraduate recruitment materials and programs.

In addition, the survey results provided the emphasis and rationale for the College of Arts and Sciences to establish its Teacher-Advisor Program (TAP). TAP was designed to provide a quality program that emphasizes the intellectual life of the University. It also allows for closer connections between faculty and students. TAP allows students to take “small, interactive, seminar-style courses” designed to enrich their first-year experience. Students have several basic options available through TAP: departmental seminars or interdisciplinary programs (Integrated Humanities Program; Integrated Social Studies Program; FOCUS program).

Another outcome of these surveys, in conjunction with findings from surveys of recent graduates, was the call for improvement in academic advising, an area that had been rated low by students and alumni. To address this problem, the College of Arts and Sciences initiated the CHIEFS program (Counseling, Help, and Information from Experienced Faculty for Students). Emeriti faculty volunteer their time and effort in providing advising help to students majoring in the largest College.

2. Applicant, Admit, and Enrollment Data*. The University maintains current semester and historical admissions data (SAT scores, high school rank, test scores for achievement test participants, etc.) on all applying, admitted, and enrolling first-time freshmen.

3. Admitted Student Questionnaires*. For many years the University has surveyed all admitted freshman applicants to assess the University's image, competition, image in relation to competing institutions, cost and financial features, ratings of information sources, and student demographics.

4. ACE/UCLA Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) Freshman Profile Survey*. The University of Vermont annually participates in this survey of freshman demographics, attitudes, values, career choices, and personal goals for each of the 32 years this survey has been administered.
5. Cohort Analysis*. We maintain data files on every freshman class entering UVM from the fall 1978 to the present. The file for each class contains basic admissions data including high school rank SAT scores, major choice, and residency. The files are updated every semester for ten years (i.e. 20 semesters) with each student's status at UVM, semester GPA, cumulative GPA, major, and residence. With these data we monitor student graduation rates, retention/attrition rates, reentry rates, and levels of intra-university migration. Data are normally reported at the university and college/school level but can also be reported at the major or department level.

6. Monitor Semester and Cumulative Grade Point Averages*.

7. Monitor Grade Distribution Patterns and Trends.

8. Monitor Teaching Loads and Course Demand Information*.

9. Monitor Enrollments and Degrees Awarded Information*.

10. Monitor Student-to-Faculty Ratios*.

11. Course/Faculty Evaluation. Course and faculty evaluations are performed by various offices and units including the Student Association, colleges and schools, individual departments, and individual faculty members. As of this writing, there is no institution-wide standard procedure for course or faculty evaluation, although candidates for tenure or promotion must submit evidence that such evaluation has been conducted.

12. Alumni Surveys*. The Development Office and the Alumni Office conduct several surveys to meet their specific needs. The Office of Institutional Studies surveys all undergraduate degree recipients one year after graduation. This survey assesses the student's post graduation activities (employment, education, other), long-range career and education goals, salary, type of work, employer, and some general attitudes and opinions about UVM.

In addition, a number of college, schools, and departments conduct their own alumni surveys. These surveys are more focused on the students' professional experiences after graduation as well as their experiences in their major at UVM. The alumni survey conducted by the College of Engineering and Mathematics is keyed to the standards of their accrediting agency, Accrediting Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET).

13. Student Satisfaction Surveys. Over the past six years, the University has conducted three satisfaction surveys of currently enrolled students. An internally developed instrument was administered as part of the efforts of the President’s Commission on Critical Choices (PCCC). The survey was conducted to provide broader student participation in the PCCC’s
deliberations by assessing a broad spectrum of students’ satisfaction with and attitudes and opinions about UVM, its programs, and its services.

Several years later, the University administered the ACE/CIRP Senior Survey. However, the low response rate and lack of usable reference norms did not provide any useful information.

In spring 1997, the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory was administered to a sample of students. At the same time, the University piloted the faculty/staff version of the same instrument. These surveys assessed opinions on the following twelve composite scales: academic advising effectiveness; campus climate; campus life; campus support services; concern for the individual; instructional effectiveness; recruitment and financial aid effectiveness; registration effectiveness; responsiveness to diverse populations; safety and security; service excellence; and, student centeredness. The results of these surveys have been used by groups and individuals (President’s Commission on the Status of Women; Executive Officer for Cultural Pluralism and Racial Equity) to assess issues of campus climate, safety, and diversity.

14. Campus Climate Survey. In 1991 the Office of Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity/Diversity Programs conducted a major survey of campus climate in order to assess the differences in the experiences of faculty, staff, and students at The University of Vermont.

15. Residential Life and Housing Surveys. Performed by the Office of Residential Life.

16. Project STAY and Learning Coop. Student research assessment, and evaluation projects of special population students.

17. Academic Department Profiles. Trend information are prepared annually for each academic department with college/school and university totals. The information currently reported includes: undergraduate and graduate applications; undergraduate and graduate enrollments; undergraduate and graduate degrees awarded; student credit hours and FTE students taught; general fund FTE faculty; student-to-faculty ratio.

18. National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO) Benchmarking Project and the University Innovation Team. The University has participated in several versions of the NACUBO Benchmarking Project. These efforts ultimately led to the establishment of the University Innovation Team. The purpose of the Innovation Team, whose membership comes from both faculty and staff, is “to advocate and support innovations to improve the quality and enhance the value of the work of the UVM community.”
19. National Study of Instructional Costs and Productivity. The University of Vermont has recently participated in the FIPSE-supported national study of instructional costs and productivity that is coordinated by the University of Delaware. It is anticipated that these data will provide important academic benchmarking information for use as department-level performance measures.

20. Annual Report on UVM Diversity*. As requested by The University of Vermont Board of Trustees, the Executive Officer for Cultural Pluralism and Racial Equity prepares a detailed report on the status and progress of UVM’s efforts to become a more diverse institution.

21. Annual Review and Analysis of Faculty and Administrative Salaries*. As requested in earlier planning efforts, The University of Vermont annually prepares comparisons of faculty, administrator, and staff salaries. Comparative faculty salary data were used as a basis for distributing a part of the FY99 salary pool differentially among the colleges and schools in order to make market adjustments.

22. Faculty and Staff Pay Equity Studies. In the past five years, the University has conducted faculty and staff pay equity studies using regression analysis. In both studies, it was found that 1) there were no regressions where the average male/female pay difference is statistically significant at two or more standard deviations and 2) very few men or women had an expected pay that is significantly less or more than would be expected from available pay-influencing factors.

23. Graduate College Program Review. In the past two years, the Graduate College has issued guidelines for graduate program evaluation. The guidelines cover the areas of Program, Faculty, and Students, including:

1. Program
   - Philosophy and direction of programs, degrees offered
   - Curriculum
   - Advising/mentoring
   - Outcomes/assessment of students
   - Promotional and informational materials
   - Factors relating to department’s or program’s ability or inability to succeed in its graduate mission

2. Faculty
   - Review of *curriculum vitae* for all faculty participating in the graduate program
   - Identify and describe the long- and short-term faculty and post-doctoral scholars visiting the program.
3. Students

- Number of students enrolled over the six most recent years.
- Internal and external funding for students
- Recruitment of students
- Facilities for graduate students; integration of students into the department

At this time, there is no systematic university-wide process for program review.

24. Library Evaluation. The administration and staff of the University Libraries have initiated a regular program of assessment to determine the needs, attitudes, and opinions of students, faculty, and staff for library and information resources and services.

25. Campus Master Plan. In 1997 a three-year effort to provide "a comprehensive land use plan" that supports the mission and strategic planning of the University over a ten-year horizon was completed.

26. Task Force on the Changing Workforce. The Task Force has completed the first stage of its work — i.e., an assessment of the current status of the staff classification system and the organization of work

Appraisal

The University of Vermont has conducted several major planning efforts and a wide range of evaluation activities over the past ten years. These include development of consistent themes expressed in institutional mission statements, consistency in planning assumptions and parameters, and consistency in definition of critical issues facing the University. There have also been significant efforts to be more inclusive in the University’s planning activities, thereby broadening campus participation and representation. It is anticipated that many of these activities will be improved and sustained, creating the "culture of evidence" necessary for accurately evaluating the planning and management decisions that will be made.

There is, of course, room for improvement. Generally, it appears that disproportionately less action has been taken than one might expect as a result of the University’s planning and evaluation activities. In some cases, efforts have appeared to be disjointed, lacking either focus or continuity, and at times, seemingly redundant. A partial explanation lies in the numerous changes in key leadership positions at critical junctures over the past ten years: president, provost, deans, and vice-presidents. Additionally, efforts have too often been reactive, attempting to cope with urgent pressures or sudden changes in the internal and external environments, rather than deliberative and proactive.
Finally, while there have been numerous evaluation activities taking place since the last accreditation, their emphases have not been on the assessment of student learning outcomes (especially general education outcomes) or systematic program review at the university level. Similarly to many other institutions in New England, reliance has rather been placed on evidence such as course completion, course grades, retention rates, etc. Presently, however, there is credible evidence that more comprehensive assessment efforts are under development or taking place at the college, school, or department level, per the following instances:

- The School of Business Administration’s large-scale project to make internal improvements using a Total Quality Management (TQM) approach;
- The Program Evaluation Program (PEP) in the School of Nursing where assessment is linked with the American Association of Colleges of Nursing accreditation standards;
- The use of portfolio evaluation in the College of Education and Social Services;
- The assessment pilot project being undertaken in the College of Arts and Sciences: History, Economics, and Communications Science departments.

**Projection**

It is anticipated that the University will make great strides in the next few years in the areas of planning and evaluation. The key leadership positions of President and Provost have been filled. Further, they have placed major emphasis on the use of shared data and information for planning and decision-making.

The importance of planning, evaluation, and assessment is underscored by one of the University’s Areas of Emphasis for the 21st century: *Strategic Budgeting and the Measurement of Quality and Effectiveness*. Work has already begun on the development of performance measures for accountability and assessment. We believe these efforts will allow the University to demonstrate its effectiveness to both internal and external constituents as well as to support the strategic planning and budget activities.

The move to greater assessment activity is foreshadowed by several recent developments. The creation of the Center for Teaching and Learning will serve as a focal point for University activities in the assessment and improvement of teaching and learning on this campus. The recent assessment activities as previously described taking place in the Business Administration, Nursing, Education and Social Services, and Arts and Sciences units signal the beginning of increased assessment activities within the academic units.