

The Higher Learning Commission (NCA)

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April 30, 2001

Dr. Joe Anna Hibler
President
Southwestern Oklahoma State University
100 Campus Dr.
Weatherford, OK 73096

Dear President Hibler:

This letter is formal notification of the action taken concerning Southwestern Oklahoma State University by the Higher Learning Commission. At its meeting on April 23, 2001, the Institutional Actions Council voted to continue the accreditation of Southwestern Oklahoma State University, and to adopt any new items entered on the attached Record of Status and Scope. The Commission Board of Trustees validated that action through its validation process concluded on April 27, 2001. The date on this letter constitutes the effective date of this new status with the Commission.

The Record of Status and Scope summarizes the new, current relationship between the Commission and Southwestern Oklahoma State University. Modifications to it may require prior approval from the Commission, although several sections of the Statement of Institutional Scope and Activity can be modified through submission of the annual report.

Changes in your institution that would require further Commission action prior to their initiation are found in Chapter 12 of *Handbook of Accreditation, Second Edition* and on pages 16 - 18 of the *Addendum to the Handbook*. The *Addendum* can be found on the Commission's website at www.ncahigherlearningcommission.org under the Information for Affiliated Institutions and Consultant Evaluators. Please review them with care.

Information about informing the public of this action is found in Chapter 15 of the Commission's *Handbook*.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees I thank you and your associates for your cooperation. If you have questions about this action or about Commission policies and procedures please write or call Dr. Mary B. Breslin, B.V.M., who is the member of our staff responsible for providing continuing assistance to Southwestern Oklahoma State University.

Sincerely,

Steven D. Crow
Executive Director

Enclosure: Record of Status and Scope

cc: Evaluation Team Members
Chair of the Board

**North Central Association of Colleges and Schools
Commission on Institutions of Higher Education**

30 N. LaSalle Street, Suite 2400
Chicago, IL 60602-2504
(800) 621-7440

RECORD OF STATUS AND SCOPE

SOUTHWESTERN OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY
100 Campus Drive
Weatherford, OK 73096

Statement of Affiliation Status

Status: Accredited (1922-34; 1950- .)

Highest degree awarded: Doctor's.

Most recent action: April 27, 2001.

Stipulations on affiliation status: Accreditation at the Doctoral level is limited to the Doctor of Pharmacy (Pharm.D) and at the Master's level to degrees in professional programs.

New degree sites: No prior Commission approval required for offering existing degree programs at new sites within the state.

Progress reports required: 6/30/04; A report on accomplishment of "The Agenda for Excellence: A Vision for Southwestern".

Monitoring reports required: None.

Contingency reports required: None.

Other visits required: None.

Last comprehensive evaluation: 2000-01.

Next comprehensive evaluation: 2010-11.

Statement of Institutional Scope and Activities

Legal status: Public institution.

H/99 undergraduate enrollment: 4308.

H/99 graduate enrollment: 607.

Number of degree programs: Associate's (8); Bachelor's (37); Master's (4); Doctor's (1).

Full service degree sites other than home campus:

--- In state: Sayre

Other degree sites: None.

Course sites:

--- In state: 1 site.

Distance Education: Courses are offered through Videotapes/Broadcast TV, Interactive TV.

REPORT OF A VISIT
TO
SOUTHWESTERN OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY
Weatherford, OK
October 2-4, 2000
for the
Commission of Institutions of Higher Education
of the
North Central Association of Colleges and Schools

EVALUATION TEAM

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Worksheet for the Statement of Affiliation Status (SAS)

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Structure and Scope of the Visit

This is the report of a comprehensive evaluation of Southwestern Oklahoma State University (SWOSU), Weatherford, Oklahoma, for continued accreditation at the master's (professional curricula) degree-granting level, conducted for the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools on October 2-4, 2000.

The seven-team members consulted with the president, vice presidents, self-study coordinator, deans, member of the staff and members of the Board of Regents of Oklahoma Colleges, faculty, staff, and students. In addition, members reviewed supporting materials in the resource room, met regularly to discuss the results of their findings, and drafted the team's recommendations for the exit interview.

B. Accreditation History of the Institution

Southwestern Oklahoma State University had its beginnings as a normal school chartered by the Oklahoma territorial legislature in 1901. Several modifications in name and authorization including the merger with Sayre Junior College in 1987 have occurred over the ninety-nine years. North Central accreditation has been continuous since 1950. The most recent comprehensive NCA review and visit occurred in 1990; it concluded with a ten-year recommendation for re-accreditation. A focused visit was conducted in 1994 to

give attention to eight concerns noted by the 1990 NCA team. The focus visit concluded that six of the eight concerns had been met and that the institution was addressing the remaining two. In 1998, another focused visit was conducted to review the SWOSU request to offer the Doctor of Pharmacy (Pharm. D.) degree and to change the Stipulations on Affiliation Status to limit the university to this degree at the doctoral level and to professional programs at the Master's level. The team recommendation was affirmative.

C. Evaluation of the Institution's Self-Study process and Self-Study Report

The institution opted to use the self-study process as an opportunity to give special attention to strategic planning. A document entitled The Agenda for Excellence: A Vision for Southwestern resulted from a broad based review of SWOSU with particular attention to its future. The information and data gathered in the future planning process were also incorporated in the self-study. The process itself including the relationships between planning and self-study is described in the preface of the Self-Study Report (viii-x). The Self-Study Report presents the current status of Southwestern Oklahoma State University fairly and accurately. It gives evidence of an extensive participatory process, which was confirmed by interviews and meetings with members of the Southwestern Oklahoma State University community. Because of the focus on planning, it was evident that the institution has begun to address several of the issues identified in the self-study process. The team commends Southwestern Oklahoma State University for this effective blending of long range planning and internal review.

The team members found their Southwestern Oklahoma State University hosts to be very welcoming and cordial. Team members were supplied with permanent name tags and were pleased to find that all university employees were proudly wearing their own blue badges throughout the duration of the visit. Questions were addressed forthrightly and the resource room provided necessary information in a well-organized fashion.

The Self-Study Report does address the five criteria for accreditation and incorporates responses to each of the General Institutional Requirements within the text.

II. INSTITUTION'S RESPONSE TO PREVIOUSLY IDENTIFIED CONCERNS OF THE

1990 COMPREHENSIVE VISIT

A. Mission

The 1990 team expressed a concern regarding the incomplete nature of the mission statement. Separate mission statements were in place for the two campuses. These matters were satisfactorily addressed prior to the 1994

focused visit and so reported. The mission statement, as adopted by the Board of Regents of Oklahoma Colleges, can be found in the catalogs of SWOSU, on its website, and is included in the Self-Study Report (pp. 2-3). It is evident that the strategic planning process is based on the present mission statement.

B. Sayre Campus

The concern regarding the relationships between the Weatherford campus and the two-year Sayre campus located some sixty miles west were being addressed when the 1994 focus team visited SWOSU. The integration of the two campuses seems complete and offers mutual benefits of which each campus is proud and from which the larger campus obtains needed opportunities for outreach to under-served populations and for delivery (as well as beta site-testing) of its distance education ambitions. The Sayre Campus is addressed further on pp. 29-32 of this report.

C. Scholarly Activities

As documented in the Self-Study Report and the exhibits made available to the team, there has been a significant increase in both scholarly expectations and achievements. While not an explicit goal in its Agenda for Excellence, expectations about increased cooperation with other institutions and organizations, higher achievements in sponsored programs, and faculty development initiatives are indicators of a growing understanding of the role of scholarly activities at SWOSU.

D. Affirmative Action

SWOSU continues to work on this issue. Issues regarding the need for a plan, commitment, organization, and results were addressed to the satisfaction of the 1994 focus unit team. Reflecting the times, the present team commends the institution for its success in increasing the numbers of minority enrollments during the last half of the past decade, for recognizing the curricular importance of cultural diversity topics and themes, and for publicizing its commitment to affirmative action on bulletin boards throughout the campuses. However, the need to increase significantly the presence of minorities in faculty and staff positions continues.

E. General Education

There is clear evidence that the institution took seriously the need for a revision of its general education program. The program, which is overseen by the General Education Committee and a Director of General Education, provides a much stronger and more coherent core curriculum than the previous program.

F. Salary Policy

The 1994 focused evaluation visit noted that a new salary schedule had been implemented and initial opposition to the plan had been overcome. Resentment on the part of some senior faculty is still evident; however, there is broad understanding of the need for a flexible salary policy which allows the institution to recruit and retain faculty. While market factors and equity are understood, there seems little enthusiasm for incorporating exceptional performance into the salary process.

G. Assessment

This issue was reviewed in 1994 and evaluated positively in light of the assessment criteria of the NCA. Several programs have made strong progress in the realm; others need to be encouraged to take this responsibility seriously. The strategic plan incorporates assessment measures and decisions about program development will utilize a variety of these measures. A more extended discussion of assessment at SWOSU is found on pp. 38-39.

H. Computing

The institution has taken the challenge of providing students and faculty with computers and other forms of technological support seriously. All members of the faculty have computers on their desks and plans are underway regarding student access from residence halls. There is strong support for the good work being done by those responsible for the computer network and related institutional support services.

III. GENERAL INSTITUTIONAL REQUIREMENTS

During its evaluation, the Visiting Team to Southwestern Oklahoma State University reviewed the Self-Study Report and other documents, as well as interview data pertinent to the 24 General Institutional Requirements. The Team found evidence that Southwestern Oklahoma State University was in compliance with each of these foundational principles for institutions of higher education.

A complete description of this is found in Chapter Four of the Self-Study Report on pages 29 to 35. Supporting documents were available to the team to further confirm the statements found in the Report.

Conclusion: On the basis of its review, the Visiting Team concludes that Southwestern Oklahoma State University meets all 24 of the General Institutional Requirements of the North Central Association Commission on Institutions of Higher Education.

IV. CRITERIA FOR ACCREDITATION

Every higher-education institution accredited by the North Central Association's Commission on Higher Education must demonstrate that it fulfills five Criteria for Accreditation. Following study of the materials presented by the institution, review of facilities and operations, and discussions with representatives of campus constituencies, the Visiting Team concludes that Southwestern Oklahoma State University fulfills these five criteria. The following section of the report provides support for that conclusion by means of evaluative and descriptive comment on selected but representative programs and activities.

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Criterion One: Southwestern Oklahoma State University has clear and publicly stated purposes consistent with its mission and appropriate to an institution of higher education

Southwestern Oklahoma State University is a public institution governed by the Board of Regents of Oklahoma Colleges. The coordinating board for all of higher education in the state is the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education. The University offers programs through the master's professional and Doctor of Pharmacy on the Weatherford campus. The Sayre campus provides opportunities for students to complete the first two years of collegiate experience.

The mission statement is widely distributed and provided the basis for the planning process which was the focus for the NCA Self-Study. The four areas of strategic vision which will be given priority over the next three to five years are

- quality, cost-effectiveness, and demand-oriented programs;
- public awareness of the strengths of the University;
- cooperative arrangements with other institutions to share program strengths and broaden educational opportunities; and
- partnerships with other enterprises that cultivate career development for students and economic development for the larger community.

Specifically, the broad planning process led to a publication The Agenda for Excellence: A Vision for Southwestern. The five goals expressed in this document are refinements of those four areas of interest. The goals are

- By 2003, Southwestern will be serving 5,500 students and will have advanced its position as one of the premier universities in Oklahoma with an emphasis on quality education.

- By 2001, the University will have an effective marketing plan that promotes greater exposure of its departments and programs.
- By 2001, the University will have enhanced the effective and efficient management of its resources.
- By 2003, the University will have established cooperative arrangements to enhance its mission of teaching, scholarly activity, public service, and economic development.
- By 2005, the assets of the Southwestern Oklahoma State University Foundation will have increased to ten million dollars.

The Agenda for Excellence articulates a vision for the University which is already being utilized to shape decisions about programs, budgets, and operations. This document presents a set of purposes and directions which have been broadly disseminated and which are in keeping with the mission of SWOSU as an institution of higher education.

Criterion Two: Southwestern Oklahoma State University has effectively organized the human, financial, and physical resources necessary to accomplish its purposes.

GOVERNANCE

Governance of all public institutions of higher education in the state of Oklahoma is the responsibility of the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education (OSRHE), which has substantive authority for the coordination of all of higher education, including the review and establishment of budget priorities and the allocation of state funding to the individual campuses and the governing boards which are charged with responsibility for the individual campuses. Southwestern Oklahoma is governed by the Board of Regents of Oklahoma Colleges (BOROC). The State Regents conduct a continuous review of academic programs which requires the periodic review of all programs at least once every five years. This formal review process is called the Academic Planning and Resource Allocation System; it is the intent of the State Regents that APRA constitute an integrated and interactive planning system for all of higher education. Thus, a major function of the OSRHE includes oversight of the planning, budgeting, and resource allocation processes on each public campus in the State.

The governing board (BOROC) is responsible for the hiring and termination of the President and all policies that relate to the operation of the Southwestern Oklahoma State University. Members of this Board are appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the State Senate. One member, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, is elected and serves as an "ex officio" voting member of the Board of Regents. In addition to governing

Southwestern Oklahoma State, the BOROC also governs five other regional universities within Oklahoma.

Both the State Regents and the BOROC operate with constitutional autonomy in their decision making processes. The authority of each board is defined in the Oklahoma State Constitution and in Oklahoma state statutes.

The Board of Regents of Oklahoma Colleges appointed the current President of Southwestern Oklahoma State University in 1990. The President operates as the Chief Executive Officer of the University and reviews and approves all administrative policies of the University. The President delegates authority to vice presidents including the Executive Vice President for Administration and Finance, the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Research, and the Vice President for Student Services. Four Directors also report direct to the President including the Athletic Director, the Director of Alumni and Development, the Director of Public Information, and the Director of Institutional Research. Internal governance councils including the Faculty Senate, the Student Government Association, and the Support Staff Council also have direct access to the President.

Southwestern Oklahoma State's governing board has authorized the University's affiliation with the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. This affiliation has been continuous since 1950.

Faculty Senate

The Faculty Senate is the representative body empowered to "make recommendations to the Administration, the Faculty, and the Student Government Association on all matters relating to the best interests of the University." This year's Senate is composed of 32 members who meet regularly to conduct the business of the Senate. The Faculty Constitution was revised in 1997. Nine standing committees are part of this structure. These committees are identified on page 20 of the Faculty Handbook. In addition, faculty members serve on a large number of University Committees, numbering more than 30. Members of the visiting team were concerned about the lack of accountability in the procedures of the Senate: neither those who make or second motions nor the votes are recorded. Further, the lack of participation by the Vice President for Academic Affairs who is the recognized "channel" to the Administration is troubling. A more open and responsible system in which the members of the Senate and appropriate administrators share ideas and concerns in official meetings should be considered.

Student Government

Student Government Associations (SGA) operate on both the Weatherford and Sayre campuses. Students are encouraged to take an active role in university life. It appears that much of this participation occurs in the form of social activities. Students also participate in recruitment and community service.

Support Personnel Organization

The University has a Support Personnel Organization consisting of volunteers from various staff positions. In a meeting with team members, the membership demonstrated a strong sense of loyalty and dedication to the University.

However, a number of concerns were expressed by the membership present at the open meeting with the team: the inclusion of mechanisms for increased participation of the support staff in university activities; the existing separation of faculty and staff events on campus; a desire to be actively involved in the selection of a new President; the forced use of vacation leave time during the inter-term winter break; sick leave policies; more staff development activities; and the need for enhanced levels of merit based salary adjustments.

The team encourages the University administration to expand its dialog with the support staff to explain and clarify existing policies and to consider ways to include the support staff in more formal ways in the fabric of the university.

FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Audit

The team reviewed on-site original copies of external, university fiscal audits for the years 2000, 1999, and 1998. The audits were conducted by Cole and Reed, P.C. of Oklahoma City. The audits appear in all respects to have been conducted in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards, and in each case, the external auditors found the University to be in sound fiscal condition. There were no exceptions stated by the auditors in the documents reviewed by the team. The required external audits are conducted annually and filed by the external auditor with the University's governing board, the Board of Regents of Oklahoma Colleges, the Oklahoma State Regents of Higher Education, and the Director of the Office of Internal Auditing of the State of Oklahoma.

The external audits are conducted by major accounting firms which are selected by the University's governing board, the Board of Regents of Oklahoma Colleges. The process of selection includes an open and competitive request for bids and proposals and the firm selected is contracted by the Board to audit each of its constituent campuses annually. The process of selection is repeated in five-year cycles with rotation to a new firm occurring in five-year intervals.

The external audits are fiscal audits only and do not include, as a matter of routine, management comments or suggestions. However, it was noted to the team that its governing Board (BOROC) would begin to require management comments commencing with the fiscal 2001 audit. The addition of required management comments should allow the BOROC to obtain comparative statements of fiscal conditions and suggestions for improvements of fiscal practices from one central auditing firm for each of its regional universities.

Revenue Sources and Internal Allocations

The primary sources of revenue for the University are state appropriations, student tuition, fees, grants and contracts, and auxiliary operations. The team reviewed internal allocation and budget documents for the current (2001) year and the previous two fiscal years. On the basis of these documents as well as the aforementioned audits and interviews with the Executive Vice President for Administration and the Director of Business Affairs and the University President, compliance with the Commission's General Institutional Requirements 19, 20, and 21 has been demonstrated.

When broken down by function, approximately 57 % of the University's Educational and General Expenditures was dedicated to Instruction. Other functional areas within the E and G budget include Research at 1.3%, Public Service at 0.8%, Academic Support at 9.2%, Student Services at 7.2%, Institutional Support at 7.5%, Physical Plant at 10.5%, and Scholarships at 6.5%. By object, total personnel expenditures constituted 75% of the University budget and 25% of the budget was dedicated to operations including travel, utilities, supplies and materials, furniture and equipment, books and periodicals, and scholarships. This allocation pattern is within the normal range for regional universities with similar missions.

Utilizing University provided comparisons with IPEDS data, the University's allocation pattern is at or above the 50 percentile of peer institutions in each function with the exception of Public Service and Student Services. Given the reality that this team's evaluation of the University has generated a concern regarding funding for essential student service activities and facilities, the reality of a below mean allocation in this function is not surprising and may indicate a need for the University to enhance funding for student service functions. However, the current allocations demonstrate an appropriate commitment to the primary mission of the campus, Instruction.

The allocation of appropriated funds to the University is based on a program budgeting formula which places heavy emphasis on fiscal year full time equivalent enrollments. Data made available to the team indicate that the University has received a fair or equitable allocation of available funds. Funding requests flow from the University to the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education (OSRHE). In turn, the Legislature appropriates state support to the

OSRHE for distribution to each of the state's colleges and universities. In recent years, Southwestern Oklahoma State has received approximately 3% of the total appropriations of state dollars available for all of the states colleges and universities. While this figure reflects equity within the state on the basis of enrollment and program funding, it is an equity within scarcity. The scarcity is driven by the reality that the budget formula for all colleges and universities reporting to the Oklahoma State Regents (OSRHE) has been funded at just 70% of formula demonstrated needs.

In fiscal year 1999-2000, based on the OSRHE formula, Southwestern Oklahoma State should have been funded at \$27,271, 107. In reality, the University was funded at \$20,032, 759 or approximately 73 % of its formula demonstrated need. The average funded of formula level for the regional universities governed by the Board of Regents of Oklahoma Colleges for the same year was 68.92% and the average funded of formula level for all state universities and colleges in Oklahoma was 69.81%. Thus, while the 73% of formula for Southwestern represents a good average, it also reflects the reality that all colleges and universities in Oklahoma are under-funded given an internal formula, which is based upon external comparisons. Audit reports reveal that over the last three years, funding per fiscal year student at Southwestern places the University third among the six regional universities within the state of Oklahoma.

It should also be noted that, because of unanticipated declines in state funding in the 1980's, each institution reporting to the Board of Regents of Oklahoma Colleges is required to operate with a reserve of approximately 8% of the institution's total budget. This figure is perhaps too conservative given institutional needs and a consistently under-funded formula budget.

The team also reviewed the management of auxiliary enterprises and debt at the University. The University currently operates without bonded indebtedness and the cash flow support for auxiliary enterprises are appropriate to current levels of service. The University contracts with an outside vendor for the operation of its bookstore, but continues to operate the food service without an outside vendor. While this arrangement appears to work, the team notes as a concern the development of facility support for student activities. The University should consider the possibility of acquiring some bonded indebtedness for purpose of enhancing student life and wellness facilities and activities on campus.

Budget and Allocation Processes.

The development of university budget requests follows a clearly defined process which allows for university wide access and provides linkage to university goals as expressed in the university's new strategic plan. The university President annually begins the budget request process by establishing

a calendar and setting general budget parameters. Vice Presidents and Action Team Coordinators are notified of the calendar and directed to develop and forward preliminary budget requests to the Office of the Executive Vice President. The Executive Vice President prepares a consolidated document for review with the President, the Budget Committee of the Faculty Senate, as well as Action Team Leaders with direct responsibility for implementing the University's strategic plan.

Subsequent to the preparation of a preliminary budget, the President meets with the Vice Presidents and the Executive Vice President, who serves as Chief Fiscal Officer of the campus, for the purpose of preparing a final budget for submission to the Governing Board and Coordinating Board. In the process of preparing a final budget, the President also meets with the campus Planning and Resource Council prior to submitting the final request to the Boards. This budget request process is followed in the allocation of resources available to the University after the legislative process and the allocation process by the State Regents for Higher Education.

The overall budget process at Southwestern State on paper appears to provide both ample opportunity to campus constituencies for input and is linked to the campus strategic planning document and process. However, team members discovered in meetings with faculty and staff a sentiment that budget parameters established at the level of the President and the Executive Vice President Officer were often narrow and restrictive. In addition, more than a few faculty seemed unaware of the opportunity for input in the budget process through the Budget Committee of the Faculty Senate. Based upon these interviews, the team suggests that the Administration and Faculty seek broader and more systematic opportunities for a more open process of internal allocation of resources. A more open budgeting process seems especially appropriate as the campus begins to implement the goals of The Agenda for Excellence, the University's five-year strategic plan.

PHYSICAL RESOURCES

Physical Plant

The University's physical plant includes 50 buildings on 190 acres of land that provide a little more than 1,000,000 square feet of usable space. In 1980, the North Central Association's Commission noted the physical plant as an area of major concern. Since that time considerable improvement has occurred. The 1990 report did not single out the physical plant as a weakness or area of concern and did note that maintenance was an area of institutional strength. The 2000 team notes a concern in the area of physical facilities that support student life activities: the Student Union, facilities for intramural activities, and the lack of a modern fitness/wellness center. The 2000 team also expresses a concern about the absence of technologically interconnected residence halls. In addition,

the 2000 team notes as a concern the University's inability to fully implement the spirit and substance of ADA requirements at both the Weatherford and Sayre campuses.

While the University's continuing maintenance program has generated significant and on-going building renovation projects in recent years, the team encourages the University to continue to enhance and beautify campus grounds and facilities. With this in mind, the team encourages the University to complete the development of a new physical master plan for both the Weatherford and Sayre campuses.

The team reviewed a list of building improvement priorities kept by the Director of the Physical Plant, who reports directly to the Executive Vice President. The list of priorities is entitled "Campus Master Plan" but falls short of a detailed physical and grounds master plan. The team is informed by the University that such a detailed master plan is near completion and that the University has contracted with an Architect and Planner in the generation of this plan. The team recommends that this new plan be shared widely within the campus's constituencies prior to its finalization and that the process of updating the new plan become a matter of periodic importance at the University.

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Criterion Three: Southwestern Oklahoma State University has accomplished its educational and other purposes.

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS: GENERAL

Concerns about General Education raised by the 1990 team "have been addressed," wrote the 1994 focused visit team. The questionable pre-1994 program used a capacious cafeteria of courses from throughout the university to meet the spirit of subject-matter mandates from the Oklahoma State System of Higher Education. The post-1994 General Education program begins with four statements of desired learning outcomes to develop students "as human beings and citizens preparing for the twenty-first century" and lists just twenty-five courses grouped in ten subject matter areas for a total of 48-49 hours. In six subject matter areas, students choose one of two or two of three or four courses; in four, courses are prescribed. All courses but the School of Business's "Contemporary Economics" are taught by the School of Arts and Sciences. SWOSU demonstrates a commitment to a coherent, defined, and focused General Education program rarely encountered at public universities, a commitment earned at costs not inconsiderable to their proposers and reaffirmed through a culture of continuous quality improvement worthy of emulation.

To achieve the present program, central administration in the early nineties insisted upon developing the statements of learning outcomes first and choosing the courses which could achieve those outcomes second. Faculty embraced the learning outcomes redefinition (not always easily) so that comprehensive course-embedded outcomes assessment is poised to feed back sophisticated information to improve curricular delivery and to enhance institutional effectiveness. A Director of General Education (former department chair and current Arts and Sciences assistant dean) works with the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs and an elected General Education Committee (two members each from the four Schools) to assure that every multiple-section course employs common textbooks, compatible syllabi, and (if not everywhere common final examinations) common General Education learning objectives. Faculty have responded well to these university-wide requests for accountability without significant additional resources: they seem to recognize value in collective approaches to curricular delivery. As more evidence develops from the analysis of course-embedded assessment, data-driven adjustments to General Education courses will inculcate a new generation of SWOSU professors to conceive pedagogy from outcomes-based perspectives. Members of the General Education committee believe the process is underway in their diverse departments, and that the lessons learned in General Education influence assessment-driven, programmatically-accredited disciplines like nursing, business, and engineering technology.

Continuous improvement and use of course-embedded assessment may lead to effective programmatic assessment—pre- and post-General Education global assessment, for instance. Central administration and Arts and Sciences now invest heavily in this effort and could recoup even more from further SWOSU investments for technological support in General Education courses, or recognition for General Education instructors in load calculation and promotion or tenure decisions, or public acknowledgement and recognition for General Education instructors and General Education Committee members alike. Stakeholders in General Education might investigate a University-wide capstone experience for the better "human beings and citizens" they seek to develop, or they might explore integrating thematic focuses of international or multicultural topics congruent with the four statements of desired learning outcomes, such as a text assigned to all new freshmen and touched upon over any four-year period by many or most of the accepted General Education courses. Such enhancements might help this exemplary program at a regional public university to achieve national recognition.

ACADEMIC STRUCTURE

The School of Arts and Sciences

The School of Arts and Sciences includes twelve academic departments including Art; Biological Sciences; Chemistry; Computer Science; Health,

Physical Education, and Recreation; Language Arts; Mathematics; Music; Physics; Psychology; Social Sciences; and Technology. The School's programs lead to the Bachelor of Arts, the Bachelor of Science, and other professional degree programs such as the Bachelor of Music and the Bachelor of Social Work. In addition, the School offers a wide and typical array of minors in the Arts and Sciences disciplines, provides academic course support for pre-professional programs in Dental Hygiene, Dentistry, Engineering, Law, Medicine, Optometry, Pharmacy, Physical Therapy, and Veterinary Medicine, and offers most of the courses in the General Education Program. The Department of Music also offers the Master of Music degree. Selected other departments offer graduate courses in support of masters degree programs in Education and Applied Psychology.

Faculty within the school are well prepared for instructional, research, and service responsibilities. For the most part, courses are taught by full time faculty with very minimal reliance on adjunct or part-time faculty. In individual interviews and at the general meeting with faculty, there was evidence of a strong commitment, dedication, and loyalty to the University. Faculty were supportive of the new General Education program and its strong emphasis on a core approach in lieu of the broadly distributive approach, which had been listed as a concern in the last decennial North Central report. The current program has a strong focus on the knowledge base, skills, and values commonly associated with a liberal education. In interviews and in a general meeting, faculty and department chairs noted that the general education program constitutes a major responsibility of the School of Arts and Sciences. Faculty confirmed that they were deeply involved in the development and remain active in the implementation and continuing assessment of the relatively new program. The new General Education program is cited by this visitation team as an institutional strength.

The School has recently completed a search for a new Dean and visits with the Dean indicated a renewed enthusiasm for supporting the action plans which have evolved from the new university planning process. The Dean of the School underscored the reality that the unit action plans evolved directly from faculty efforts and did not involve at the initial stages either input or influence from the Dean's Office. Thus, faculty were allowed to develop priorities and strategies in a "visioning" process which is not dominated by preconceptions at an administrative level. Faculty expressed satisfaction with the process in individual interviews and in the general or open meeting conducted by members of the visitation team. While the development of action plans is at an initial stage, faculty seemed supportive of the process and hopeful of results in the way of resources and an enhanced focus within the school. Measurable progress in the quality of teaching, research, and service in the School's departments should occur in very specific ways in a three to five year time frame.

Faculty seemed satisfied with the recent upgrading of individual access to computers as well as a recent allocation of over \$320,000 for instructional equipment and technology in the School. From the perspective of the dean and

the department chairs, this allocation was an early indicator that planning efforts and departmental participation in these efforts could be linked at the institutional level to allocation decisions.

Concerns expressed by some faculty and department chairs included unevenness in the application of instructional loads, inadequate reassigned time for department chairs, uneasiness with the consolidation of the Departments of Chemistry and Physics and concern with anticipated internal re-allocation of resources from departments and disciplines with low student participation and graduation rates. Although such concerns are real, there is also evident a consensus that the School is in the process of being right sized and the planning process has reinforced changes previously contemplated by faculty and administration. The fact that the planning process has, to this point, been faculty-driven was cited by the dean and reinforced by faculty as a strength.

The team strongly encourages faculty and administration attention to declining enrollment in selected disciplines in the Arts and Sciences. Although the number of students declaring a major or undecided in the Arts and Sciences is at a ten year high (1,704), several majors operate with precariously low student/faculty ratios and others are experiencing on a relative basis high student/faculty ratios. This imbalance could jeopardize several existing programs and suggests that serious consideration be given to the reallocation of resources from low enrollment majors to better subscribed programs. The existing Academic Planning and Resource Allocation process mandated by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education and the new campus-based strategic planning process should provide decision makers with a data base from which difficult resource reallocation decisions may be made for the welfare of the School.

Selected disciplines in the School of Arts and Sciences are accredited by or affected by accreditation standards from the following specialized accreditation bodies: the American Chemical Society; the Technology Accreditation Commission of the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology; the National Association for Music Therapy; the National Association of Schools of Music and the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education. These accreditations seem appropriate to the mission of the University and represent areas of excellence within the University.

School of Business

The School of Business is accredited by the Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Programs (December 1999). The School is undergoing significant transformation. As a result of internal tension, the dean and both chairs resigned last year. An interim dean was appointed (August 2000) as well as an interim chair of business administration. A chair was permanently appointed for accounting/finance (June 2000). Faculty expressed considerable

support for the new administration and felt that faculty morale was much improved. Student enrollment numbers have fluctuated. The pattern has been an overall decline which now seems to have halted and an increasing trend is underway. The School is planning to add new academic programs in management information systems and is phasing in a 150-hour accountancy program. Both should have positive effects on enrollment. The facility is relatively new and is well equipped in IT-computer equipment, having received authority to purchase 20 new, state-of-the-art computers. The major concerns for the School are faculty and salaries, which are interrelated. In the last hiring cycle, three positions formerly held by doctorally trained faculty had to be replaced by master's level, professionally qualified persons, largely because of an inability to offer adequate salaries. While this approach may satisfy a short-term need, it may be detrimental in the long term.

School of Education

Since the 1996-97 reorganization, the School of Education has consisted of two departments, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Programs and the Department of School Service Programs. The latter offers graduate programs and certification in school administration, school counseling, agency counseling, and school psychometry. Elementary and secondary faculty members prepare elementary, secondary, PK-12 pre-service teachers, as well as master's degree candidates. Annually, education faculty members are required to work in the schools for 10 hours, and most also work with recent graduates during the graduates' first year as practitioners.

Declining enrollments are a concern in both undergraduate and graduate programs. Faculty members explained that within the past few years, Oklahoma instituted a Commission for Teacher Preparation, which acted promptly to increase the rigor in Oklahoma teacher preparation programs. A portfolio concept was implemented at both undergraduate and graduate levels. The general education requirement, "the 4 by 12," was mandated so that all students must complete 12 credits in each of four areas: English, mathematics, biological and physical sciences, and social sciences. Yet, at roughly the same time, teacher candidates certified to teach in one area were permitted to add an area of certification by passing an examination, as long as the additional certification is within the same school level. These factors, increased rigor and additional certifications by examination, contributed to the drop in teacher preparation enrollments experienced in the late 1990s. Regional demographics also present a challenge.

Teacher education graduates from SWOSU are in demand regionally, but faculty members expressed grave concern that in Oklahoma, public school teacher salaries are not competitive with those in neighboring states. Lower starting salaries and fewer teacher education graduates have served to reduce the pool of qualified teachers pursuing careers within the Oklahoma schools. This

has led to alternative certification strategies that increasingly result in persons without appropriate credentials hired within the Oklahoma schools. The School of Education faces a troubling paradox: SWOSU-educated teacher education graduates are in high demand in neighboring states and are meeting ever more rigorous standards during their formal preparation and in their year of residency. Yet, it appears that Oklahoma schools in the SWOSU service region will be forced to rely upon those admitted to the teaching profession through alternative paths.

School of Health Sciences

The School of Health Sciences includes the School of Pharmacy, Division of Nursing, and Division of Allied Health.

School of Pharmacy

The School of Pharmacy is in the process of converting from the Bachelor of Science to the Doctor of Pharmacy (Pharm.D.) degree. An accreditation visit was conducted by the American Council of Pharmacy Education in October 1999; as a consequence, the School has been granted CANDIDATE STATUS in the Doctor of Pharmacy Program. A subsequent accreditation visit will occur in early 2001 for evaluation to remain in candidate status or advancement to full accreditation. Progress toward implementation of the professional practice degree is progressing very well. A major consideration was garnering additional funding to meet the added program requirements. This was accomplished by charging students in the professional program a special programmatic fee equal to in-state tuition. Total costs are still less than comparative pharmacy programs in this region.

The School has been given authority to hire additional faculty. Progress has been made with considerable gender diversity being accomplished. A major barrier for hiring clinically oriented faculty was salary; however, special consideration was allowed in hiring at increased salary levels. Nevertheless, faculty salaries still lag national norms (AACP) by more than 25%. Faculty workloads are typical of those in other schools in the University (24 credits plus 3 credits scholarly activity). Faculty members show considerable interest in participating in scholarly activity and pharmaceutical sciences will begin some bench-type research. Faculty morale is judged as excellent with stated respect for the dean and central administration. Faculty participation was high in the University's action plan, as well as the initiatives in assessment and general education. The School enjoys a high level of informational technology with computers for faculty and computer clusters and laboratories for students. The central administration holds the school, dean, faculty, and students in high regard as evidenced by the tangible support provided for salary adjustment, resource allocation, and planned renovation of physical facilities to support the new Pharm.D. degree program.

Division of Nursing

The Division of Nursing offers the degree of Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) to the traditional generic student and to the registered nurse (RN) student, and is accredited by the National League of Nursing (March 1996). All full-time faculty members hold master's degrees; two are doctorally qualified. Fall 2000 marks the initial offering of the revised professional curriculum, which is consistent with the holistic approach to nursing defined as the mission of the department. The Oklahoma Board of Nursing granted the program continuing full approval in spring 1998. The Division has strong administrative support, evidenced by the renovation of the programmatic laboratory space, including two new skill labs, a small classroom, and additional storage space for equipment and supplies.

Faculty members appropriately identify declining enrollment as the greatest programmatic challenge. In addition to declining regional demographics, the program faces increased competition as a result of action by the Board of Regents to approve additional sites for nursing programs offered by other Oklahoma institutions. Faculty members plan to respond through effective marketing and improved recruiting. Programmatic retention data are not included as a part of the University fact book, and that could provide a useful reference for additional planning strategies for faculty members. Several nursing faculty members indicate they are available to teach courses within their disciplinary expertise in other programs within the School of Health Sciences, which would provide some assignment flexibility within the School.

Division of Allied Health

The Division of Allied Health offers nationally accredited programs in medical technology and health information management, and two associate degree programs in physical therapist assistant (PTA) and occupational therapist assistant (OTA) on the Sayre campus with cooperative accreditation. Enrollment in the health information management major bears careful monitoring, as it appears to have stabilized in the last two years at slightly less than half the average enrollment enjoyed from 1992 to 1996. While the self-study reports stable enrollment in medical technology, the Fall 2000 SWOSU Fact Book shows dramatic decreases in the number of medical technology majors, with only 3 in fall 2000, compared with 56 majors in fall 1993; 53 majors in fall 1994; and 50 majors in fall 1995. In fact, the medical technology, PTA, and OTA programs have all suffered precipitous enrollment declines in recent years. Faculty members attribute decreased student interest in the PTA and OTA programs to changes in Medicare, third-party billing, and federal home health care regulations that currently set a \$150 cap on reimbursement to individuals for physical and occupational therapeutic treatments. Moreover, some hypothesize that the same changes have adversely affected interest in the medical technology program. Exacerbating these difficulties is the spring 2000 notification that the Commission

on Accreditation in Physical Therapy has placed the PTA program on probation, necessitating notification of the program's status to all enrolled students and to all students seeking admission. The dean indicated that the PTA program will be reassessed; a contributing factor will be the recently remodeled Sayre campus facilities for both the PTA and OTA associate degree programs. This reassessment will be only one test of the effectiveness of "The Agenda for Excellence" strategic planning process, as the campus works its way through competing resource expectations from its cooperative partners and its core programmatic missions.

The Division also makes two open-enrollment baccalaureate degree programs available to students in health care administration and the health sciences. These are used by students as pre-professional programs; health sciences demonstrates excellent growth, whereas the administration degree track enrolled 27 declared majors in fall 2000, down from 40 in fall 1999, and 60 in fall 1998. The addition of two new allocations to the health sciences shows considerable administrative support for this combined array of SWOSU degree offerings.

Graduate Education

The Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs also serves as the Dean of the Graduate School, currently overseeing three active graduate programs—the Master of Business Administration, Master of Education, and Master of Music. Enrollment in a fourth program, the Master of Science in Applied Psychology, has been suspended. Each program is reviewed once every five years, with the evaluation focusing on program objectives, student enrollments, diplomas/degrees granted, faculty, curricula, and resources. Additional program reviews are conducted by external organizations in securing or maintaining program accreditation.

The Graduate Council is composed of eight graduate faculty, two graduate students, and is chaired by the Dean of the Graduate School. The Council recommends policies and monitors approved policies. The graduate curriculum is taught by approximately 100 "Graduate Faculty," who are designated as such having earned a Ph.D. or an Ed.D. and having garnered a recommendation for such status from their department. Graduate Faculty not actively engaged in scholarly or creative activity are subject to removal from the Graduate Faculty. There are also approximately 50 "Associate Graduate Faculty," who are instructors with a master's degree who are active in both teaching within a graduate program. There is no Graduate Faculty Constitution and no difference in the rights or responsibilities of "Graduate Faculty" and "Associate Graduate Faculty."

The primary objectives of graduate education delineated in the Graduate Catalogue include "promoting independent thought and providing advanced declarative and procedural knowledge." In general, the graduate curriculum

appears to support these objectives. A review of randomly selected syllabi from 5000 level courses offered by the College of Business and College of Education reflect a tendency to focus on advanced content and require greater levels of independent and applied learning than similar courses offered at the undergraduate level. Similarly, a review of randomly selected 3000 level courses offered to advanced undergraduate students, but also open to graduate enrollment, reveals a commitment to clearly delineating expectations for graduate students that differ from undergraduates. Typically, graduate students are asked to complete additional reading, additional assignments and meet frequently on an independent basis with the instructor. Each of the graduate programs, to varying degrees, requires graduate students to be actively engaged in research—though such initiatives are clearly tempered by the fact programs are designed to assist students develop their skills and knowledge base in professions that don't place a premium on basic research skills.

The number of graduate degrees granted by the institution over the past ten years has remained relatively stable. The institution has granted, on average, 142 degrees each year. Graduate degrees represent approximately 17% of the total number of degrees granted by the institution each year.

These figures stand to change dramatically. There has been a precipitous drop in graduate enrollments—with fall 2000 revealing an approximate 50% decline in both graduate headcount and graduate FTE over fall term two years ago. Graduate enrollment, which accounted for between 11% and 13% of the total enrollment from 1990-1998, has dropped to 7% in 1999 and 6% in 2000. The Masters of Education degree program and the pool of Undecided Graduate Majors—programs that have accounted for approximately 90% of the graduate headcount over the past five years—have experienced significant declines. Over the past two years, there has been a 40% drop in FTE among Undecided Graduate Majors, and a 53% decline in FTE in the Master of Education program. Even the relatively robust summer enrollments of graduate students revealed a noteworthy decline in summer 2000.

Significant changes in state requirements in professions directly addressed by the graduate curriculum, the emergence of graduate programs among private schools which have lower degree requirements than state universities, and a growing number of graduate competitors in the Tulsa area were cited by the faculty as reasons for this decline.

There is evidence that the campus has certain competitive advantages at the graduate level. The University appears to have very competitive tuition rates, a graduate faculty who appear quite committed to their programs, and the recent addition of tuition waivers for graduate students. Graduate faculty, in particular, appear confident, based on the solid placements rates of the graduate programs and the good reputation of the University.

SWOSU, particularly as it continues to move through the process of implementing its strategic plan, should consider closely what role graduate studies will play on the campus in the years ahead. As indicated under Goal #3 of the Visioning Statement, the campus will retain only those programs that meet ARPA guidelines, and will add programs only if they will meet such guidelines. However, other important questions for SWOSU remain. For instance, in serving 5,500 students by the year 2003 (Goal #1), how many of these will be graduate students? Answering such a question is central to implementation of other strategic decisions (i.e., Goal #2: which graduate programs will receive special attention, where will they be marketed, and what will be said about these programs to attract students?)

Moreover, as suggested in Goal #3 of the Visioning Statement, the University is encouraged to extend its tradition of offering graduate education through distance education by exploring the viability of offering asynchronous learning opportunities. The convenience that attends such opportunities may prove particularly alluring to working adults interested in the Master of Business Administration program.

Sayre Campus

The Sayre campus serves 462 students, more than half of whom are under 23

and another third of whom are over 27. All are overwhelmingly first-generation college students place-bound by personal resources or circumstances, and to succeed in college most require the Sayre experience of highly motivating one-on-one instruction in a nurturing environment. More than 60% of Sayre's students go on to the Weatherford campus for a four-year degree. Stakeholders believe in this campus. Nearly all of the faculty and staff and 35 students turned out to discuss the strengths of their campus with a visiting NCA consultant-evaluator on a day when very few of them had to be on campus since few classes are held. Their testimony by presence and participation witnessed the commitment of these folks to a special place in sparsely populated western Oklahoma.

Enrollment has been steady for the past four years, though down from the 682-headcount-student peak in 1993 (the same year of Weatherford's peak at 4,990). An array of associate degree programs is supported by the 48-49-hour General Education program whose courses share similar or identical objectives and learning outcomes with Weatherford's. Indeed, faculty testified to their Weatherford faculty counterparts' active involvement in shaping and helping to assess these courses; nearly all SWOSU General Education courses as taught at Sayre share common textbooks, common syllabi, and common course-embedded assessment techniques with those at Weatherford, though the University transcript still marks a course with the same number and name by the

campus of delivery, a practice which should be reconsidered given the close integration of the two campuses and their faculties.

The sixteen faculty at the Sayre campus earn rank according to standards set by the Board of Regents for Oklahoma Colleges (BOROC). All fall into the Lecturer or Instructor categories, minimum requirements for each rank being set by BOROC. Six have now earned tenure as Instructors, and eight more are on tenure track and should stand for tenure in the next three to four years. Two or three faculty members should complete requirements for doctoral degrees and be eligible for promotion to Assistant Professor in the next five years, particularly if the Dean is given local autonomy in setting teaching load so as to encourage degree-completion behaviors.

In its current three-year strategic plan, Sayre campus seeks Weatherford campus support for new curricular plans, student recruitment and retention, and additional technological and pedagogical equipment. SWOSU attention to the physical plant has provided a sparkling, convenient, five-building campus adjacent to an I-40 exit and close to the Sayre branch of Western Tech, part of Oklahoma's well-funded

vocational-technical system and with which the current energetic dean is forging mutually beneficial partnerships. Sayre's three top priorities are curricular planning; recruitment and retention; and technological support. An extensive environmental scan which defines new opportunities and identifies additional investment in each of the priorities is needed. Additional investment in planning would help determine which programs of study to offer in concert with the base General Education program that constitutes almost 80% of the associate degrees; which potential student populations to attract and what it will take to retain them; and what technological and pedagogical resources to add to the well-equipped campus. The Sayre campus is already a leader in telecourse delivery (asynchronous video instruction using packages developed elsewhere) and in interactive video delivery (synchronous multisite instruction) in western Oklahoma; telecourses will be superseded by web-based self-paced instruction and interactive video expanded to new markets such as tribal communities if SWOSU chooses to make entrepreneurial investments in line with the goals of the "Agenda for Excellence."

The Sayre campus appreciates the ten months of service by its first outside dean, who is leaving to become an Associate Vice Chancellor with the Oklahoma State System of Higher Education. Planned interim on-site leadership from an experienced Weatherford campus administrator (the current Director of Assessment and Self-Study Coordinator) will provide time for local stakeholders and SWOSU leaders to identify an energetic, innovative, and caring long-term dean who will sustain the strengths of

nurture and challenge which underlie the Sayre experience and the opportunities for change which can guarantee Sayre's advancement as the front door of SWOSU to western Oklahoma, to new native American constituents, and to aspiring college students reached best by out-of-the-classroom educational delivery.

Some immediate desires at the Sayre campus include better accessibility for the mobility-limited; authority to implement daycare services, perhaps beginning as a campus-sponsored but student-run cooperative babysitting space; exploration of student housing; and assessment of needs for on-site four-year completion programs. An outsider hears a desire for a "'real' four-year, full-service comprehensive college" in

Sayre and near the Texas panhandle; and the visitor would discount that desire as parochial and excessively burdensome to taxpayers, except for recognizing the opportunity possible for SWOSU's expansion through its front door to these potential new markets. Careful balance of on-site intimacy combined with aggressively-expanded distance delivery centered at Sayre for non-traditional and underserved-population students offer SWOSU a marketing opportunity in Oklahoma City for new traditional students.

Faculty Development

The Faculty Development Committee (FDC) encourages excellence in teaching scholarly activities through programming focused on improving teaching, research and new faculty orientation. The FDC is made up of faculty who are nominated, then elected, by members of the Faculty Senate, with others nominated by the deans from each school and appointed by the Vice President for Academic Affairs and the President. The Director of Assessment serves as an ex-officio member. The Chair is elected by faculty on the FDC serving the last year of their two-year term.

In general, members of the FDC serve as liaisons, bringing specific requests from faculty of their school to the group for consideration. The Committee also conducts a needs analysis (survey) early in the academic year, a process that is reportedly plagued by a low response rate. Currently, first-year faculty participate in a program where they learn about university policies, assessment, workshops relevant to teaching improvement and grant writing. There are some departments in various colleges from across the campus that also support first-year faculty by providing mentoring opportunities. The nature and intensity of these mentoring programs tend to vary widely, but most reportedly focus on helping new faculty prepare for tenure and promotion.

The FDC has used its annual budget (during the 1997-1998, \$12,000) over the past two years to sponsor workshops for all faculty, including sessions about on-line Course Info, writing for publication, and developing critical thinking skills. The

attendance and perceived utility of these sessions are not known beyond that there appears to have been 87 faculty and 37 administrators who attended the two-day session on critical thinking. The FDC also provides support, when dollars are available, to fund requests of individual faculty to attend unique or important professional development opportunities off campus.

SWOSU, as indicated under Goal #1 of the Visioning Statement, appears committed to "incorporating faculty development programs to assist in the improvement of pedagogy." To that end, the FDC is encouraged to think in greater detail about the professional development needs of the various segments of its faculty population (e.g., first-year, probationary, mid-career, senior). A more rigorous and focused needs analysis generally, and a tracking of attendance and participant evaluation of the various professional development opportunities (e.g., workshops) specifically, would assist with long term planning.

A closer examination of the needs of first-year faculty, and a more coherent mentoring program for first-year faculty (an initiative under Goal #1) may assist some colleges with their reported problems retaining new faculty. Recent workshops about writing for publication, grant writing, and cultivating critical thinking are, no doubt, formative for probationary faculty. However, more regular and intensive professional development opportunities for probationary faculty—beyond that of the one-shot workshop—will have greater effect on their teaching and, ultimately, success in achieving promotion and tenure. Finally, it is clear that mid-career and senior faculty would benefit significantly from a greater commitment to, and promotion of, the sabbatical program. Faculty in these population segments have ostensibly ignored sabbatical opportunities, with the campus awarding only one or two (depending on which senior administrator you talk to) over the past five years.

Any progress in the area of faculty development will require greater financial commitment from SWOSU. The FDC is strongly encouraged to consider working through the highly successful Office of Sponsored Programs to locate and secure funding for innovative professional development programs.

Sponsored Programs

The Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) assists principal investigators in the preparation and submission of extramural grants, contracts, and cooperative agreements, and acts as a liaison between granting agencies and the University to ensure compliance. The OSP is overseen by the Director of Sponsored Programs, who is also responsible for activities of the institutional review board for human subjects, radiation safety, animal welfare, and intellectual property. The Director reports to the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Research Administration.

The University has an appropriate policy on Protection of Human Subjects. It was reported that there are also institutional policies on animal welfare, chemical safety, and radiation safety.

The success of the campus generally, and the OSP specifically, in securing extramural funding over the review period is remarkable. In FY1991, the OSP assisted in securing \$226,000. By FY1999, this figure had grown to \$3,300,000 and is expected to reach \$3,500,000 by the end of FY2000. Faculty, administration, and the Director of OSP are all to be commended for their roles in engineering this noteworthy increase. Further, as evidenced in Goal #3, the campus is acutely aware of this success and appears committed to ensuring continued success in the years ahead.

Distance Learning

Southwestern Oklahoma State university became involved in distance learning when Sayre Junior College, seventy miles to the west of Weatherford, was merged with SWOSU as a branch campus in 1987. Faculty on both campuses became involved in telecourses, which combine television lessons viewed at home or on campus, related assignments and readings, and examinations. Students have contact with faculty by telephone, e-mail, or in person by appointment for discussions and for examinations held on campus. Led by the director of distance learning and 2.50 professional staff members (1.50 of those on the Sayre campus) augmented by student help, distance learning continues to grow and develop. The department coordinates the Regents Television Instructional System on campus, the University distance learning offerings, which include telecourses, computer assisted instruction, and interactive video courses, and works with the associate vice president for academic affairs and the academic departments to schedule distance learning offerings. Distance learning offerings increased 37% in 1999-2000 relative to the previous year, and generated in excess of \$200,000 in tuition receipts. This fall, twenty-eight interactive video courses are being offered; last fall there were twenty. Distance learning priorities include delivery of the MBA to two sites, and increased participation in the cooperative school counselor M.Ed. degree program. The distance learning web site is straightforward, easy to use, and informative.

At this time, SWOSU has two web courses in education, and one in business, with a number of web-enhanced offerings in various disciplines. Blackboard or Course Info became available to faculty members this fall, and on the first faculty development day of fall 2000 in August, thirty faculty members participated in a "train the trainer" program using that tool. The director of instructional technology indicated that another 19 faculty members are learning Blackboard and that the campus community is on its way to incorporating asynchronous learning into its pedagogical menu. The relatively early, and

certainly sustained, success of the Sayre telecourse initiative contributed to a delayed move into web-based and web-enhanced course development.

Distance learning initiatives should be expanded, with particular attention to various modalities, including asynchronous learning.

Continuing Education, Conference Coordination, and Media Services

The Division of Continuing Education falls under the supervision of the director of the conference center and media services. The School of Pharmacy is heavily involved in a range of continuing education programs, which are the responsibility of the associate dean in the School of Pharmacy, who also coordinates programming for non-traditional students. Within the School of Education, Friday evening and Saturday workshops for in-service teachers, often grant-supported, are effective and mission-consistent.

The Conference Center, originally a church which is located directly across the street from Southwestern, is a considerable asset to the University. A rough count of activity during fiscal year 2000 revealed 135 scheduled events, ninety-four of which were University-sponsored, that attracted over sixty-eight hundred participants to the facility. The director supervises the operation of the center, and aided by one full-time assistant director, helps to plan and conduct the conferences, seminars, workshops, meetings, and special events hosted by the University Conference Center. The director also administers media services, which includes selection, acquisition, distribution, and maintenance of audiovisual equipment. Video programs obtained and produced through media services are relocated in the library's collection for distribution to faculty, staff, students, and members of the public.

UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

There are library facilities on both the Weatherford and Sayre campus, and the Sayre Library has recently undergone remodeling. The library staff is service oriented and maintains policies which insure access through scheduling, computer availability, and newly acquired electronic databases. For example, the Weatherford campus library is open 84 hours per week. Materials are selected carefully to maximize resources and the library reports that the budget in this regard has been increased by 10 percent in five of the past seven years. The use of interlibrary loan and the increasing numbers of electronic sources for scholarly journals including J-Store are viewed as positive accomplishments by faculty and students.

TECHNOLOGY AND COMPUTER SERVICES

The University Computer/Telecommunications Advisory committee is appropriately representative of academic and administrative areas and contains

members with technological expertise. Although the SWOSU Faculty Handbook does not list a student member, the committee chairperson indicated that there is a student member, normally the president of the student association. The advisory committee makes recommendations to the academic vice president and effectively carries out its multiple charges. The advisory committee (1) solicits information from the University community concerning present and future technology-related needs; (2) develops a technology strategic plan that is linked to campus-wide and departmental action plans and includes short- and long-range acquisition, implementation, and coordination of technology-related activities on a University-wide basis; and (3) recommends standards for software, hardware, and other related items that will be available University-wide to ensure uniformity, accessibility, and economy.

All technology plan goals set for the initial three-year plan spanning 1998-2001 were met, with two exceptions. The plan called for a faculty development program to facilitate University-wide training in all areas of computer and telecommunication applications. The academic vice president referred this to the Faculty Senate. That body rejected the proposal, citing no need for the program. The plan also proposed the development of Strategic Control Units (SCU) across campus to provide effective technological coordination for each SCU, e.g., academic school. This suggestion failed to gain the support of the Council of Deans, because of the costs associated with the necessary faculty reassigned time. The advisory committee has made good progress on the second, three-year technology plan, and will bring both failed recommendations back for reconsideration as components of the second plan.

University computer services consists of a director who supervises eight staff members: a webmaster, added as a new allocation in June 2000; a network administrator; three program analysts; a technician; a telecommunications expert; and an administrative assistant. The unit is responsible for both academic and administrative computing, and this organizational structure works well at Southwestern. Computer services personnel consistently emphasize the *service* component of computer services, and work successfully to provide its various constituents with what is required to accomplish assigned responsibilities. Working with the University Computer/Telecommunications Advisory committee, software and hardware standards are established and are reviewed as many as four times each year.

Computer services' first goal in the current three-year action plan is to incorporate the technology plan fully into "The Agenda for Excellence." Secondly, the unit will work to ensure that departmental action plans are similarly linked. This fall, for example, computer services plans to pilot three approaches to creating computer access in the residence halls, which is Goal 1, Initiative 5 in "The Agenda for Excellence."

SWOSU has developed and implemented a technology plan and technological support for faculty and students that deserves commendation.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment efforts at Southwestern Oklahoma University are overseen by the Director of Assessment and an Assessment Committee with members appointed from constituencies across the campus by the Vice President of Academic Affairs.

General Education assessment efforts are exemplar. Clearly stated behaviorally-based outcomes are closely linked to the curriculum, with assessment data collected each semester through a number of curriculum-embedded quantitative and qualitative measures. Though data collection efforts are still in their nascent stages, there is anecdotal evidence that such information is being used by the instructors to adjust pedagogy, and may eventually influence decisions relevant to the revision of the curriculum. The General Education Committee, the Director of General Education, the Director of Assessment, and the faculty involved in the collection and analysis of the data at the Weatherford and Sayre campuses, are to be commended for the intelligent design and their relentless efforts in implementing this model program.

The General Education Director and Committee members recognize the labor-intensive nature of, and appear mindful of the risks affiliated with, using only curriculum-embedded assessment procedures. They are encouraged to continue their exploration of using pre- and post-test measures to affirm that the outcomes are largely a by-product of the curriculum, and identifying and implementing ways of making the current data-collection system less onerous or, at least, more widely recognized as meritorious/valuable to the University.

All undergraduate and graduate programs have developed assessment plans—plans that include the identification of assessment outcomes and measures. However, there appears significant variation among the academic programs relative to how much progress each has made in implementing their plan. In general, many programs in the School of Business, the School of Education, and the School of Health Sciences have identified assessment outcomes, and there is evidence that many are active in employing measures in accordance with the requirements of their accrediting organizations. (Among these, degree programs such as the Bachelor of Science - Elementary Education, are to be commended for delineating behavioral-based objectives and finding a number of internal and external assessment measures.) Other degree programs, primarily in the School of Arts and Sciences, appear to have invested little energy in identifying specific behavioral-based outcomes or demonstrated commitment to collecting data.

The Assessment Committee is encouraged to assist those academic units struggling with the implementation of an assessment plan. One suggestion is to

make more public the methods and successes of those programs that are more advanced in the assessment process. There is reason for optimism in believing that all academic programs can be brought up to speed quickly. There is ample evidence that increasing numbers of faculty are becoming conversant with the vocabulary, processes, and best practices in assessment. Moreover, basic mechanisms exist for sharing assessment information with internal and external constituencies. In discussions with students, faculty and administration, it became clear that there is a growing awareness of the relevance of assessment in achieving the core mission of the University.

Finally, SWOSU is encouraged to assist programs in adopting processes that use assessment results to improve pedagogy, revise the curriculum, and influence departmental three-year budgeting and planning decisions. In general, assessment stands to become a more integral part of institutional budgeting and planning decisions when it can be made a part of other institutional processes (e.g., Academic Program Review). Further, as the assessment efforts on the campus continue to mature, the Assessment Committee might work to identify learning outcomes manifest in settings and activities outside the curriculum (e.g., Student Affairs initiatives), and consider methods of assessing such outcomes using not only the ample student perception data currently collected, but also performance-based data.

STUDENT AFFAIRS

The Division of Student Services, under the direction of a Vice President who reports to the President, provides an effective array of student services including: Student Senate and Student Organizations, Student Development Services and Placement, Residential Life, Student Health Services, and High School – College Relations including the Upward Bound Program. There appears to be a sound institutional commitment to educational programs that enhances undergraduate student life. The Vice President has assembled a strong team of individuals who understand student learning and personal development and who work collaboratively as a team and with others at the University. Staff in this administrative unit seem to be knowledgeable, energetic, and committed to developing excellence in programs and services to students.

Financial and human resources, however, appear to be unevenly distributed at the University. There is a need in the majority of these offices for an increase in basic funding in order to continue day-to-day operations and further develop important programs and services. This unit could make a greater impact on students if human and financial resources were enhanced. Opportunities for professional development are available but rarely is this option possible at the national level. Much can be learned by involvement in professional organizations and associations; therefore, increased funding in this area is important. A review all of the budgets, salaries, and human resources of this unit in order to become

more equitable with other administrative areas at the University and within the state is encouraged.

Members of the NCA team met with several students and found them engaging, motivated, and generally positive about their experiences at SWOSU. The majority of the students enthusiastically report that they receive a quality education from the University that will ultimately contribute to their intellectual development and overall success. However, some believe that resources are allocated to some of the more popular academic programs while many of the liberal arts programs are inadequately funded and face elimination. They believe they are studying and living in a safe environment and name individual administrators and academic advisors who go out of their way to make their college experiences invaluable.

Students do not believe they have a voice or input on many of the decisions made by the administration regarding items that directly affect them. In fact, they believe information is kept from them until final decisions have been made. And when given responses to many of their concerns, they feel that they are often given misinformation. It is important to note these feelings do not include the student services staff; they are perceived as always going the extra mile to meet student expectations and as caring, supportive, and hard working individuals. For example, without exception student leaders expressed a desire to have their tuition and fees increased if given an opportunity to have some input regarding how these funds would be spent. It appears that the Vice President for Student Services is not always a full participant when major administrative decisions (i.e., academic programs, budget, ADA) are considered; this may contribute to student perceptions regarding their limited role in the governance process.

Renovations are underway to make the facilities function as residence hall units rather than the traditional "dormitory" style. The University should be applauded for this position. Although the method employed is somewhat slow, students appear to be extremely patient and are looking forward to living in more adequate space and pleasant surroundings. Generally, the residence halls appear clean and well maintained by the custodial staff and the residents. Charges for rooms seem to be low and should be reviewed. In an effort to make living spaces more inviting through renovations, installing air conditioning, wiring the halls for cable and the internet, and charging a higher fee or variable fee for the type of room requested may be an option to be able to continue to infuse these buildings with more amenities.

Some attention needs to be given to the current situation in Student Health Services. Although there does not seem to be major complaints from students regarding the health services they receive, it appears as if the current arrangement with a local physician holds the University hostage. Because of the lack of medical doctors in the area who would be able to provide health care for students at the institution, it appears as if the University has been forced to

accept care from a physician who actually has very little commitment to servicing students and the University. The University is encouraged to review this issue so that appropriate health care can be provided by a caring, accessible, and available physician.

The Dean of Students seems to be the person responsible for ADA compliance issues at the University—especially those that affect students. However, the Dean doesn't have a budget or any involvement with major decisions which affect renovations of space, including bringing the University into compliance. Therefore, a thorough review of this should be done so an agreed-upon plan for bringing the University up to compliance with the ADA is done in a more systematic way. Efforts need to be made to assure that the special needs of these students and staff are met and that all of the appropriate persons are involved in the planning process to meet this legislation.

Although the Dean of Students is not an academic dean, either this individual or the Vice President for Student Services should be a part of the academic deans meetings. There seems to be much that either of these individuals could add to the meeting as important issues are discussed. It is believed that this arrangement would better serve the students and the administration well.

In the absence of the University being able to afford additional staff, it is not surprising that graduate students are not given an opportunity to have graduate assistantships in Student Services. One graduate student has been assigned to the counseling center to assist with state mandated activity transcripts. Student Affairs is a legitimate profession and provides many skills, which could be appropriately used by these students in many of their professional careers and lives.

There is a lack of cohesion in the enrollment management area (admissions, financial aid, and orientation), although it appears that they are working well. It is suggested that these areas continue to do so even if they are not tightly organized. Since the University has identified admissions as a goal, it would be appropriate to review the structure of this unit and also give careful consideration to the role of retention initiatives.

INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS

Southwestern Oklahoma State is a member of the Lone Star Athletic Conference, which is affiliated with the National Collegiate Athletic Association's Division II level program for athletics. The University sponsors 10 NCAA sanctioned sports (five for men and five for women). The sponsored NCAA sports include football, basketball, baseball, soccer, and golf for men and softball, cross country, basketball, golf, and soccer for women. The University also sponsors men's and women's rodeo, which is affiliated with the National Intercollegiate Rodeo Association. The Athletic Department operates under the

leadership of the Athletic Director, who reports to the President of the University. The University Athletic Council consisting of selected faculty members advises the Athletic Director concerning athletic matters and serves as a faculty voice in athletic affairs.

The Athletic Department has completed a detailed self-study within the past year to enhance the integrity of its program and insure University compliance with NCAA philosophy, policies, and rules. The University is a recent new NCAA affiliate and has just completed movement from the NAIA to the NCAA at the Division II level. The University has appointed a member of the women's coaching staff as compliance officer and appears to be in compliance with NCAA policies and rules as well as the policies of the Lone Star Athletic Conference.

Scholarship distribution includes full scholarships (tuition, room and board) broken down as follows:

<u>Sport</u>	<u>Men/Women</u>	<u>Number of Full Scholarship Equivalents</u>
Soccer	m	6.2
Soccer	w	6.2
Golf	m	2.1
Golf	w	2.1
Football	m	27.0
Cross Country	w	2.1
Softball	w	6.2
Baseball	m	6.2
Basketball	m	10.0
Basketball	w	10.0

Given the reality that 53% of the total student enrollment at Southwestern consists of women and 47% men, there remains room to increase participation levels for women in intercollegiate athletics. The imbalance of scholarship support and participation rates between men and women is driven by the heavy participation inherent in football.

The Department notes that there has been little demand for additional sports opportunities for women. However, the University demonstrated no evidence of any recent survey of women students to determine actual interest levels in additional intercollegiate sports opportunities for women.

The total University budget for Athletics for the 2001 fiscal year is \$723,720. The value of a full scholarship for fiscal year 2001 is \$4,956 for two academic semesters. Of the \$723,720 budgeted for Athletics, \$585,620 are budgeted from student activity fees. Since Athletics generates a revenue of only \$12,000, the program is heavily dependent on mandatory activity fees assessed to each enrolled student. While this situation is not unusual for a small to medium sized university, the University may have to adjust fee levels or support for Athletics as it implements enhanced student life activities for all students at the University.

The team also encourages the University to consider additional opportunities for women and to periodically survey the interests of enrolled students as well as potential students in increased opportunities for participation in Athletics.

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Criterion Four: Southwestern Oklahoma State University can continue to accomplish its purposes and strengthen its education effectiveness.

PLANNING

Strategic planning has been a central feature of life at SWOSU since the summer of 1998. A Planning and Resource Council (PRC) was appointed by the President to develop a vision statement and a plan for the University. Data collection teams were established to review internal and external expectations and values. Sixty-five people from the University and the community participated in a special session on December 9, 1998, to shape the general direction for the plan. Ultimately, five goals were identified and approved by the PRC.

The plan was integrated into the work of the North Central Association Self-Study Committee since the institution chose to make this a special emphasis. The goal statements were next operationalized into action plans with specified completion dates. The entire process is intended to be completed within five years. This was communicated to the University community in a general meeting in August 1999. It was evident to the team that the institution is taking The Agenda for Excellence seriously and that significant progress in addressing the five goals is already well underway. It can be expected that future leadership will adhere to the plan with the support and encouragement of the University

community and the Board of Regents of Oklahoma Colleges. To repeat, the five goals are

- By 2003, Southwestern will be serving 5,500 students and will have advanced its position as one of the premier universities in Oklahoma with an emphasis on quality education.
- By 2001, the University will have an effective marketing plan that promotes greater exposure of its departments and programs.
- By 2001, the University will have enhanced the effective and efficient management of its resources.
- By 2003, the University will have established cooperative arrangements to enhance its mission of teaching, scholarly activity, public service, and economic development.
- By 2005, the assets of the Southwestern Oklahoma State University Foundation will have increased to ten million dollars.

Other key planning elements including the three year budget plan, Academic Plans as mandated by the Oklahoma Regents, and the University Telecommunications/

Computer Strategic Plan are to be closely aligned and the visiting team encourages the inclusion of the anticipated facilities planning document. Regular feedback to the University community on progress reports of The Agenda for Excellence from the leadership of the institution is an expectation expressed in the stipulation of a progress report.

DEVELOPMENT

The University is supported by two Foundations. The largest, the Southwestern Oklahoma State University Foundation, provides general support to the University and scholarship support for its students. The assets of the Foundation have grown from approximately \$800,000 in 1990 to \$7,000,000 in the current year. The University has successfully completed two capital campaigns and with the help of a consultant made significant strides in building a culture of giving among its local, regional, and national constituencies. One of the major goals of the University's strategic plan, The Agenda for Excellence, is to increase the financial holdings and assets of its main foundation to \$10,000,000 by the year 2005.

In addition to the SWOSU Foundation, the University is supported by a specialized foundation, the Southwestern Pharmacy Alumni Foundation, which provides general support to the School of Pharmacy and scholarships for Pharmacy students. The total assets of this foundation are approximately \$2,500,000. In addition, the University maintains a separate trust fund dedicated to students, the Distinguished Freshman Trust Fund, with assets of \$400,000. This fund is exclusively dedicated to scholarships for incoming students. The

University also maintains an endowed fund with the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education. The earnings from this fund of approximately \$550,000 is dedicated to the University's lectureship and cultural events series, Panorama.

The Foundation records are audited on an annual basis by an outside auditing firm and the team reviewed original copies of these audits. The audits appeared to represent fairly and accurately the written documentation regarding assets available to the University through the SWOSU Foundation.

The team notes as an area of strength the ability of the University and its Foundation to attract resources through a substantially increased level of giving. The Foundation recently announced the funding of its first endowed chair at the University.

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Criterion Five: Southwestern Oklahoma State University demonstrates integrity in its practices and relationships.

FEDERAL COMPLIANCE AND THIRD PARTY COMMENTS

Information related to federal compliance and third party comments was included in the material and exhibits available to the team during its on-campus visit. The team reviewed materials and conducted appropriate interviews and arrived at the following findings.

Federal Compliance

The team reviewed materials related to the University's semester credit awards and program length, and concluded that they are similar to those of other regionally accredited institutions. The semester hour is defined as 50 minutes of instructor/contact once a week for sixteen weeks. The sixteen week semester excludes periods of enrollment, registration, orientation, and vacation or break time. The Associate of Arts degree requires 64 credit hours of satisfactory academic performance; the Bachelors, 124 credit hours; and the Masters, 32 credit hours.

Tuition and fees include all charges for enrollment with the standard exceptional charges for special services such as standardized examination fees, specialized laboratory and supply fees, health care fees, and other service and/or activity fees. The fee structure is reasonable and traditional for a four-year

university. Tuition rates included six levels: lower division for resident students (1000 and 2000 level courses); lower division for non-resident students; upper division (3000 and 4000) for resident students; upper division for non-resident students; graduate division (5000 and above) for resident; and graduate division for non-resident students.

The University charges an additional program fee for all students enrolled in the Doctor of Pharmacy program.

Southwestern Oklahoma State University is in compliance with Title IV of the Higher Education Reauthorization Act and its default rate has declined the past several years from 8.8 % to 7.5%. The Director of the Financial Aids Office shared original documentation of the University's authorization and good standing with the United States Office of Education with respect to its federally financed financial aids programs.

The University's financial aids programs are audited annually by staff of the Board of Regents of Oklahoma Colleges and these audits have generated no adverse findings or questionable costs.

North Central Compliance

Southwestern Oklahoma University meets the Commission's requirements regarding publishing in its catalog its affiliation with the Commission and the publication of the Commission's address and telephone numbers.

With respect to professional accreditation requirements, no school or college within the university with specialized programs covers more than one-third of either the institution's offerings or students. The North Central Association's Commission on Institutions of Higher Education is the university's only institutional accrediting body.

Student Complaints

Southwestern Oklahoma has a process in place and collects information about student complaints that are shared with the University President and/ or the appropriate Vice President or administrator. The team reviewed these complaints and the University's responses and viewed the complaints as routine and the University's responses as appropriate.

Third Party Comments

The team reviewed the process the University used to inform the public of the impending NCA accreditation visit and invited public comment about the University and its programs. Notices were published in the two main newspapers

last June. The process of seeking comments generated no comments of a positive or negative nature.

V. INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHS

1. The University has developed and is implementing a five-year plan, "The Agenda for Excellence: A Vision for Southwestern," which presents a strategic vision, goals, and action plans. This plan, which served as the focus for the institutional self-study, calls attention to four areas: 1) quality, cost effectiveness, and demand-oriented programs; 2) public awareness of the strengths of the University; 3) cooperative arrangements with other institutions; and 4) partnerships with other enterprises. This strategic plan offers the opportunity to attain realistic goals through processes which bring together planning, budgeting, and resource allocation.
2. The General Education program is a model of a faculty-driven and effectively assessed curriculum that delivers the knowledge, skills, and values commonly embedded in a liberal education.
3. The Sayre campus addresses a place-bound population whose access to higher education is limited; Sayre students experience sound education in a nurturing atmosphere that leads to satisfying employment while preparing them for further educational opportunities.
4. Faculty, staff, and students demonstrate commitment, dedication, and loyalty to Southwestern Oklahoma State University.
5. The University has enhanced its ability to attract resources through a substantially increased level of giving to its Foundation and through increased grant activity.
6. The University has developed and implemented a technology plan and technological support for faculty and students that deserves commendation.
7. The University's ability to implement significant parts of the strategic plan is strengthened by the reality that the campus is essentially debt free with no outstanding long-term bonded indebtedness exists.
8. The self-study report presents evidence of the bulldog determination of the SWOSU community in responding to each of the concerns of the 1990 NCA visiting team.

VI. TEAM'S CHALLENGES

1. Embedded in the five goals of "The Agenda for Excellence" is a set of concerns which can only be met by sustained and committed leadership

- from the Board of Regents of Oklahoma Colleges and the senior administration.
2. The University should continue to achieve greater salary flexibility which recognizes market factors and merit.
 3. Full implementation of the spirit and substance of ADA requirements throughout both campuses requires more attention.
 4. Enhancement of physical facilities to support student life activities, i.e., wellness, intramurals, and technologically interconnected residence halls, as well as addressing the current inadequacies of the student union, should be given high priority as resources allow.
 5. Enrollment declines in selected areas, and particularly in graduate education, threaten an appropriate balance of resource allocation to maintain core missions; they require continuing close attention as presented in "The Agenda for Excellence."

VII. TEAM'S ADVICE AND SUGGESTIONS FOR INSTITUTIONAL IMPROVEMENT

1. Faculty and administrators are encouraged to share information broadly and systematically with the campus community to facilitate a more open internal allocation of resources as the goals of "The Agenda for Excellence" are implemented.
2. The University is encouraged to assist those academic units struggling with the implementation of an assessment plan and should encourage all programs to move towards a process of using assessment results in improving pedagogy, revising the curriculum, and influencing departmental (and institutional) budgeting and planning decisions.
3. A new physical master plan should be developed and widely shared with the University community.
4. Distance learning initiatives should be expanded, with particular attention to various modalities, including asynchronous learning.
5. To develop a more diverse faculty and administrative core, inclusive and open national searches for administrative and faculty vacancies are encouraged.
6. Professional development opportunities for first-year, probationary, and mid-career faculty and staff should be expanded.

VIII. TEAM'S RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE

The Team's recommendations for action which include the recommendation to continue the accreditation of Southwestern Oklahoma State University to 2010-2011 are shown on the attached Worksheet for the Statement of Affiliation status. The Team further recommends a progress report to the NCA staff by June 30,

2004, on the accomplishments of The Agenda for Excellence: A Vision for Southwestern. The Team's reasons for its recommendations are

1. Southwestern Oklahoma State University has a clearly stated and well-understood sense of institutional purpose and mission. The mission statement has the approval of the governing board and is published in the University Catalog and on the website.
2. A strong commitment to excellence in teaching is recognized by faculty, administrators, and trustees as central to the mission of Southwestern Oklahoma State University.
3. Physical facilities provide for an attractive physical setting.
4. The University has a dedicated and loyal constituency including students, faculty, staff, administrators, and alumni.
5. Southwestern Oklahoma State University is carefully managed and fiscally sound.
6. The progress report is requested to address the special emphasis which was at the heart of the NCA Self-Study. The report should document the institution's progress in meeting the strategic vision and five goals delineated in The Agenda for Excellence.