Introduction to the Report of the Higher Learning Commission
Of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools
Consultant-Evaluator Team Visit

Although institutional reaccreditation by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA) occurs only once every ten years, the preparation leading up to the reaccreditation is complex and time-consuming. The self-study process was formally begun in February 2000, with the appointment of Dr. Roanld Modras, Professor in Theological Studies, to chair the Self-Study Steering Committee. Hundreds of SLU students, staff, and faculty contributed to the development of the self-study report submitted in February 2002. This report formed the basis for the comprehensive visit by a team of Consultant-Evaluators, April 15-18, 2002. After their visit, the team prepared a written report which, along with our self-study materials, was the subject of review in August by a Readers' Panel selected by NCA. Finally, on September 9, the Higher Learning Commission's Institutional Actions Council met and approved SLU's continuing accreditation through 2012.

As the Consultant-Evaluator team completed work on campus last spring, it provided an overview of its findings and recommendations. These comments were reported in *Grand Connections* and *University News*, and by Father Biondi in his spring State of the University address. The full text of the Consultant-Evaluator team's two-part written report is available below. The "Assurances" section of the report elaborates on the team's findings with respect to NCA compliance standards and forms the core of the report. It is binding on the institution. A consultative "Advancement" section follows, and provides suggestions about how we might address challenges we ourselves identified through our institution's self-study. The remarks in the "Advancement" section are advisory.

ASSURANCE SECTION

SECTION ONE

REPORT OF A VISIT FOR CONTINUED ACCREDITATION OF

SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY

St. Louis, Missouri

April 15-17, 2002

for

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

EVALUATION TEAM

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Table of Contents

St. Louis University

THE ASSURANCE SECTION
FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION VISIT

I. CONTEXT AND NATURE OF THE VISIT

A. Institutional Context

- With two campuses and 13 schools and colleges, Saint Louis University (SLU) is a large**,** complex, Catholic-Jesuit urban university. The past ten years have been among the most eventful in its 184 year history. In 1994, the Carnegie Foundation classified Saint Louis University as a Research II university and now**,** through reclassification, as a Research-Extensive University.

- Saint Louis University has gone from a primarily commuter to a residential institution for undergraduates to a institution that, today, has tripled the number of students living on campus. Moreover, it has gone from being viewed as a regional university to one with a national profile.

- The University has employed a wide variety of means to communicate the meaning and import of its Catholic, Jesuit mission. The "Decade of Renaissance," just passed, has proved to be a bridge to a new, modern era, and one that holds a bright promise for all involved with this forward-thinking and progressive university.

B. Unique Aspects of the Visit

- None

C. Off-site or Branch Campuses Visited

- Two team members visited and evaluated the Madrid, Spain campus of Saint Louis University on April 4-5, 2002. This visit was made for the purpose of evaluating campus facilities, the administration, and the faculty for the adequacy of offering degree programs. In addition the request to offer the M.A. in English as the first degree offered by the Madrid campus was evaluated.

D. Interactions with Institutional Constituencies

- The full range of mid and senior level administrators, faculty, and students were interviewed including:

  Members of the President's Coordinating Council
  Selected Enrollment Management Staff
  President
  Representatives of various Student Affairs offices
  Director of the Office of Institutional Study
  Selected Members of the Institutional Review Board
  Selected Alumni Representatives
  Representatives of the University Assessment Committee
  Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate
  Open Session with Faculty (approximately 75—85 in attendance)
  Dean of the School of Nursing and four School administrators
  Dean of the School of Medicine and Associate Dean
  Registrar
  Financial Aid Officer
  Undergraduate Admissions Officer
  Selected Members of the Board of Trustees
  Dean of the School of Public Health; three School administrators
  "Self Study Conversation" attendees (approximately 34)
  Dean, School of Business
  MBA Program Director
  Chief Information Officer
  University Librarian

    Economics Department Chair
    Dean, College of Law
    Dean, College of Philosophy and Letters
    Dean, Parks College of Engineering and Aviation
    Vice-President, Madrid Campus
    English and Communications department heads and two faculty
     at the Madrid Campus
    Chair and two faculty members, English Department, Universidad
     Autonoma de Madrid
    Department Heads of Business and Administration, English and and
     Communications, Modern Languages and Arts, Sciences and
     Engineering, Madrid Campus
    Dean, College of Arts and Sciences
    Board of Undergraduate Studies
    English Department Chair and Graduate Coordinator, SL Campus
    Two Associate Deans, College of Arts and Sciences
    Board of Graduate Studies
    Director, International Center
    Director, Honors Program
    Representatives of the Academic Services and Advising Offices
    Professional Advisor in the School of Business
    Pre-Professional Health Advisor

- Separate, open sessions were held for faculty clerical and technical support staff, and students.

- The Team Chair proposed (and the Self Study Coordinator and Associate Provost accepted) that a group of approximately 40 faculty, department chairs, deans, support staff, and graduate and undergraduate students be assembled during the visit for the purpose of engaging in a conversation regarding the present and future of the University. This "conversation group" met in a relaxed, parlor-like setting, was facilitated by the Team Chair (with the majority of other Team members present), and proved highly stimulating and reflective for the approximately 36 individuals in attendance.

II   COMMITMENT TO PEER REVIEW

A. Comprehensiveness of the Self-Study Process

- The self-study process extended over a two plus year period and involved wide representation from within the University.

- The self-study addressed all criteria in a comprehensive manner and was easy to read. It included strengths/challenges for all major areas.

- Twelve subcommittees involving close to 100 persons studied numerous specific aspects of the University.

- At the open faculty session, a significant number of faculty members noted that they were familiar with, or had been involved in, the Self Study process.

B. Integrity of the Self-Study

- The self-study represented an honest and comprehensive portrayal of Saint Louis University. Faculty, staff, administrators, students, and alumni were familiar with the self-study. No one within the Saint Louis University community, with whom the Team spoke, challenged the content or the process from which the self-study emerged.

- The Team found no inconsistencies in the self-study.

- The self-study was congruent with the materials reviewed on campus.

- The self-study was congruent with individual interviews held on-site.

C. Capacity to Address Previously Identified Challenges

- The University is capable of and willing to address challenges. Previously identified challenges included issues of governance,

communications, "mission training" for new employees, and evaluation of academic advising, especially in the transition from the first to the second year. Evidence exists to support the position that the University addressed these issues. However, the University admits that more needs to be done to enhance faculty participation in decision-making and governance**.**

- The University's term **"**Decade of Renaissance" appropriately describes the extent of positive change since the last comprehensive visit.

- Project SLU2000 addressed academic quality, competitive research position, and reputation of the University. It involved a five-year $100 million initiative to move the University forward.

- The current sound financial status of SLU will facilitate future planning and management.

- Progress has been made on the Assessment Plan, but SLU has not yet achieved the comprehensiveness needed in this area.

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

- Announcements of the Evaluation Visit were placed in local newspapers as well as the student newspaper, on the University's website, and in communication to alumni.

- One third-party comment was received by The Higher Learning Commission. That comment was offered by a student expressing

disappointment that SLU, from that individual's perspective, lacked flexibility with its doctoral programs and was unable to accommodate part-time and evening enrollment in Business.

III. FEDERAL COMPLIANCE

- The Team reviewed the compliance areas and finds that the institution has responded to the items required by the Federal government.

IV. AFFIRMATION OF GENERAL INSTITUTIONAL REQUIREMENTS

- The GIR's are met.

V. FULFILLMENT OF THE CRITERIA

A. CRITERION ONE

The institution demonstrates that it has clear and publicly stated purposes consistent with its mission and appropriate to an institution of higher education.

Evidence that demonstrates fulfillment of the criterion

- The mission and goals are clarified and reaffirmed periodically.

- The mission permeates all sectors of the University. Faculty, students, staff, and alumni are very aware of that mission.

- There have been overt efforts to communicate mission and to orient personnel and students to that mission**.**

- Persons interviewed spoke of significant personal and professional commitment to the SLU mission.

- The Jesuit identity and legacy has been reaffirmed in the past decade.

- There is a strategic planning process underway; planning is now being addressed at the unit level. This planning process is based on the mission and goals.

- Strategic decisions by the Board of Trustees and the President during the past decade have been appropriate to promote the mission of SLU, e.g., Project SLU2000 and the sale of the Saint Louis University Hospital to Tenet Corporation to better support medical education.

- The institution is clearly mission driven, as reflected in a prevailing effort to excel as the "finest" Catholic Jesuit University in the United States. All campus stakeholders understand and communicate this pervasive central purpose.

- Saint Louis University employs a wide variety of approaches and techniques through which to receive feedback from its many constituencies. That information is used to evaluate its purposes and chart new or revised directions.

- Each division of the University has its own publication or publications. The mission of the University is clearly stated in all publications.

Evidence that needs strengthening

- Comprehensive and consistent evaluation of mission and goals has not been achieved completely in spite of several efforts to address assessment broadly.

- Assessment and strategic planning have been brought together under one office with the goal of coordinating a comprehensive assessment plan and assessing some outcomes at the University level. Continuity of this new office is critical to integrate assessment and planning and the ongoing assessment of mission and goals at the University level and to coordinate assessment generally to "get the total view" as stated by the administrator of this office.

Evidence that requires attention and Commission follow-up:

None

Recommendation of the Team

Pattern of evidence sufficiently demonstrated; no Commission follow-up recommended by the Team.

2. ## CRITERION TWO

   The institution demonstrates that it has effectively organized the human, financial and physical resources necessary to accomplish its purposes.

   Evidence that demonstrates fulfillment of the criterion

   - Governance—External

     − The University has a devoted, active, diverse, well-qualified and knowledgeable governing Board. The Trustees are involved, committed, informed, and aware of challenges facing the University. The Board of Trustees is about to initiate a $300+ million dollar campaign.

- **Governance—Internal**

  – The University has a capable and committed administration and support
    staff

  – Individual colleges and schools have developed strong systems for shared
    governance.

- Faculty

  – The University's faculty is capable and accomplished. Faculty/student ratio
    has improved since 1997 from 1:16 to 1:12. Full-time faculty is 86% of
    the total faculty. 96.4% of the faculty hold terminal degrees.

  – Steady progress has been made in gender diversity, but ethnic and racial
    diversity of the faculty remain a challenge.

  – The faculty is committed to teaching, research, and service; but uphold the
    long-time commitment to students and to quality teaching.

  – Significant faculty development opportunities are available at the
    college/unit level and are used by faculty.

- Financial Resources

  – The University has a balanced budget of more than $400 million and an
    endowment of more than $800 million. More than $30 million in federal
    research funds flow through the University on an annual basis, most of
    them to the medical school. The endowment grew dramatically in the late
    1990s and the $300 million sale of the University's hospital added to that
    endowment.

- The University appropriately uses significant tuition discounting to foster its enrollment goals with regard to both the quantity and quality of the students it recruits.

- The University has a well-managed advancement function and has been raising approximately $30 million a year from all sources.

Evidence that needs strengthening

- Fast moving changes have required centralized strategic decision making perceived by some negatively and as too centralized.

- Communication to and from the President's Coordinating Council is a concern. The group's meetings are confidential and while minutes are kept, no effort is made to disseminate the work of the council to the campus nor are members supposed to discuss the issues the PCC is considering with other campus colleagues. Many of the Deans of the various colleges and schools feel especially out of the loop on important institution-wide decision-making conversations.

- Some faculty and department heads expressed need for more effective communication and involvement in decisions affecting the future of the University.

Evidence that requires attention and Commission follow-up:

None

<u>Recommendation of the Team</u>

Pattern of evidence sufficiently demonstrated; no Commission follow-up

recommended by the Team.

3. **CRITERION THREE**

The institution is accomplishing its educational and other purposes.

Evidence that demonstrates fulfillment of criterion

- The University's administrative system appears to be operationally sound and responsive.

- Generally, the Colleges and Schools have stable and committed leadership; there is strong attention to curricular development; and processes are in place for faculty involvement in decision-making.

- Across the University, significant resources are committed toward the support of faculty and staff development.

- When appropriate, academic programs hold appropriate discipline or professional accreditations with all recent accreditation reports reflecting very favorably upon their respective programs.

- Individual liberal arts core curricula, with high levels of commonality, have been integrated into the undergraduate degree programs of each of the colleges and schools offering undergraduate degrees.

- Curriculum development is characterized by review at both the department and college level for both undergraduate and graduate curriculum and courses.

- The Student Services structure appears to work well, with professionals in all associated areas working together to meet the needs of students and assist the institution accomplish its purposes.

- While very traditional in organizational structure and programming, the University Libraries effectively serve the scholarly information needs of faculty and students.

- Information technologies are rapidly evolving and, generally, are supportive of both academic and administrative offices and units. Saint Louis University has taken a cautious, indeed conservative, approach to the incorporation and deployment of new technologies, especially instructional technologies. This appears entirely appropriate, given the pedagogical principles typically associated with Jesuit education and its emphasis on small classes and personalized instruction.

- International opportunities permeate all facets of the University, with a major international campus in Madrid, Spain, evolving over nearly 30 years into Spain's premier international university. SLU provides many opportunities to ready students for a world in which commerce and communication daily cross national boundaries.

- The Honors Program adds a significant and distinctive element to the University's programming and contributes to the its ability to accomplish its academic purposes.

- The Athletic Division contributes effectively to the quality of the overall University experience by offering highly competitive sports in a major conference.

- An exceptional range of spiritual and service opportunities are offered through the Campus Ministry Office. These opportunities clearly help the institution accomplish its purposes.

Evidence that needs strengthening

- The School of Allied Health needs permanent leadership.

- All health programs express desire for more diversity; such diversity is particularly needed in the faculty.

- Satisfaction with shared governance varies among health related programs, ranging from significant satisfaction to significant dissatisfaction.

- A *coherent* program of assessment of the liberal arts core curricula has not been developed completely or implemented. The University has been focusing most of its efforts on assessment at the program level at the time the student completes the degree. This means that the assessment of those elements particularly addressed by the core courses is incorporated into assessment at degree completion time, rather than earlier in the student's undergraduate career.

- University-wide student learning outcomes have been adopted, but those that are specifically to be addressed by the core curricula

have not been identified comprehensively. Thus, it is not completely clear

what the specific core learning outcomes are, and without clear learning

outcomes, core assessment remains underdeveloped.

- Assessment is basically decentralized. Colleges/units have assessment

  plans, complete annual assessment reports, and have assessment of

  outcomes reasonably well integrated. Assessment of general education

  outcomes is less obvious. Various incomplete attempts at defining

  university outcomes and assessing have led to a newly consolidated Office

  of Institutional Study assisted by a relatively new University Assessment

  Committee.

- There appears to be some confusion about the difference between

  assessing individual students' learning and assessing programs.

  Assessment of student learning outcomes in Arts and Sciences programs is

  uneven, with some programs having clear statements of outcomes and a

  well-developed assessment plan, but with little data on outcomes. Other

  programs lack a developed assessment and, still others, lack clarity in the

  statements of learning outcomes.

- After wide consultation and faculty participation in shared governance

  procedures, the University has successfully shepherded the creation of an

  Ad Hoc Committee on the Governance of the

Undergraduate Curriculum. That Committee is now challenged to consider a common core.

Evidence that requires institutional attention and Commission follow-up

- Integration of all assessment efforts and utilization of the results, particularly at the University level, is still in process and needs to be moved significantly forward.

- When placed against the assessment levels found in the March 2002 *Addendum to the Handbook of Accreditation Second Edition,* the SLU assessment efforts are <u>generally</u> at Level Two, but still need maturation in order that data from assessment programs are used consistently and widely to improve programs and enhance student learning. The institution is aware that improvements are needed.

<u>Recommendation of the Team</u>

Pattern of evidence sufficiently demonstrated, except that greater progress needs to be shown in the area of assessment.

4. **<u>CRITERION</u> <u>FOUR</u>**

The Institution can continue to accomplish its purposes and strengthen its educational effectiveness.

Evidence that demonstrates fulfillment of the criterion

- The University has powerful, charismatic, and determined leadership.

- There is an institutional long-range plan in place. The institution has

an effective planning process that offers the means to modify goals, alter

developed programs to cope with shifting levels and sources of support, and

strengthen institutional vitality.

- An institution-wide strategic planning process (the third such cycle under the

  current president now in his fifteen year) was initiated in 2000.

- The institution has experienced a truly remarkable physical renewal in the

  past decade. Most obvious is outstanding landscaping, providing a campus

  beauty and functionality that is immediately visible to the newcomer. Indeed,

  the University has transformed a wide area of its once partially downtrodden

  surrounding "mid-town" urban environment.

- Student quality is strong and getting stronger, budgets are-balanced;

  endowment has more than doubled; the quality of the faculty and

  administration is admirable with many strong recent faculty hires as a result of

  SLU2000. Saint Louis University is among a small group of institutions so

  well positioned.

Evidence that needs strengthening

- The sustainability of programs and positions funded through SLU2000 is

  uncertain and subject to the success of the future capital campaign and/or

  future growth of the endowment.

Evidence that requires attention and Commission follow-up

None.

Recommendation of the Team

Pattern of evidence sufficiently demonstrated; no Commission follow-up

recommended by the Team.

5. **CRITERION FIVE**

The institution demonstrates integrity in its practices and relationships.

Evidence that demonstrates fulfillment of the criterion

- The Registrar described a standard transcript process with adequate attention to

  details.

- The integrity of the transcript process is assured through protection of student

  records.

- The Registrar clearly articulated an understanding of the responsibility for

  integrity of academic records.

- The University is aware of federal and other rules and regulations and adheres

  to these matters in excellent fashion.

- The University is successful in addressing gender balance among the faculty.

- Printed handbooks clearly describe duties and obligations of those responsible

  for providing services. They detail procedures to seek clarification or to

  address grievances.

- Student transcripts follow commonly accepted practices and are reflective of academic experience.

- Saint Louis University has a long and effective history of working collaboratively with other institutions of higher education in the region.

- The institution has a remarkably deep and functional capacity to oversee and monitor the many programs and partnerships it supports.

- An Associate Provost for Research spearheads an active and comprehensive Institutional Review Board made up of 22 faculty members and supported by six full-time staff.

- Effective and ethically-grounded policies and procedures are in place and are adhered to by administrators as well as the student association.

- The University maintains an enviable relationship with its alumni and support for the University from alumni is strong.

Evidence that needs strengthening

- The success shown in attracting female faculty needs to be extended to minority faculty, as the University is aware.

- The University should consider broadening its notion of "minority" beyond African-Americans to include aspects of the newer immigration, such as Latinos and Southeast Asians.

Evidence that requires attention and Commission follow-up:

None

Recommendation of the Team

Pattern of evidence sufficiently demonstrated; no Commission follow-up

recommended by the Team.

VI.   REQUEST FOR CHANGE—MADRID, SPAIN CAMPUS

On April 4-5, 2002, two members of the Comprehensive team conducted an evaluation visit to the Madrid, Spain, campus to review the institution's request for authorization to offer degrees at that location. The site visit was made for the purpose of evaluating facilities, administration, and faculty for the adequacy of offering degree programs. In addition, the visitors reviewed the MA in English, proposed as the first degree to be offered. Finally, the site visit also provided an additional opportunity to evaluate the site's contribution to international education at Saint Louis University.

Over the last several years, under the tenure of the current Vice-President, the mission of the Madrid campus has become increasingly degree oriented. Its initial role was as a study abroad site, and in that role it has long been and continues to be recognized for its quality. In recent years the emphasis increasingly has been on preparing Spanish and other international students for transfer to the St. Louis campus and, therefore, the campus provides two to three years of appropriate curricula that address core requirements and provide introductory courses appropriate for transfer to degree programs offered in St. Louis.

The anticipated next stage in development is to offer degrees on-site at the Madrid campus. The initial proposal is for an MA degree program in English, but other degrees are in preparation, including a B.S. in Nursing (in the final stages of development.) Other possible degrees under consideration are a B.S. in International Business and a BA and an M.A. in Spanish. The likely development of future programs is in specialized markets for which a defined need has been determined.

Evidence that supports the Request for Change

- The human resource base of the Madrid campus is well developed. The faculty and support personnel are employed under Spanish labor laws, and because of prior development of the campus as a site for study-abroad and to offer courses of study preparatory to transfer, the full campus infrastructure has been developed and is in place, with the Vice-President reporting to the Provost of the St. Louis campus.

- The faculty, staff, and facilities are adequate to deliver existing and immediately proposed programs. The proposed MA program is a joint effort with both the Saint Louis campus and with the Universidad Autonoma de Madrid (UAM). Students will earn two degrees: An M.A. from Saint Louis University and an MA. from UAM). The dual degree program will enable graduates to have their degree recognized for employment in the public sector (public schools, for example) in Spain. All internal and external approvals have been completed.

- The MA. program in English is well designed, and the resources to support it are in place. The degree offered is the same degree provided on the home campus and the degree requirements are the same. The program is structured for completion in two years, during which students will complete study in six terms (quarters), five of them on the Madrid campus and one at the St. Louis campus (typically summer). Curriculum is approved through the curriculum process of

the St. Louis campus. Students must take three courses from the St. Louis campus and may take no more than half their coursework from the UAM

- Faculty are approved to teach in the program through meeting the graduate faculty standards of the St. Louis campus, and the curriculum offered for the program is drawn from the curriculum of the St. Louis campus. The Madrid campus will provide three literature faculty and one linguist to the program. Each year, one graduate faculty member from the St. Louis campus will also be in residence during spring semester to teach and participate in MA. examinations and thesis evaluations.

- Admissions standards for the program are those of the St. Louis campus. It is expected that 10 students per year will be admitted to the program, many of them teachers in Spanish secondary education.

- Computer labs with access to the St. Louis campus and e-mail, and all the privileges (databases, main campus library website, internet) are available on the Madrid campus.

- The advantages to the St. Louis campus include additional summer graduate enrollment, which should allow for increased availability of summer graduate courses in English to St. Louis campus students and teachers in the St Louis area, opportunities for graduate teaching assistants at the Madrid campus, and opportunities for faculty exchanges between the Madrid and St. Louis campuses. Additionally,

the program will provide opportunities for research projects that are ESL

related. The St. Louis campus English department is very supportive of the

project.

- Primary advising will be done by the Madrid campus faculty, with the

    availability of a secondary content advisor from among UAM or St. Louis

    campus faculty.

Evidence that needs strengthening:

- Before adding additional degree programs, the Madrid campus should use a

    similar development process to the one just employed, analyzing need and

    collaborating in program development with the St. Louis campus

    departments, schools, or colleges affected. Further, program expansion should

    not be advanced without adequate additional teaching and office space to

    support the growth of the Madrid campus. A campus master plan for space

    should be considered.

- The assessment program will be the same as that of the English MA. on the St.

    Louis campus. Program outcomes have been designed, and the thesis and MA

    examination will serve as the primary instruments for evaluation. It is

    important that the assessment program be more fully developed to make the

    essential linkages between the learning outcomes and the thesis, perhaps

    using an appropriate rubric, and between the questions for the MA

    examination and the learning outcomes, so that data can be

routinely collected and used for future program improvements.

- The assignment for full-time faculty in Madrid includes three courses, advising, campus integrated service, and research. There will likely be a need to facilitate the research needs of faculty through better office space, reduction in service commitments, and continued faculty development opportunities.

- Library facilities on the Madrid campus are limited**,** and may need some strengthening as degree programs grow. At present resources and arrangements with nearby libraries are adequate.

Recommendation of the Team:

The request was for permission to offer degree programs at the Saint Louis University Madrid Campus and review the proposed M.A. in English program, to be the first degree offered at that campus. The Team recommends that the Request for Change be approved; however, the University is to notify the Commission when it offers a new degree and, of course, proper preparation for the new degree is expected.

VIL TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS

<u>**Accreditation Relationship:**</u>

Continued Accreditation with the next comprehensive visit to be in ten years or in 2011-12

Rationale:

Saint Louis University has made remarkable progress in the last decade under dynamic, stable leadership. This is a transformed campus that could easily be the envy of any urban university seeking to create a distinctive identity. The campus community has embraced the mission. This mission is both understood and made known by all elements of the campus community. Moreover, this shared mission provides the primary link among students, faculty, and administrators across an impressive array of colleges, schools, and programs that collectively offer scores of strong undergraduate and graduate opportunities. Equally impressive, the mission of the University as it is being implemented connects the University with the Greater St. Louis community in ways that inspire enthusiasm and respect. A strong faculty and a commitment to academic quality support the University's vision for new stature as it evolves into a research university. Its mission and academic distinctiveness distinguishes Saint Louis University from other academic institutions in the St. Louis area.

Such success carries with it new challenges and opportunities. The level of expectation of the   faculty, staff, students, and administrators has been raised and the University will be required to find new ways to meet such challenges. Among

these challenges is the need to expand externally funded research, the need for additional

facilities to respond to an expanded research mission, the need for a more diverse faculty

to enrich the learning environment, and the need to find a more responsive governance

relationship between senior leadership and other campus constituencies, particularly

faculty. In short, the remarkable institutional transformation has created an opportunity

and need for new kinds of more inclusive dialogue. The Team maintains that Saint Louis

University can and will face boldly these challenges, and others that it has identified in its

self-study, and become an even stronger and more outstanding institution. Accordingly,

the Team recommends continuing accreditation.

Definers of Relationship

Degree Level: Doctor's

Ownership: Private, not for profit

Stipulations: None

New Degree Sites: Madrid, Spain

Commission Follow-Up

A Progress Report dealing with student outcomes assessment by end of summer

2005**.** The report will need to address, specifically, the assessment of the General

Education Core, as well as the assessment of all degree programs.

Rationale:

An overall student learning outcomes assessment plan has been completed; an

officer has been designated as accountable for such

assessment; and implementation of assessment is generally consistent at the unit level; however not all of the elements for a comprehensive and university-wide plan are in place. Quality control of student outcomes measures is not evident across the entire University; improvement of programs based on feedback is not consistent; information is not aggregated institution-wide; monitoring and reporting is not consistent; and assessment of the Core Curriculum has not developed.

ADVANCEMENT SECTION

SECTION TWO

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Dr. Edward D. Garten, Dean of Libraries and Information Services, University of Dayton, Dayton, OH 45469-1360 (**Chair**)

THE ADVANCEMENT SECTION
FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION VISIT

I. OVERALL OBSERVATIONS ABOUT THE INSTITUTION

Saint Louis University has made remarkable progress in the last decade under dynamic, stable leadership. One result is a transformed campus that could be the envy of any urban university seeking to create an identity. But the campus transformation is more than bricks and mortar, green space and sculpture. The campus community has overwhelmingly embraced the mission of the University.

The mission distinguishes Saint Louis University from other universities in the immediate area. With success come new opportunities and challenges. The bar of expectation has been raised among faculty, staff, students, and administrators has been raised. The University must secure new ways to meet such challenges including the need to expand externally funded research, the need for additional facilities to respond to the research mission, the need for a more diverse faculty to enrich the learning environment, and the need to find a more adequate governance relationship between the Board of Trustees and President and other campus constituencies, particularly faculty. In many places the campus is highly decentralized while, in other areas, a high level functional decentralization is evident. Some middle-level administrators believe that their talents could be better used as part of a team that is given both the opportunity and the responsibility to operate their units with more direct access to data and financial information.

In particular the Team offers the following major observations:

- SLU has made exceptional progress in the past decade, especially in strengthening, developing, and expanding academic programs.

- SLU has matured in the past decade and earned the Carnegie Research Extensive Classification. This will create the demand for substantial, new resources—for laboratories, enhanced library resources, expanded information technologies, and high caliber faculty.

- Project SLU2000 is a bold, far reaching improvement program that allocated significant new monies to various aspects of the University. The initiative was somewhat of a risk, but has paid off well to date.

- The SLU Trustees have as a goal to secure permanent endowment funds to continue the progress of Project SLU2000. Securing this goal will be critical.

- Decisive, strategic decision making by the Trustees and central administration over the past decade has positioned SLU well for the future.

- Significant steps to assure academic, research, and service quality are documented through the self-study process.

- Quality and diversity of the student body have been enhanced since the last visit. Much yet still needs to be done, especially in regard to minority diversity.

- There is a unique understanding and commitment to the SLU mission which produces a strong sense of community among faculty and staff. In a time of

great stress and tension within American higher education, this commitment to mission should be continued and further strengthened.

- The growth in the intellectual climate of the University is leading toward a higher level of institutional maturity and scholarly productivity.

- There is substantial evidence of opportunities for students and faculty to engage in social justice aspects of mission both in programs and outreach.

- The institution is in sound fiscal condition and has benefited from a significant expansion of the endowment.

- The remarkable transformation of the University under the current President's leadership is creating an opportunity and need for new kinds of more inclusive constituent dialogue.

- An overall assessment plan has been completed, an officer has been designated as accountable for assessment, and implementation of assessment is generally consistent at the unit level; however, not all of the elements for a comprehensive plan are in place: Quality-control is not evident across the University; improvement of programs based on feedback is not consistent; information is not aggregated institution wide; monitoring and reporting is not consistent; and assessment of the core curriculum has not developed.

- The sustainability of programs and positions funded through SLU2000 is uncertain and subject to the success of the future capital campaign and/or future growth of the endowment.

II. RECOGNITION OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS, SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS OR EXEMPLARY INNOVATIVE PRACTICES

- The development of the Madrid campus into an international campus that serves as a transfer site for students completing degrees in the U.S. and as a degree-granting campus provides a solid opportunity to enhance the role of the University in global markets.

- The rebuilding of physical facilities and beautification of the campus are worthy of strong commendation, not only at the regional, but also at the national level.

- The University has developed several impressive museums and art galleries that demonstrate an outstanding commitment to cultural enhancement and preservation.

- The Project SLU2000 program shows uncommon Board of Trustees support for faculty and programs. The use of a portion of the endowment to move the university forward in areas of its commitment (inquiry based education and

  research growth, to name only two) demonstrably shows Board and Presidential commitment to development and change.

- The education of faculty, staff, and administration about the mission of the University and the strong commitment to its implementation is a hallmark of Saint Louis University and helps to provide a distinguishing feature in the wider community and in recruiting both students and new faculty

- The sale of the SLU Hospital to Tenet Corporation appears to have been a wise business decision, yielding investment income to cover the costs of the Medical School long term.

III. CONSULTATIONS OF THE TEAM

The consultation presented here is intended to inform the University's ongoing improvement. Implementation of these suggestions is not a requirement of continuing accreditation. Four areas were identified by the institution: (A) Recruitment and Retention of Diverse Faculty; (B) Assessment, especially at the liberal arts core; (C) Faculty Development; and (D) Movement to a Less Centralized Management Process.

A. Recruitment and Retention of Diverse Faculty

During the campus visit, it became clear that to some members of the university community, the focus of diversity initiatives is on African-American faculty. St. Louis is an increasingly diverse city, which includes wide ethnic and racial diversity. Further, the diversity of the nation continues to increase. Therefore, it would behoove Saint Louis University to make sure that the concept of diversity is broad and embraces a wide array of diverse populations.

There are a number of approaches to increasing faculty diversity. The College of Arts and Sciences this year has been quite successful in expanding the diversity of its new hires. So, the first place to look for assistance may be internally. Some of the strategies used in Arts and Sciences included working cooperatively with the faculty search committees so that they understand the importance of diversity in their searches, linking the concept of diversity to the mission, and carefully exploring ways to recruit and reach candidates. It is also important not to undersell the urban advantages of St. Louis as a community with much to offer.

Additional approaches might include developing relationships with universities who have been successful in preparing more diverse faculty, both to give their graduate students opportunities to link with SLU—research connections, dissertation assistance, etc. First-hand visits to campuses to meet and chat with graduate students throughout their programs can be valuable. Connecting with the same students at national disciplinary conferences can reinforce the interest.

Some universities have been successful with "grow your own" strategies, developing ongoing relationships with their graduates of both bachelor's and master's degree programs, encouraging them to seek doctorates with the intention of returning to their home campus, and providing them with teaching fellowships (with a reduced assignment) during their dissertations. Another approach is to have a "target of opportunity" hiring process that enables a campus to hire a candidate for a position that has not been advertised, but which will be available in one to two years due to a retirement. If a department identifies a new hire that can add diversity to its programs, or that meets another target (doctorally prepared faculty in a hard-to-hire area, for example), the dean and university determine whether they can support the faculty member until the vacancy occurs. If they agree, the candidate is invited to campus for an interview, and the process occurs just as if a full search were being conducted. The hiring is made only upon the recommendation of the department and the dean.

The University should consider involving as wide a spectrum of its community as possible when recruiting minority faculty. For example, during campus visits, candidates should meet with some of the minority faculty from across the campus. The notion of

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community, including campus community is important to younger faculty. Community can be as important as monetary rewards in the hiring process. Consideration might be given to senior and mid-level hires as well as to the more customary entry-level hires. When attempting to hire minorities, the institution should not focus exclusively on "the best" when that would not be the standard used for other groups. As noted earlier in this report, the University should consider widening its of minority or diverse faculty to include groups beyond African-Americans.

B. Assessment, especially at the liberal arts core

Some important first steps have been taken—the naming of an assessment director and an assessment committee. An assessment plan for the University that clearly delineates the expectations for assessment and a regular reporting and review process is essential. Both NCA and the American Association for Higher Education (AAHE) are good sources of assessment assistance. Assessment has been a major topic of many presentations at the Annual Meeting of The Higher Learning Commission of NCA and the annual *Collection of Papers on Self-study and Institutional Improvement* can provide valuable models and potential contacts. AAHE's annual assessment conference, as well, can provide helpful sessions and the pre-conference workshops bring excellent presenters to work with teams that are undertaking initiatives.

General Education is decentralized. There is not a publicized university level general education core, yet there are common elements across the undergraduate programs. Assessment of general education outcomes has been slow in emerging even though there have been numerous discussions and efforts on this topic. Would the related effort of clarifying general education outcomes and their assessment be enhanced by more overt clarification of a university general education core? The Team believes the answer is "yes."

The institution should consider giving the assessment director authority over campus-wide assessment with sufficient resources and clout needed to develop a strong culture of assessment. The institution should consider developing a core curricula student learning outcomes and assessment model. It should consider establishing an ongoing oversight body for curriculum or create a body periodically as needed. Assessment should be managed by the assessment committee working with the assessment director or by a core curriculum committee.

To assess the liberal arts core, it is essential that student-learning outcomes for the core be developed. They can be developed across the campus and implemented in the individual core curricula. Some campuses are experimenting with capstone seminars for their liberal arts core that will assess development of the learning outcomes through various course-embedded measures. Others are assessing the learning outcomes in all courses by asking faculty to describe the assignments, examinations, paper, etc., that show how learning outcomes are being met and then to provide a course-based assessment. Others are using standardized tests of liberal arts content to assess development of content knowledge, critical thinking, and mathematics and writing skills. The Internet provides some excellent links to assessment of General Education. Other potential sources are the *Journal of General Education* and the publications of the American Association of Colleges and Universities. A recommended book that addresses improving grading and using grading for assessment is *Effective Grading: A Tool for Learning and Assessment* by Barbara E. Walvoord and Virgin Johnson Anderson (Jossey-Bass, 1998).

Walvoord is an excellent facilitator for assessment workshops, but she is in high demand and she may be difficult to secure. She frequently does pre and post-conference workshops for the AAHE Assessment Conference in June of each year. Also, AAHE has an assessment project jointly conducted with NCA that could be explored. A small number of campuses participate in collaborative assessment workshops. Information is available at http://www.aahe.org.hlc/.

C. Faculty Development

The initiatives already undertaken by Saint Louis University, which include research support and research leaves, and some flexible reassignment of time are excellent. Further, developing workshops, symposia and seminars that bring expertise to campus rather than sending faculty individually off-campus can be excellent as well. This can be done both with teaching development and research initiatives.

Teaming with other institutions in the city on faculty development initiatives can connect faculty with peers with similar areas of interest, and can lead to research collaborations. A shared conference on a topic of common interest, for example, could link faculty to colleagues within their own institutions and to colleagues across the community.

Faculty Development relative to use of technology is an ongoing need in any university. Maintenance of this effort is critical for the future as technology continues to challenge all of us. Some universities have used a multi-step certification/recognition process to encourage faculty development and to recognize faculty members' investment in technology training.

D. Movement to a Less Centralized Management Process

The number of colleges/schools is extensive for the size of the university. There must be very high administrative overhead. If one looks at all the department heads, assistant/associate deans, directors and deans the number of administrators seems excessive. Would the university benefit from a complete review of the administrative structure of the university, to look for potential streamlining to reduce costs of administrative overhead?

Some simple approaches could be used to improve the communication between central administration and the deans, department heads, and faculty. Approaches to consider:

- A President's Faculty Committee

- A Dean's/Provost/President "Thinking it Through" discussion or forum series

- Periodic "Department Head/Deans Days" which emphasize dialogue at that level.

The University should consider undertaking an analysis of the size and scope of the administration and colleges/schools to determine if this is the most effective overall model for the cost investment. Additionally, the University should consider undertaking a review of program size at both the undergraduate and graduate levels to determine impact on resources. There are a number of small undergraduate majors and graduate programs that appear to be having very limited success in recruiting, retaining, and graduating students. The program review process should include a provision for addressing questions of program size and the related issue of program use of resources.