

ASSURANCE SECTION

REPORT OF A COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION VISIT

TO

GOVERNORS STATE UNIVERSITY
University Park, Illinois

November 16, 2009 – November 18, 2009

FOR

The Higher Learning Commission
A Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools

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I. CONTEXT AND NATURE OF VISIT

A. Purpose of Visit

The purpose of the visit was a comprehensive review of Governors State University (GSU).

B. Organizational Context

GSU is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year. It was founded in 1969 with authorization by the Illinois General Assembly. Since its beginning GSU has been an upper-division and graduate level institution, only students who completed at least 60 hours of credit could be admitted. GSU was also intended to be an "experimenting university," attempting to address some of the criticisms of higher education. For example, faculty did not have tenure, students received no grades, the buildings were not partitioned into separated classrooms, and faculty offices were assigned offices without any regard to discipline. Today, these early tenets of GSU are gone, but the institution still holds onto the premise that it continues to be an experimenting institution.

The university has been led by five presidents: Dr. William Engbretson served the institution from 1969 to 1976, Dr. Leo Goodman-Malamuth served from 1976 to 1992, Dr. Paula Wolff served from 1992 to 2000, Dr. Stuart Fagan served from 2000 to 2007, and Dr. Elaine Maimon, serves today.

GSU was granted correspondent status in 1970 and has maintained accreditation with continued accreditation in 1974, 1979, 1990, and 2000.

C. Unique Aspects of Visit

In addition, the institution submitted a Change Request for permission to offer degrees in Addictions Studies (M.H.S.), Bachelor of Science in Nursing (B.S.N.), Master of Science in Nursing (M.S.N.), and Doctor of Nursing Practice (D.N.P.) through distance delivery (online) methods.

D. Sites or Branch Campuses Visited

The institution has two physical off campus sites, located in Kankakee and Naperville, where courses are delivered. The institution also has nearly fifty other moving cohort sites. Each of the physical sites has two classrooms and an administrative office with one full time staff member. A lengthy discussion about the future of the sites was carried out with university officials and, given the small size of operation at these two sites, they were not visited.

E. Distance Education Reviewed

As mentioned above, GSU submitted a change request to offer four existing programs via distance learning. As a result, an extensive review of distance education for these

programs and for the general distance education program was carried out. A report of this work is contained in this document.

F. Interactions with Constituencies

Board of Trustees (all present)

Management

President
VP/Chief of Staff/Treasurer
VP/Advancement/CEO Foundation
Interim Provost/VP Academic Affairs
VP General Council
Dean, College of Health and Human Services, and
Interim Vice Provost for Research and Graduate Studies
Dean, College of Business and Public Administration
Dean, College of Education
Dean, College of Arts and Sciences
Dean, University Library
Associate Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students
Vice Provost, Academic Affairs
Associate Provost
Director of Foundation & Institutional Support
Director of Institutional Research
Interim Director of Admissions
Associate VP, Facilities Development & Management
Associate VP, Human Resources & Diversity
Assistant VP, Enrollment Services/Registrar
Director of TRIO Programs
Department Chairs

Faculty/Staff/Department Chairs

GSU Faculty Leaders (Seven people present)
Administrative/Academic/Professional Meeting (Approximately 70 people present)
Faculty Members – two meetings (47 people present)
Civil Service Employees (Approximately 65 people present)
Diversity Council (8 people present)
Technology Meeting (4 people present)
General Education (7 people present)
Graduate Council (13 people present)
Advisors/Academic Resource Center/University Examinations (8 people present)
Student Support (7 people present)
Transfer/Admissions (9 people present)
Consultancy on Doctorate in Education (4 people present)
Assessment (8 people present)
University Curriculum Committee (8 people present)
PBAC (10 people present)

Change Request for Online Programs (7 people present)
Sponsored Programs & Research (7 people present)
Financial Aid
Provost's Council (10 members present)
Educational Policies Committee (11 people present)

Students

Undergraduate students (3 students present)
Graduate Students (37 students present)

Outside Constituents

President of the GSU Foundation
South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association Representative
President/CEO of the Chicago Southland Convention and Visitors Bureau
VP of Advancement at Joliet Junior College
Superintendent, School District 162
Dean, Arts and Sciences, Prairie State College
President of Kankakee Community College
President of Olive Harvey College
Director of Public Affairs, St. James Hospital
Small Business Administration
President of the GSU Alumni Association
Mayor of University Park

G. Principal Documents, Materials, and Web Pages Reviewed

Most of the documents that the team reviewed were collected and organized by GSU on the institution's website, www.govst.edu, called "website" from here on in this list.

1. GSU Self Study
2. State of Illinois Governors State University Financial Audit, 2008
3. State of Illinois Governors State University Financial Audit, 2007
4. Governors State University Institutional Snapshot
5. Governors State University Request to Review Ed.D in Counselor Education and Supervision
6. Governors State University 2009-2011 Catalog
7. GSU Personnel Manual
8. Agreement 2006-2009, University Professionals of Illinois Local 4100
9. *Strategy 2015*
10. *GSU Factbook (2007-2008)*
11. Consultant Report for Strategic Planning
12. *Impact 40th Anniversary*
13. Dashboard Measures
14. Black History, webpage
15. Women's History, webpage
16. Latino Events, webpage
17. Distinguished Lecture Services, webpage

18. Art Exhibits, webpage
19. NSF grants, webpage
20. Guangdong University of Technology, webpage
21. Board of Trustees Minutes
22. Academic Strategic Plans, College of Arts and Sciences, College of Business and Public Administration, College of Education, College of Health and Human Services, IT
23. South Suburban Consortium for "Grow Your Own Illinois," webpage
24. Latino Center for Excellence, webpage
25. Legislation Establishing Board of Trustees proceedings, webpage
26. Faculty Senate, webpage
27. Student Handbook
28. Planning and Budget Advisory Council (PBAC), webpage
29. Retention Report
30. GSU Federal Compliance Report for the HLC Comprehensive Visit
31. Third Party Comments for GSU
32. University Curriculum Council, website
33. Faculty Senate, website
34. Safety Booklet, website
35. Staff Awards, website
36. PeopleAdmin – Faculty and Staff Employment, website
37. Specialized accreditation reports, website
38. Planning for Professional Doctorates, website
39. University Assessment Committee Documentation, website
40. Assessment happening at college and program level, website, Resource Room
41. External Program Review, website
42. National Searches and Summaries of Faculty Terminal Degrees, website
43. Faculty Scholarship and Service, website
44. Sabbaticals and Sabbatical Report on Activities and Accomplishments, Resource Room
45. University Library, website
46. Center for Online Teaching and Learning, website
47. Scholarship CUEs, Resource Room
48. Faculty Research Grants, Resource Room
49. Intellectual Life Activities, website
50. "One Book, One Southland" Celebration, website
51. Tuition Waivers for Staff and Family Members, website
52. Student Research Conference, website
53. Student Involvement in Professional Organizations, website
54. Office of Sponsored Programs, website
55. Intellectual Property Rights, website
56. Institutional Review Board, website
57. Research Involving Animals, website
58. 2003 Progress Report on Assessment
59. HLC Federal Compliance Documentation, Resource Room
60. Syllabus Format, website
61. UCC Review of Syllabi, Resource Room
62. IDEA HS's, www.illinoisideahs.org/idea/

63. Policy 48 & Policy 56, website
64. CQIA work on Mapping, website
65. Student Evaluation of Instruction Process, Resource Room
66. Writing Center, website
67. President Maimon's Installation Speech, website, video
68. Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park, website
69. Enrollment Issues, website, Resource Room
70. Evaluation and Retention Processes for GSU Faculty, Administrative and Professional Employees, and Civil Service Staff
71. External Advisory Boards, website
72. PBAC Strategic Plan
73. Governance Organizational Chart, website
74. Information Technology Committee of the Budget & Planning Advisory Council, Resource Room
75. Facilities Planning, Resource Room
76. Renovated Spaces, Resource Room
77. History of Offering Distance Learning Coursework, website
78. Nursing Student Surveys, Resource Room
79. Addictions Studies Student Surveys, Department Chair's Office
80. GSU Planning to Offer Online Programs, Resource Room
81. Certificate for Online Teaching and Learning, Resource Room
82. Needs Analysis for Change Request, Resource Room
83. GSU Rubric for Online Courses, website, Resource Room
84. NLN-AC and Illinois Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Professional Certification Association Review Processes
85. Assessment in CHHS, website
86. CHHS Academic Program Council, Resource Room
87. Report of a Comprehensive Visit & 2000 Self-Study, Resource Room, website
88. HLC Correspondence, website
89. CenterPoint for Entrepreneurs, website
90. Dual Admission Agreements with Community College Partners, Resource Room
91. South Metropolitan Higher Education Consortium, website
92. Center for the Performing Arts, website
93. Scholarship and Tuition Waivers for Enrolled Students, Resource Room
94. Undergraduate Admissions, website,
95. Honors Program, website
96. Family Development Center, website
97. Metropolitan Institute for Leadership in Education, website
98. Main Building Floor Plan
99. Student Complaint Log 2007-2010
100. IPEDS Data Feedback Report 2009
101. GSU A Unifying Force in the South Suburbs
102. Multiple Career Services Documents
103. Multiple Office of International Students Documents
104. Multiple SAAS Documents
105. Tutoring Center Semester Reports, Winter & Summer 2009
106. Services for Students with Disabilities Documents
107. State of Illinois Graduation Demographics for High Schools, Junior Colleges, and

Colleges.

II. COMMITMENT TO PEER REVIEW

A. Comprehensiveness of the Self-Study Process

The institution began the self-study process by identifying and appointing the co-chairs: the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and a professor of Physical Therapy. In February 2008, a full HLC Self-Study Steering Committee of sixteen members began meeting, eight of whom were appointed to the Executive Committee. It should be noted that GSU's provost and twenty-two administrators, faculty members, and students attended the 2008 HLC Annual Meeting in Chicago. Five subcommittees were formed to address each of the five HLC self-study criteria. Using HLC consultant-evaluators from GSU, the institution also conducted training sessions for the five subcommittees.

The self-study process was designed to accomplish four goals: to secure continued accreditation through the Higher Learning Commission, to enumerate a number of particular strengths, to identify challenges requiring continuing institutional actions, and to provide evidence that the university is prepared to meet those challenges.

B. Integrity of the Self-Study Report

The Self-Study Report demonstrates that the institution has a clear understanding of the accreditation process. The report outlines all necessary components of the self study and clearly articulates the institution's position with respect to each of the criteria. Additionally, the Self-Study includes a request for institutional change. The report represents an honest and objective review of the institution's strengths and weaknesses.

C. Adequacy of Progress in Addressing Previously Identified Challenges

The team considers the response of the organization to previously identified challenges to be adequate.

D. Notification of Evaluation Visit and Solicitation of Third-Party Comment

Requirements were fulfilled.

III. COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS

The team reviewed the required Title IV compliance areas and the student complaint information. See Appendix on Federal Compliance.

IV. FULFILLMENT OF THE CRITERIA

CRITERION ONE: MISSION AND INTEGRITY. The organization operates with integrity to ensure the fulfillment of its mission through structures and processes that involve the board, administration, faculty, staff, and students.

1. Evidence that Core Components are met

Core Component 1a: The organization's mission documents are clear and articulate publicly the organization's commitments. The President, the senior administration, faculty, students, staff and Trustees at Governors State University are able to clearly articulate the mission of the institution in a coherent way. The commitment to access and affordability, diversity, and investment in the economic future of the region are expressed by all campus constituents and are evidenced on campus in multiple ways. Two important structures that have developed out of GSU's mission focus are the Planning and Budget Advisory Council (PBAC) and *Strategy 2015*. The five core values and six broad goal areas of *Strategy 2015* align extremely well with the institutional mission, and are influencing the direction of the academic and administrative units' strategic plans.

The PBAC structure, established in 2007, appears to be strategic, inclusive and far-reaching. The PBAC's mission is to create and implement structures and processes to assure "strategic allocation of resources" to achieve "sustainable excellence" in all of GSU's activities, decisions that are "congruent with the mission of the university." PBAC guides the annual resource allocation to reflect institutional priorities. The team identified widespread understanding and support of the PBAC process across constituencies on campus.

Core Component 1b: In its mission documents, the organization recognizes the diversity of its learners, other constituencies, and the greater society it serves. The institution's commitment to diversity, which has become so woven into the fabric of the university, is inseparable from its mission and thoroughly enriches the working and learning environment. Diversity is a strength at GSU and a model for other institutions. 42.7% (6 year average) of the student population identify as minority, while 35% of the full-time faculty and 27% of the part-time faculty (Fall 08) identify as minority.

GSU's mission explicitly states the university's commitment to serve as "an economic catalyst for the region." Regional leaders in higher education, public education, business, industry and government testify enthusiastically to GSU's significant, ongoing impact on the region, citing multiple partnerships in programming, grant-writing, and facilities sharing (detailed in Criterion V).

Finally, the institution's mission articulates an "exceptional and accessible" education. Academic quality measures are evidenced through a variety of means including licensure rates and faculty credentials. And across the institution, faculty and staff expressed their commitment to educating "place-bound" students. GSU is a major partner institution for five regional community colleges, and provides access for countless other students to complete their bachelors' degrees.

Core Component 1c: Understanding of and support for the mission pervade the institution. Expression of GSU's mission statement is pervasive on campus. The statement can be found in multiple prominent locations across campus, on public computers, on many syllabi, and even in the signature block of many administrators' e-mails. In addition to this visibility, understanding of the mission was commonly expressed in interviews with all constituents of the institution.

Core Component 1d: The organization's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the organization to fulfill its mission. The president's strong leadership and commitment to transparency have resulted in strong planning

processes, significant faculty buy-in, and effective community partnerships. She and her leadership team have positioned the university well for future success.

It is evident that GSU's Board of Trustees is both knowledgeable and engaged. As a group, they demonstrate long-standing involvement with and deep commitment to the institution. They understand their strategic and fiduciary responsibilities. They have taken steps to assure the academic quality of GSU's academic programs, notably, urging the institution to seek external accreditation for all programs that are eligible for such accreditation.

As indicated above, the PBAC process is perceived as inclusive and transparent, as noted particularly by the institution's faculty. The Civil Service employees also cited shared governance as a strength of the institution. Staff members report that at times the senior leaders of the institution make decisions on a "fast track" that precludes their involvement and input, noting administrative re-structuring and GSU's ambitious future enrollment goals. But in general, senior leaders are perceived as effective, and morale among all constituencies appears to be high.

Visits with the Planning Budget Advisory Council (PBAC) confirmed for the team that the entire governance system is sound and representative, thus allowing for strategic decisions to be made. The entire system of governance and specific budgetary decisions provide evidence that these strategic decisions are driven by mission and GSU's Strategic Plan.

From documentation found in the Self-Study as well as information in other written documents, the administrative organization includes the Board of Trustees, the President, the Provost, and three Vice Presidents, five Deans and others who carry on the myriad of tasks associated with GSU. This structure is appropriate for this university and consistent with practice in the academy. It is positioned to carry out its mission in keeping with its Strategic Plan.

Additionally, Senates exist for faculty, students and other groups with committees tasked to carry out specific tasks. The faculty and civil service personnel are organized and reflected in collective bargaining agreements found through documentation provided.

Core Component 1e: The organization upholds and protects its integrity. It is clear that GSU is a mission-driven institution that has implemented structures that align its mission, planning, resource allocation, governance and community outreach. Its constituents understand and support the mission and the structures. There is coherence at this institution that points to a culture of integrity.

Conversations with the administration, faculty, and staff consistently revealed that people believe that they are treated fairly and that they are generally satisfied that the institution's human resource processes are followed and consistently applied.

2. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention

Core Component 1d: The Board is frustrated by the long-time vacancy of two positions, which require appointment from the governor. The Board delegates appropriate management to the administration and as noted above is structured in an appropriate manner to carry out its responsibility. While GSU would be

strengthened by the presence of two additional active Trustees, the six current Trustees are doing an excellent job of supporting and guiding GSU's leadership team.

3. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require Commission follow-up.

NONE

4. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components are not met and require Commission follow-up. (Sanction or adverse action may be warranted.)

NONE

Recommendation of the Team

CRITERION IS MET; NO COMMISSION FOLLOWUP RECOMMENDED

CRITERION TWO: PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE. The organization's allocation of resources and its processes for evaluation and planning demonstrate its capacity to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its education, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

1. Evidence that Core Components are met

Core Component 2a: The organization realistically prepares for a future shaped by multiple societal and economic trends. The university strategic plan represents planning for the future by setting critical goals such as student enrollment and retention that will improve the university's sustainability. Trends in the south Chicago suburbs have been examined, particularly in light of the current economic crisis.

The Planning and Budget Advisory Council (PBAC) was founded in the fall of 2007. It was created to implement **Strategy 2015**, GSU's strategic plan. PBAC was populated to be representative of the whole university. Its goals were to create participative mechanisms and provide advice to upper administration on academic excellence, planning and budgeting, financial growth and sustainability, continuous improvement, and student enrollment and retention. PBAC has assured, as much as is possible, that decisions are made for the greater good of the university and not more localized interests.

After talking to many university employees, the team found that most agree that the budget has been developed more in accordance with GSU's mission and less on the basis of previous practice or special interests. The process was intended to be transparent and it appears that the process has achieved this expectation. For example, the strategic plan and metrics with results attached are available to anyone, internal or external, on the Governors State web site. This is highly admirable; most colleges and universities are hesitant about making such information available in a public forum.

Core Component 2b: The organization's resource base supports its educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their

quality in the future. The preponderance of evidence is that Governors State is relatively financially secure. Some concerns were expressed about the amount of financing for deferred maintenance, although it appears that the institution is fiscally conservative in budgeting. It is clear also that deferred maintenance (see below) is a critical need. There has been no postponement of long term debt or any other actions that suggest financial difficulties.

As viewed on a link the Master Site Plan is thoughtful and strategic, and provides evidence that the strategic plan and the facilities plan are aligned. The documentation reviewed regarding GSU's facilities included Deferred Maintenance Plan (2006), Sustainability Plan (2006), Campus Master Site Plan (2008) and the Facilities Plan (2009) are a result of the PBAC Facilities Committee efforts. The members of the committee referenced ongoing efforts of the past ten years that a number of projects were completed earlier in the ten year period after the last visit of the HLC. In 2003, all capital funding was frozen by the Governor's office. However, for the FY10, \$22.6 million was approved by the state and construction projects are "shovel ready."

It is noted that certain solutions to infrastructure updates and renovation have been made possible through debt financing service of a \$16 per credit hour mandatory fee starting in 2008. This approach will lead to a pay-as-you-go situation and will add to the stability of the physical plant without incurring longer term deferred maintenance.

The team conferred with the new Vice President for Institutional Advancement and discussed extensively her plans to engage with alumni, business, and other stakeholders in support of GSU. Her area of responsibility is of critical importance as a source of revenue, given the erosion of state appropriations over the last 10 years. The Team was surprised with the lack of attention of this area in the Self-Study, but came away with confidence and evidence that significant planning is being implemented with realistic goals for the next five years.

The Human Resources (HR) function appears to be effectively addressing external legalities and expectations as well as internal needs. PeopleAdmin software has improved the tracking of job candidates and other administrative functions within HR. It was noted that departments that have hired employees respect Human Resources as a partner, not an administrative block. Labor relations appear stable at GSU, and HR addresses issues of pay inequity. HR recently delivered Noël Levitz' customer service training which was well received; staff believe they should be delivering more training if the budget was not constrained. It is clear that Human Resources staff is updated on changes in the environment by membership and certification of Society of Human Resources Management (SHRM), College and University Personnel Administration (CUPA), and/or membership in interest groups within the state government.

Deficiencies in the laboratory resources are addressed in the "Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require Commission follow-up" section below.

2. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention

Core Component 2c (Continued): Although there is evidence to suggest that the organization's resource base supports its educational programs, improvements could be made. The institution is proud of its student/instructor ratio of 11:1. However, if this ratio is a result of a lack of control by Deans in assuring that student needs are paramount in scheduling courses, then efficiency and productivity could be significantly improved. Several times, the practice of faculty needs and wants

primarily driving course scheduling was mentioned. For example, a study was done of Prairie State Community college student needs that suggested a need for morning classes. Yet changes in scheduling appear to be minor. There should be clear understanding amongst those who schedule about the minimum student enrollment in classes determined by break even analysis. The team believes that there are too many classes with low enrollment.

Core Component 2d: All levels of planning align with the organization's mission, thereby enhancing its capacity to fulfill the mission. The translation of goals from the strategic plan to the operating functions and the academic enterprise appear well-connected. We heard clear understanding across the campus and commitment about the implementation of the strategic plan relative to operational goals. On the other hand, we will note again the difficulties in measurement on the university level. Whether measurements and metrics are applicable and well understood on lower levels is questionable.

3. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require Commission follow-up.

Core Component 2b (Continued): The chemistry storage facility and laboratories have been inadequately resourced and constitute an immediate safety and health hazard to students, staff and faculty of GSU. The storage facility is in complete disarray, with trip hazards, poorly labeled cabinets, inattention to cleanliness and likely inattention to expiration dates and other safety issues. There is no evidence of a recent fire department inspection. Material Safety Data Sheets were not readily available to users of the facility. Corroded storage containers/carts were visible. Chemical hoods had not been inspected for proper functioning since 2001, and department personnel reported that there are periodic power outages and no warning system. GSU does not have a standard plan for re-starting the hoods subsequent to power outages, which has resulted in hoods being inoperative for days (e.g. over the weekend) even after power is restored. There was confusion as to how far the magnetic field of the Nuclear Magnetic Resonance machine magnet extended. GSU personnel interviewed were not cognizant of the specific safety standards relevant to their operation. There were no references to the standards that do apply under the U.S. Department of Labor-approved, public sector occupational safety and health program operated by the State of Illinois, which would typically include the federal standards as a minimum – but may include more stringent requirements. These conditions represent a significant legal liability for the institution in the event of an accident, and must be addressed immediately.

Core Component 2c: The organization's ongoing evaluation and assessment processes provide reliable evidence of institutional effectiveness that clearly informs strategies for continuous improvement. Several issues will be discussed about the implementation of strategic planning, although the most important issue relates to the monitoring of results and taking action when goal achievement becomes problematic.

A critical example of incomplete strategic planning is that data exists that suggests both enrollment and retention continue to be problematic. There is also evidence that the institution has taken several steps to address this issue. At the same time, the team could not find any analyses/planning that led the institution to implement these particular changes. The results of the Adult Learner Inventory for students were tracked in 2002, 2005, and 2008. The two outstanding unmet needs identified in the study were related to life and career planning and financing. Concern was expressed by staff during the visit about whether advising would be centralized or decentralized. The College of Business and Public Administration and the College of

Education have advising staff within the colleges. Other colleges appear to use centralized advising. No evidence that the utility of these models has been examined could be found. Advising has been identified as an important retention issue since 2002 and, progress has been made as noted in Criterion 3d. The second most problematic area, in terms of assessing institutional effectiveness, was in the area of increasing and diversifying revenue streams. Although the GSU administration address the issues of financing on a continuing basis, the development of specific measurable goals that illustrate the institution's progress were often not found. In addition, continuous improvement metrics track satisfaction level of students and alumni, but metrics within the strategic plan for both of these issues do not appear to exist.

It is likely that some metrics are not valid, and consequently the measurement of progress relative to the strategic plan may also lack reliability and validity. Evidence that unmet goals are being discussed is non-existent. In addition, the team could find no evidence that suggests that the institution is undertaking planning alternatives to revise a goal to be more realistic, to focus more resources or, action on critical goal(s). In general, it is difficult to find instances in which decision making is based on data.

Some of the sub-committees of PBAC appear more successful than others. For example, the Budgeting sub-committee appears to be very active. They have examined many alternative solutions in relationship to budgeting issues and made suggestions that were subsequently implemented. On the other hand, examining the actions of the Continuous Improvement sub-committee, considerable time appears to have been spent discussing their mission and what the committee should do. Not many meetings have been held and the mission was early on seen as something the president would provide. A few months later, the committee was still discussing how to formulate their mission. This would be the likely sub-committee to be addressing metrics and lack of achievement, but more data gathering appears to be the primary activity in this committee. After viewing accreditation agency responses to GSU, the information on the summary of the institutions' specialized accreditation does not agree in several areas. For example, the CBPA information was incorrect, even after CBPA noted the necessary changes to the Continuous Improvement sub-committee.

Some of the specific measurement issues related to the strategic plan and metrics are:

- The metrics of **Goal 1 (Academic Excellence)** include student credit hours, dually admitted students, pass rates of certification/licensing exam results, and terminal degree status of faculty. Academic assessment would provide measurements of quality, but the team was unable to find evidence that this information is being collected or analyzed. For example, a metric related to terminal degrees could not be found within **Goal 2 (High Quality Faculty and Staff)**.
- **Goal 2 (High quality faculty and staff)**. The metrics in this goal are publications, presentations, the number of GSU grant awards, and Professional Development expenditures. The team found information on publications, and presentations, but the information was totaled so that the team was unable to determine faculty publication versus presentations. Although goals were identified in the various organizational strategic plans, many of the goals were too general to be of use by the institution. Other data was difficult to analyze.
- Some goals may be unrealistic, e.g., the 50% increase in enrollment and credit hours by 2014. Many faculty and staff told the team that they did not consider the achievement of this goal to be realistic. The trends reviewed by the team suggest that alternative planning may be required to achieve this goal. In fact,

the team could find no evidence that this goal is being monitored and discussed, relative to changing the level of the goal or focusing more resources to achieve the goal. Concerns were also expressed that if the goal was met, facilities might not be available to meet the increased demand due to the decrease in state funding.

4. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components are not met and require Commission follow-up. (Sanction or adverse action may be warranted.)

NONE

Recommendation of the Team

CRITERION MET; COMMISSION FOLLOW-UP RECOMMENDED.

Focused Visit on Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness 2012 – 2013.

Progress Report demonstrating immediate steps have been taken to correct safety deficiencies in the “E” and “F” Wings by April 30, 2010.

CRITERION THREE: STUDENT LEARNING AND EFFECTIVE TEACHING. The organization provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission.

1. Evidence that Core Components are met

Core Component 3a: The organization’s goals for student learning outcomes are clearly stated for each educational program and make effective assessment possible. Governors State University has met some aspects of Core Component 3a and not met other aspects. On the one hand, it has clearly stated goals for most student learning outcomes for each course and most educational programs that will, in time, make effective assessment possible. On the other hand, the authority to govern program outcomes is not clear, the team could find no planning documents that programs can use to guide them in the academic assessment process, and the university is not making sufficient use of learning outcomes assessment for program decision-making. Furthermore, the university must develop metrics to define what academic assessment ought to be. Finally, the university must define general education learning outcomes and develop a plan to assess them.

The University Curriculum Committee at Governors State University is charged with the task of ensuring that every course has clear and measurable learning outcomes that correspond to the learning outcomes of the program. It does so through a meticulous curriculum review process that scrutinizes every course, ensures alignment with stated program objectives, and ensures the measurability of the learning outcomes. Courses and programs that fail to demonstrate clear and measurable learning objectives are rejected, with the effect that the change may not take place. Adjustments are often made in “real-time” using electronic technology, with the committee reviewing the material in one location and the author in his or her

office being asked electronically to make revisions then and there. The curriculum mapping process is well underway and should be concluded soon. The standardization of syllabi, ensuring that students have consistent and accurate information about the courses they are taking, is particularly commendable and quite an achievement for the university. Therefore, Governors State University has ensured that clearly stated student learning outcomes exist for each course and program. Although the university has made sure that the outcome goals will be able to be used for assessment in the future, a weakness does exist and is described below.

Core Component 3b: The organization values and supports effective teaching.

It is clear that Governors State University values and supports effective teaching as evidenced by the ways it evaluates and rewards faculty and gives students a voice in the evaluation process.

Effective teaching is the primary criterion used for the evaluation of faculty for continuation and for promotion and tenure, and this is widely known through institutional culture, the faculty contract, and other means. The university logo itself embodies "teaching" as one of its three main vertices. The university has a standardized instrument for student evaluation of teaching, and collection and distribution of these data is effective; faculty members being evaluated for promotion and tenure also have their syllabi and other "qualitative" teaching and learning measures reviewed. In the faculty contract ("Agreement 2006-2009"), teaching must be rated "Superior" in order for a faculty member to be granted tenure or promoted to Associate Professor, whereas being "significant" or "effective" (rather than "superior") are sufficient for promotion or tenure in the categories of research and service. This demonstrates clearly that teaching is the top priority at Governors State University. Faculty members who do not show progress on improving their teaching may not be renewed, because the Agreement expects annual progress on teaching from the time of hire to the time of tenure six years later.

The university offers a Certificate in Online Teaching for those wishing to use more digital technology in their teaching. Concerned with inconsistencies in support of online teaching and learning in the past, the institution moved the division of information technology into academic affairs, which assured and enhanced the connectedness of IT to the teaching and learning mission.

Faculty members at the university extend the learning experiences of students by encouraging and sponsoring their work in Student Research Day, an undergraduate research conference. The conference features a speaker, a luncheon for the student researchers, and a published Proceedings of the GSU Student Research Conference, and many students take advantage of the opportunity.

For these reasons, it is clear that Governors State University values and supports effective teaching.

Core Component 3c: The organization creates effective learning environments.

It is clear that Governors State University creates effective learning environments, although the team has some concerns about particular facilities. In general, the university's classrooms and other learning spaces are in excellent shape and promote the type of learning valued by the mission of the university. A positive

aspect of classrooms at Governors State University is that they correspond to the small class sizes and low student/teacher ratio that is a source of pride to the university. Fifty-eight classrooms hold 36 students or fewer, and only five hold more students than that. Given Governors State University's upper division and graduate student mission, this classroom configuration is entirely appropriate and enhances the learning experience for students. The team does have some serious concerns about the science labs found in the "E" and "F" buildings, which are addressed below.

The deployment of teaching technology is increasing, with many classrooms displaying state-of-the-art display and computing technology. Investment in technology upgrades surpassed \$450,000 in FY09 and has roughly averaged that amount for the past seven fiscal years. On balance, Governors State University demonstrates that it creates effective learning environments appropriate to its mission.

Core Component 3d: The organization's learning resources support student learning and effective teaching. It is evident that Governors State University provides learning resources that support student learning and effective teaching. This is evidenced in many ways, including specialized program accreditation, library resources, the Writing Center, and travel resources made available to students.

The university prides itself on having specialized program accreditation in every program for which it is available, which is over 60% of the programs it offers. Such additional accreditations help ensure that Governors State University is using its resources to support student learning and effective in a manner consistent with the accreditation expectations of program accreditation.

The university's library has grown considerably since the last institutional accreditation, both in terms of the collection and electronic resources and access, and is conveniently located at the heart of campus. The team observed the library flourishing with lots of students using the collection and the computer stations. The library extended its hours in 2003 based on student survey data and now stays open until 10:30 p.m. most weekdays.

The writing ability of transfer students has been a concern to the university, so the GSU Writing Center now provides 24-hour writing assistance through an online portal. This portal allows students to submit papers for revision suggestions, receive assistance on Spanish/English translation issues, get help with citations, and access style manuals (e.g., APA, MLA, etc.) and other resources.

The university provides Student Travel and Conference Funds through the Student Life Unit. These funds are used by students travelling to academic conferences by supporting travel, meals, lodging, and registration fees up to \$900 through a clearly articulated application process. Students and staff report that the quality of advising at GSU is "uneven," which limits the successful implementation of the Directed Self-Placement process. However, in some parts of the university, excellent "intrusive" advising is taking place, including emails and phone calls to new students and students who have stopped out and placing registration holds on students who have not met with their advisor.

The team was concerned that student surveys reported dissatisfaction about support for Life and Career Planning and the self-study indicated that Career Services has

been a very low-performing area. However, we learned during our site visit that the surveys were solicited during an academic year when the Director of Career Services position was vacant for several months and student services dropped dramatically. Since that time, a new Director has been hired. Currently, Career Services is a robust operation, with 4-6 career fairs annually, effective publications, and a full range of the kinds of career support one would expect at an institution of GSU's caliber.

The new Red Lantern degree audit system has proven to be a tremendous asset to advisors and will become even more powerful in helping students when students themselves have access to the system sometime in 2010. The system allows students to get a clear snapshot at any time of where they stand in the progress toward their degree. Investing in the system shows an institutional commitment to quality advising and to helping students complete their programs in a timely fashion.

Therefore, for these reasons and others, Governors State University has demonstrated that it provides learning resources that support student learning and effective teaching.

2. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational Attention

Core Component 3d (continued): Feedback the team received from students indicates that GSU's students increasingly feel the need for even more access to the library and to other campus resources. Many students do not have computers at home; they work full-time, and are in classes in the early evenings. They expressed their frustration that the campus and the library are not open significantly more hours on evenings and weekends, especially towards the end of the terms and during final exam periods. The campus might benefit from re-polling students, since six years have passed, and might want to evaluate the feasibility of staying open later in the evening and opening earlier on weekend mornings.

3. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require Commission follow-up.

Core Component 3a (continued): While Governors State University has ensured that courses and programs have clearly stated and measurable learning objectives, and while these objectives lend themselves to use in assessment, it is evident at this time that learning outcomes data are not being collected consistently and not being used for institutional decision-making. Though these outcome goals make assessment possible, they do not entirely make it actual at this time. There is evidence that the prior assessment program, which ended with the establishment of the PBAC and CQIA committees, was more effective at collecting assessment data and using it in some way in decision making. For example, the university has its students go through a Directed Self Placement (DSP) process during their course selection process, but the data collected is not used as an aggregated assessment tool useful in establishing what the needs of incoming students might be and how the institution might address them. Furthermore, DSP scores and placements are not correlated with student performance in subsequent classes. Students who take the

DSP and self-place are still in need of extensive advising. The overall assessment data collection process is extremely decentralized, leading to confusion. The data collection problem is of particular concern for the nineteen programs that do not have specialized programmatic accreditation, but may also be of concern in some of the accredited programs.

Even in the case of externally reviewed programs, such as Criminal Justice, it is not clear that assessment data are collected and actually used to make program decisions. In the case of Criminal Justice, their 2009 Program Review reveals for learning outcomes "the CJUS program relies primarily on the Student Assessment of Instruction" (p. 5), an instrument designed to give affective response to the quality of instruction and not designed primarily to assess student acquisition of learning outcomes. The relationships between UCC, APRC, the Graduate Council, and PBAC are not clear or seen as important to students. Administrators acknowledge that the learning outcomes side of assessment is something that the university needs to work on but has not as yet achieved. Governors State University needs to focus organizational attention on ensuring that learning outcome data are collected, analyzed, and used to improve programs.

It is not always axiomatic that schools that are accredited have satisfactory assessment processes. However at Governors State, the recent hiring of Deans in Education and Business and Public Administration may help the university achieve more effective assessment. The Dean of the College of Education, has worked with her faculty to prepare for a NCATE visit in 2010. The State of Illinois decided to postpone all NCATE reviews until 2011, and the College of Education will have its review in that year. In the COE, Elementary Education undergraduate program represents a good example of assessment that includes gathering data relative to student learning outcomes and using the data to create changes that improve student learning outcomes or "closing the loop."

In the College of Business and Public Administration, the recently hired a dean has begun the process with her faculty of developing learning goals and mapping the objectives to the curriculum. The next few years will include the identification of measurements, the application of measurements, and finally the identification of efforts that should increase goal achievement across the student population. A recent visit by a person, who is considered an expert in AACSB assessment expectations, may have served to unfreeze the faculty in understanding the need for assessment if the prestigious accreditation of AACSB International will be achieved.

In Health and Human Services, not all programs appear to be equal in achieving respective accreditation. For example, there is evidence that in 2006 Social Work was cited by its accrediting agency for a lack of assessment. The letter that was sent back by Social Work did not appear to be at an equivalent understanding of assessment as compared to the accrediting agency. The Bachelors of Health Administration in November, 2009 was cited in the accreditation report that "GSU does not meet the Program Evaluation and Improvement criterion and that there was no evidence that program evaluation is the basis for program revision and improvement." There is a follow up report due in one year. It was also noted that concerns from 2000 had not been responded to. Concern was expressed that the masters in Health Administration may not be sufficiently differentiated from the undergraduate program and that program was assigned progress report in two years.

Arts and Sciences provided a list of objectives that mostly were un-measurable and/or not related to student learning outcomes.

Core Component 3c (continued): Not all learning environments are optimally effective. In particular, science labs and classrooms in the “E” and “F” wings are in dire need of renovation, and their current outmoded and run-down condition hampers student learning. Though the Illinois State Legislature recently approved the renovation of these labs for funding, the funding was never actually provided. The laboratory learning environment is further hampered by significant safety concerns ranging from inadequate ventilation, heating and cooling; undesignated egress routes; unsecured and degrading chemicals in teaching laboratories; undocumented safety inspections; and obstructed areas due to general lack of cleanliness. Power outages have frequently made it impossible for the university to conduct classes in these labs for extended periods of time. This environment is not conducive to learning and presents immediate and long-term safety hazards to all levels of students and faculty teaching in this environment. While severely hampering the learning environment, this situation is also a potentially serious legal liability for the institution. *[Please also see Core Component 2b for further concerns with these facilities.]*

4. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components are not met and require Commission follow-up. (Sanction or adverse action may be warranted.)

NONE

Recommendation of the Team

CRITERION MET; COMMISSION FOLLOW-UP RECOMMENDED.

Focused Visit on Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness 2012 – 2013.

Progress Report demonstrating immediate steps have been taken to correct safety deficiencies in the “E” and “F” Wings by April 30, 2010 of the receipt of this report.

CRITERION FOUR: ACQUISITION, DISCOVERY, AND APPLICATION OF KNOWLEDGE.

The organization promotes a life of learning for its faculty, administration, staff, and students by fostering and supporting inquiry, creativity, practice, and social responsibility in ways consistent with its mission.

1. Evidence that Core Components are met

Core Component 4a: The organization demonstrates, through action of its board, administrators, students, faculty, and staff, that it values a life of learning. It is evident that Governors State University demonstrates through its action that it values the life of learning. For example, the university supports faculty scholarship in a number of ways. The GSU sabbatical program provides competitive sabbaticals to eligible faculty members, awarding five to seven sabbaticals each year. Five sabbaticals were awarded during the 2008-09 academic year. Eligibility is determined by years in service and is tracked in a document produced by the Office of the Provost. Faculty research grants funded by the GSU Foundation are also made available to faculty members on a competitive basis. The annual amount given out has ranged from \$19,000 to nearly \$27,000 during the past eight years. The number of grants given out has ranged from 61 in 2003 to 22 in 2006; a deliberate program to reduce the total number of awards and increase the amount of

each award is clearly underway. Overall, scholarly productivity doubled from Academic Year 2005-06 to Academic Year 2007-08 in terms of faculty publications (a 146% increase) and national scholarly presentations (a 64% increase). Employees of all types are eligible for tuition waivers at the university, and many members of the civil service faculty report earning GSU degrees by taking advantage of this benefit. All of these indicators are evidence that Governors State University values the life of learning.

GSU has established a variety of activities and programs to foster a positive academic climate serving its predominantly part-time student clientele. These programs include an Honors Program serving approximately 100 students each trimester, travel support for conference attendance by 35 students annually, and an annual Student Research Conference for both undergraduate and graduate students. The campus regularly hosts lectures on diverse topics, including community engagement, Black history, Hispanic heritage, entrepreneurship by women, alternative energy, and health care. The campus climate of scholarship is also improved through the activities of the Intellectual Life Committee, which has supported several events to promote awareness of the arts and humanities impacting hundreds of campus constituents. The campus includes a sculpture park and hosts a variety of art exhibits throughout the complex. As a result, the campus environment is vibrant and conducive to inquiry and creativity.

Core Component 4c: The organization assesses the usefulness of its curricula to students who will live and work in a global, diverse, and technological society. GSU has successfully attained specialized professional accreditation for all programs that are eligible, including ten programs that were initially accredited subsequent to the Board of Trustees' mandate in 2000. Consequently, the institution regularly obtains external expert review of the majority of its curricula by cognizant professional societies. In addition, GSU has implemented a five or six year review cycle for all established programs, a timeline that is more aggressive than the IBHE eight year requirement. For some non-accredited programs, the institution has invited external reviewers to provide additional perspective on the curricula and program quality. These external engagements enhance the value of GSU's programs to its students and their employers.

Core Component 4d: The organization provides support to ensure that faculty, students, and staff acquire, discover, and apply knowledge responsibly. GSU has clearly articulated, appropriate policies addressing academic integrity, ethics, intellectual property rights, human subjects research, and animal use and provides appropriate administrative support for research compliance oversight. In each case, faculty members are actively involved in oversight or advisory committees. The institution encourages students and faculty to err on the side of caution in determining when to submit project information to the Institutional Review Board, although the majority of cases are determined to be in the exempt category. The institution has made substantive advances in providing support to faculty seeking external funding. Despite the challenging economic climate, the Sponsored Programs Office received a 50% funding increase last year to \$188,000, enabling increased staff support for grants accounting and proposal preparation. Through these efforts, GSU is providing a sound infrastructure for its faculty and students to acquire knowledge effectively and responsibly.

2. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention

Core Component 4b: The organization demonstrates that acquisition of a breadth of knowledge and skills and the exercise of intellectual inquiry are integral to its educational programs. As an upper division university with a total

transfer undergraduate population, GSU is obligated to admit students who began their education elsewhere. The university has developed extensive articulation agreements and clear general education policies to ensure that each student is exposed to an appropriate foundation in the liberal arts and sciences. Students may satisfy the general education core by completing an appropriate associate's or bachelor's degree from an approved institution in Illinois, completing the Illinois Articulation Initiative General Education Core Curriculum (GECC) program, completing the general education distribution specified by GSU, or completing selected GSU programs in teacher education or business. However, GSU has not established adequate processes and programs to assess appropriate mastery of a relevant general education core prior to the completion of the baccalaureate awarded by GSU. The team could not find any evidence of articulated goals, outcomes, or assessment of general education.

In addition, previous GSU efforts to implement placement tests and required remedial coursework have been replaced with a voluntary Directed Self-Placement program, with neither an initial validation effort nor a subsequent evaluation of the effectiveness of the new, voluntary approach. Interviews with faculty indicated that some feel compelled to "teach down" to the students' level, suggesting that failure to address the student's general education preparation may result in inadequate upper division achievement. The team concludes that the institution has taken a step backward with respect to ensuring student learning in the area of general education, although we acknowledge that some progress has been made in expanding writing center services. While we note that developing a sound approach to general education assessment in GSU's environment is a formidable problem, the university has an obligation to address it because GSU is ultimately the grantor of the bachelor's degree.

The lack of goals for general education is clearly a problem for GSU. The team believes, however, that the best way to address this issue is to do it through assessment. That is, assessment of general education is an important part of the focused visit that the team is recommending. By necessity, GSU will have to formulate goals, learning outcomes, and measurements of student success for general education as part of the work that will be required by the focused visit.

3. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require Commission follow-up.

NONE

4. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components are not met and require Commission follow-up. (Sanction or adverse action may be warranted.)

NONE

Recommendation of the Team

CRITERION IS MET; NO COMMISSION FOLLOW-UP RECOMMENDED

CRITERION FIVE: ENGAGEMENT AND SERVICE. As called for by its mission, the organization identifies its constituencies and serves them in ways both value.

1. Evidence that Core Components are met

Core Component 5a: The organization learns from the constituencies it serves and analyzes its capacity to meet their needs and expectations. There is ample evidence in the self-study as well as other documentation and conversation with external groups that GSU has a commitment and outreach to "Chicago Southland." GSU demonstrates this by a number of collaborative relationships that brings education, business and government together. Through these efforts, the mission is in part achieved and opportunities for students to grow in their understanding of service are enhanced. GSU shares its cultural assets with the community through art in education, the Center for Performing Arts, and the Nathan Manilow sculptures, just to name a few.

There are many examples to illustrate that strategic planning is influenced and shaped by constituent groups. GSU has developed many links to the community through advisory councils, community colleges, local business and government. Other diverse groups, such as schools, hospitals, law enforcement and others are also partnering with GSU. One of the best examples the team found was with the surrounding network of area community colleges. These partnerships comprise GSU's most essential external connection. Because GSU's mission is explicitly to serve as an upper-division undergraduate university, it relies heavily on the enrollment of "space-bound" community college graduates. It is clear that GSU is making intentional, systematic outreach to its partner community colleges through a variety of strengthening strategies:

- They are exploring Dual Admissions Initiatives which allow students to apply for both their Associate and Bachelor's degrees at the same time.
- They are sending faculty advisors to the local community college sites to assure a smooth transition to GSU.
- GSU advisors are partnering with community college advisors on programs where a recommended 4-year path of study can be determined. A paralegal program has established such a pathway; occupational therapy is also exploring this option.
- Community college leaders report that President Maimon provides strong leadership to a consortium of area colleges and universities; she was a recent commencement speaker at Joliet Junior College.
- GSU recognizes the importance of community colleges' role in students' success by inviting community college leaders to its annual Commencement ceremonies with special recognition of each community college's graduates who will be graduating from GSU.
- GSU provides faculty development work for local community colleges.

Core Components 5b: The organization has the capacity and the commitment to engage with its identified constituencies and communities. Governors State University demonstrates that it has the capacity and the commitment to engage its identified constituencies and communities. For example, the Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park is an asset of the institution which serves as a major artistic resource to the Southland community. The sculpture park literally surrounds the campus and features 26 pieces of large-scale permanent artwork by artists including John Payne, Mary Miss, Tony Tasset, and Henri Etienne-Martin. The enormous piece "Horizons" by Icelandic artist Steinunn Thorarinsdottir was on display during the HLC team's visit, having received support for the temporary installation from Harris Bank and other sources. The artist herself was on campus to give a lecture about the piece in October 2009. Other fine and performing arts programs on campus demonstrate similar capacity and commitment at Governors State University to engage its identified constituencies and communities.

Core Component 5c: The organization demonstrates its responsiveness to those constituencies that depend on it for service. Governors State University demonstrates its responsiveness to the constituencies that depend on it for service. The geographic region where Governors State University is located has higher rates on unemployment and mortgage foreclosures than the rest of the Chicago area and the rest of Illinois, so the university has responded by providing programming to spur economic development. One example is the Minority Business Expo, which is a reflection of the significant diversity in the region. The Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority at GSU helps host the annual Minority Business Expo, which allows vendors from minority-owned businesses to display their products and network with others. This serves Chicago's "Southland" region by providing economic development. The African Gown Awards is tied into the Expo to add excitement and extend the program into the evening. It is evident from letters written by Rich Township staff members that the local community is very supportive of the program. Another example is the Centerpoint for Economic Entrepreneurs, which helps grow businesses in the region. In these and other ways, Governors State University clearly demonstrates its responsiveness to the regional constituencies that depend on it for service.

Leaders in the communities surrounding GSU are liberal in their praise of GSU's regional impact, and perceive GSU as critical to the area's growth. They cite a multitude of meaningful connections with GSU. At the end of the Metra train line, GSU provides recreation, parks, forest preserves, and extensive public art to the community. They provide an early childhood center for the community. GSU has hosted community planning meetings for University Park and legislative forums for Cook and Will Counties. GSU has extensive connections with local hospitals, providing Board training, developing curricula for nurses, offering interns from their business, social work and health and human services departments, and offering a health careers program for low-income students. GSU also partners with community agencies in research grants (two are currently in the works with St. James Hospital, the area's largest employer). A school superintendent reports that GSU is "the only university consistently at the table" in joint planning efforts. GSU also shares resources to support the surrounding districts' joint professional development efforts/staff development days, resulting in the recruitment of such experts as Jonathon Kozol and Harry Wong. One superintendent reports, "We come bringing thousands of children" to GSU's performing arts center for events ranging from Suzuki strings to children's opera.

The GSU Promise is an innovative and ambitious commitment on the part of the institution to provide a debt-free education to all Pell-eligible students. GSU is growing an endowment of unrestricted funds to support this promise. The plan is to begin this program for up to 50 students.

Core Component 5d: Internal and external constituencies value the services the organization provides. As described in the self-study, GSU as the only public institution in Chicago Southland, understands its obligation to the wider community. From Alumni to External Advisory Boards, there are ongoing connections made that provide feedback and focus on programs and relevance such as:

- The Metropolitan Institute of Leadership in Education (MILE) that provides service to constituencies in education fields on and off campus. Outreach programs include substitute teacher academy, new Principal mentors, back-to-school for parents, and others.
- Law enforcement has several programs directed to improvement and the Navy PACE (Program for Afloat College Education) demonstrates the range of GSU's influence and service.

- The Alumni Association also includes several clubs related to demographics such as the Latino Club, interests such as the Travel Club, and professional growth such as the Addictions Studies Club and Business and Public Administration Network. There will be more efforts from the Vice President of Institutional Advancement to develop new ideas to develop ties to alumni that will develop communities of practice as well as building philanthropic ties and results for GSU.
- One critical effort that may help a great deal with both early childhood education curricula and enrollment/retention of students and especially, mothers with small children is the Family Development Center. Expanding educational access to younger children has significant potential to broaden the COE educational process.

2. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention

Community development is clearly a strength of GSU's, although there is little evidence that needs are identified through data gathering nor that the existence and effectiveness of these efforts are documented. Metrics should be developed for the strategic plan that tracks such results.

3. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require Commission follow-up.

NONE

4. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components are not met and require Commission follow-up. (Sanction or adverse action may be warranted.)

NONE

Recommendation of the Team

CRITERION MET; NO COMMISSION FOLLOW-UP RECOMMENDED

INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE REQUEST: Proposal for Limited Approval to Offer Online Degrees

Governors State University has requested authorization to change the stipulations within the current Statement of Affiliation to offer online degrees in Nursing for the baccalaureate completion (RN-BSN), Master of Science in Nursing (MSN), and the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP), as well as in the Addiction Studies/Behavioral Health Program for the Master of Health Sciences (MHS). The following paragraphs will describe what was found relevant to the six major questions addressed in the request.

This institutional change request is predicated as a method to achieve the university's mission to make higher education accessible to all, particularly those traditionally underserved by higher education. Although distance education is not specifically identified as a strategy to achieve the University's goal to provide distinctive academic

programs, Strategy 2015 does call the University to promote best practices in multiple modes of course delivery and to enhance and maintain high quality graduate programs. If further expansion of on-line degree programs is identified as a strategy to achieve mission of accessibility and enrollment goals, the institution should consider a more overt expression of commitment to distance and on-line learning.

The needs assessment to deliver these programs completely on-line is limited to a survey of MSN nursing students which indicated that 8/60 preferred an all on-line program, a 2007 survey that indicated 54% of 63 nursing students dropped out due to lack of convenience, an evaluation of current utilization of available on-line coursework and to a survey conducted by the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) in the Fall 2002. Only the conclusion of the survey was provided, and stated that "students wanted more flexibility through more on-line and distance options, that competitors were expanding, and that the Illinois Virtual Campus (IVC) was seeing more requests for on-line programs." The IVC enrollment data found at www.ivc.uillinois.edu does indicate a 17% increase in on-line enrollment in Illinois Colleges and University from 2008 to 2009. Interviews with the Dean of the College of Health and Human Services indicated that capacity for growth in each of these programs ranges from no capacity to double the current capacity. Since the needs assessment did not quantify the needs for these on-line degree programs, on-going monitoring of need versus capacity is warranted.

Interviews with faculty and administration revealed that the majority of the requested on-line degree programs require clinical components, socialization and/or professional evaluation that would inhibit the ability to provide a completely on-line degree. The institution will need to utilize caution in managing student expectations for a completely on-line program.

GSU has an appropriate infrastructure for offering on-line courses, and components of all four programs are currently offered on-line or in a web-enhanced format. Faculty development in on-line teaching techniques is supported through the Center for Online Teaching and Learning, and on-line library resources are available for student research. These on-line courses in the nursing and addiction studies disciplines have served over 800 students and generated over 2500 credit hours in recent years, demonstrating GSU's experience in on-line delivery.

The proposal for offering the identified programs as on-line degree programs was duly reviewed and approved per GSU's policies and procedures and evidenced by committee minutes for the following groups: the program faculty, the College of Health and Human Services Academic Program Council and Academic Affairs Committee, the University Curriculum Committee, the Academic Program Review Committee and the Graduate Council.

Challenges identified for this program were those identified for the University by the Commission in 2000. These challenges identified were uneven assessment of student learning across academic programs, the need for an enrollment management plan, and the lack of stability in the Office of the Provost. Assessment issues specific to this change request are addressed later in this document. The institution noted that this request for on-line degree programs has been delayed due to significant budget

constraints. Despite these constraints, on-line courses were developed removing the financial resource constraints on moving this change request forward.

The Commission identified assessment of student learning outcomes as a challenge as part of the last comprehensive visit. The outlined assessment plan presented for this change request is evidence of the continuing challenge the institution faces in the areas of assessment. The assessment plan outlined is a mixture of programmatic and curricular assessment. The articulated measures of student learning are a mixture of measures of program success (80% of students admitted will complete program of student within 4 calendar years, 100% of graduates of seeking employment will have secured jobs within 12 months of graduation, 85% of DNP graduates sitting for practice certification will achieve certification on first attempt) and measures of student learning (National League for Nursing outcomes objectives, ATI test of critical thinking, student evaluation of instruction). Assessment of student learning outcomes is based primarily on indirect measures of student learning (student evaluation of instruction, course syllabi review, Educational Benchmarking Inc.). Identification of direct measures of student learning correlated directly to key learning outcomes is critical. These direct measures should be monitored in a serial fashion to allow for the identification and implementation of educational interventions with subsequent assessment of success or failure.

Recommendation of the Team

CHANGE REQUEST RECOMMENDED; COMMISSION FOLLOW-UP RECOMMENDED

In light of the fact that assessment of student learning and institutional effectiveness has been identified in this document combined with the fact that these programs are new, the focused visit recommended above will include assessment activities with regard to the programs identified in the change request.

V. STATEMENT OF AFFILIATION STATUS

A. Affiliation Status

NO CHANGE

B. Nature of Organization

1. **Legal status:** No Change
2. **Degrees awarded:** No Change

C. Conditions of Affiliation

1. Stipulation on affiliation status

No Change

2. Approval of degree sites

No Change

3. Approval of distance education degree

Change to include: "No Commission approval required to offer degrees in Addictions Studies (M.H.S.), Bachelor of Science in Nursing (B.S.N.), Master of Science in Nursing (M.S.N.), and Doctor of Nursing Practice (D.N.P.) through distance delivery (online) methods.

Rationale: The Change Request and the site visit provided evidence that Governors State University is prepared to offer the online degrees requested in Nursing and Addiction Studies/Behavioral Health Program. The recommended focused visit on Assessment of Institutional Effectiveness and Student Learning should, however, include language that updates the commission on the utilization, implementation and assessment of the on-line programs with emphasis on comparison of the achievement of student learning outcomes to the traditional degree delivery pathways.

4. Reports required**Progress Report**

Safety Issues in Wings "E" and "F" (April 30, 2010)

Rationale and Expectations: As described under Criterion 2, the chemistry storage facility and laboratories constitute an immediate safety and health hazard to students, staff and faculty of GSU. The storage facility is in complete disarray, with trip hazards, poorly labeled cabinets, inattention to cleanliness and likely inattention to expiration dates and other safety issues. There is no evidence of a recent fire department inspection. Material Safety Data Sheets were not readily available to users of the facility. Corroded storage containers/carts were visible. Chemical hoods had not been inspected for proper functioning since 2001, and department personnel reported that there are periodic power outages and no warning system. GSU does not have a standard plan for re-starting the hoods subsequent to power outages, which has resulted in hoods being inoperative for days (e.g. over the weekend) even after power is restored. Team members were told that the magnetic field of the NMR magnet penetrates beyond the walls of the laboratory to the building exterior, yet the only posted warnings for those with pacemakers are on the interior door of the laboratory. GSU personnel interviewed were not cognizant of the specific safety standards that do apply under the U.S. Department of Labor-approved, public sector occupational safety and health program operated by the State of Illinois, which would typically include the federal standards as a minimum – but may include more stringent requirements.

The progress report should include details of how these problems have been

addressed, including photographs of success of the cleanup efforts, signage changes, and overall cleanup of the laboratories. The report should clearly identify the specific, relevant standards with which GSU must comply under the U.S. Department of Labor-approved, public sector occupational safety and health program operated by the State of Illinois. The report should also illustrate that proper inspections have been completed, and specify the schedule for recurring inspections consistent with required state and/or federal standards.

5. Other visits scheduled

Type of Visit: Focused Visit

Topic(s) and Timing: Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness – Academic Year 2012-2013.

Rationale and Expectations: The observations of the team combined with the fact that GSU was cited in an earlier HLC visit on the issue of assessment, leads the team to believe that further action must be taken. Thus, we are recommending that a focused visit on assessment and on institutional effectiveness be required. The focused visit should confirm that the institution has constructed a sustainable assessment plan, that it has developed metrics that appropriately validate institutional effectiveness and student learning, and that a complete cycle of assessment has been demonstrated. The focused visit must address the assessment of general education, including the development of goals for general education, measureable learning outcomes, and how the institution will manage a general education program in the context of its mission. Assessment of the online degree programs included in the Change Request will also need to be addressed.

6. **Organization change request:** Recommended (See Rational Above)

D. Commission Sanction or Adverse Action

NONE

E. Summary of Commission Review

Timing for next comprehensive visit (academic year – 2019-2020)

Rationale for recommendation: Governors State University has made tremendous improvements since the last Comprehensive Visit, especially in the areas of strategic planning and addressing deferred maintenance issues. GSU has strong leadership that strives for transparency and inclusiveness. The institution's clear sense of mission and focus on transfer students is quite apparent across campus and unique. The notion that GSU serves as the "Public Square" for the region is also evident, needed, and appreciated by the community. While finances will continue to remain tight, the institution is poised for growth and promise in the future. The team, however, also believes that some of the items mentioned in this report will hamper the potential for success in the future. The team has experienced a wonderfully unique institution, with a clearly defined mission, and an outstanding collection of individuals. After reflecting on the evidence, the team feels comfortable recommending continued accreditation with a ten-year period before the next Comprehensive Visit.

VI. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND EXPLANATIONS

NONE

VII. APPENDIX WORKSHEET ON FEDERAL COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS

INSTITUTIONAL MATERIALS RELATED TO FEDERAL COMPLIANCE REVIEWED BY THE TEAM:

- Governors State University 2009-2011 Catalog
- Governors State University Federal Compliance Report for the HLC Comprehensive Visit November 16 – 18, 2009
- BOT Finance and Budget Committee minutes
- Governors State University Student Handbook & Daily Planner, 2009-2010
- Third Party Comments for Governors State University
- www.govst.edu
- www.itransfer.org
- GSU Policy Manual
- State of Illinois Governors State University Financial Audit, 2008
- State of Illinois Governors State University Financial Audit, 2007
- GSU Viewbook
- GSU Fact Card
- GSU View
- Press Releases to regional newspapers: Southtown Star, Northwest Indiana Times, and Kankakee Daily Journal

EVALUATION OF FEDERAL COMPLIANCE PROGRAM COMPONENTS

1. **Credits, Program Length, and Tuition:** *The institution has documented that it has credit hour assignments and degree program lengths within the range of good practice in higher education and that tuition is consistent across degree programs (or that there is a rational basis for any program-specific tuition).*

The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance.

2. **Student Complaints:** *The institution has documented a process in place for addressing student complaints and appears to be systematically processing such complaints as evidenced by the data on student complaints for the three years prior to the visit.*

The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance.

3. **Transfer Policies:** *The institution has demonstrated it is appropriately disclosing its transfer policies to students and to the public. Policies contain information about the criteria the institution uses to make transfer decisions.*

The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance.

4. **Verification of Student Identity:** *The institution has demonstrated that it verifies the identity of students who participate in courses or programs provided to the student through distance or correspondence education.*

The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance.

5. **Title IV Program and Related Responsibilities:** *The institution has presented evidence on the required components of the Title IV Program. The team has reviewed these materials and has found no cause for concern regarding the institution's administration or oversight of its Title IV responsibilities*

- **General Program Requirements:** *The institution has provided the Commission with information about the fulfillment of its Title IV program responsibilities, particularly findings from any review activities by the Department of Education. It has, as necessary, addressed any issues the Department raised regarding the institution's fulfillment of its responsibilities in this area.*
- **Financial Responsibility Requirements:** *The institution has provided the Commission with information about the Department's review of composite ratios and financial audits. It has, as necessary, addressed any issues the Department raised regarding the institution's fulfillment of its responsibilities in this area.*
- **Default Rates, Campus Crime Information and Related Disclosure of Consumer Information, Satisfactory Academic Progress and Attendance Policies:** *The institution has demonstrated, and the team has reviewed, the institution's policies and practices for ensuring compliance with these regulations.*
- **Contractual Relationships:** *The institution has presented evidence of its contracts with non-accredited third party providers of 25-50% of the academic content of any degree or certificate programs.*

The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and recommends the ongoing approval of such contracts.

6. **Institutional Disclosures and Advertising and Recruitment Materials:** *The institution has documented that it provides accurate, timely and appropriately detailed information to current and prospective students and the public about its accreditation status with the Commission and other agencies as well as about its programs, locations and policies.*

The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance.

7. **Relationship with Other Accrediting Agencies and with State Regulatory Boards:** *The institution has documented that it discloses its relationship with any other specialized, professional or institutional accreditor and with all governing or coordinating bodies in states in which the institution may have a presence.*

The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance.

8. **Public Notification of an Evaluation Visit and Third Party Comment:** *The institution has made an appropriate and timely effort to solicit third party comments. The team has evaluated any comments received and completed any necessary follow-up on issues raised in these comments.*

The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance.

ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE

INSTITUTION and STATE: Governors State University, IL

TYPE OF REVIEW (from ESS):) : Continued Accreditation
___ No change to Organization Profile

Educational Programs

	Program Distribution	Recommended Change (+ or -)
Programs leading to Undergraduate		
Associate	0	
Bachelors	23	
Programs leading to Graduate		
Masters	25	
Specialist	0	
First	0	
Professional		
Doctoral	3	

Off-Campus Activities

In-State:	Present Activity:	Recommended Change: (+ or -)
Campuses:	None	
Sites:	Ashkum (IL State Police District 21) ; Burr Ridge (Burr Ridge Middle School) ; Chicago (Barbara Vick Early Childhood and Family Center) ; Chicago (Chavez Elementary Multicultural Academy) ; Chicago (Columbia Explorers Academy) ; Chicago (Dodge School) ; Chicago (Dyett Academy Middle School) ; Chicago (El Valor) ; Chicago (Esmond Elementary School) ; Chicago (Everett Elementary School) ; Chicago (Foreman High School) ; Chicago (James R. Thompson Center) ; Chicago (John F. Eberhart Elementary School) ; Chicago (Peck School) ; Chicago (Sawyer High School) ; Chicago (University of Chicago Hospital Academy) ; Chicago	

(William F. Finkl Elementary School) ; Chicago (Zapata Academy) ; Cicero (Morton Freshman Center) ; Coal City (Coal City High School) ; Coal City (Coal City Middle School) ; Dolton (Dolton Middle School) ; Elgin (Elgin Community College) ; Elgin (Elgin Community College) ; Elgin (IL State Police District 2) ; Elgin (Illinois State Police District 2) ; Evergreen Park (Central Junior High School) ; Frankfort (Frankfort Fire Department District, Firestation 1) ; Frankfort (Frankfort Police Department) ; Harvey (Thornton High School) ; Hinsdale (Burr Ridge High School) ; Joliet (Joliet Police Department) ; Joliet (Joliet Township High School, West Campus) ; Joliet (Lynne Thigpen School) ; Kankakee (Kankakee Education Center) ; Lansing (Calvin Coolidge Elementary School) ; Lansing (Lansing Police Department) ; Lockport (Illinois State Police District 5) ; Matteson (Matteson School District 162) ; Metamora (Metamora High School) ; Midlothian (Bremen High School) ; Naperville (Naperville Education Center) ; New Lenox (Lincolnway Central High School) ; Oak Forest (Oak Forest Village Hall) ; Oak Forest (South Suburban College University Center) ; Oak Lawn (Oak Lawn High School) ; Orland Park (Robert Morris College) ; Oswego (Oswego East High School) ; Plainfield (Plainfield High School) ; Plainfield (Plainfield North High School) ; Plainfield (Plainfield South High School) ; River Grove (Triton College) ; Riverdale

(Riverdale High School) ;
Romeoville (Romeoville High
School) ; South Holland
(Thornwood High School) ;
Tinley Park (Andrew High
School) ; Tinley Park
(Grissom Middle School)
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Course
Locations:

Out-of-State:	Present Wording:	Recommended Change: (+ or -)
Campuses:	None	
Sites:	Dyer, IN (Dyer Police Department)	
Course Locations:	None	
Out-of-USA:	Present Wording:	Recommended Change: (+ or -)
Campuses:	None	
Sites:	None	
Course Locations:	None	

Distance Education Certificate and Degree Offerings:

Present Offerings:

Board of Governors BA Program/Interdisciplinary Studies (new name) offered via Internet

Recommended Change:

(+ or -)

+ Addictions Studies (M.H.S.), Nursing (B.S.N., M.S.N., and D.N.P.)

STATEMENT OF AFFILIATION STATUS

INSTITUTION and STATE: : Governors State University, IL

TYPE OF REVIEW (from ESS): Continued Accreditation

DESCRIPTION OF REVIEW (from ESS): Embedded change request to offer Addiction Studies (MHS) online, BSN online, and DNP online.

DATES OF REVIEW: 11/16/09 - 11/18/09

Nature of Organization

LEGAL STATUS: Public

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: no change

DEGREES AWARDED: B, M, D

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: no change

Conditions of Affiliation

STIPULATIONS ON AFFILIATION STATUS: The doctoral degree is limited to the Doctor of Physical Therapy, the Doctor of Occupational Therapy, and to the Doctor of Nursing Practice.

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: No change

APPROVAL OF NEW DEGREE SITES: The Commission's Streamlined Review Process is only available for cohort degree sites within the institution's service area designated by the Illinois Board of Higher Education: all of Will and Kankakee Counties and anywhere 40 miles or fewer from the main campus within Illinois.

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: no change

APPROVAL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION DEGREES: Prior Commission approval required for distance education programs other than the Board of Governors BA program.

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: Prior Commission approval required except for the following degree programs: Addictions Studies (M.H.S.), Nursing (B.S.N., M.S.N, D.N.P), and Board of Governors BA.

REPORTS REQUIRED: None

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: Progress report due 4/30/2010 on safety of chemistry facility and laboratories

OTHER VISITS REQUIRED: None

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: Focused visit in 2012-13 on assessment and institutional effectiveness including attention to general education and to comparative outcomes for students in online programs.

Summary of Commission Review

STATEMENT OF POPULATION & FINANCE

YEAR OF LAST COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION: 1999 - 2000

YEAR OF NEXT COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION: 2009 - 2010

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: 2019-2020
