Report to the 
Faculty, Administration, Trustees, Students 
of the 

UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT 
Burlington, Vermont 

by 
An Evaluation Team representing the 
Commission on Institutions of Higher Education 
of the 
New England Association of Schools and Colleges 

Prepared after study of the institution's self-evaluation report 
and a visit to the campus April 19-22, 2009 

The members of the team:

Chairperson: Dr. Philip E. Austin, President Emeritus and University Professor, University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT

Dr. Suzanne E. Austin, Associate Dean for Social Sciences and History and Professor of History and Latin American Studies, University of Delaware, Newark, DE

Dr. Jamshed Bharucha, Provost and Senior Vice President, Tufts University, Medford, MA

Mr. Frank D’Andraia, Dean and Director of Libraries, University at Albany, State University of New York, Albany, NY

Ms. Margaret N. Harrigan, Senior Policy and Planning Analyst, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, WI

Dr. James T. McGill, Senior Vice President Finance and Administration, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD

Dr. Coleen Pantalone, Associate Professor of Finance, Northeastern University, Boston, MA

Dr. Patricia F. Plummer, Senior Advisor to Senior VP Academic and Student Affairs and International Relations, University of Massachusetts, Boston, MA

Mr. Mark Rubinstein, Vice President Student and Academic Services, University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH

Dr. Jeffrey R. Seemann, Dean, College of the Environment & Life Sciences, University of Rhode Island, Kingston, RI

This report represents the views of the evaluation committee as interpreted by the chairperson. Its content is based on the committee’s evaluation of the institution with respect to the Commission’s criteria for accreditation. It is a confidential document in which all comments are made in good faith. The report is prepared both as an educational service to the institution and to assist the Commission in making a decision about the institution’s accreditation status.
11. Other characteristics:

COMMISSION ON INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION
New England Association of Schools and Colleges
Preface Page

Name of Institution: University of Vermont

Date form completed: 2/18/2007

1. History
Year chartered or authorized __1791____ Year first degrees awarded __1804____

2. Type of control:
☐ State ☐ City ☐ Other; specify: ________________
☐ Private, not-for-profit ☐ Religious Group; specify: ________________
☐ Proprietary ☐ Other; specify: ________________

3. Degree level:
☐ Associate ☐ Baccalaureate ☐ Masters ☐ Professional ☐ Doctorate

4. Enrollment in Degree Programs (Use figures from fall semester of most recent year):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Associate</th>
<th>Full-time</th>
<th>Part-time</th>
<th>FTE</th>
<th>Retention</th>
<th>Graduation</th>
<th># Degrees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baccalaureate</td>
<td>9,513</td>
<td>354</td>
<td>9,829.2</td>
<td>85.5%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>662</td>
<td>722</td>
<td>867.1</td>
<td>84.1%</td>
<td>80.4%</td>
<td>425</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Medicine: 453 0 453 100% 93.8% 81*

(a) full-time 1st to 2nd year (b) 3 or 6 year graduation rate (c) no. of degrees awarded most recent year

5. Number of current faculty:
Full time: 1,081 Part-time: 222 FTE: 1,155 Instructional/Research Library/Extension 53 3 53

6. Current fund data for most recently completed fiscal year: (Specify year: ________)
(Double click in any cell to enter spreadsheet. Enter dollars in millions; e.g., $1,456,200 = $1,456)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revenues</th>
<th>Expenditures</th>
<th>SEE ATTACHMENTS</th>
<th>SEE ATTACHMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuition</td>
<td>Instruction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gov't Appropriations</td>
<td>Research</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gifts/Grants/Endowment</td>
<td>General</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auxiliary Enterprises</td>
<td>Auxiliary Enterprises</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$0.000</td>
<td>$0.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Number of off-campus locations:
In-state ___ Other U.S. ___ International ___ Total ___

8. Number of degrees and certificates offered electronically:
Programs offered entirely on-line ___ Programs offered 50-99% on-line ___

9. Is instruction offered through a contractual relationship?
☐ No ☐ Yes; specify program(s): ____________________________

10. Accreditation history:
Candidacy: None Initial accreditation: December 1929 Last comprehensive evaluation: Spring 1999
Last Commission action: Fifth-year interim report accepted Date: March 4, 2004

11. Other characteristics:
### Statement of Revenues, Expenses and Changes in Net Assets

*for the years ended June 30, 2008 and 2007*

($dollars in thousands$)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Operating revenues</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuition and fees</td>
<td>$243,536</td>
<td>$224,765</td>
<td>$ -</td>
<td>$ -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential Life</td>
<td>41,988</td>
<td>37,730</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less scholarship allowances</td>
<td>(51,492)</td>
<td>(44,065)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net student fees</td>
<td>234,432</td>
<td>217,620</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal, state, and private grants and contracts</td>
<td>141,583</td>
<td>139,336</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales and services of educational activities</td>
<td>5,053</td>
<td>4,414</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Auxiliary Enterprises</td>
<td>30,949</td>
<td>30,678</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student loan interest and other operating revenues</td>
<td>11,671</td>
<td>9,730</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total operating revenues</strong></td>
<td>431,688</td>
<td>402,190</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Operating expenses</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensation and benefits</td>
<td>(341,589)</td>
<td>(303,877)</td>
<td>(289)</td>
<td>(298)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplies and services</td>
<td>(163,989)</td>
<td>(156,276)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depreciation</td>
<td>(26,094)</td>
<td>(20,436)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholarships and fellowships</td>
<td>(12,551)</td>
<td>(12,579)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total operating expenses</strong></td>
<td>(543,233)</td>
<td>(495,142)</td>
<td>(289)</td>
<td>(298)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Operating loss</strong></td>
<td>(112,135)</td>
<td>(90,922)</td>
<td>(79)</td>
<td>(107)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-operating revenues (expenses)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State appropriations</td>
<td>44,623</td>
<td>43,855</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private gifts</td>
<td>16,598</td>
<td>14,626</td>
<td>6,650</td>
<td>5,866</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net investment income</td>
<td>4,154</td>
<td>73,089</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>1,086</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest on indebtedness</td>
<td>(14,414)</td>
<td>(10,059)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss on disposal of capital assets</td>
<td>(39)</td>
<td>(1,196)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net other non-operating expense</td>
<td>(1,685)</td>
<td>(998)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UMEA Grants to UVM College of Medicine &amp; others</td>
<td>4,526</td>
<td>4,521</td>
<td>(5,766)</td>
<td>(6,441)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net non-operating revenues</strong></td>
<td>53,763</td>
<td>123,530</td>
<td>7,196</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Income (loss) before capital and endowment additions</strong></td>
<td>(59,372)</td>
<td>32,548</td>
<td>1,117</td>
<td>(96)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State capital appropriations</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>1,800</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital gifts and grants</td>
<td>1,449</td>
<td>7,842</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gifts for endowment purposes</td>
<td>7,083</td>
<td>5,916</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total other revenues</strong></td>
<td>10,112</td>
<td>16,558</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Increase in net assets</strong></td>
<td>(49,200)</td>
<td>48,106</td>
<td>1,117</td>
<td>(96)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net Assets, Beginning of Year</strong></td>
<td>605,759</td>
<td>657,853</td>
<td>10,372</td>
<td>10,463</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net Assets, End of Year</strong></td>
<td>$557,539</td>
<td>$609,959</td>
<td>$11,489</td>
<td>$10,372</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of the financial statement.
The actuarial accrued liability at the measurement date of July 1, 2007 was $350,173, with a normal cost of $10,288. The actuarial value of assets funding the liability was $0, as the University’s contributions are comprised entirely of direct payments for benefits. Employer contributions for fiscal year ended June 30, 2008 totaled $10,516, or 28.6% of annual other postemployment benefit (OPEB) cost. The unfunded actuarial accrued liability (UAAL) was $320,173. The annual required contribution (ARC) of $36,808 for fiscal year 2008 is the sum of $11,008, the normal cost at July 1, 2007 plus interest, and $25,800, the 2008 amortization of the UAAL.

Total annual other postemployment benefit (OPEB) cost for the year ended June 30, 2008 and the liability as of June 30, 2008 include the following components:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>June 30, 2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Annual required contribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest on net OPEB obligation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARC adjustment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual OPEB cost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributions during FY08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase in net OPEB obligation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net OPEB obligation, beginning of year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net OPEB obligation, end of year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In accordance with GASB Technical Bulletin 2006-1, assumed health care costs do not reflect any expected federal reimbursements to the University under the Medicare Part D Program.

K. Operating Expense by Function

Operating expenses by functional classification for the years ended June 30, 2008 and 2007 are summarized as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year ended June 30, 2008</th>
<th>Compensation and Benefits</th>
<th>Supplies and Services</th>
<th>Scholarships and Fellowships</th>
<th>Depreciation</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instruction</td>
<td>$119,266</td>
<td>$20,822</td>
<td>$140,087</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>59,714</td>
<td>26,274</td>
<td>87,988</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public service</td>
<td>27,138</td>
<td>8,161</td>
<td>35,299</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic support</td>
<td>56,766</td>
<td>13,861</td>
<td>50,627</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student services</td>
<td>19,404</td>
<td>10,364</td>
<td>29,768</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional support</td>
<td>31,114</td>
<td>20,998</td>
<td>52,112</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operations and maintenance of plant</td>
<td>19,752</td>
<td>23,325</td>
<td>43,081</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholarships and fellowships</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12,551</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auxiliary enterprises</td>
<td>28,432</td>
<td>37,784</td>
<td>66,216</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depreciation:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>26,094</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Operating Expenses</strong></td>
<td><strong>341,589</strong></td>
<td><strong>163,589</strong></td>
<td><strong>12,551</strong></td>
<td><strong>26,094</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>545,823</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year ended June 30, 2007</th>
<th>Compensation and Benefits</th>
<th>Supplies and Services</th>
<th>Scholarships and Fellowships</th>
<th>Depreciation</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instruction</td>
<td>$ 99,888</td>
<td>$ 18,247</td>
<td>$ 118,135</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>53,291</td>
<td>27,702</td>
<td>80,993</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public service</td>
<td>23,823</td>
<td>8,584</td>
<td>32,507</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic support</td>
<td>59,858</td>
<td>15,570</td>
<td>55,428</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student services</td>
<td>16,825</td>
<td>9,179</td>
<td>26,004</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional support</td>
<td>29,634</td>
<td>12,769</td>
<td>42,383</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operations and maintenance of plant</td>
<td>16,868</td>
<td>32,080</td>
<td>48,948</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholarships and fellowships</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12,570</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auxiliary enterprises</td>
<td>23,710</td>
<td>32,046</td>
<td>55,756</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depreciation:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>20,439</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Operating Expenses</strong></td>
<td><strong>305,877</strong></td>
<td><strong>156,276</strong></td>
<td><strong>12,570</strong></td>
<td><strong>20,439</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>495,162</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT

**FY 2008 Operating Expense by Function**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Compensation and Benefits</th>
<th>Supplies and Services</th>
<th>Scholarships and Fellowships</th>
<th>Depreciation</th>
<th>In Millions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instruction</td>
<td>$119,266</td>
<td>$20,822</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>$140.087</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>$59,714</td>
<td>$28,274</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>$87.988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Service</td>
<td>$27,138</td>
<td>$8,161</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>$35.299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Support</td>
<td>$36,766</td>
<td>$13,861</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>$50.627</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Services</td>
<td>$19,404</td>
<td>$10,364</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>$29.768</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Support</td>
<td>$31,114</td>
<td>$20,998</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>$52.112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operations &amp; Maintenance of Plant</td>
<td>$19,755</td>
<td>$23,325</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>$43.081</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholarships and Fellowships</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>$12,551</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>$12,551</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auxiliary Enterprises</td>
<td>$28,432</td>
<td>$37,784</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>$66.216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depreciation</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>$26,094</td>
<td>$26,094</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Operating Expense</strong></td>
<td><strong>$341,589</strong></td>
<td><strong>$163,589</strong></td>
<td><strong>$12,551</strong></td>
<td><strong>$26,094</strong></td>
<td><strong>$543,823</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

INTRODUCTION

This report is intended as a summation of the findings of the NEASC Reaccreditation Team assigned to evaluate the University of Vermont. The ten-member team visited the University for the period April 19 to April 22, 2009. Team members had carefully read the Self-Study Report in advance of the visit and were well-prepared for the work of the visit.

The University was very helpful to the Team prior to and during the visit. The Self-Study Report was comprehensive and well-written. In addition, the University provided a second volume that covered its assessment activities across all areas. The University set up an intense visit schedule that allowed the Team to meet with all of the key academic, administrative, and student leaders of the University, along with open forums for faculty, staff, and students. During the course of the visit, members of the Team met with the Chair of the Board of Trustees and four Board members appointed by the legislature, the President, the vice presidents, college and school deans, department chairs and program heads, staff from student services and facilities offices, and students. The University was very accommodating of any changes the Team made in the visit schedule.

We have made every effort in this report to both reflect accurately the strengths and concerns that the Team discovered during its visit to the University in relation to the eleven Standards for Accreditation of the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education and to focus the discussion on the Standards themselves. This visit was a mandated ten-year comprehensive evaluation following upon the previous such evaluation that took place in fall 1999. At that time, the University was asked to report on its success in developing and implementing its strategic plan and budget, fulfilling the objectives of the capital campaign, developing assessment activities, and enhancing enrollment and retention. In the five-year follow-up report, the Commission noted the substantial progress made by the University in meeting its challenges. At that time the Commission noted in its narrative that it was not clear how the survey data and other benchmark data being collected were linked to initiatives addressing institutional effectiveness.

The Team was impressed with the University of Vermont’s strong and visionary leadership and with the genuine commitment of the faculty, staff, and students to the University’s vision and mission.

STANDARD ONE: MISSION

The University of Vermont is a unique public university. It is small, by state university standards, with 1,134 full-time faculty and 225 part-time faculty. In fall 2008, it enrolled 9,829.2 FTE baccalaureate students, 881.9 FTE graduate students, 453 FTE medical students, and 340.1 non-degree students. It is a public land-grant university that receives among the lowest levels of state support in the nation; only 7.5% of the operating budget comes from state appropriations. 65% of the University’s undergraduate population is from outside Vermont, and for many years it was recognized as a public ivy. The University suffered from a decade of turmoil in its senior leadership during the nineties, but has now returned to a period of greater stability and a much clearer strategy for future growth and development.
The University has clearly articulated vision and mission statements, the essence of which have remained constant for the past 120 years. The University’s vision is to be among the nation’s premier small research universities, preeminent in our comprehensive commitment to liberal education, environment, health, and public service.

The mission statement of the University includes a description of the “UVM graduate”. The mission is to create, evaluate, share, and apply knowledge and to prepare students to be accountable leaders who will bring to their work dedication to the global community, a grasp of complexity, effective problem-solving and communication skills, and an enduring commitment to learning and ethical conduct.

The mission of the University is intended to flesh out the substance of the vision, but it is the vision that differentiates the University and captures the unique nature of the institution and its graduates. As noted in the Self-Study Report, these statements have evolved over time without losing their fundamental characterization of the University. The University Board of Trustees approved the vision and mission statements and the strategic plan, with seven goals, in May 2003. Core values of respect, integrity, innovation, openness, justice, and responsibility, articulated in the University’s Our Common Ground statement, guide policies and planning. In 2007, the University Planning Council developed a matrix of over 160 performance indicators for the seven strategic goals. The performance report issued in fall 2007 included 48 of these metrics. These data were reviewed to assess progress toward meeting the University’s strategic goals. The Board approved revised vision and mission statements and a refocused strategic plan with five strategic goals in fall 2008. Metrics and targets have not been developed for these revised goals.

The faculty, staff, and students with whom the Team spoke were aware and supportive of the vision and mission of the University and were proud of what the University stands for and what it has accomplished. The strategic planning process, as well as the programs offered in the various colleges and the research undertaken by faculty, reflect the University’s unique focus on the environment, health, and public services. This focus is also reflected in other aspects of the University’s life, such as the successful efforts to obtain silver or gold LEED certification on new building projects and residential living/learning communities focusing on Global Village, GreenHouse, Health and Wellness. The vision and mission clearly permeate the core of the University’s life.

Institutional Effectiveness
The vision and mission statements of the University have been reevaluated and revised on a periodic basis, most recently in 2008. While the revisions reflect the increasing size and complexity of the University, the basic focus has remained unchanged. The vision and
mission statements inform the strategic planning process and are reflected in the curricular and co-curricular programs and research agenda of the University.

**STANDARD TWO: PLANNING AND EVALUATION**

**Planning**
The University has embraced strategic planning at the institutional level since its last accreditation review in 1999. In 2003, the Board of Trustees endorsed a broad-based Strategic Action Plan, which built on the University’s plan adopted in 2000. The 2003-2008 Strategic Plan incorporated a wide-ranging and comprehensive array of goals for the University, including plans to increase enrollments, improve student housing, strengthen financial resources, grow the research enterprise, provide experiential opportunities for students, such as research and service-learning, and increase the diversity of faculty, staff, and students.

Formal plans for specific areas of the University developed between 2004 and 2006, including facilities, financial operations, and information technology, were built on the goals and objectives laid out in the overall strategic plan. In addition, five presidential commissions on issues of gender, race, diversity and inclusion, LGBT, and social change were appointed to provide leadership and planning around these issues.

In 2007, President Fogel charged the University Planning Council with revising the strategic plan. The University Planning Council, a 22-member team of senior administrators and faculty leaders chaired by the Provost, crafted changes that would more closely tie the goals and actions of the plan to the updated mission and vision statements of the University. The President invited comments from faculty, staff, and students on the proposed plan, which was posted on the website of the Office of the President. The amended plan, “Strategic Plan 2009-2013: Sustaining the Advance”, was approved by the Faculty Senate and Board of Trustees in 2008. The new plan contains five strategic goals:

- Diversity: Build a diverse and globally aware University community sustained by an inclusive, supportive and just campus climate.
- Academic Programs: Increase the quality and stature of academic programs and align undergraduate and graduate education with institutional priorities.
- Scholarship: Focus and strengthen research, scholarship, and the creative arts, and develop outstanding graduate programs that support the creation and sharing of knowledge.
- Student experience: Provide a distinctive University experience that prepares students for success as accountable leaders in the 21st century.
- Institutional efficacy: As an institution, model the highest standard of ethical conduct, accountability, and best practices, public service, and strong commitment to lifelong learning.

The University collects data to support its planning efforts and improve institutional effectiveness. Regularly published data include the annual Sourcebook, a report of
Success in implementing the strategic goals is demonstrated in many areas. For example, a living-learning residence complex was built, minority student enrollments increased from 428 in fall 2002 to 708 in 2008, and new academic initiatives such as a University-wide diversity requirement were adopted.

Evaluation

As part of the Self-Study Report [Volume 2], the University Assessment Council undertook an overarching “assessment of assessment” at the University, “Institutional Assessment at the University of Vermont, 2007-08”. It shows substantial progress since the 1999 accreditation review. This analysis covered four areas: assessment of institutional performance; assessment of learning outcomes at University, school and college, and academic program levels; assessment of academic programs; and assessment of campus offices and services.

President Fogel assigned the University Planning Council the task of developing and compiling indicators to evaluate progress on the goals of the Strategic Plan. The Council presented its Strategic Plan Performance Indicators Report to the Board of Trustees in fall 2007. This report identifies 48 measures related to the seven goals included in the 2003-2008 Strategic Plan. The report uses external data from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), Consortium for Student Retention Data Exchange (CSRDE), Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) and other sources to benchmark the University’s progress against peer institutions. Where data are available, multi-year trends are reported to showcase progress over time. Although much of the data are highly relevant to the mission and strategic plan, no targets are identified for any of the measures. Thus, it is difficult for the University to know if it is making progress in meeting its goals.

The University Planning Council and senior administrative leaders used the performance indicators report to inform the revision of the strategic plan in 2008. Five Strategic Plan Action Idea Working groups made up of faculty, staff, and students were established in fall 2008 to develop new indicators based on the updated strategic plan.

The University is working to tie resource allocation to the University’s mission and objectives. The Fiscal Priorities Committee was appointed in 2006 to assist the Provost in aligning financial decisions with the goals of the strategic plan. The Committee held public meetings in 2008 with unit heads where they discussed the unit’s budget request for the coming year along with the unit’s efforts to advance the University’s Strategic Plan.

In addition to the evaluation of progress toward meeting its strategic goals, the University has undertaken academic program review that includes an evaluation by an external reviewer. The University has nearly completed one round of academic program review and is planning to modify the process to make it more effective as it begins a second round of reviews.
Moreover, as part of the self-study process, the University surveyed the academic programs to learn what assessment of student learning outcomes is occurring in each of the programs. Assessment of student learning outcomes varies across the programs, with a rigorous process in place where discipline-based accreditation requires it, and generally a much less developed process in the other programs. A more detailed discussion of academic program review and assessment of student learning outcomes is provided in Standard Four of this report.

Finally, as noted in Volume 2 of the Self-Study Report, many service areas at the University collect and analyze data to improve their service to students and the University as a whole.

**Institutional Effectiveness**

The University has made a serious effort to engage in planning, evaluation and assessment to support institutional improvement. Strategic plans, developed and used to inform financial and capital planning, are part of the University’s culture. However, as the University acknowledges, assessment at the University and program levels is still developing.

**STANDARD THREE: ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNANCE**

Within the past four years, the University has assessed and revised its governance structures, including the Board of Trustees, the Faculty Senate, the Student Government Association, the Graduate Student Senate, and the Staff Council. The governance structure is described clearly in documents available publicly. These documents include recently revised by-laws and organizational charts, available on the web, which delineate the roles of the Board of Trustees, the administration, faculty, students, and staff.

The Self-Study Report mentions “considerable change in terms of Board structure and operation since the 1999 NEASC visit.” These reforms were put in place in 2005-2006, and included the establishment of an Ad Hoc Committee on Board Governance. The Governance Committee carries out assessments of board efficacy and organizes an annual retreat on Board effectiveness. The Board thus “systematically develops and ensures its own effectiveness”. The Governance Committee also established a new committee structure with one committee focused on academics and the other on business; the committees include faculty, staff, student, and alumni representatives.

In the course of its Board assessment and reorganization, the University has taken steps to address the governance concern raised in the 1999 NEASC Reaccreditation Team – a concern with which the Commission concurred – about “the extraordinarily large number of presidents (reportedly four, including interim appointments) and provosts (reportedly eight) who have served the University” since the previous self-study. The 1999 Team suggested that the “the Board of Trustees may want to ponder whether appropriate incentives and situational protections are in place to encourage senior leaders to be both creative and vigorous in their leadership and long lived”. The Commission urged the Trustees “to consider the benefits of longer-term contracts, since stability of leadership is key to long-range planning and effective institutional operation”. A Trustee Subcommittee for Presidential Evaluation now conducts a fifth-year review of the President.
The Board of Trustees includes representation from the community (nine legislative and three gubernatorial appointments), in addition to nine self-perpetuating trustees and two students. All Board members are free of financial conflicts of interest and Board meetings are open to the public.

The faculty has an important role in governance. The faculty’s role is focused on the Faculty Senate, which has been restructured since the last accreditation visit. The Faculty Senate formerly took the form of a set of town meetings. In the new configuration, it is a body of elected representatives with a leadership structure and designated committees. Members of the Faculty Senate reported that the new structure gives the faculty a more representative and focused voice and a more nimble set of procedures for doing the work of the faculty. They feel that the Faculty Senate provides a more defined channel of communication with the administration than was there before. Members of the Faculty Senate feel that the new governance structures at the University are a distinct improvement over the structures that existed during the period of high administrative turnover just prior to the last NEASC visit. The Faculty Senate will assess the effectiveness of its new structure by AY2010.

The Staff Council has also been restructured since the last visit. In the new configuration, members are elected from different divisions of the University, except those that are unionized. Members of the Staff Council with whom we met strongly that they were empowered by the new structure, which has been in place for two years, and that they have good lines of communication with other governance groups. The Staff Council meets regularly with the President and Provost. The committee chairs reported that their committees are engaged in substantive work on behalf of staff and that the reforms have had a positive impact. The Staff Council would like to serve as the vehicle for nominating staff to serve on committees appointed by the administration.

Student views are incorporated into the governance system. An elected Student Government Association channels input from undergraduate, and to some extent graduate, students to the administration as well as to other constituencies. The out-going and in-coming leaders of the Student Government Association expressed satisfaction with the recognition of their governance role at the University, and with their lines of communication to the senior administration. A newly re-established Graduate Student Senate serves a parallel function for graduate students, although they are still awaiting a response to their request for formal recognition as a governance structure. This recognition would entitle them, among other things, to make presentations to the Board of Trustees on equal footing with the Student Government Association.

The governance structure involves regular communication among all appropriate constituencies. However, given the history and culture of decentralization at the University, communication falls short of what will be necessary to mobilize the University at all levels of administration to achieve the stated mission in a unified way. Some deans, department chairs, and others expressed a lack of cohesion among the various units at the University.
Institutional Effectiveness
The University periodically reviews its organizational structure and system of governance. The governance reforms put in place after the last accreditation visit have enhanced the effectiveness of the University’s ability to carry out its mission.

STANDARD FOUR: ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

The mission of the University is “to create, evaluate, share, and apply knowledge and to prepare students to be accountable leaders who will bring to their work dedication to the global community, a grasp of complexity, effective problem-solving and communication skills, and an enduring commitment to learning and ethical conduct.” The University prides itself on providing an intimate, high quality undergraduate liberal education while it also aspires to rank among the nation’s premier small research universities. It is clear that the seven undergraduate schools and colleges, offering 97 majors and 81 minors, the Graduate School, offering 53 masters, 22 doctoral programs, and seven Certificates of Graduate Study, and the College of Medicine, offering a Doctor of Medicine (M.D.) degree, collectively offer collegiate-level programs that fulfill the standard. The Division of Continuing Education offers both non-credit and credit-bearing courses in a variety of formats and settings. University Extension is well known for its rich array of non-credit programs across the State of Vermont.

Academic oversight at the University to assure quality is effectively overseen at the department/faculty, college/dean, Faculty Senate, and Provost levels. Program coherence and appropriate sequencing is assured via departmentally proposed, and school and college approved, systems of course prerequisites and a sequential numbering system for courses of increasing complexity and challenge. Faculty Senate oversight of academic programs emphasizes program quality and consistency, including through its academic program review process. Requirements for each program are published in the online catalogue, and formal learning outcomes, with associated web addresses where the learning outcomes can be found, have been established for 80 of the 95 undergraduate majors for which information was collected. Eighteen of 80 majors include program-learning outcomes on course syllabi, and 25 of the 80 publish learning outcomes in student or program handbooks. Most undergraduate programs include a first-year required course or seminar, and although there is no University-wide requirement for a capstone experience, numerous synthesizing courses and experiences are offered, many of which are required in the major. Programs appear to be adequately resourced, although the deans and department chairs both indicated that a lack of funding predictability made instructional delivery difficult at times.

As in other areas, the use of information technology and information resources in the academic programs is uneven across colleges and majors. The College of Medicine has an exemplary program in the use of technology in learning and in the practice of the profession including, for example, web posting of all course materials including video streaming of lectures and hand-held devices for use in clinical practice. Other schools and colleges do not appear to have an overall plan regarding the infusion of technology in the curriculum. The University migrated to Blackboard and administrators reported that about half of the
University’s courses have some materials posted on it. There seems to be some resistance by faculty to using technology in teaching. Online education at the University seems to be limited to the Division of Continuing Education. However, specific majors, like geography, do make use of up-to-date technologies in their field.

All students, with the exception of those in the College of Arts and Sciences, are enrolled, usually in their first semester, in a small, required course in expository writing or in a course in English with a substantial writing component. College of Arts and Sciences students do not have a writing course requirement, but they are enrolled in a small, writing intensive seminar in their first semester. Thus all students have instruction in writing as a way of assuring competence in the English language.

Under the authority of the University Board of Trustees, the Faculty Senate has oversight of all academic programs and curricular matters including the establishment, dissolution, and substantial changes in degree programs. Students in any terminated program are given the opportunity to complete the program in a reasonable time.

**Undergraduate Degree Programs**
The University has decentralized undergraduate degree programs that place responsibility and standards at the level of the faculty of the schools and colleges. The University budgeting process appears to link resource allocation to program delivery, albeit imperfectly as expressed by the deans and department chairs. The 97 majors and 81 minors have, in general, well defined and clear requirements, with oversight provided by the Curricular Affairs Committee of the Faculty Senate with an emphasis on program quality and consistency. This function is accomplished through an academic program review process that is described later in this Standard. Finally, a University-wide first-year experience is under consideration.

Currently there is no University-wide general education requirement at the University. Rather, the self-study process produced evidence that all seven schools and colleges have distribution requirements that appear to meet the 40-credit requirement. The Self-Study Report states that an analysis of these different sets of requirements

> “reveals a unifying principle underlying each set that defines general education as a broad exposure to the liberal arts and sciences, creates a structural interdependence among the schools and colleges, and relies on the College of Arts and Sciences to deliver most of the general education curriculum.”

However, the report also makes clear that there at least three different forms of liberal education/general education requirements (i.e. Arts and Science model; distribution requirements; and distribution commonalities). The Provost, deans, department chairs, and many others indicated that, if nothing else, these variable systems create considerable problems for students moving between colleges and majors. Furthermore, although it is clear that the faculty is dedicated to and, in fact, does provide a rich educational experience for undergraduates, the decentralized nature of general education makes it difficult to ensure
quality control of this important educational function. The Team was made aware of a proposal to create a University-wide core curriculum (i.e., report of the Transformational Change Working Group dated April 15, 2009). A further discussion of this issue is found in the next section.

General Education
Requirements for general education courses are set by each school and college and vary in their depth and breadth. There is a University-wide six-credit diversity requirement that is well articulated and integrated into program requirements. The only other University-wide requirement is a physical education requirement that is currently being reviewed based on student complaints about the added fee and lack of access to courses. A recommendation to eliminate this requirement is in process.

The general education requirements for some colleges are difficult to interpret from catalogue descriptions. On the one hand, the College of Arts and Sciences and the School of Business Administration have clearly explained general education requirements that provide at least the 40 semester hours described in Standard Four (17). However, other colleges have five or more requirements, with the exception of the Colleges of Nursing and Health Sciences and the College of Education and Social Services that have fewer general education requirements, reportedly due to lack of room in the curriculum after meeting discipline-based accreditation requirements. A perusal of the required courses in these colleges does suggest that the 40 semester hour requirement is being met.

The self-study process has brought to light again the discussion of a University-wide core curriculum that, apparently, has gone on for many years. Recently the President circulated an essay that asked the community, through a task force, to make recommendations around reorganization of the University including a common general education program. The task force’s final report did recommend that the University discuss a common core with learning outcomes and assessment. In addition to the usual challenges faced in gaining agreement on a common core of learning, deans report that the financial structures for departments providing “service courses” will need to change in order to gain agreement.

Given the wide variation in requirements between and within the schools and colleges, it is difficult to assess whether students are attaining the knowledge and skills identified in the Standards and in the University’s mission and vision statements. To demonstrate that the University meets Standard Four, the University used an indirect method to provide evidence that all students complete at least 40 semester hours of general education that includes arts and humanities, sciences and mathematics, and social sciences. A study of course-completion data, based on the number and type of general education course registrations, demonstrated that students were completing a broad general education curriculum. While the data on these 30 highest enrolled courses is helpful, more evidence will be necessary in the future to assess learning outcomes. The University’s participation in the pilot test of general education outcomes in the Voluntary System of Accountability will be helpful in assessing the effectiveness of the current variety of core curricula and the future general education curriculum to be developed. In addition, a new Writing in the Disciplines program is being
implemented and faculty and chairs commented favorably on the professional development provided to faculty.

Considering the quality of the faculty, the diversity of offerings and the qualified students who enroll, it is likely that graduates possess the competencies required in the NEASC Standards and expressed in the vision and mission statements of the University. Conversations with faculty, students, administration and staff support this impression. However, empirical evidence is lacking and recent efforts to provide this evidence need to be continued beyond the NEASC process.

The Major or Concentration
All schools and colleges require an in-depth study of at least one discipline or interdisciplinary area as a major. The faculty of each of the seven schools and colleges set their own graduation requirements, and these appear to be appropriate for the majors in terms of mastery of the knowledge, information resources, methods, and theories pertinent to a particular area of inquiry. All programs have explicit requirements for degrees and majors that are organized by the program faculty to provide students with increasing complexity and challenge. These are regularly monitored through student advising and through faculty oversight of the curriculum within their purview. Eighty of the 95 undergraduate majors surveyed by the Assessment Council have developed formal learning outcomes. Professional training programs appear to be appropriately linked to field practice experiences.

Graduate Degree Programs
The Graduate College is responsible for all advanced degree programs except the Doctor of Medicine program, and offers 53 masters, 22 doctoral programs, and seven Certificates of Graduate Study. An Executive Committee, composed of faculty members and a graduate student member, works closely with the Dean of the Graduate School. The Self-Study Report and Team visit indicate that the graduate programs provide students with an appropriate mastery of their field and/or professional area, with appropriate degree requirements and research opportunities. Professional programs meet the accreditation standards of their professional organizations.

Resources for graduate programs are generally adequate, and in the biomedical sciences, particularly robust as a result of external grant support. Under the leadership of the Provost, the University is committed to a greater alignment of graduate programs with the vision and mission and with resource allocation. The University generally provides an appropriate amount of staffing to allow the accomplishment of graduate education objectives, and graduate students are well qualified for advanced academic study; in fact there appears to have been an increase in the quality of graduate students since the last accreditation visit. The University is committed to an effort to further diversify its graduate student enrollment.

Graduate programs are also reviewed in the Academic Program Review process, but as discussed later in this Standard, the current process does not address graduate program learning outcomes specifically. The Team notes, however, that the process is currently being revised to accommodate this need. This transition should assist the University with its stated
goal of identifying three to five graduate programs to which extraordinary resources will be provided to move them into the top quartile in NRC rankings.

The College of Medicine offers the Doctor of Medicine (M.D.) degree, and it works with the Graduate College to offer the combined M.D./Ph.D. degree, and with undergraduate programs in the biomedical sciences. Faculty in the College of Medicine regularly teach and mentor undergraduates through the HELiX program and have also regularly taught interdisciplinary sophomore seminars in the Honors College. In 2003, the College of Medicine implemented the Vermont Integrated Curriculum, an award-winning web-based learning environment. The educational technology program that facilitates the delivery of the integrated curriculum is called CoMET. CoMET allows the College to deliver every aspect of its curriculum online, making it broadly available to faculty and students, even when students are in clerkships at other locations. The entire curriculum is under the supervision of the College of Medicine faculty. The M.D. program is ranked fifth in the country in Primary Care by *US News and World Report*.

**Integrity in the Award of Academic Credit**

The creation and elimination of courses and programs is primarily the purview of the faculty through the Faculty Senate’s Curricular Affairs Committee. Undergraduate programs are planned and delivered on campus primarily for a traditional age population. Graduate programs are also delivered on-site. There are no off-site degree programs and there are limited offerings of online courses and certificates through the Division of Continuing Education. The Registrar’s Office describes an effective online degree audit program that has proven to be very helpful to students and administration. The Registrar’s Office has standards for the evaluation of transfer credit from other institutions. It has developed articulation agreements with the Vermont Technical College, St. Michael’s College, and the Community College of Vermont. It finds that these students perform at least as well academically as students who arrive as freshmen. Clear guidelines on the award of grades are published in the catalogue. Students report difficulty in the transfer of courses between colleges primarily due to varying general education requirements.

Based on interviews with faculty, chairs, deans, the Provost, the Registrar and the Curricular Affairs Committee of the Faculty Senate, and information provided in the Self-Study Report, catalogue, by-laws, and regulations, the University provides ample evidence that it follows common practices in American higher education in awarding credit.

**Assessment of Student Learning**

A faculty-driven process adopted by the Faculty Senate in 2000 guides the University’s periodic review of academic programs. Reviews of graduate and undergraduate programs are conducted by a subcommittee of the Faculty Senate’s Curricular Affairs Committee and include a self-study prepared by the program faculty and chair and a review of the self-study by one or more external consultants, but not a site visit. After a review is completed, representatives from the Provost’s Office, Curricular Affairs Committee, school or college representatives, and program faculty meet and agree to recommendations contained in a Memorandum of Understanding. Substantial concerns or opportunities raised as a result of the review can lead to a second-level review in more depth and may include a visit by an
external reviewer. To date, no second-level reviews have occurred. The Faculty Senate process stipulates that all programs will be reviewed on a five-year cycle, unless this conflicts with the cycle of external accrediting agency review. From the inception of the program through 2008, 71% of the academic programs have been reviewed, so the review cycle is closer to seven to eight years which is not unreasonable given the number of different programs offered.

The Curricular Affairs Committee reviewed the academic program review process in 2007-2008 and made recommendations to increase its effectiveness. For example, the Committee recommends that the process be revised to include information on how the unit fits in with the priorities of the school or college. In addition, the process should assign a larger role to external evaluators – including a site visit for all reviews. The report should specify concrete actions to be taken and a “formalized and transparent” follow-up should occur to ensure recommended actions are taken. While changes in the process will likely occur as a result of the report that will be considered by the Faculty Senate in 2009-2010, this appears to be a well-established process that will continue.

Assessment of student learning outcomes at the University level is just beginning. While the University has articulated what a University of Vermont graduate is in its mission statement, as discussed earlier in this section, there are no University-wide general education requirements nor is there assessment to determine whether this vision of its graduates is being attained. The sole University-wide requirement is a diversity requirement that consists of a three-credit course for freshmen entering in fall 2007 and two courses for freshmen entering in fall 2008. There is also a University-wide two-credit physical education requirement that the Faculty Senate has recommended be eliminated.

The University is participating in the Voluntary System of Accountability and the invitational Test Validity Study. Forty-eight freshmen and 48 seniors took six hours of test modules in the fall and the results are expected this summer. These results are expected to help inform the University’s discussion around general education and how it should be assessed.

In 2007, the University created an Assessment Council chaired by the Associate Provost for Planning and Assessment. The first responsibility of the Council was to survey the various colleges and programs to determine what assessment was occurring across the University. The Assessment Council used the “E1A Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators” format as a template for assessment of these 95 undergraduate and 74 graduate programs. In its Assessment Report of 2007-2008, the Council reported that 80 of the 95 undergraduate majors examined have developed formal learning outcomes, whereas only 18 of the 52 master’s programs and 7 of the 22 doctoral programs examined have learning outcomes.

According to the survey, there are nine different assessment methods being used – six direct and three indirect – across the programs. Most programs (63 of 80) used both direct measures, such as capstone courses, and indirect measures, such as graduating senior surveys, to assess outcomes. As a result of their assessment, about half (41 of 80) of the undergraduate programs made changes to their program. Assessment efforts were more developed in programs that participate in reviews by a professional accreditation agency such
as Education and Nursing. All of the 80 undergraduate programs that have learning outcomes post those outcomes on their website. However only 11% of the College of Arts and Sciences programs with learning outcomes and 65% of the other schools’ and colleges’ programs communicate their learning goals beyond the website.

The Council reported significantly fewer program-specific learning goals for graduate-level programs. At the graduate level, programs with learning outcomes typically rely on thesis and dissertation work for assessment. Only 18 of the 52 master’s level and seven of the 22 doctoral programs articulated student learning outcomes. Few changes were reported at the graduate level as a result of an assessment process.

As might be expected, programs with discipline-based accreditation and licensure have more developed assessment processes and many have completed a full cycle of assessment or more. This is not necessarily the case in other programs.

Institutional Effectiveness
The University has an array of programs at both the undergraduate and graduate levels that are appropriate to its mission. Program development and curriculum are under the purview of the faculty. Systems are in place, including Faculty Senate oversight of new or eliminated programs and periodic program review, to ensure the integrity of the academic programs.

While the work of the Assessment Council and the appointment of an Associate Provost for Planning and Assessment are first steps, there does not appear to be a culture of assessment, especially in units that do not have discipline-based accreditation or licensure. There is no University-wide assessment of student learning goals that align with the vision of the University of Vermont graduate and there has been no systematic oversight at the Provost or Faculty Senate level of assessment processes in the various academic programs.

STANDARD FIVE: FACULTY

The University has a full-time faculty of 1,134 (with 436 in the College of Medicine) and a part-time faculty of 225 (with 45 in the College of Medicine). Many members of the faculty received their graduate degrees from some of the best universities in the world; and over 80% of new faculty hires during the past five years received their degrees from “very high research universities.” Among the full-time faculty, 84% possess the terminal degree in their field.

Since the last accreditation visit in 1999, the most significant change for members of the faculty at the University has been the establishment of a chapter of United Academics (AAUP/AFT) full and part-time faculty unions. Faculty from the College of Medicine and the program in Military Science are not part of these collective bargaining units.

Both tenured/tenure track and non-tenure track faculty ranks and roles are clearly described in the Collective Bargaining Agreement. The current distribution of full-time tenured and
tenure-track faculty by rank is 37% full professors, 37% associate professors, and 26% assistant professors.

The University also has an active Faculty Senate, described in Section Three of this report. Faculty representatives from across the University, including the College of Medicine, are actively engaged in governance.

While faculty salaries remain below the average of their “track institutions,” significant gains have been made during the past seven years. From 2002-2003 to 2007-2008, annual salary increases for continuing faculty at the ranks of full, associate, and assistant professor have increased 40%, 39.5%, and 42.6% respectively, surpassing salary increases at “track institutions.” This development is a positive demonstration of the administration’s commitment to recruiting and retaining the best possible faculty.

General guidelines for the promotion and tenure process are included in the Collective Bargaining Agreement. In addition, all departments and schools have approved promotion and tenure guidelines that must be reviewed every five years according to the terms of the Collective Bargaining Agreement. In meetings with the faculty and chairs, it appears that the criteria for the promotion of associate professors to full are not always as clearly delineated as those for promotion from assistant to associate professor. There is no process for post-tenure review at the University. These issues should be discussed.

The Collective Bargaining Agreement also delineates sabbatical policies for tenured faculty. The Team also heard that the College of Arts and Sciences has had a policy of supporting “junior sabbaticals” for some time; and there appears to be some interest in seeing this model implemented in other colleges and schools.

Of particular note in the University’s attempt to promote success among the faculty is the Faculty Mentoring Program. Initiated in 1995, the program provides mentors primarily to new faculty. During the past four years, the program has fostered a total of 102 new protégé-mentor pairs. This program is in addition to mentorship of new faculty that takes place within their departments. The University also provides a two-day orientation program for new faculty, another indicator of its commitment to their success.

The University is committed to academic freedom and to creating and sustaining a diverse workforce. As part of that initiative, the University has established five Presidential Commissions (Social Change, Diversity and Inclusion, LGBT Equity, Racial Diversity, and the Status of Women) that make recommendations to the President and Provost on a variety of issues. The University is also committed to diversity in its hiring policies. These activities have resulted in a 33% increase in ALANA (African-American, Latino(a), Asian, and Native American) tenure-track faculty to 11% of the total, although this rate remains below that of peer institutions. Currently, women faculty occupy slightly less than 1/3 of all tenure-track appointments, a rate similar to that of peer institutions.
Teaching and Advising
The University has a long tradition of excellence in teaching and advising, particularly at the undergraduate level. Teaching, as a percentage of workload, varies across and within the schools and colleges and the disciplines. The standard teaching load is 3/2, but there are a variety of ways that individual teaching loads are administered. Workloads are mediated through the collective bargaining process and are determined during meetings between individual members of the faculty and department chairs. Currently, the student/faculty ratio is 15.2:1 and the goal is to raise it to 16:1, bringing it more in line with peer institutions.

Following its long-standing support of the teacher/scholar model, members of the faculty are committed to teaching as well as to research/scholarship. Excellence in teaching at both the graduate and undergraduate levels plays a significant role in the promotion and tenure process, as well as in annual evaluations. Faculty teaching is evaluated both through peer review and through student course evaluations, both designed to collect quantitative and qualitative data. Evaluation forms vary across and within the schools and colleges. Data collected over the past eight years indicate that between 76% and 78% of students rated the quality of faculty teaching as good or excellent.

Since the last accreditation visit, the University established the Center for Teaching and Learning designed to support innovations in teaching and technology. The University also recently migrated from WebCT to Blackboard and approximately half of the faculty now make some use of Blackboard in their teaching.

Scholarship, Research, and Creative Activity
Faculty are actively engaged in scholarship, research, and creative activity. The University was awarded $122,032,968 for research activity in FY2008. This is almost double the amount of external funding a decade ago. Much of the externally funded research activity at the University is biomedical, with 60% going to the College of Medicine. The remaining 40% is spread across a wide range of research areas. While external funding is critical to the University’s goal to becoming a premier small research university, there is also substantive scholarship and research in the social sciences, arts, and humanities. For example, the University is a leader in the area of Holocaust Studies. To encourage interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary work, the University created a matrix center definition in May 2007. The Center for Complex Systems and the Center for Clinical Translational Science are the first examples of this new kind of entity. In keeping with its mission, other interdisciplinary centers include the Vermont Artisan Cheese Institute, the Vermont Center for Aging, and the Gund Institute for Ecological Economics, among others.

The University provides facilities and administrative infrastructure to support research and scholarly activity. The Collective Bargaining Agreement includes provision for the annual distribution of funds earmarked for faculty development. Such expenses might include such expenses as travel to conferences, summer research, and purchases of materials. As an additional indication of the administration’s commitment to faculty research, in fall 2008, the Office of the Vice President for Research made available an additional $400,000 for a new program, Innovation Research Grants. The funds were awarded competitively to a variety of
research and scholarship projects across the University and these projects are currently under way.

Institutional Effectiveness
Through the processes of contract negotiation, annual evaluations, and budget and position planning at the University, school and college, and departmental levels, the University periodically evaluates the sufficiency and support for the faculty as well as the effectiveness of faculty in teaching, advising, and scholarship, research, and creative activity.

STANDARD SIX: STUDENTS

To create the educational experience that the University seeks to offer to its students, as well as to its faculty and staff, the University faces a complex array of challenges. Though graced with the natural beauty of its location and, importantly, “the history and character of Vermont,” the University must also contend with the history and current reality of modest state financial support, a small and declining base of college-bound Vermont students, and limited racial and ethnic diversity among residents of the state and in the surrounding region. In the absence of sufficient endowment or other sources of funding, the first challenge obligates the University to a high-cost tuition structure, particularly for a public institution, and this can only serve to make the second and third challenges more difficult to overcome. Yet, in keeping with its mission “to prepare students to be accountable leaders who will bring to their work dedication to the global community” and its vision to be a premier small research university, the University has pursued a thoughtful strategic enrollment plan that acknowledges and seeks to respond to each of these adverse forces in a constructive and integrated manner.

Complementing the enrollment planning efforts, the University provides a comprehensive program of student services designed to ensure that the potential reflected in the students who enroll is largely realized, both academically and through personal development. An institutional philosophy, aligned with the mission, underlies these services and allows for clear articulation of common goals that contribute to “a high quality student experience by enhancing learning, advancing diversity, creating community, promoting health and safety, and managing…resources effectively.” Particular attention is paid to support for students who are underrepresented or deemed to be at greater risk. The University recognizes the challenges it faces as a result of an older physical plant, not designed for accessibility, the coordinated delivery of student services, and the demands placed on these structures by the recent period of growth. More generally, the University is also aware of the challenges associated with effective advising and has taken steps to improve this circumstance, but continues to work toward further enhancement of its advising systems and its engagement of students as they enter the University. Through regular administration of qualitative and quantitative assessment, the University evaluates the experiences of students and its own efforts toward improvement, incorporating results of those analyses into practice.
Admissions
To date, the University's enrollment offices have demonstrated measurable success with respect to planned growth, increased diversity among enrolling students, and the stronger academic profile of undergraduate students that is further reflected by improved retention and graduation figures. These are laudable outcomes; however, there are some challenges and these are likely to be exacerbated by the current economic downturn and could persist into the future, even after an economic rebound.

Beyond the undergraduate data, the University also acknowledges relatively flat enrollment among non-degree students, steady growth in the College of Medicine, and “slightly more erratic” growth at the graduate level. In general, the academic qualifications of the graduate students also appears to have increased over time based on mean GRE scores, despite a modest decline in the two most recently reported years. During this period, the Graduate College has seen an increase of approximately 30% among international students, contributing to the experience of a more diverse campus for all students.

The University has clearly defined its enrollment objectives and all available data suggest effective performance by the Office of Admissions and related offices in identifying, recruiting, admitting, and enrolling well-qualified students who are likely to be successful at the University. This seems to reflect institutional understanding of the factors that contribute to student success at the University, which then must be articulated to prospective students and translated into operational protocols for applicant review. A study of the Office of Admissions website and related materials confirms that it provides clear and accurate information about the admissions criteria and process, including information about specialized programs and support for students with disabilities.

According to the Self-Study Report, the Office of Admissions uses an academic score of 1-9 (lowest to highest) that synthesizes the most readily quantifiable aspects of the review process into a single, simpler measure. Without losing sight of the holistic review that the Office affords to all applicants, this measure allows the staff to make efficient use of time by directing "more scrutiny" and consideration of "student background, experiences, unique circumstances and other factors" to those candidates who fall into the 1-5 range than to those who fall into the 6-9 range. In light of the dramatic increase in applications observed over the past several years, nearly tripling in the past decade, this is a pragmatic and appropriate response to ensure that holistic review is not replaced by automation and that admissions officers can continue to play a meaningful role in building a community rather than simply filling a class. Sustaining this approach to admissions is also very compatible with the University’s effort to foster a more diverse community as exclusive reliance or over-reliance on those quantifiable measures would tend to work against the interests of students from most under-represented backgrounds, as well as students from lower-income households.

Given the importance of enrollment to the University’s financial viability and of diversity to its ability to create an appropriate learning environment, it is sensible that these two themes will emerge among the projections for Admissions. While both sets of issues remain challenges, the University’s awareness of them, record of progress in responding to them, and identification of responsible individuals and offices working collaboratively to address
them offer a basis for optimism that they will receive the necessary attention; however, the cost of attendance at the University remains a substantial impediment to both of these objectives.

In the document, “Advancing the Vision, 2004-2013” the University had anticipated an escalation in the discount rate to support financial aid, but also an amelioration of the rate of increase for tuition to approximately 4% (after relinquishing an earlier goal of 3%). This goal was, in fact, achieved for 2006 and 2007, but even with tuition increases moderated for those two years, the actual increase in direct cost of attendance (including tuition, mandatory fees, room and board) remained closer to 5% in those two years and the increases appear closer to 6% in the two subsequent years.

While commensurate increases in financial aid can soften this impact for some students, the source of that aid can also exacerbate the pressure on other students. In the absence of sufficient private support and with reduced endowment payout due to distressed financial markets, if the University continues to rely heavily on gross tuition to provide need-based financial aid, it can only benefit some students at the expense and willingness of others. Based on the 2005 ASQ+ data reflecting an apparent inverse correlation between self-reported parent income and yield, it appears that there is some price sensitivity among those applicants who are most likely to pay into the pool. Additionally, the general trend of declining yields both for all admitted undergraduate candidates and for those with ACE scores between seven and nine suggests some weakness in “market position” for the University that has the potential to put pressure on the academic profile that the University seeks, although this point might be offset by the high percentage of enrolling students who self-report that the University was their “first choice” school.

For these reasons, it is sensible for the University to continue to pursue a data-driven and comprehensive approach to strategic enrollment management, ensuring adequate attention to the capacity of students to manage costs as well as related debt. Based on conversations with key leadership staff involved in these efforts, these plans do build on a rational analysis of the market for prospective students – specifically counting on net growth in the number of projected college-bound high school graduates from the 20 top University of Vermont feeder states – but the question of the capacity or willingness to pay or to incur debt among these prospective students seems to remain not fully answered. Still, there is clear awareness of this concern as it pertains to the pressure that current students and their families are experiencing that is expected to serve as the basis for retention analysis in the coming year. Presumably this attention to the needs of current students and their families will translate to similar analyses for prospective students.

Retention and Graduation
Once admitted, the University offers an array of transition and support programs to promote student success. Some of these resources are available to all students and include Orientation, Opening Weekend educational programming, and the “Cat’s Tale” student guide. This particular resource represents a creative approach to welcoming students into the University community, beginning with a clear articulation of institutional values. This is complemented with a wealth of information that covers institutional and bureaucratic
necessities, constructive ways to engage the Burlington community, helpful tips for managing your health, safety and wellness and other similar guidance. In addition to these general resources, the University also offers some targeted programs designed to support high-risk undergraduate populations. These include the Summer Enrichment Program, the ALANA Student Center, the ACCESS (Accommodation, Consultation, Collaboration, and Education Support Services) Office, and the Office of International Education.

More broadly, the University provides students with comprehensive and detailed information through the University Catalogue, individual school, college, and department and office websites and publications, makes extensive use of surveys including the National Survey of Student Engagement and ongoing analyses prepared by the Office of Institutional Studies, and pursues external benchmark data against which to measure its performance in supporting students through graduation.

The fact that retention and graduation figures have been strong and improving relative to peers during a period of intense growth suggests effective monitoring and calibration of rubrics for admission, as well as deployment of appropriate supporting resources as described above; however, the institution does acknowledge some concerns. In aggregate, first-year retention for cohorts entering between fall 2000 and fall 2006, improved from 81% to 85.6% (with some variability in a generally upward trend) and its 6-year graduation rate has risen from 66.8% two years ago to 71%. Retention and graduation rates for graduate students show comparable upward trends.

During that same period, in each year except fall 2001, the retention rate for entering cohorts of ALANA (first time, first year) students actually surpassed the full cohort figure. While this reflects a positive intermediate outcome, the report notes that the higher survival rates through the second year generally have not translated to greater success at achieving degree completion. If ALANA students are more likely to come from outside of Vermont, it is possible that the subsequent attrition is in part related to the forces that have contributed to slightly lower graduation rates for all non-resident students; however, in the context of a public meeting to discuss the Campus Life Task Force Report, President Fogel commented that “the university needs to focus on (ALANA) students graduating with high levels of academic success as well as positive feelings about their campus experience.” Thus, the implication is that there might be more adverse forces affecting retention of ALANA students than simply the cost and distance considerations that would be expected among all out of state students. The ALANA Student Center appears to make a real difference in the lives of ALANA students at the University, even though it is located away from the core of campus. While staff report that students do find their way to the Center, it might be helpful to revisit this issue, but with sensitivity to the fact that some of the attributes of the current location are, in fact, integral to the ALANA Student Center’s mission.

The University participated in the National Survey of Student Engagement in 2002, 2005, and 2008. In addition, it was ranked by The Wall Street Journal among the top 30 public universities (18th) in successfully placing students in the country’s most prestigious medical, law, and business graduate programs. Forbes.com, Sierra Magazine, and Kaplan College
Guide all rank the University among the top colleges and universities in terms of its environmental initiatives and programs.

The projection that the University will seek recognition as a POSSE Partner to better support retention and graduation for ALANA students is a logical one for the University to consider. The ability to bring in groups of students lessens the likelihood of students feeling isolated and alone. At present, the University makes effective use of financial aid to support inclusion of students from racially and ethnically underrepresented groups, students who are from low-income families, and students who are first generation in their families to pursue college.

As with the projections associated with Admissions, the projections associated with retention and graduation reflect strategic efforts to align practice and outcomes with institutional mission. The primary general objective is to undertake a comprehensive retention analysis to guide deployment of resources in support of a substantial improvement in the six-year graduation rate. The target to raise graduation rates “to the mid-80th percentile range by 2016” is ambitious and, until the research is completed, it is unclear whether this constitutes a plan or simply an aspiration. While there are public universities that have achieved or surpassed this level of success (notably “Big 10” schools along with other major flagship institutions such as the University of Virginia), most do not face the types of challenges that the University of Vermont faces with respect to reliance on non-resident students or the obligation to charge tuition and fees that are more similar to costs associated with private institutions.

Student Services
The Division of Student and Campus Life has five goals for co-curricular learning: advance diversity; enhance learning; create community; promote health and safety; and manage resources. A review of the websites and other collateral material from the various support offices reinforces the notion that these themes are genuine, shared and serve to guide the structure of student services within the Division and with other University offices with which they have formed partnerships. Roles on formal commissions as well as less formal meeting groups contribute to a network that supports communication, identification of shared concerns and strategies for response among offices in this Division and across other central University offices.

While the work within the Division and with certain central administrative offices seems clearly defined and well organized, a challenge for this Division is that it serves as a central hub for certain support activities, but, given the decentralized nature of the schools and colleges, the spokes that connect this work to the schools and colleges find different points and differing strengths of attachment with those units. This is possibly a reflection of the differences among the schools and colleges rather than a reflection of any real difference in interest or support for the work of the Division of Student and Campus Life, but to the extent that certain support services are “distributed” among the schools and colleges, again, it creates the potential for uneven and inconsistent experiences for students. Particularly in the “post Virginia Tech era,” there is a question of whether faculty and academic administrators
accept and understand a shared role in meeting the service needs for students that might require a consistent baseline of services and support.

The organizational clustering of related offices, such as the Center for Health and Wellbeing, reflects a logical way of integrating services that mirrors the ways in which students might seek or need such services, although the appraisal indicates that “services are situated in decentralized locations across campus, which reduces their physical visibility and limits convenience for students navigating multiple offices.” Thus, the challenge is to find ways to align the philosophical predisposition and organizational strategy to overcome the barriers that result from historical decisions about physical plant. Still, the sense is that offices, such as the Dean of Student, the ALANA Center, and various advising centers on campus are able to assist students with identification of their needs and the appropriate resources, even if navigating the campus to obtain those services remains less than ideal.

The breadth of the University’s student services reflects an understanding of the needs of its students. This understanding is assessed, literally, even before the students arrive through instruments, such as the ASQ+, that offer insights into enrolling students’ interests, expectations, and needs. Given that virtually all first- and second-year students reside on campus and that most are “away from home” (consistent with the University’s draw on non-resident undergraduate and graduate students), the scope of the University’s program for health, wellness, recreation, and entertainment is appropriate and appears to complement rather than to compete with the University’s academic mission; however, in the context of dramatic recent growth, it is apparent that many of the facilities to support the student experience – most notably those supporting health and athletics – no longer meet the demands of the current (and projected) campus community.

Within the realm of student services, the University subscribes to clear expectations for professional and ethical conduct, as outlined by NASPA, sensitivity “to culturally sensitive standards,” and adherence to published institutional policies. In turn, students are also expected to adhere to institutional policies and these are outlined in the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities and the Code of Academic Integrity. The University honors due process in all matters documenting alleged misconduct and the procedures associated with that due process are clearly articulated through University materials.

This commitment to accountability also is reflected in the University’s efforts to ensure safety. While the University has implemented an emergency response system based on rigorous national standards, the number and severity of incidents of alcohol and drug abuse, bias incidents, mental health concerns, and sexual assault mean that the University must continuously work at prevention strategies. Staff point to increased reports of concerning behaviors, but these are possibly more a function of greater effectiveness in communication and outreach to support reporting than a reflection of increasing problems. Student leaders also acknowledge the University’s efforts and believe that the University is a safe place.

With regard to facilities, the combination of growth coupled with the need for more accessible buildings and for buildings that are organized in a manner that is more compatible with the ways in which the University organizes services for students suggests a substantial
investment in construction. The development of the Strategic Capital Plan, presumably, will guide that building, but funding is a concern, particularly if it is as ambitious in scope as the needs suggest it could be. Funding through private sources would be positive, but if the funding is through debt as auxiliaries, whether athletics or health services, the additional burden on students will exacerbate some of the financial challenges previously described. Additionally, as the demographic shift away from the Northeast continues, as the population ages, and as the delivery of higher education is transformed through technology, decisions to incur long-term debt for physical plant that appear sensible in 2009 might seem less sensible in the coming decades, even as those bonded buildings are still in repayment.

The proposal to integrate academic and career advising in the context of a first-year experience model is supported by the data on the role that career considerations play in students’ decisions to attend college and to attend particular colleges. As articulated in one of the sessions, it will be helpful “to connect students to their purpose for being at UVM.” Further, with the growing attention paid to the value of integrating internships and other forms of experiential learning into the curriculum, fostering greater and earlier awareness of career-related planning resources and making these integral to the academic advising process will likely contribute to their effectiveness. Still, with the decentralized nature of most activities on the University campus, it is not yet clear from the documents or subsequent discussions what this integrated approach to advising might be or whether it can be counted on to be implemented uniformly and with equal effectiveness across the campus. This projection has the potential to be critical to student success at the University and to “branding” a distinctive University of Vermont undergraduate education, but in the absence of a clear articulation of the plan, or even the process for creating the plan, it is impossible to assess whether this will actually have the desired impact.

There is apparent (self-reported) inconsistency in advising across schools and colleges, and perhaps across and even within departments, in terms of student experience, faculty training, and assessment of this function. While this is not unique to the University, undertaking a review is reasonable. Linked to the proposal to develop the common first-year experience, ensuring a consistent “baseline” experience for all students is worthy of attention given the critical role that advising plays in student development, and moving toward greater consistency could help to foster the framework for more shared responsibility for delivering student services.

The University’s attention to student satisfaction with the integrated Student Financial Services Office is consistent with the ethic of ongoing assessment visible in other parts of the University. Described as a “leading edge design” for coordinating these services, it will be important to determine whether the projected benefits of integration and coordination are actually reflected in student and parent/guardian experience. To the extent that most of the financial aid and billing-related services are now delivered online, part of this assessment should presumably address the degree to which systems are efficient, user-friendly, and effective in providing necessary information for users to complete transactions. The greater opportunity for “value added” service will likely be found in the proactive outreach, financial aid literacy, and planning efforts of the Office. In this regard, measurement of “satisfaction”
should also include an axis of efficacy that is more robust than simple transactional satisfaction.

Institutional Effectiveness
A review of all available materials suggests that the University both collects and analyzes data on virtually all facets of the services that it provides to students. There is much evidence to support the position that the University makes use of these analyses to inform practice and to revise structures and strategies to facilitate student success. Although confronted by challenges, the overall impression is that the University has been responsive to student needs, leveraging its resources to good effect, and proactive in anticipating and delivering services.

STANDARD SEVEN: LIBRARY AND OTHER INFORMATION RESOURCES

University Libraries and Learning Resources and Enterprise Technology Services provide sufficient and suitable information resources, services, and instructional technology to successfully support the University’s mission and administrative functions and activities. The University Business Council and the Faculty Senate Financial and Physical Planning Committee and Educational and Research Technology Committee provide broad University oversight of information technology activities.

Collections and Resources
In this era of economy, the University Libraries collection budget increased an average of 3.4% over the last ten years, while the cost of information increased 8.5% annually during the same period. That funds can be found to acquire and sustain access to essential online resources is exemplified by the recent acquisition of the Web of Knowledge and ScienceDirect databases. The Libraries regularly consult key constituencies about the depth and breadth of the research collections. These discussions have led to the smooth transfer of less frequently used materials to storage. Also, these consultations have enabled the Libraries to respond to user preferences for more online access to digital collections. Indicative of the up-to-date collection development strategies embraced by the Libraries, two recent degree and program accrediting authorities found the resources of the University Libraries to be sufficient for those programs.

As part of the strategy to successfully address the changing needs of research library users, the University Libraries prepared a strategic plan that maximizes the use of financial resources, optimizes access to physical and virtual collections, enhances management of electronic resources, and improves discovery of unique collections. Creation of digital content for the University of Vermont Libraries and participation by the Libraries in the University-wide digitization project, as well as placement of the University’s theses and dissertations online, are critical components of the plan.

Facilities
Both Enterprise Technology Services and the University Libraries have made significant progress in addressing space needs. The opening of the new Enterprise Technology Services facility in the off-campus Technology Park eliminated the environmental challenges that
plagued the old on-campus center. The new facility insures a secure, stable, and reliable environment for enterprise technology operations, as well as those specialized computing activities maintained by the colleges or departments. To date several units have exercised the option of relocating equipment, including the University Libraries and the School of Business. The College of Arts and Sciences is expected to do so shortly. More importantly, the new facility leverages resources, provides economies, as well as efficiencies, and serves as an example of how campus units with similar interests and activities working in concert can produce measurable and strategic dividends that benefit the entire campus community.

The current blending of the Dana and Bailey/Howe Libraries, with different cultures and traditions, is another example of successful cooperation across units. The two libraries share a common commitment to being user-focused. The transformation that is underway is made easier because changes in services, operations, and organizational structure are measured and the process is inclusive.

Assessment data collected by the University Libraries indicate entrance gate statistics for the recently opened Dana Medical Library went up 13% over the previous year and user surveys indicate a high level of satisfaction, underscoring the popularity among various University constituencies for contemporary physical spaces for study, collaboration, and socializing. Similar positive feedback occurred when Bailey/Howe Library users were consulted about the refurbishing of selected public seating areas. The University Libraries 2009-2013 Strategic Plan makes a commitment to repurpose additional spaces in all library facilities to insure the changing teaching and research needs of users and academic partners are addressed. Chief among the space conversions contemplated is the creation of a “Learning Commons” area for the Bailey/Howe Library. Examples of two recently repurposed areas in Bailey/Howe Library are new spaces created for the Center for Teaching and Learning and the Center for Digital Initiatives.

**Services and Support**

The University Libraries offer a variety of traditional and contemporary services. Assessment data indicates a high level of user satisfaction among all core constituencies for such operations and services as reference, instruction, ILL, media support, and document delivery. The University of Vermont Libraries website is an effective research tool, providing a clear path into the resources and services available to the University community. The Libraries Strategic Plan for 2009-2013 details other new teaching and research services that are being contemplated to assist students and scholars.

Clearly, the University Libraries have made significant and meaningful progress to integrate information technologies into core library services. These innovative and appealing services, which enable faculty and students to work productively, include the following: virtual reference, ILL e-delivery, IM/texting, and e-reserves. The strategic alliances with the Center for Teaching and Learning and the Writing Center are indicative of the high priority the library professionals place on working with the teaching faculty to enhance student learning. The Libraries offer highly-regarded courses designed to improve research skills sets, as well as student understanding of copyright and the appropriate use of intellectual property.
However, current staffing levels do not allow the Libraries to insure all undergraduates have the opportunity to benefit from these courses.

As part of the strategy to meet the changing needs of the academy, as well as the changing needs of users, the Libraries established a pro-active unit called the Learning Resources Group (Academic Computing/CTL/Media). The activities of this cluster have had a direct and positive impact on strengthening faculty instruction, pedagogy, and student learning through the application of technology and media. The Libraries have also established a Discovery and Delivery Council and a Technical Services Working Group to improve user access to library materials and to eliminate operational redundancies.

Overall, Enterprise Technology Services and the University Libraries offer a variety of quality services and technological support to the University community that are beneficial to study and research, as well as administrative activities.

The Team notes one point of particular concern. The lack of a dedicated line in Enterprise Technology Services devoted to information security is a serious concern. The University’s need to ensure the confidentiality and integrity of its information assets is self-evident. Having a dedicated line devoted to information security underscores its commitment to stewardship of sensitive personal information and critical business information. The assignment of a new line devoted to information security would be an acknowledgement of the many potential online threats and the importance of protecting the privacy of University constituents, safeguarding vital business information, and fulfilling legal obligations.

Another area of interest to the Team is the time and attention devoted by Enterprise Technology personnel and others to the recharge process required by the decentralized approach to supporting information technology operations. The current charge-back policy does not appear to be either efficient or cost effective. The approximately 100 or so charge-back categories appear to be excessive and the financial logarithms associated with this policy should be re-evaluated.

Enterprise Technology Services directly oversees a core of infrastructure and information technology services. It operates in a decentralized environment with a complex, distributed-support model. The creation of coordinating councils and committees has eased, but not eliminated, the many challenges associated with such a decentralized information technology environment. To insure the University commitment to excellence in support of instruction, innovation, research, and scholarship is achieved, the information technology playing field needs to be leveled so that support across all units is more even, maximizing the use of resources and insuring a more agile decision-making process.

Institutional Effectiveness
The University Libraries completed a new Strategic Plan for 2009-2013. The University Libraries have a successful record of regularly applying large and small-scale assessment activities, including the use of surveys, focus groups, feedback tools, evaluations, and the application of formal research studies to systematically evaluate their collections, operations, and services.
Enterprise Technology Services is expected to complete a strategic plan in summer 2009. The plan and other documents planned for completion in summer 2009 cover policy and planning and offer a timely opportunity to strengthen information technology operations and services and improve and streamline the decision-making process. In order to facilitate the work of Enterprise Technology Services, the Provost, deans, and other appropriate senior officers need to clearly identify information technology collaboration as an academic priority, not merely an Enterprise Technology Services initiative. Given the increasingly complex security issues faced in information technology, the lack of a dedicated information security officer is a concern.

**STANDARD EIGHT: PHYSICAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

The University’s physical resources are comprised of 11,445 acres throughout Vermont. 4,362 acres directly contribute to the academic mission of the University. These physical resources include nine Natural Areas, managed by the University’s Natural Areas Center, that host multiple research projects. The main campus of the University is situated on 422 acres in downtown Burlington, Vermont. Its nearly 300 buildings comprise almost 5.6 million square feet of space. Currently, 88 of the University’s buildings are on the National Register of Historic Places.

The University’s building program has been substantial in the last decade, focusing on buildings supporting its student housing and student services mission, as well as adding research space. The Campus Master Plan, most recently revised and adopted by the Board of Trustees in May 2006, and the Strategic Capital Plan, developed in November 2006, provide strategic direction to the building program. In keeping with the University’s vision and mission, there has been a focus on environmentally-sensitive construction with the achievement of LEED certified buildings, as well as a concerted effort to reduce energy consumption in existing campus buildings, following its Energy Policy. Facilities management has a clear sense of direction of its capital needs that is coordinated with the academic arm of the University and that focuses on how best to meet the highest priority needs of the University.

The level of deferred maintenance, identified by management, is estimated at $150 to $200 million, amounting to about a third of the depreciated value of the buildings. Management is focused on the issue, but recognizes that with constrained additional bonding capability, funds will need to be built into the operating budget to continue the commitment to decreasing this backlog.

There are sufficient classroom facilities, generally adequately equipped. Approximately one-third of the classrooms are controlled centrally and scheduled using Collegenet’s Resource 25. The remaining classrooms are departmentally controlled. In addition, the University has 14 special equipment classrooms and 211 instructional laboratories. All centrally scheduled classrooms have a standard configuration of media and technology. There is sufficient space for faculty offices.
The University also has adequate research space. It added a new research building in 2001 and acquired a research facility it had been leasing in 2005, thus adding almost 200,000 square feet to University-owned research space.

University housing includes 75 buildings with approximately 5,130 beds managed by the University, including some apartment units for students with families. In addition another 275 beds are owned and managed by private developers. There are plans to add additional student housing to meet the planned enrollment increase. The University is talking about a public/private partnership where it provides the land to accomplish this.

**Institutional Effectiveness**

The institution has adequate ongoing evaluation of its physical resources in light of its mission, current needs and future plans. The connection of its building and renovation projects, through LEED certification and its Energy Policy, with the University’s vision is exemplary. The level of deferred maintenance is reasonable given the size of the University and funding to address it is expected to rise once the budget shortfall, discussed below, is addressed.

**STANDARD NINE: FINANCIAL RESOURCES**

The University has an FY2009 annual operating budget of approximately $560 million, including state appropriations and private giving, but not including the change in endowment fund assets. The general operating budget component is $270 million, comprising tuition, state appropriations and other general revenue income. The remaining elements of the budget are auxiliaries, gifts, grants, and contracts. The general operating budget started with a $15 million shortfall, a carry-over of deficit funding practices from the prior two years. A new financial management team is focused on taking the actions necessary to overcome the general fund operating deficit. Projections for the loss at the time of the site visit had been reduced to $7 million with a projected deficit of about $4 million in FY2010 and balanced budgets thereafter. The plan is measured, is generally conservative in its assumptions, and carries the resolve of the chief financial officer and his team to achieve it. The University will need to be diligent in monitoring its progress to a balanced condition.

The University receives among the smallest state appropriations in the country, providing about 7.5% of operating funds. As a consequence the University relies heavily on out-of-state students who pay a substantial tuition premium and, indeed, out-of-state undergraduates comprise about 65% of the undergraduates. The University is also restricted to charging no more than 40% of out-of-state tuition to its in-state students. The reliance on out-of-state students and the restriction on in-state tuition pose special challenges for the University.

The University, like many of its public and private university counterparts, has been affected by the macroeconomic conditions that impact its investments, debt portfolio, and operating expenses. Management has reviewed its revenue streams and expenditure categories to move the University to a healthy financial status in these challenging economic conditions. The
steps necessary to bring the University into fiscal balance have been taken by trimming expenses, primarily in administrative programs, by some lay-offs, not hiring into vacant positions, consolidating some administrative programs and focusing on revenue streams with the promise of higher net income. The University has a history of financial stability, including the ability to make capital investments of a high priority. With the focus of its talented management team, garnering support throughout the University, the University should return from its deficit position to a stronger on-going financial condition.

The University’s multi-year financial plan is well and credibly presented. It is tied reasonably tightly to the academic plan and involves the key academic constituencies in its year-to-year modifications.

Several senior financial positions have been vacant since spring 2008, including the Vice President for Finance and Administration. That position has been filled with the permanent appointment of an experienced financial executive. He and the Board are focused on filling the remaining positions. These are key appointments in assembling a team of effective financial managers.

The Board of Trustees is active in providing financial oversight with a standing committee focusing on financial affairs. The Board approves budgets, multiyear plans, investment policies, and debt policy. It, along with the senior administration, is hiring an internal auditor. This is a key position in a complex institution like the University, especially with its exposure to compliance issues related to Federal research grants and contracts.

In FY2007 the management letter from the University’s external auditors noted several “significant deficiencies” and some “material weaknesses,” the latter category being particularly troublesome. The following year there were no material weaknesses, but still a number of significant deficiencies, indicating some good progress in resolving control weaknesses, but still requiring focused attention to resolve. Several of the significant deficiencies stemmed from the implementation of new Human Resources and Financial systems; such findings are not unusual following major new system implementations. However, the material weakness stemmed from a collection of poor practices related to the reporting on grants and contracts. By the last audit, some of these issues had been resolved. Management must continue its diligent focus to solve these issues that carry significant compliance risk.

The College of Medicine is a large financial and reputational component of the University. Its primary teaching facility is the co-located Fletcher Allen Health Care medical center, a separate corporation. The relationship between the College of Medicine and its main teaching facility is critical to the health of the medical school and the University. This relationship is strong and mutually supportive, with the dean and the hospital officials working closely together.

Institutional effectiveness
The University has in place adequate internal and external mechanisms to evaluate its fiscal condition and financial management and to maintain its integrity. When fiscal control
problems were uncovered, the University acted promptly and in a transparent manner to understand and correct the problems.

STANDARD TEN: PUBLIC DISCLOSURE

The University provides current and prospective students, faculty, and staff, as well as other interested individuals, with information that is complete, accurate, accessible, clear, and sufficient for intended audiences to make informed decisions.

The University provides print and online resources (web and e-mail), as well as media and mailings to inform the campus community, prospective students, faculty, staff, and the public. The University’s Records and Document Request Policy is online. This document provides direction on how to secure information and explains statutory exceptions, such as personnel matters and contract negotiations.

The primary tools used to deliver information are the University of Vermont website, online catalogue, online "news vehicle" called UVM Today, print publications Vermont Quarterly and Vermont Medicine Magazine, and occasional mailings of newsletters and news magazines produced by colleges, schools, and other University units. Prospective undergraduates may obtain a copy of the Admissions Viewbook and the undergraduate handbook, called Cat's Tale. Assessment data gleaned from a survey of undergraduate prospective students rated the quality of institutional information as very good to excellent.

The new University homepage, which was redesigned based on an evaluative study and report, is an effective and navigable access tool, providing a clear path to a variety of information of interest to current and prospective students and others. The University website contains course listings, admissions and financial aid information, and other helpful data to help students and prospective students make informed decisions.

University Communications has established an on-going system of feedback that insures the University’s website is frequently monitored and up-dated, further strengthening the goal of maintaining University website pages that are current, accurate, and helpful to students, prospective students, University personnel and others. To assist in the effort to keep ever-changing web content current and accurate, University Communications is exploring investment in a content management system.

The Office of Institutional Studies gathers, analyzes, interprets, distributes, and retains a variety of data in support of the management, planning, budget, and policy activities of the University. The Office of Institutional Studies and University Libraries act as repositories of official data and information about the University.

The Office of Institutional Studies is charged with insuring all its publications are consistent and accurately portray conditions and opportunities available at the University before the information is distributed. Working in an environment of economy and in a decentralized...
culture, the Office monitors and spot checks information on admissions and program requirements for the University’s schools and colleges and for the Admissions Office. This oversight is done to insure consistency between printed materials (admission and program brochures) and similar web information. Validity study data found no serious discrepancies and when potential for confusion was identified, corrective action was taken.

Materials associated with the reaccreditation process are available on the University website.

**Institutional Effectiveness**

The University regularly engages in an analysis of print and online information to ensure resources are complete, accurate, and current. Surveys of appropriate constituencies provide useful data to guide this analysis and to inform changes in the presentation of information on the University to prospective students and staff and to the general public.

**STANDARD ELEVEN: INTEGRITY**

The legal framework under which the University operates is through incorporation “by the State of Vermont for the purpose of providing public education.” The authority to grant degrees emanates from the University Charter, first authorized in 1791 and most recently updated in 2003. Under the governance of a Board of Trustees, established By-laws and the 2006 Board Policy Manual guide the University’s operations. The University Officers’ Manual provides a compilation of policies that pertain to the governance, structure, and administration of the institution.

In articulating the mission, vision, and goals for the University, President Fogel described institutional efficacy to mean that the University would “model the highest standard of ethical conduct, accountability and best practice…” In turn, the University has committed to instill within its students the same values as articulated in its mission statement.

The most inclusive articulation of this expectation is found in “Our Common Ground,” in which the President conveys

> We who work, live, study, teach, do research, conduct business, or participate in the University of Vermont are members of this community…. We aspire to be a community that values…INTEGRITY. We value fairness, straightforward conduct, adherence to the facts, and sincerity. We acknowledge when things have not turned out the way we had hoped. As stewards of the University of Vermont, we are honest and ethical in all responsibilities entrusted to us.

While these are philosophical positions, there is ample evidence to suggest that the articulated principles are incorporated into the life of the University in a meaningful way. Within the past three years, the University has undertaken a review of all University policies as part of a comprehensive restructuring of its policy process. This effort resulted in the revision or reaffirmation of some policies, as well as creation of new policies to respond to
emerging needs or identified gaps. In addition to the review or creation of these policies, the process also assigned responsibility for the administration of each policy and established a schedule for policy review and renewal or retirement to ensure that policies will remain relevant and effective in the future.

The most comprehensive set of policies appears to be those that pertain to students for whom concrete expectations are defined in “The Code of Academic Integrity,” “The Code of Students Rights and Responsibilities,” and the “Student Alcohol and Other Drug Policy” for virtually all facets of their lives within the University community.

The University also provides policies that establish the framework for the ethical conduct and integrity of the work of faculty and staff. At the foundation of this framework is the University’s commitment to a policy of academic freedom, first formally adopted in 1954 and most recently revised and reaffirmed by the Faculty Senate in 2008 and by the Board of Trustees in February 2009. Other policies are more specific and address particular matters of faculty and staff responsibility in the conduct of institutional affairs. Examples include policies governing conflict of interest and protection of human subjects in research and policies that define the responsibility to safeguard the privacy of students’ educational records under FERPA.

The University has established policies for employment that are consistent with Federal laws and has charged specific offices, e.g. Human Resource Services and the Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity, with administration and oversight of those policies. Additionally, the University subscribes to certain principles that support inclusion and civility and has established administrative offices such as the Diversity and Equity Unit, as well as Presidential Commissions to monitor practice, advise on policy, strengthen capacity, and support compliance with those principles.

Based on the appraisal offered by the University, the primary concern that emerges is that policy communication is uneven and this might suggest that understanding is also uneven among faculty and staff. As such, the primary risk is that breaches of policy could occur out of ignorance, even if not out of willful disregard. Although offices that are responsible for administration of policies are understood to be fully knowledgeable about those policies, it is less clear that they have sufficient resources to provide necessary training and oversight, particularly in the context of a decentralized campus environment. The appraisal concludes with the note that online training is being developed for a variety of policy purposes and this should prove to be an efficient means of ensuring universal and uniform communication. Still, if this is to be effective, a robust assessment will be necessary to ensure that these training protocols instill both knowledge and understanding that is retained over time.

The projections for this Standard call upon the University to follow through on its original policy process commitment by reviewing the first set of revised policies from 2006. In turn, beyond revising those policies as appropriate, the projection calls upon the University’s Institutional Compliance Office to make recommendations to amend and strengthen the policy adoption process, should that prove to be appropriate, by FY2010. To support this endeavor, a review of that Office by the Interim Vice President for Administration and
Finance has been undertaken to ensure sufficient resources to accomplish that result. At present it is not clear that this review has resulted in sufficient resources being assigned to the Institutional Compliance Office and this requires further attention.

**Institutional Effectiveness**

The University takes seriously the principle of integrity and has established it as an active and shared value of the community. Sufficient evidence is available to demonstrate that the University has an effective framework for policy development and review, but this process and appropriate monitoring remain dependent on adequate support for the Institutional Compliance Office. Areas of concern receive attention and the University is publicly forthright about these matters, reinforcing its commitment to improvement; however, weaknesses in institutional communication have the potential to erode confidence in this principle.

**INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS SUMMARY**

The University of Vermont has well-defined vision and mission statements, the essence of which has remained constant for over 100 years. The vision is to be a premier small research university with a commitment to liberal education, environment, health, and public service. The commitment to this vision permeates the activities of the University, ranging from the academic programs it offers, to LEED certification in new building projects, to energy conservation policies that go well beyond mere cost-saving strategies. There is a sense of pride among faculty, staff, and students in the role that the University plays in higher education.

The University is clearly committed to strategic planning, including an overall strategic plan, a campus master plan and strategic capital plan, and a strategic financial plan. At the University, strategic planning is embedded in the culture, performance metrics have been developed and data on these metrics have been collected. However, the University has not taken the next step to set targets for these metrics against which it can measure its progress toward meeting its goals. With the development of the revised strategic plan, new metrics must be devised and targets must be set.

The nonacademic areas of the University also engage in strategic planning. Data are collected and analyzed to judge these units’ effectiveness; the findings are used for purposes of improvement.

The Team notes that the assessment of academic quality and the integrity of programs are determined primarily through program reviews with external evaluators for all undergraduate and graduate programs, as well as discipline-based external accreditation and licensure in professional programs. Most academic programs have articulated student learning outcomes, with somewhat fewer in the College of Arts and Sciences. However, it appears that the systematic use of data to evaluate student learning outcomes and to guide curriculum reform occurs primarily in programs with discipline-based accreditation. In addition, general education requirements vary across the schools and colleges. There is no University-wide
assessment of student learning goals that aligns with the vision of the University of Vermont graduate and there has been no systematic oversight at the Provost or Faculty Senate level of assessment processes in the various academic programs.

SUMMATIVE LIST OF INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHS AND CONCERNS

Strengths

- The University has clearly articulated vision and mission statements that permeate the fabric of the University.
- The Board of Trustees, faculty, staff, and students have been engaged in an evaluation of their respective governance processes and changes in the structure in all four groups have occurred.
- The University is completing a first round of academic program review and has assessed its effectiveness. Once changes in the process are made, the University expects to continue with an even more rigorous second round.
- Faculty across the University are clearly committed to undergraduate and graduate education.
- While still below peer groups, the University has made substantial progress in raising faculty salaries and shrinking the gap.
- The University has a strong, data-driven admissions program and has made substantial progress in its retention and graduation rates.
- The University has served as a model for its students with its success in obtaining silver and gold LEED certification in new buildings and implementation of a comprehensive and effective energy policy.
- The University quickly and transparently addressed a problem with financial controls once it was identified. Under new leadership, the budget for the next two years has been adjusted to build in all operating costs.

Areas of Concern

- While the University has engaged in significant strategic planning, it needs to move to systematically setting measurable targets and routinely measuring and reporting on progress toward meeting those goals.
- As the University seeks to achieve its stated mission in a unified way, greater attention will need to be paid to effective communication beyond that provided in the governance structure. Some mid-level administrators expressed a lack of cohesion among the academic units.
- A University-wide academic technology plan that includes faculty development in using classroom technologies appropriate to the major would move the University forward in the use of technology.
• The University does not have a University-wide set of general education requirements that embody the institution’s definition of the University of Vermont graduate nor does it have an assessment process for general education.
• Assessment of student learning outcomes is uneven across the academic programs.
• Health services are provided in multiple locations, and other student services are delivered with various degrees of effectiveness because of the decentralization of the schools and colleges.
• The program of discounting tuition to attract additional high-quality students may be reaching an unsustainable level.
• While efforts to centralize some information technology operations are underway, because of decentralization, the support for information technology resources and support is uneven across campus.
• The University needs to ensure adequate staffing and oversight in three distinct areas – information technology security, internal audit, and compliance – as part of its risk management activities.