

REPORT OF A VISIT TO UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-OSHKOSH

Oshkosh, Wisconsin April 28 - 30, 1997

for the Commission of Institutions of Higher Education
of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools

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UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN OSHKOSH

This is a report of a visit to the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh for the purpose of conducting their regularly scheduled comprehensive evaluation for continued accreditation for the Master's (arts and sciences and professional curricula) degree-by the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

The report is organized in four sections including an introduction, evaluation of General Institutional Requirements and Criteria, strengths and limitations, and the team's recommendation.

The University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh is currently celebrating its 125th anniversary. Name changes during its history reflects its evolving mission from Oshkosh Normal School (1871) to the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh with the merger of the Wisconsin State Universities and University of Wisconsin System (1972). Other names included Oshkosh State Teachers College (1925), Wisconsin State College-Oshkosh (1949), and Wisconsin State University Oshkosh (1964).

The University serves the Fox River Valley, a major population and business corridor and the state's fastest-growing region. Including Green Bay, the population of the Valley is nearly 650,000. The valley has three private universities, two UW two-year centers, and two UW four-year campuses. The University of Wisconsin Oshkosh is the largest higher education resource in the Valley.

The accreditation history follows the name changes in the University. It was first regionally accredited in 1915 as a teacher training institution and in 1929 was transferred to the North Central Association. The University's last comprehensive transferred to the North Central Association. The University's last comprehensive visit was 1987.

Prior to the on-site visit, team members reviewed materials provided by the University, including bulletins, self-study, and policies and procedures. During the visit, we reviewed documents including minutes, newsletters, accreditation reports, board minutes, financial audits, admission files and registration procedures, faculty personnel files, and other documents. The team met with the Chancellor, members of the administrative team, the President of the State Board of Regents, deans, faculty, students and staff. The team also toured the campus.

The last comprehensive visit did not provide a list of strengths and limitations but used the term observations to describe eight areas. Those areas include equipment, faculty teaching loads, more funding for assistantships, library resources, short and long-term planning, faculty and administrative decision making, recruitment of multicultural faculty and students (including international), and a need to remain sensitive to the financial needs of students. Areas of significant improvement since 1987, as noted by the dean include:

1. resolution of faculty, staff, administrative, and student decision making;
2. library resources;
3. sensitivity to the financial needs of students (The University was recently ranked fourth "Best Value in the Midwest" by U.S. News & World Report. They provide merit scholarships, work-study and funding for student assistants and graduate assistantships).
4. equipment- while we were on site a major renovation project of the Science facilities was announced.

The University identifies six notable successes since the last NCA visit faculty recruitment, student quality, faculty scholarship, instructional technologies, extramural support and governance.

GENERAL INSTITUTIONAL REQUIREMENTS

MISSION

- 1. It has a mission statement, formally adopted by the governing board, and made public, declaring that it is an institution of higher education.**

The University of Wisconsin Oshkosh falls within the umbrella mission statement of the University of Wisconsin System which was adopted in February of 1989. *The Report to the University Community: Status of Goat Initiatives* reaffirmed the goals of general education, instructional technology, diversity, accountability/assessment, and sufficient sears for entering students. The University of Wisconsin Oshkosh, along with the other comprehensive universities, is signatory to a select mission statement which underscores the undergraduate focus of their teaching and research responsibilities as opposed to the doctoral emphasis of the Madison and Milwaukee campuses. Within the context of these system wide missions statements, the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh articulates a "Vision, Values and Goals" statement that identifies its unique place and role in the university system.

- 2. It is a degree-granting institution.**

The institution offers academic programs leading to associate, baccalaureate, and masters degrees.

AUTHORIZATION

- 3. It has legal authorization to grant its degrees, and it meets all the legal requirements to operate an institution of higher education wherever it conducts its activities.**

The institution has been authorized by the Wisconsin State Legislature under the legal authority of Chapter 36 of the Wisconsin Statutes, to operate as an institution of higher education. Original authorization was granted in 1871. Under the merger law of 1971, the legislature merged the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh and 12 other state four-year higher education campuses to create the University of Wisconsin System.

- 4. It has legal documents to confirm its status: not-for-profit, for-profit, or public.**

Legal documents confirming the institution's status as a public institution of higher education are located in the UW System administrative offices and are available upon request for viewing by the general public. The documents are also cited in the UW System Fact Book 1997-98.

GOVERNANCE

- 5. It has a governing board that possesses and exercises necessary legal power to establish and review basic policies that govern the institution.**

The University of Wisconsin Oshkosh is part of the UW System authorized under Chapter 36 of the Wisconsin Statutes. This statute conveys to the institution the legal authority to review and establish policies. The System is governed by a seventeen member citizen Board of Regents, who meet ten to twelve times per year. Minutes confirm that the Regents are exercising their proper authority and have strengthened quality through enrollment management, technology access, program review and program redirection.

- 6. Its governing board includes public members and is sufficiently autonomous from the administration and ownership to assure the integrity of the institution.**

The Board of Regents consists of fourteen nonuniversity representatives and one UW System student, all nominated by the governor and appointed by the legislature. In addition, the Wisconsin Technical College System and the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction each have a representative. Currently six of the seventeen members are women.

- 7. It has an executive officer designated by the governing board to provide administrative leadership for the institution.**

The UW System President and the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh Chancellor are authorized by section 36.09(e) of the Wisconsin Statutes.

- 8. Its governing board authorizes the institution's affiliation with the Commission.**

The University of Wisconsin System and its Board of Regents authorizes the affiliation of the institution with the Commission. The UW System general administrative policy paper #24 specifies the details of that affiliation. The University of Wisconsin System authorizes all UW campus' affiliations with the Commission, including that of UW-Oshkosh:

FACULTY

9. It employs a faculty that has earned from accredited institutions the degrees appropriate to the level of instruction offered by the institution.

The faculty have earned terminal degrees in their areas of expertise from accredited institutions. Due to a large number of faculty retirements the University has been able to replace faculty with terminally degreed faculty hires.

10. A sufficient number of the faculty are full-time employees of the institution.

Although the University experienced some difficulty in filling vacancies in the past year it seems that for the 1997-98 academic year the outlook is much more positive and the number of ad-hoc faculty will be significantly reduced. Most members of the faculty are tenured or have tenure-track appointments. Faculty retention since Fall '92 have averaged 78.7%; 82.8% of those doctorally prepared, 92.7% minority and 75% of female.

11. Its faculty has a significant role in developing and evaluating all of the institution's educational programs.

As documented in the current draft of the Faculty Handbook, the UWO faculty are statutorily charged with primary responsibility for development and evaluation of the curriculum. Faculty are responsible for the curriculum, for program assessment, and for the delivery of services on and off campus. There are mechanisms in place that afford the faculty the opportunity to change programs and to approve delivery of services.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

12. It confers degrees.

It confers appropriate degrees in line with its legal authority, accreditations, and mission.

13. It has degree programs in operation, with students enrolled in them.

Degree programs are identified and students are enrolled.

14. Its degree programs are compatible with the institution's mission and are based on recognized fields of study at the higher education level.

There is evidence that demonstrates that programs are in consort with the mission of the institution and that they follow approved programs of study common to institutions of higher education.

15. Its degrees are appropriately named, following practices common to institutions of higher education in terms of both length and content of the programs.

The degrees of the University follow common practices for institutions of higher education. Undergraduate programs require 120 credit hours. At the graduate level program requirements vary but in general 36 hours are the norm.

16. Its undergraduate degree programs include a coherent general education requirement consistent with the institution's mission and designed to ensure breadth of knowledge and to promote intellectual inquiry.

UWO undergraduate students are all required to complete a set of general education requirements comprising a minimum of 42 credits. As currently structured, these requirements include up to 14 credits in *basic knowledge and skills* (e.g., composition, mathematics or logic, physical education, non-Western cultures, communication) as well as a set of *distribution requirements* the humanities (9 credits), the natural sciences (8 credits) and the social sciences (9 credits). Students can fulfill the distribution requirements using an almost infinite array of introductory courses in various disciplines.

Students are required to complete courses in all four areas to satisfy the minimum 42 credits. A description of the program and requirements as well as the various course offerings begins on page 21 of the Undergraduate Bulletin where the purposes and general objectives of the program are also stated.

At the time of the team visit, a committee had identified consensus among the faculty that basic skills should be infused throughout the undergraduate curriculum (rather than a distinct component), that interdisciplinary seminars should be included, and that greater coherence in the general education curriculum is sorely needed.

17. It has admission policies and practices that are consistent with the institution's mission and appropriate to its educational programs.

The institution's admission requirements are fully outlined in the *Undergraduate Bulletin*. The requirements are appropriate to the institution and reflect the dictates of the State Legislature applicable to all institutions within the University of Wisconsin System. Requirements consist of appropriate ACT scores, class rank, high school curriculum, and graduation from accredited high schools. Likewise, admissions procedures for graduate programs are fully articulated in the *Graduate Bulletin*. The requirements are appropriate to graduate learning and reflect the unique discipline-specific requirements of individual degree programs.

18. It provides its students access to those learning resources and support services requisite for its degree programs.

The University has sufficient and appropriate physical facilities including the Halsey Science Center, Polk Library, Priebe Art Gallery, and Swart Hall. Support services include academic advisors, numerous computer labs providing access to Internet and World Wide Web, self-instruction technology to provide students access to learning experiences and opportunities which support the various degree programs.

FINANCES

19. It has an external financial audit by a certified public accountant or a public audit agency at least every two years.

An annual audit is conducted by the Wisconsin Legislative Audit Bureau. Recent audits report no written comments or audit concerns.

20. Its financial documents demonstrate the appropriate allocations and use of resources to support its educational programs.

Financial documents support revenues adequate to meet approved expenditures and required cash flow. Revenue and resource allocation are subject to public plans for financial development established by the UW System Board of Regents.

21. Its financial practices, records and reports demonstrate fiscal viability. The institution demonstrates through its financial practices, records and reports both fiscal viability and the flexibility to adjust to revenue changes and/or changing resource priorities.

PUBLIC INFORMATION

22. Its catalog or other official documents includes its mission statement, along with accurate descriptions of educational programs, degree requirements, learning resources, admission policies, academic policies and procedures, faculty credentials.

Information is widely available from a variety of sources including printed materials, WWW sites, and on site through offices.

23. It accurately discloses its standings with accrediting bodies with which it is affiliated.

Catalogs and other information accurately reflect the University's standing with accrediting bodies.

24. It makes available, upon request, information that accurately describes its financial condition.

Financial records were easily available and are authorized and conducted annually by the State of Wisconsin designees.

The team believes the University meets all GIR's.

CRITERION 1

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

The Board of Regents in the State of Wisconsin has established broad definitions of mission for the University system. Within those guidelines, the University has established and disseminated its own campus mission, vision, values, shared principles, and goals. The University and many of its units have WWW pages, as well as the traditional means of disseminating these guidelines.

The team believes the University meets Criterion One.

CRITERION II

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

In their self-study, the university identifies several concerns-primarily related to the changing

educational and technological environment, but including the need for qualified faculty and increased funding.

1. Human Resources

A. Board of Regents. The institution is governed by a system-wide Board of Regents whose authority is set by statute. This Board consists of four team citizens and one student, each of whom is appointed by the Governor and approved by the legislature. In addition, a representative from both the Wisconsin Technical College System and the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction serve as Regents. Six of the seventeen members are women. The Board sets policies and practices, meets ten to twelve times per year, and has been active in supporting strategic planning, quality programs, enrollment management, technology enhancement, program review and reduction of duplicated offerings.

B. Administration. The University is organized with a simplified administrative structure that is modest in the number of positions assigned to management activities. This partially results, from a \$1.2 million cut during 95-97 biennium where most reductions were taken from areas other than direct instruction. The management of the institution rests in the Chancellor, who is chief executive officer of the institution and manages with general authority from the System president and the Regents. A provost and vice-chancellor, four collegiate deans, and an assistant vice chancellor, Graduate School and Research coordinate academic programs, and appropriate positions exist for budget, finance, student activities, admissions, development and other support services. Although some incumbents are new to their administrative responsibilities, all appear competent and share a common vision for the institution and a trust and concern for each other. There is room, however, for more gender and minority balance among administrators. The University administration is strengthened by an active Faculty Senate, Senate of Academic Staff and a Student Association. They appear to fulfill their governance roles responsibly and in a spirit of mutual respect and cooperation. Policies and procedures of the University are clearly published in University, faculty, staff and student handbooks, and the language in such handbooks is inclusive.

C. Faculty The University has 384 faculty (including those holding limited appointments), most holding the appropriate terminal degree. With retirements during the past ten years, the number of full professors has decreased. The numbers of women (from 31 to 32%) and multicultural faculty (from 9 to 10.7%) have remained virtually unchanged. The quality of the faculty was repeatedly cited as one of the most -important strengths of the institution. Nearly everyone with whom we met cited the dedication, intelligence, and productivity of the faculty - particularly those hired in recent years -- as one of UWO's most significant resources. Faculty in every college have been recognized across the state and across the nation for their scholarly and pedagogical accomplishments.

UWO has 113.07 FTE teaching Academic Staff, the highest total among four-year campuses in the system. Members of the UWO Senate of Academic Staff members (meeting with team members) expressed no real concerns or dissatisfaction about their status vis-a-vis tenure and tenure-track faculty. They feel that present governance arrangements give them a voice and this is an improvement over past conditions. They did express positive attitudes toward possibly

gaining long-term contracts for the teaching academic staff who qualify.

The 1996-97 Academic Staff newsletter reported that the UW Board of Regents 21st Century Study recommended that "since teaching Academic Staff are a growing part of those instructing students across the UW System, it is time to examine the role of teaching Academic Staff within the UW System with the intention of improving their status, roles, rights and responsibilities." UW System Administration has established a steering committee to get the process going, chaired by the system senior vice president for administration and a faculty member in the Chemistry Department at Madison. A final report is due Nov/Dec 1997.

D. Students Fall 1996 FTE was 8,844 (10,382 headcount), approximately evenly split among genders (58.1% female and 41.9% male). Most are Caucasian (94.9). Admission standards have increased during the past ten years to include higher ACT scores, increased high school credits and improved high school graduation placement. The University also has a large number of transfer students from surrounding UW system institutions. Multicultural increases in students have been primarily in Asian (86%) and Hispanic/Latino (117%), although there have been some increase in American Indian (8%) students.

The caliber of the student body, particularly at the undergraduate level, has increased markedly since the last reaccreditation visit. In conjunction with UW System Enrollment Management plans, the campus has successfully raised admissions requirements; currently, most entering freshmen (85%) are in the upper half of their high school graduating class.

II. Financial Resources

The UW System operates on a biennial budget developed at the System level and reviewed and approved by the Board of Regents, legislature and the governor. The institution operates on an annual budget. Generally, the University receives annual increases to its base for new programs and authorized state salary plans. In FY 95-97, the institution was cut \$1.2 million in general program revenue, although this was partially offset by increases in tuition. The institution was able to accommodate this budget cut primarily as a result of anticipatory contingency planning which capitalized on the management of vacancies and the reduction of noninstructional staff and allocations. In fact, expenditures for administration are about two-thirds the national average for similar campuses. State support has not kept pace with inflation over the past decade, and tuition as a proportion of total revenue has increased annually to equal nearly 35 percent of all revenues. This has increased student debt and will require additional efforts by the development office and foundation to provide additional scholarships. The new efforts to increase gift and grant income through the coordinated activities of the grants office, alumni office, foundation and university relations is expected to increase other fund revenues. The Chancellor is both committed and competent to spearhead a grand gift expansion program.

The history of financial management shows responsible commitment to assure effective fulfillment of mission. Additional funding may have to be identified, however, to meet the expanding need for technology resources on campus.

UWO needs to give careful consideration to the amount of startup funds it will allocate to its new faculty hires. This will be especially necessary for those individuals expected to be active

in graduate education and/or to secure external funding. The \$5,000 to \$10,000 package which appears to be rather common among science faculty is comparatively very low. The use of indirect cost dollars as a further supplement should be seriously entertained.

III. Physical Plant

The 118 acre main campus has thirty-seven buildings, all appropriate for the institutional programs. An additional fourteen acres are used for intramural sports. The University has a master plan for facilities and has taken steps consistent with that plan. Funding is now available for a \$14 million renovation of the Halsey Science Center. The campus is attractive and well maintained. The need to develop additional reserves for deferred maintenance and repair is important to preserve the historic appeal of the campus.

IV. Information Technology (IT)

UW-Oshkosh has made significant progress in updating its campus technology. In 1995, UW System institutions were required to expand their Information Technology (IT) plan to include library, media and distance education technologies. This broader focus, along with the use of Quality Reinvestment Program allocations, lab modernization dollars, a student technology fee, General Program Revenue funds, gifts and other sources, has resulted in great strides for the campus. The IDEA lab, general computer labs, the distance education classroom and access to full text databases and electronic journals are a few examples of recent technological advances.

The campus has clearly made information technology a high priority. The team visited well-appointed open computer laboratories for general student use as well as more specialized computer laboratories maintained by and for individual departments. All major campus buildings are networked. The campus Distance Learning classroom in the Polk Library is truly impressive. There is a well developed and well-publicized schedule of professional development workshops open to faculty and staff who want to enhance their skills in using information technology in their teaching and research, and the Library/Learning Resources staff are responsive to faculty and staff interests in this area. Faculty and staff spoke positively of the central administration's commitment to providing support for information technology.

This new technology requires that the University develop an institutional plan to ensure continuing technological progress. In October, 1996, an Information Technology Strategic Planning Group was charged to develop an IT Plan for the University. The planning group included IT unit managers, governance group representatives, a Deans' Group representative, and senior administrators. The plan lists many favorable conditions including the staff and the IDEA Lab for training faculty and staff. The plan indicates that the University needs to improve the usability and reliability of the current services from e-mail to library catalogs to replacement of outdated equipment. The University needs to replace its mainframe computer. These changes would position the University to use the WWW technology for expanded outreach efforts and for new instructional and administrative applications.

All classrooms have data jacks installed, campus cable TV will be installed in general purpose classrooms. Campus channel 20 coupled with Titan TV 12 are unmatched resources that can be used for both education and distribution of information. Client-server technology will change the

way people view and use computing technology. Improved processes incorporated with software changes will have a synergistic effect. Digitized formats for traditional library materials make information available at a touch of the finger.

The University is to be commended for developing a realistic Technology Plan. The effort will assist the campus in understanding technological forces affecting both the current condition and opportunities for future growth.

V. Academic Support - Library and Learning Resources

The University has addressed several issues discussed in the 1987 report: providing adequate space for student use in the library and making available on line data bases for faculty research. The world of information science having changed dramatically in the last ten years, the functions served by the library and its resource allocations have also shifted. Whereas in 1987 the call was for more periodicals and monographs, since then there has been a necessary and appropriate shift to the acquisition of and access to electronically based information sources.

Recently the University's Division of Information Systems and Technologies was reassigned to an Assistant Vice Chancellor for Information Technology, who also oversees Libraries and Learning Resources. Combining under one administrator both library and information technology services is a model being followed by universities similar in size and mission. It recognizes that traditional library functions have expanded to incorporate new information science technologies and that information technologies are closely linked to services traditionally provided by libraries.

The team believes the University meets Criterion Two.

CRITERION THREE

The University is accomplishing its educational and other purposes.

The Self-Study document, supported by a plethora of documentary evidence provided in the site-visit resource room, and confirmed by conversations with student, faculty, administration, and community leaders indicates that the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh fully understands its central educational purpose and accumulates appropriate data to confirm that it achieves the same; understands the values of higher education and demonstrates activities which reflect and transmit those values; understands and strives to fulfill all of its various stated purposes; and understands the relationship between its resources and programs and achievements.

The ample-course offerings, specific degree requirements, General Education program, and expected student outcomes identified and elaborated upon in both the *Undergraduate Bulletin* and the *Graduate Bulletin* attest to the fact that students at this university will be led to use their intellects, examine their values, appreciate and respect diversity of views expressed in research, and engage each other and their teachers in the free exchange of ideas and attitudes. Review of randomly chosen course syllabi, informal conversations with faculty and students, and spot checks of student work further substantiate the role this university fills as an institution of higher education as defined by the Commission.

The University has a mission to provide the state and region with qualified graduates from specialized programs, nurses, speech and hearing clinicians, trained business professionals,

PK-12 public school teachers. The degree programs providing these professionals are well subscribed; graduates are employed in the region and across the state and nation; employers regularly express satisfaction through surveys and by anecdotal feedback that they are pleased with the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh graduates they employ.

In concert with its mission to provide qualified graduates and appropriate classroom experiences, the University is also fulfilling a mission to provide the region with rich and diverse fine and performing arts experiences thereby enhancing the cultural life of university and area citizens and giving them an opportunity to participate in events which add meaning and value to life beyond the daily routine of human interaction.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment plans for a majority of graduate and undergraduate programs have been developed. Some programs (20) were able to make some modifications as the faculty members were developing the plans, while others (3) were able to modify the programs after the plans were developed. The need to ensure the collection of data and establishment of a feedback loop is still pressing. The General Education component continues to be of concern.

Employer surveys constitute only one facet of the assessment plan which the University uses to track student learning and program effectiveness. The University filed an assessment plan with NCA in January of 1996 which identifies multiple assessment strategies to monitor student achievement and provide data that will lead to continual efforts to improve teaching and learning. The assessment plan is in the early stages of implementation, and some faculty are yet to be fully committed to the philosophy of Continuous Program Improvement and the value of diverse assessment strategies. It seems evident, however, that these are in the minority and full fledged implementation of assessment to monitor patterns of evidence relative to Criterion Three will take place in the near future.

The institution has made a good start at developing and implementing a comprehensive assessment plan, but continued refinements are needed. Assessment plans for individual majors vary widely in their level of completion and their efforts to incorporate multiple measures; greater consistency in this dimension is sorely needed. A systematic assessment plan for general education outcomes must await completion of the general education revision process (see below). Perhaps most important, the campus needs to develop routine mechanisms through which the faculty use the results of their assessment activities to guide program revisions and improvement. Given the positive approach to assessment voiced by the faculty and the progress made to date, there is reason to believe that the campus will be successful in this task.

COLLEGE OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (COBA)

Established in 1965, the College of Business Administration (COBA) has full accreditation from the American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. It is the only business program in northeastern Wisconsin with AACSB accreditation. It offers a Bachelor of Business Administration (B.B.A.) Degree program and a Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree program. The graduate program began in 1970 and has nearly 500 students.

The College's four departments with student enrollment figures are as follows: Information Systems and Operations Management (164), Finance and Business Law (202), Accounting (182), and Marketing, Management and Human Resources (354). The COBA had 2275 undergraduate students in the fall of 1988 and 1666 in Fall of 1996. The MBA program had 534 students in the Fall of 1988 and 507 students in the Fall of 1996. 267 MBA students were admitted in the Fall of 1996.

The College has assembled a strong faculty who are active in research and the community. Faculty serve the community through business partnerships and the Small Business Develop Center.

The MBA program is also offered at two off-campus sites in Stevens Point and Green Bay, Wisconsin. These sites permit student access to graduate work in business to a broad segment of eastern central Wisconsin. While nontraditional in location, the MBA program is identical in format and content to the program delivered on the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh campus. The College has been a leader in the use of innovative techniques for the delivery of courses to students. In this MBA program, the College uses distance education technology to deliver courses simultaneously to students in Green Bay and Stevens Point. Currently, the use of the Internet is being explored to deliver classes directly to a business site.

The College uses alumni surveys, curriculum reviews directed by its Business Advisory Board, exit interviews of graduating seniors, and internal program reviews to ensure that its curriculum is responsive to student and employer needs.

A COBA Advisory Board made up of 30 business representatives from the Fox River Valley provides advice on program direction and reviews College planning. The Advisory Board is very effective and extremely supportive of COBA goals and objectives. The College has made reasonable progress toward developing an assessment strategy but must now work more vigorously to assure that it is implemented and the results are used to make curricular and administrative changes.

COLLEGE OF LETTERS AND SCIENCE

The College of Letters and Science is the largest of the four academic colleges that comprise the academic affairs unit of the university. Because of its role as the primary provider of courses for the General Education program it touches the intellectual life and affects the educational growth of virtually all undergraduate students who matriculate at the institution as first time entering freshmen and continue in place through graduation.

The college is organized into four divisions housing over 30 discrete academic disciplines. These divisions include Social Science, Math and Science, Humanities, and Fine and Performing Arts. The college is led by a dean, three part-time associate deans, and an assistant dean.

The college offers 34 majors and 43 minors leading to BA, BFA, BM, BS, BSW, AA degrees. Masters degrees are available in biology, math education, physics, public administration, psychology, and speech and hearing science.

Numerous programs within the college enjoy discipline specific accreditation, e.g. NASM,

ACJMC.

The College is to be commended for changing, in 1990, the requirements for the Bachelor of Science degree to include 11 credits of mathematics and 12 in natural science. This change stimulated greater equity between the number of BA and BS degrees being generated by the College. Students previously sought BS degrees because the BA required 14 hours of foreign language. Altering the BS requirements by adding math and natural science altered student perceptions that it was the easier degree route to graduation.

The College has also developed a Writing Across the Curriculum program which seeks to ensure that students continue to engage in developing written communication skills beyond the freshman year. The program requires extensive writing throughout the lower and upper level courses in the various curricula of the College.

Faculty in the College may now elect to teach a nine-hour work load rather than the standard twelve in order to engage in, scholarly/creativity activities leading to publication, conference presentations, exhibitions, etc. Those electing this

option must commit to higher research standards for promotion consideration than their peers who teach twelve hour loads. The College sponsors opportunities and resources to faculty to assist them in developing new pedagogy or improve teaching strategies through several professional development opportunities such as the dean's "Focus on Pedagogy" sessions, peer-mentoring, or exchange teaching assignments. Much is being done in the area of collaborative faculty undergraduate research. The fruits of these efforts appear regularly in the pages of nationally recognized refereed journals.

The college is aggressively pursuing community service and outreach through a variety of initiatives such as Science Olympiad, Eisenhower grants to work with PK-12 faculty, CAPP (college courses taught in high schools), National Youth Sports Program.

Of particular note is the role of the Fine and Performing Arts, programs in the cultural life of the region as well as the campus. Concerts, plays, exhibitions fill the yearly calendar of special events for Oshkosh and the Fox River Valley region.

COLLEGE OF NURSING

The degree programs offered in the CON - BSN and MSN (Family Nurse Practitioner, Gerontological Nurse Practitioner, Nurse Educator, Nurse Administrator) -- are appropriate for the UWO mission, and are widely recognized in the field.

The UWO College of Nursing (CON) offers undergraduate and graduate nursing degrees, and is accredited by the National League for Nursing (NLN). The CON faculty staffing level has remained relatively constant over the past seven years, with 21.6 FTE tenured or tenure-track faculty (of a total 29.4 faculty). There is also heavy reliance on academic staff members hired on one-semester or one year contracts for clinical supervision; several of these staff members have worked with CON in this capacity on an ongoing basis for many years.

Of the full-time CON faculty members, 12 hold the PhD from accredited institutions; all Ph.D. faculty members have graduate faculty status. The remaining faculty members have MSN

degrees from accredited institutions. Of the 13 faculty members currently on staff who were hired in the past 10 years, 6 hold the PhD in nursing.

The undergraduate and graduate CON programs, like all academic programs at UWO, are comprehensively reviewed on a seven-year cycle. The review process includes a self-study prepared by the program faculty, an on site assessment by external consultants, and review and recommendations by faculty external to the program, dean, provost and vice chancellor. In addition; the CON faculty are in the process of revising their assessment plan for the major. While the faculty has made progress in developing an assessment plan and mechanisms for using the resulting data for program improvement, they still have work ahead of them in refining these plans. We encourage the faculty to continue their work on identifying student outcomes data that will reveal the extent of success in meeting program goals, and means of program improvement.

The CON houses the Elmer Leach Learning Laboratory for Nurses, multimedia, anatomical models, and clinical simulation equipment to provide for psychomotor .skills practice, independent study and faculty-assisted learning opportunities for nursing students. Each hospital bed in the learning lab has a bedside computer that is networked into the college system which allows students access to related nursing computer software to enhance their learning and to simulate bedside charting.

CON also has a specialized computer lab furnished in part by a grant from the Helene Fuld Health Trust. This lab, which opened in fall 1992, consists of four interactive computer stations that simulate real life clinical situations, provide immediate feedback, and allow the student to make critical nursing decisions and problem solve.

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN SERVICES

The College has six departments, each headed by an elected chair: Counselor Education, Curriculum and Instruction, Educational Foundations, Human Services and Professional Leadership, Reading Education, and Special Education. The College also has a number of ancillary services. The College offers Bachelor of Science in Education or Bachelor of Science in Human Services, Bachelor of Music Education and Bachelor of Fine Arts degree programs.

In addition to its undergraduate programs, the College offers programs leading to the Master of Science in Education in Counseling, Elementary Education (PK-8), Reading, and Special Education. A program leading to a Master of Science in Educational Leadership degree is also offered. Four cooperative graduate degree programs involving the College and other UW .System campuses are also available to students in the region.

Overall enrollment for the College for the past ten years has remained stable although there are variances within individual programs. Enrollments in the College graduate programs are also relatively stable. The College reports that the overall enrollment has remained rather stable having 1,969 students in 1987 and 1,854 students enrolled in the College in 1996.

Programs in the College are evaluated by external and/or internal reviews. External reviews include those done by professional organizations such as the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). The College hosted an NCATE visit in April 1997 and reports are that the visit was very positive. Individual programs are also reviewed by an

internal University process every seven years.

In 1987 the Professional Education Program (PEP) was initiated as the undergraduate teacher preparation program. The PEP expanded teacher education to five years, enhanced liberal arts requirements, and added a graduate component. After ten years of existence the PEP is being evaluated vis a vis the current student population, the need to have students complete their program in a more timely manner, and the ability of the program to reach its intended goals.

The College is sensitive to the needs of the clientele in the region. Based on those needs the College has developed two new curricular initiatives. A dual licensure program in elementary and special education was developed. The other areas of teaching emphasis developed based on needs in the field were bilingual and English as a second language education. These programs were developed in cooperation with the College of Letters and Sciences.

The Graduate School and Research (GS & R)

Five new program initiatives (Gerontology emphasis in MPA, Gerontology Nursing, and Reading, Post Master's certification and GAP in Instructional Media Supervision and Gerontology Practitioner emphasis have been implemented since 1987. Two graduate programs (MA-Humanities and MA-Library Science) were discontinued. The number of graduate students have increased approximately 18% during the past ten years.

The institution needs to make a sharper distinction between its graduate and undergraduate programs. This must be done on both administrative and academic levels.

The combining of responsibilities for graduate education with those of evening/weekend programs, and continuing education contributes to a blurring of this distinction. It does not provide the visibility and separateness that is characteristic of graduate education. It can also lead to conflicting missions and purposes, especially when selectivity in admission may conflict with the generation of tuition revenue.

The approval of graduate level courses appears to be vested within academic colleges, and there is no all-campus review by members of the graduate faculty. This, too, causes a blending of undergraduate and graduate missions. This function should be assumed by the present graduate council with the implicit understanding that they would have the final approval following collegiate deliberation.

While the institution is to be commended for its academic review process, it is unfortunate that the assistant Vice-Chancellor is not directly involved with the identification and selection of external reviewers. This can potentially lead to such reviews being predominantly slanted towards undergraduate programs. Again graduate education within the institution becomes less distinct and visible.

At all levels the propriety of the Graduate School in admissions must be recognized and stressed. If this is not done the quality and standards of the process can become compromised. But this is also important in delineating between the role of academic deans in administering undergraduate programs and that of the Graduate School for its programs. Related to this and while it is trivial in certain respects, the conferral of graduate degrees at commencement

ceremonies should be done by the Graduate School and not an academic unit. The symbolic impression that this would make is very important.

The current graduate programs are filling important niches within the region. They should be periodically reviewed to ensure that sufficient need for them continues to exist. Most likely, future programs will primarily be on an interdisciplinary nature, again requiring a high level of cooperation and unity of purpose among the academic deans.

The review of faculty - initial selection, granting of tenure, and post-tenure review - needs Graduate School involvement, especially if the faculty member has graduate responsibilities. The criteria to be used may be different from those for faculty not involved in graduate education. This, too, would be an important distinction to make.

According to the responses to the 1987 report, teaching loads are still high. Some colleges have developed load-shifting plans but according to information provided, these have resulted in overloads for adjunct and academic staff. There is no differentiation either in writing or in concept of the enormous time necessary for meeting graduate students needs for intellectual and scholarly activity. Additionally, to the University's credit, it has begun an Annual Graduate Research Day (1994), has encouraged and funded faculty-student research projects at both the graduate and undergraduate levels (1994), has a Graduate School Travel Fund (1992), and has a very active Faculty Development Program. However, all these activities increase faculty time requirements.

The self-study does not identify the heavy teaching load of faculty members involved in graduate education as an issue. Instead it identifies as an area for improvement the necessary use of distance-learning technologies-another time intensive endeavor.

On a graduate level the minimum undergraduate GPA of 2.75 for admission is slightly below that of most other graduate schools. Increasing this to a higher level would send a strong message to both the campus and applicants that graduate education at Oshkosh demand a level of academic preparation and capability that is clearly different from that associated with the undergraduate experience. Since the Graduate School does admit students on a probationary status under certain circumstances, elevation of the required GPA might be done without a severe reduction in the eventual number of admitted students.

On the admissions side, the Graduate School should take a more active role in distinguishing itself from undergraduate programs. Specifically, it needs to be clear to all units and their academic deans that final admission decisions are made within the Graduate Office and that the role of the programs is only to make recommendations. The utilization of probationary admittances should be very limited in usage and the Graduate School should be more assertive in denying admission to applicants falling below the 2.75 GPA level.

To its credit, the majority of admitted graduate students have completed at least a portion of their undergraduate work on campuses other than Oshkosh. The awarding of graduate assistantships at an earlier date (for example, in late February or early March) is important if the campus is to be competitive for high quality students. This will be particularly important in the recruitment of minority students.

As was the case on the undergraduate level, expansion of graduate programs in selected areas will establish a competitive niche for the campus with respect to recruitment. Given these times of limited resources, these new programs by necessity may be interdisciplinary and intercollegiate in nature. To accomplish this will require a higher level of cooperation among the academic deans and the Graduate School than currently exists.

General Education

The University currently has a General Education program that is consistent with the mission of UW Oshkosh. It aims to provide basic skills and knowledge requisite to student success in the academic arena, and also to ensure breadth of knowledge in those intellectual fields generally viewed as the common currency of educated citizens.

There is substantial faculty and administrative concern that the present General Education program is in need of revision to provide clearer focus and bring thematic coherence to the experience. The current program was in place in 1987 and was cited then as lacking “a coherent, integrated focus.” It consists of 42 credits drawn from a large array of courses distributed across four areas. It lacks clear definition and does not clearly address the need to stimulate and examine values or to promote intellectual inquiry. The University recognizes this and has been engaged in extensive evaluation since 1987. An *ad hoc* Faculty Senate General Education Review Committee was constituted in 1995 and began anew to address the need for revision in response to a Goal Initiative that recommended an “intensive study of and possible reform of the General Education Program.” The committee established a four-phase plan and a detailed time line. Activities completed by April 1997 include surveying faculty, setting up an on-line discussion group, establishing a newsletter, conducting focus groups and interviews, tabulating faculty ranking of goals for general education, drafting and revising a goal statement, and developing and using an innovative exercise to suggest components of a model program. The process being used is comprehensive and consultative and holds the promise of producing curricular reform that will include a more valid General Education Program.

STUDENT SERVICES

The Division of Student Affairs has a number of new employees to the institution including the Assistant Chancellor for Student Affairs. A coordinated approach among the staff who have some responsibility for students will facilitate their efforts. New programs are being developed that include a Wellness Program as well as a look at meeting the needs of non-traditional students. Academic programs as well have been developed during the evenings and weekends to help meet the needs of working students.

Facilities are adequate for students and adjustments are made to meet the needs of all students. Safety is a priority as with other institutions, and has resulted in increased lighting, security, and educational programs. Residence halls are equipped with e-mail and Internet access for students. The institution likes to note that there is a “port for every pillow”.

Community outreach is offered through the arts, partnerships with business, service, outreach, Healthcare, intertribal association and other programs. The university is committed to strengthening the bonds between themselves and the community.

The team believes the University meets Criterion three.

CRITERION FOUR

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

Since the 1987 NCA visit, the University has used multiple documents to reflect its long-range planning. Many efforts of those documents were initially generated by the State of Wisconsin Board of Regents and then reframed for appropriateness to the University. They have been successful in knowing and serving their region. Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) is an overriding framework for the University. A 1993 University wide conference established 11 objectives for use during the next five years, which have provided a basis for decision-making, curricular assessment and budget planning

A study conducted by the UW System Board of Regents *A Study of the UW System in the 21st Century* was adopted in March, 1996. Broad goals of this study include: preserving and enhancing access and quality; keeping college affordable, creating new knowledge for Wisconsin workers, continuing restructuring and improving efficiency, and working in partnership with the State. These goals are reflected in the self-study and other materials.

The team believes the University meets criterion four.

CRITERION FIVE

The institution demonstrates integrity in its practices-and relationships.

In addition, relevant statements regarding the University's commitment to high standards and the policies that govern procedures are widely disseminated in appropriate publications. These statements are available to the public in the Undergraduate Bulletin as well as the Graduate Bulletin. Statements are also on file in the Office of the Chancellor of the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh. The University's "Statement of Values" and "Shared Principles to Guide Interactions Among Members of the University Community" provide a value-based framework for decision and action. With the cooperation of the three governance senates, all segments of the university share a commitment to upholding these standards.

For example, the Student Handbook publishes student academic disciplinary procedures. Each fall the Dean of Students Office distributes these procedures to faculty, along with a sample statement on "Academic Integrity" that faculty are encouraged to incorporate in syllabi or distribute as handouts in class and a sample disciplinary letter that faculty can use. In addition, the Dean of Students Office staff is available to conduct presentations on academic dishonesty for faculty and student groups.

The Division of Academic Support is the office in charge of the oversight and implementation of the "Design for Diversity: The Oshkosh Plan" developed by the institution in January 1989 following the development of the System's plan in 1988. Information presented in the. *Minority/Disadvantaged 1995-96 Annual Report* shows that the objectives are being met through the efforts of the Assistant Vice Chancellor and her staff.

Some departments have been successful at recruiting ethnic minority faculty members by diversifying the curriculum and changing students' curricular requirements.

The University community has made an ethnic studies course a graduation requirement. There are a series of courses recommended with different foci. The English Department has made changes that match candidates areas of expertise and has made courses in those areas part of the requirements. By doing so, the Department has made the new hires feel a part of the program and not appendages to the program. Other departments are encouraged to explore the possibilities of such alternatives in order to attract a more diverse faculty.

The team notes and appreciates the concern raised in the Self-Study Report (p. 94) by the College of Letters and Science that "very few ... students have had or take advantage of opportunities to learn about foreign cultures." We suspect the statement might well have been made by each of the other colleges. Data and casual observation of the human traffic through and between buildings on campus underscore the homogenous nature of the University community.

In an increasingly global society, it is incumbent upon all institutions of higher learning- UWO not excepted- to bear responsibility to foster familiarity with and sensitivity to cultures and ethnic populations beyond the parochial experiences of the majority. Providing a context to foster contact, familiarity, and appreciation among and between diverse peoples is arguably as important to human intellectual and spiritual growth as mastery of a content area.

With this in mind, the team further advises that the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh continues its commitment and seeks and implements multiple means of enriching its students' and citizens with the experience of diversity.

The team believes that the University meets Criterion five

SECTION II

INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHS

- 1) Exceptional progress in developing shared governance among administrators, faculty, support staff, and students leading to a strong sense of openness, consensus, and mutual trust.
- 2) Significant resources are available for faculty professional development.
- 3) There has been considerable success in meeting the needs of the immediate region which, in turn, has fostered strong collaborative relationships.

INSTITUTIONAL CONCERNS

1. While an assessment plan has been accepted by North Central, it remains in an initial stage of implementation and the institution must be very aggressive in bringing departments into compliance and moving forward.
2. A faculty committee has made significant progress in looking at a General Education program for which dissatisfaction currently exists. The group is to be commended for suggesting a reduction in the number of available courses and for concise statements of goals and objectives. It is critical that these recommendations be seriously discussed and considered by

the campus community.

3. There is little evidence that graduate programs are viewed as distinctly separate from undergraduate programs. Rather they appear to be continuations of the undergraduate experience without sufficient regard to those unique features of independent and focused scholarly activity that epitomize graduate education.

SECTION III

ADVICE

1. The Admissions Office as well as the Counseling Center would benefit from diversifying their staffs to include ethnic minority members.

The University has made progress in hiring women and faculty and academic staff in recent years. Because this effort has been a recent priority and opportunities to hire new faculty have been accelerating, however, women faculty are clustered at the lower ranks. According to the Fall 1996 Data Book, women comprise 14% at the rank of professor, 29% at associate, and 46% at assistant. Among the academic staff, 58% are women. The underutilization analysis presented in the Affirmative Action Plan for November 1996-October 1997 (based on 1990 census data) indicated a need for women in the faculty groupings identified as Business and Management, Communications, Counseling Center, Education, Letters, Life Science, Mathematics, Library, Philosophy/Religion, Physical Science, Social Science, and Visual/Performing Arts. The 1987 report said by way of advice that "Administration should be sensitive to the need for additional female and minority counselors." Currently there are two female counselors, four male counselors, and no minority representation. However, a search is underway for hiring a new counselor and all finalists are female.

The 1987 report recommended that the University "aim for the next level of achievement: To promote women into the top levels of academic and institutional administration." On this measure also, progress has been made but must be continued. The 1997 team noted that among the administrative groups, women hold 31% of Administrative Council positions, there is no woman dean, and only ten of 38 department chairs (26%) are women. The Labor Market Plan Information for Wisconsin reported that between 1990 and 1994, the non-White population increased from 8.7% to 9.5%.

2. Data on overall student recruitment, admission, retention, progression, and graduation is not available in the way of formal reports except for Multicultural and disadvantaged students. The institution acknowledges in the self-study report the need to establish an institutional research office that would make the data, analyses, and reports readily available for university-wide planning. The team members acknowledge this need and recommend that steps be taken to address this issue. The institution should move aggressively to utilize an institutionalized commitment to recruiting minority and marginalized students from both urban and rural populations in the state, and region.
3. The institution should undertake a deliberate review of the entire university curriculum with a faculty commitment to infuse issues of ethnicity and diversity into that curriculum in all colleges, provide resources and administrative and faculty leadership to bring scholars,

lecturers, performers, artists of diversity regularly to share their expertise with the community, recruit tenure-line faculty from diverse ethnic and social backgrounds.

4. The campus has made little progress since the last NCA visit in recruitment of women faculty, though women have been moved into key administrative positions on campus. The team found no evidence that retention and promotion were more difficult in the cases of women faculty. Continued efforts to recruit, retain, and promote women on campus must remain a high priority.
5. Teaching loads are high, particularly for faculty members who are involved in graduate teaching. Ideally, all faculty involved in graduate teaching and/or research/creative activity should teach no more than 9 credits per semester; that standard has been achieved in some programs, but not in all. As faculty retirements occur in the next few years, faculty, staff, and administrators may want to consider how these vacancies would provide opportunities to reduce teaching loads in critical areas.

SECTION IV

RATIONALE

The team believes the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh meets all GIR's and Criteria and recommends continued accreditation for the next ten years with no reports required.

The University has engaged in a comprehensive self-study and clearly identified their strengths and limitations, as well as goals and aspirations. They have done so in light of the opportunities and restraints of the University of Wisconsin System. They have responded to observations from prior NCA visits and have plans for continuing to respond.

The University has mechanisms for monitoring and maintaining current programs. The team's findings are consistent with the self-study of the University. Two of the concerns cited are those common to modern institutions and reflect the higher education concern over general education and the implementation of assessment guidelines and are those currently being addressed by the University. The third concern, related to graduate education, is one in which the University has little recognition. The team encourages the University to address this issue as soon as possible.

WORKSHEET FOR STATEMENT OF AFFILIATION STATUS

INSTITUTION: UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-OSHKOSH
800 Algoma Boulevard
Oshkosh, WI 54901

TYPE OF REVIEW: Continued Accreditation

DATE OF THIS REVIEW: April 28 - 30, 1997

COMMISSION ACTION:

STATUS: *Accredited (1915-22;1928- .)*

Institution *Recommended Wording:* RETAIN ORIGINAL WORDING

Team *Recommended Wording:* RETAIN ORIGINAL WORDING

HIGHEST DEGREE AWARDED: Master's.

Institution *Recommended Wording:* RETAIN ORIGINAL WORDING

Team *Recommended Wording:* RETAIN ORIGINAL WORDING

MOST RECENT ACTION: August 21, 1987.

TO BE CHANGED BY THE COMMISSION OFFICE

STIPULATIONS ON AFFILIATION STATUS: None.

Institution *Recommended Wording:* NONE.

Team *Recommended Wording:* NONE.

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

Institution *Recommended Wording::* RETAIN ORIGINAL WORDING

Team *Recommended Wording:* RETAIN ORIGINAL WORDING

PROGRESS REPORTS REQUIRED: None.

Team *Recommended Wording:* NONE.

MONITORING REPORTS REQUIRED: None.

Team *Recommended Wording::* NONE.

CONTINGENCY REPORTS REQUIRED: None.

Team *Recommended Wording:* NONE.

OTHER VISITS REQUIRED: None.

Team *Recommended Wording:* NONE.

LAST COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION: 1986-87.

TO BE CHANGED BY THE COMMISSION OFFICE

NEXT COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION: 1996-97.

Recommended Wording: Team 2006-07.