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ABSTRACT

To realize its vision as an accountable, collaborative, and increasingly integrated network of universities focused on higher learning, the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education commits itself to three major initiatives, focusing on: (1) learning; (2) collaboration and integration; and (3) the accountability imperative. These goals and the strategies to bring them about build on foundation planning set by previous documents including the "Excellence in Equity." To achieve these objectives, the state system will expand access to new and existing clientele, focusing on student diversity. The state also plans to enhance and expand learning activities for Pennsylvania students, and to strengthen the match between the state system's educational programs and the needs of students and the state. The plan also calls for optimizing the management and development of system resources. Six appendixes contain supplemental information about the plan, including the Executive Summary of the "Excellence in Equity" plan. (Contains 56 references.) (SLD)

Imperatives for the Future

A Plan for Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education

Contents

The Vision

Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education will serve the Commonwealth ever more effectively as a dynamic, technologically advanced, integrated network of publicly owned universities focused on learning. The State System will be accessible to students from diverse backgrounds, accountable to its many constituencies, and actively engaged in the continuous improvement of its programs, services, faculty, and staff. Above all, the State System will prepare students to succeed in the global economy, to contribute to the economic and social well-being of the state and nation, to play constructive roles in their communities, and to lead productive and meaningful lives.

The Vision of the State System of Higher Education is affirmed, herein, by the members of the Board of Governors:

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Vice Chair

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Foreword

It is with pleasure and a strong sense of commitment that we share with you *Imperatives for the Future: A Plan for Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education*. This document launches a new cycle in a process that has been ongoing since the establishment of the State System in 1982.

"The chancellor shall conduct comprehensive planning in consultation with representatives of the trustees, presidents, faculties, students, and alumni. . . ." So reads the legislative act which created the State System of Higher Education. Accordingly, in 1984, the State System published its mission statement and an initial set of strategic directions to guide System and institutional planning. Two years later, the System's Board of Governors adopted a policy on planning, requiring each of the universities to maintain and regularly update institutional plans within the framework of the System-wide mission, plans, and policies. In 1990, the Board endorsed *Priorities for Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education during the 1990s*, recommendations which are providing guidance to the universities in many areas, including "what we teach" and "how we teach." *Excellence and Equity: A Plan for Building Community in Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education*, the multi-faceted, multi-year plan to guide social equity programs was approved in 1994, and serves along with *Priorities* and the original mission as the foundation for *Imperatives for the Future*.

"Imperatives" is a strong word. Strong language, we think, is needed to forcefully communicate our message. This message must describe how we plan to provide higher education in an increasingly complex, competitive environment; how we will serve today's much more diverse clientele and take full advantage of the opportunities that new information and new technologies make available; and how we will preserve the concern for individual students and strengthen the relationships with local communities that have been the hallmark of State System universities. We must do all of this without the expectation of significant increases in state revenues.

This strategic plan grows out of a great deal of study and discussions that occurred over the past two years under the leadership of the System's vice chancellor for academic and student affairs. At the core of the planning process was a Planning Advisory Council, which included representatives of the System's many constituencies. The Council identified major issues, advised on process, and reviewed and suggested revisions to numerous drafts of the plan. The System's participation in The Pew Higher Education Roundtable in the fall of 1994 and spring of 1995 brought together members of this Council, as well as other university administrators and faculty, for discussions of the critical issues facing higher education in general and Pennsylvania's State System in particular. Task groups, charged by the Council and planning staff, developed foundation papers on six key issues during this same period.

Early drafts of the plan were reviewed by the Board of Student Government Presidents, the Executive Committee of the Pennsylvania Association of Councils of Trustees, the System's chief academic and chief student affairs officers, the System-wide Faculty Professional Development Council, and many other groups. Subsequent drafts of the plan were taken "on the road" during the spring of 1996 to faculty forums held at five different universities and also to several groups of Pennsylvania citizens. Finally, members of the Board of Governors and the System's Executive Council also provided their very significant suggestions.

The resulting document, *Imperatives for the Future: A Plan for Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education*, was forged by consensus, yet it does not compromise in calling for change. It is a dynamic and agile plan that builds on the long-standing strengths and values of State System universities, while recognizing that significant changes in the environment, with our clientele, and in the attitudes of various stakeholders necessitate changes in the ways we seek to fulfill our mission to Pennsylvania. In producing this plan, we have *learned* that our focus must be fully on learning; we have collaborated among ourselves and with others; and we have taken the first step toward greatly enhanced accountability. These are our "imperatives for the future."

F. Eugene Dixon, Jr.
Chairman, Board of Governors

James H. McCormick
Chancellor

Executive Summary

To realize its vision as an accountable, collaborative, increasingly integrated network of universities focused on learning, the State System of Higher Education commits itself to three major initiatives that we consider imperative to the future of public higher education and several goals to achieve those initiatives. These goals and the recommended strategies build upon foundations set by previous planning documents, including *Priorities for Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education during the 1990s* and the 1994 System *Excellence in Equity* plan. They take into account reasonable assumptions about future opportunities and constraints; and build on the particular strengths that characterize the State System universities.

Focus on Learning

Given our faculty's long-standing commitment to excellence in teaching and concern about students as individuals, the State System of Higher Education is well-positioned to become the first system of public universities to commit to the new focus on learning defined in this plan. The traditional model of instruction in higher education is directed almost exclusively toward the transmission of knowledge; the new learning-centered model emphasizes what students should know and be able to do and incorporates new understandings of how today's diverse students learn most effectively. The aim is to assure that students achieve clearly defined learning outcomes, including the skills, values, and perspectives, as well as knowledge, needed in the 21st century workplace. The quality of student learning, the quality of learning produced through faculty scholarship and service, and the commitment to learning by all members of the university communities will be the State System's mark of excellence.

Collaboration and Integration

The plan calls for increased collaboration on many levels: within universities, among the universities, and between individual System universities or the System as a whole and external organizations. Cooperative learning, learning communities, interdisciplinary courses and programs, undergraduate research, and greater interconnection between faculty and staff will strengthen the focus on learning within universities. Among System universities, collaboration in the development and delivery of academic programs and in faculty scholarly and service activities, joint purchasing, and sharing of equipment and other resources will lead to greater integration of the State System, enabling us to make optimal use of limited resources. Finally, partnerships with basic education institutions and linkages with business and industry, social and health organizations, government agencies, other colleges and universities, and regional communities will strengthen the State System and the many groups with whom we collaborate.

The Accountability Imperative

Accountability is imperative—for student learning, for faculty development and productivity, for the quality and convenience of services to internal and external clientele, and for the efficient, cost-effective management of resources. In our new environment of broader accountability, State System faculty will define the expected results of a liberal education and all academic majors, assess students' learning, and use the findings to improve academic programs. The System will develop performance indicators to better demonstrate its accountability and will institutionalize the principles of continuous improvement. Communication with all System constituencies will be expanded as we respond regularly to their interests and concerns, explain the distinctiveness of State System universities within the complex array of higher education in the state, and highlight the many ways that the State System of Higher Education contributes to Pennsylvania and the nation.

To support and achieve these major initiatives, the State System will pursue four strategic goals and take specific actions which provide opportunities for excellence and for the establishment of community:

- *We shall expand access to new and existing clientele, with attention to the increasingly diverse and nontraditional student members;*

- *We shall enhance and expand learning opportunities for Pennsylvanians and others through information and communication technologies;*

- *We shall strengthen the match between the State System's educational programs and the needs of students and the state; and,*

- *We shall optimize the management and development of System resources.*

Integration of the initiatives and goals of this plan with ongoing university planning processes—and integration of planning across the major functional areas of the System—will be the keys to implementation of this plan. Through the plan's vision, the State System of Higher Education commits itself to the changes being called for in higher education and reaffirms its commitment to provide a high quality education that is affordable and accessible to Pennsylvanians.

"A paradigm shift is taking hold in American higher education. In its briefest form, the paradigm that has governed our colleges is this: A college is an institution that exists *to provide instruction*. Subtly but profoundly we are shifting to a new paradigm: A college is an institution that exists *to produce learning*. This shift changes everything."

(Barr and Tagg, *Change*, 1995)

Focus on Learning

The first of the State System's primary initiatives is a conscious and deliberate sharpening of our focus on student learning. This shift in focus grows out of the excellence in teaching which has long characterized State System universities. It also reflects new student needs and approaches to teaching and learning that many State System faculty already have recognized and adopted.

The focus on learning is being discussed and advocated widely in higher education today. It grows out of three trends that have had a major impact on higher education over the past decade or more—and lays the foundation for responding to a significant emerging trend.

First, during the past two decades, college student populations have become increasingly diverse in background, age, preparation, and learning styles. Research on collegiate teaching and learning shows that exclusive use of the lecture format (still the case in most college classrooms across the country) does not fit the ways that many students learn most effectively; hence, it does not consistently yield the quality and quantity of learning that faculty expect and students need. As early as 1984, the Study Group on the Conditions of Excellence in American Higher Education, sponsored by the National Institute of Education, issued *Involvement in Learning*, a report which recommends a number of changes in curriculum and pedagogy intended to increase student involvement, motivation, and achievement. This report spawned more calls for changes in *how* college faculty teach and for much greater attention to students' different "learning styles." The State System's 1990 plan, *Priorities*, and System-wide and campus-level faculty professional development programs have responded to these calls, building a strong foundation for the subtle, but profound shift of focus from teaching to learning.

Second, and closely related, a significant body of recent research documents the positive differences in student achievement—and in student retention—resulting from the use of more active teaching and learning approaches. To develop complex thinking skills, students must practice such skills often in classroom interaction and course assignments and be coached on how to improve them. To strengthen written and oral communication, students must be required to use such skills throughout their college education. To learn to integrate and apply knowledge, they must engage in interdisciplinary thinking, case study analysis, and practical problem-solving. To learn to work effectively with others, they must be provided with ample opportunity to collaborate with peers. Studies show that most students learn more effectively when they work cooperatively with other students. Not surprisingly, studies also show a strong correlation between academic success and time spent on academic work. Recognizing the positive impact of more active classroom strategies on learning, many State System faculty already are teaching quite differently today from the way they did 10 years ago. Increasing numbers also are discovering the many ways they can use technology to make learning more active, interactive, and productive.

Third, the needs of the workplace in a knowledge-based, global economy have changed dramatically in recent years. With regard to undergraduate education, local and national studies have shown repeatedly that while employers are still interested in a solid foundation of disciplinary knowledge, they are even more interested in students' communication and thinking skills. Too often, they find recent college graduates deficient in their abilities

to analyze, interpret, synthesize, and effectively present information; to find and apply needed information and solve problems; to work effectively in teams and in multicultural settings. Employers seek flexibility, initiative, and well-honed learning skills that will enable workers to find and use the knowledge needed for varied tasks. To prepare students for this workplace, colleges and universities must promote the active discovery, formulation, expression, and application of knowledge and concomitant development of skills by students—under the active and imaginative tutelage of faculty.

The sharpened focus on learning—on the outcome of education, rather than the input—is the natural extension and the latest expression of these three trends. It is reinforced by an increasing emphasis on accountability and by recent calls for increased "learning productivity," i.e., enabling students to learn more in a given period of time through more flexible delivery systems. The State System's initiative to focus on learning is, then, a commitment to the continuous improvement of the quality of education offered by the universities. Because of our early response to the trends noted and the faculty's long-standing commitment and attention to the needs of students, the State System is well-prepared to lead the challenge among public university systems to commit to learning as the focus of all campus endeavors.

Further, the System-wide commitment to learning will position the universities for the dramatic changes in the demand for and the delivery of learning in the Information Age of the 21st century. In *Transforming Higher Education: A Vision for Learning in the 21st Century* (1995), futurists Dolence and Norris stress the exponential growth of knowledge and information, which will demand continued learning, require the integration of work and learning, and offer learners a wide range of choices:

"The classroom will not disappear, nor will the campus fade into oblivion. Rather, American higher education in the 21st century will provide a spectrum of choices for learners, ranging from the truly traditional to the truly transformed. These choices will be exercised by individual learners, faculty, researchers, and practitioners in their daily work and as they chart the pathways for their learning careers. Individual learners are an inexorable force driving learning in the Information Age.

Higher education will be responding not only to the various learning styles and needs of students in their classrooms, but also to the interests, time frames, and specific needs of a much broader clientele of lifelong learners. In this arena, information technology no longer will be simply a means of strengthening teaching and learning; it will transform teaching and learning. "Networked learning" will enable workers to access the information and knowledge and develop the new skills they need in a rapidly changing workplace. Rather than credits, degrees, and other traditional indicators of higher education, the emphasis more and more will be on learning—with the what, where, when, and how tailored to the learner."

(Dolence and Norris)

Implications

With its emphasis on students as learners, how will this new focus make a difference? Along with a concern for student satisfaction, the System is even more interested in what students are learning, and how efficiently and effectively they are doing so. System universities also are concerned about how well learning matches the needs of employers and prepares students for the complex society they will live in, and how faculty and students can work together to improve the results of learning. The university's "product," as well as its major process, is learning. Thus, the initiative to focus on learning is about improving the quality of both.

Students increasingly will become partners in learning. In the traditional model of instruction, faculty organize and transmit knowledge, while students are expected to take notes, complete assignments, pass exams, and be assigned grades. Often, grades are overemphasized. In the new learning environment, faculty and students assume greater responsibility for achieving explicit results, based on high expectations and requiring active student involvement. Incoming and prospective students and their parents must be educated about their increased responsibility for learning. Admissions officers, faculty, administrators, and student affairs professionals also must help students understand that they must devote as much time as possible to academic activities, take advantage of available learning resources, work collaboratively with faculty and peers, and participate in various assessment activities.

System faculty have a head start in the transition to a learning focus. Teaching is their primary responsibility; most are highly student-oriented, and many already have significantly changed their approach to teaching to promote greater student involvement in learning. Still, this new focus has important implications for faculty. First, while faculty development has long been a priority at the System and the university levels, even greater emphasis on and support for faculty development opportunities will be needed. In addition to staying abreast of new knowledge in their disciplines, faculty will be expected to continue learning how to motivate, assess, and assure learning among diverse students. Curricula, including the General Education curriculum, will require ongoing revision based on students' needs and learning outcomes. Learning how to use existing and evolving technologies to enhance and structure learning in entirely new ways will be an ongoing challenge. In addition, many faculty, especially those in professional fields, will need to strengthen their understanding of the world their students will enter by gaining firsthand experience outside of academe.

A second, related implication for faculty lies in the broader interpretation of scholarship. Within the traditional triad of teaching, research, and service, the issue will not be which of these functions is valued more highly or contributes more to the status of the individual or the institution, but the extent to which the varied scholarly and professional activities of faculty contribute to learning. Individual faculty will be able to contribute to the learning not only of students, but of department and disciplinary colleagues, other faculty and staff across the university, and members of their particular profession or the larger community. In this environment, expectations would be established in terms of the talents of individuals, the interests of the department and institution, and the needs of those being served.

As learning becomes the central focus of System universities, student affairs professionals, and all staff who work directly with students will become partners with faculty in providing encouragement and assistance in creating a campus climate that promotes and supports learning. Residence life, for example, holds great potential to provide students with opportunities to become involved in living/learning experiences. Ongoing support also should be available to students living off-campus and those in distance education programs. In addition to providing a wide array of opportunities for student learning outside of the classroom (as they always have), student affairs educators will create structured settings for students to assess and reflect on the learning they acquire through co-curricular activities, community service, travel, work-study, and other work experience. Particular attention must be paid to the learning styles and needs of students who are members of minority groups or other under-represented populations. Research shows that the more integrated

students' learning experiences are and the more they engage in self-assessment and reflection, the greater the impact of their education. Student affairs professionals also will work with faculty and students to establish social, civic, and leadership goals that reflect society's expectations of college graduates, to assess student achievement of those goals, and to strengthen those curricula and co-curricula activities which foster students' development as contributing members of their community.

Finally, since learning is the major purpose of State System universities, and students are the major, though not the only, clientele, all institutional structures and functions should be aligned to support learning and meet clients' needs. Administrators and staff will bear primary responsibility for insuring that administrative and instructional support functions enable faculty and students to pursue the goal of learning as effectively and conveniently as possible. Continuous improvement principles, already being implemented at System universities, provide a well-tested approach to re-evaluating organizational structures and re-focusing organizational functions to better address the institution's mission. The focus on learning will allow the work of administrators and staff to be assessed in terms of contributions made to the learning culture, as well as to their own continuing learning, their ability to adapt to change, and their accountability to both internal and external constituencies.

Anticipated Outcomes

First, with the focus on learning in all areas of the academy, graduates of State System universities will be among the best-educated college graduates in Pennsylvania. They will be valued in the schools, businesses, health care facilities, non-profit and government agencies, and other organizations in which they are employed. Having been accustomed to high expectations for performance and frequent demonstration of various skills, and having received constant coaching and support in the development of those skills during their college years, System graduates will be strong communicators, good thinkers, effective problem-solvers, and competent in the skills and knowledge required by their profession. They will know how to find and apply information needed to analyze problems, complete work assignments, or initiate new projects. They will know how to select, interpret, evaluate, and synthesize useful knowledge from the vast range of information resources available at work and at home. They will be flexible and resourceful, prepared to adjust to rapid changes in the workplace and in society, comfortable in a multicultural environment, and committed to lifelong learning and personal growth. Having well-developed social skills and a strong sense of values, State System graduates will be productive members of work groups, as well as valued participants in community and civic service activities, able to justify conclusions and actions on sound ethical principles.

Second, State System faculty will find the new emphasis on learning intellectually stimulating and professionally fulfilling. They will appreciate the fact that more of their students are learning more; they will welcome the opportunity that ongoing assessment offers to continuously improve student learning. Increasingly, they will use various technologies to facilitate students' learning efficiency, leaving more time for valuable faculty/student interaction and collaboration on research or applied projects.

The focus on learning will promote collaboration between faculty and students across academic departments and between faculty and student affairs professionals. Faculty will be energized by development of interdisciplinary curricula, continuous improvement of the General Education curriculum, participation in learning communities, experimentation with new approaches to assessment, and efforts to bring greater coherence to students' total undergraduate experience—all essential academic work that will be appropriately recognized and rewarded. Student affairs professionals will find their work more challenging and fulfilling, as they develop new ways to support and reinforce student learning, expand services to new and diverse clientele, and maintain a campus environment that supports the focus on learning.

Over time, the focus on learning will function as a new lens for looking at customary ways of doing things, a new criterion for allocation of scarce resources, a new guideline for decision-making

concerning equipment purchases and facilities renovation, a new approach to assigning and evaluating work, and a new standard for recognizing and rewarding excellence. Perhaps most important, it will provide a centering value for university communities, uniting diverse groups and constituencies around an activity and goal that all will share—learning.

Collaboration and Integration

"Collaboration" has become a watchword of the 1990s, as organizations of all kinds have found that more integration of internal units and collaboration with external entities increases creativity and productivity. This new organizational dynamic, often facilitated by technology, focuses on "systems thinking," i.e., the interrelationships among parts and processes and the value added by such interaction. The era of the stand-alone organization—or the isolated "ivory tower" institution—is gone. Both systems thinking and collaboration are key features of the "learning organization," described in Peter M. Senge's widely read book, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization* (1990).

Collaboration is not new to the State System. Since its inception in 1983, the State System of Higher Education has been a collaborative organization of institutions that enjoy a significant level of autonomy. The System's governance structure, collective bargaining processes, and many facets of its operations have been collaborative from the outset. But recent fiscal, philosophical, educational, and technological changes call for much more—and more deliberate and structured—collaboration within universities as learning-centered organizations, among the universities within the System, and between State System universities (and the System as a whole) and many other organizations and entities within the Commonwealth, the nation, and the world.

Collaboration within the Universities

In a learning-centered university, learning activities tend to be less individualistic and competitive and more interactive and cooperative—qualities already found in many State System university classrooms. As Barr and Tagg point out:

> "In the Learning Paradigm, learning environments—while challenging—are win-win environments that are cooperative, collaborative, and supportive. They are designed on the principle that accomplishment and success are the result of teamwork and group efforts."
>
> (Barr and Tagg)

While faculty will develop (and continuously refine) learning goals for individual courses, major programs, and the General Education program, increasingly, the achievement of these goals will involve faculty and student collaboration. A particularly powerful form of faculty/student collaboration occurs when faculty involve undergraduates, as well as graduate students, in research activities, as many System faculty already do.

Collaboration among students, as well as between faculty and students, is a key feature of a productive learning environment. Research on collegiate teaching and learning demonstrates the power of peer interaction and support, whether it comes in structured study groups, collaborative academic projects, peer tutoring, or "learning communities." Several System universities have experimented with learning communities, which take many forms, but most often consist of linked or "clustered" courses, in which a group of students is enrolled in the same courses (or sections) together. The instructors design learning experiences that insure peer interaction and help students understand the links among the disciplines involved. Recent studies show that participation in learning communities during the freshman year has a positive effect on student achievement and retention, and faculty have found this teaching approach intellectually stimulating and an opportunity for them, as well as their students, to learn.

In addition to collaborating within departments to develop learning goals for courses and major programs, faculty increasingly will join with other academic departments to develop interdisciplinary academic programs and joint research and service projects. Faculty collaboration will

facilitate adaptation to the changes information technology fosters in teaching and learning, as they work to determine for what purposes, when, and how technology can be used most effectively. Student affairs educators can assist faculty in developing service-learning curricula, share ideas about how to make course material relevant to the experiences and goals of particular student groups, and collaborate with faculty in planning and conducting assessment activities.

Similarly, administrative collaboration within the universities and at the System level will hold greater importance as we restructure management operations. The System's continuous improvement initiative features the use of cross-departmental teams to analyze and recommend better linkages between and improvement of management processes. Often, enhanced collaboration among administrative and support units, in itself, will improve services to students and other clientele. In a few years, a reliance on collaboration will become a distinctive feature of the State System's organizational culture.

Collaboration among State System Universities

"Twice Imagined," the title of the April 1995 issue of The Pew Higher Education Roundtable's *Policy Perspectives*, summarizes the major forces of change affecting American higher education, then "imagines" what a system of higher education that adapts effectively to these changes might look like.

> "At the core of this more promising future is a paradox that only higher education itself can resolve: colleges and universities must become more nearly interchangeable nodes on an expanding educational network, *and*, as individual institutions, they must become more distinctive and discernible from one another."
>
> (*Policy Perspectives*)

The point applies particularly to the State System of Higher Education. Despite important differences in mission and size—from a large, doctoral institution to relatively small, primarily undergraduate universities—the 14 System universities are quite similar in the nature and range of academic program support services and administrative structure. Although their strengths vary, most System universities provide a broad range of liberal arts and professional preparation programs. Given current financial constraints, however, for new programs to be developed and existing ones strengthened, the universities will need to phase out programs with dwindling enrollments and reallocate resources. As these trends continue and are coordinated across the System, our universities will, indeed, become more distinctive, while the System as a whole will become more efficient and better integrated.

At the same time, collaboration in the development and offering of academic programs—by sharing faculty expertise and equipment and utilizing distance education technologies—offers the universities the opportunity to introduce, continue, or expand programs they could not otherwise afford, thereby addressing the interests and needs of more students. For instance, "seminar semesters," which bring students from several universities to one campus to take upper division work in such fields as German, physics, philosophy, or marine biology (where enrollments at individual universities may not support a full four-year program) could enable participating universities to continue offering these majors. Providing specialized courses or short programs across the System through distance education offers similar advantages. In some cases, especially in the development of new and expensive graduate offerings, joint degrees—such as the Clarion University of Pennsylvania/Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania joint graduate nursing program—may be the most cost-efficient approach.

Expanded collaboration in faculty development and scholarly and service activities—again, there are already many examples of such initiatives in the System—also will stretch limited resources, while generating creativity among colleagues from different universities. Untapped potential lies in the development of integrated grant proposals and fund-raising initiatives. Collaborative endeavors across administrative units also will increase with the sharing of expertise and integrated approaches to common objectives.

Collaboration between the State System and External Groups

The focus of this initiative is to accelerate a movement already under way. For example, collaboration between the State System and the community colleges in Pennsylvania has produced an articulation agreement and a detailed electronic system for enhancing the transfer of students between these institutions. The State System intends to initiate other forms of collaboration, not only with community colleges, but also with state-related and independent institutions, often through shared technology, to provide higher education services statewide as efficiently and effectively as possible.

Partnerships between basic education systems and the State System as a whole—the highly successful Philadelphia Partnership is an example—and with each of the 14 universities have expanded significantly in recent years. These programs focus on motivation and basic skills development for at-risk school populations, enrichment in various fields, such as the arts, mathematics, sciences, or general education, school restructuring initiatives, tutoring projects involving college students, professional development for teachers and college faculty, academic alliances among disciplinary colleagues, teachers' centers, and distance education to provide learning opportunities to secondary students that rural schools could not otherwise offer. Most of these programs involve schools and universities as equal partners, and are yielding benefits to faculty and students at all levels, while strengthening teacher preparation programs at State System universities. Additional collaboration with businesses and foundations will be needed to sustain and expand these vital partnerships.

Collaborations between System universities and business, industry, government, and health and human service agencies take many forms, including student internships, community service activities, applied research provided by faculty for regional, state or national organizations, and small business development centers. Many professional preparation programs within System universities have advisory committees of professionals in the field; others should form such committees. The use of working professionals in advisory capacities in program review and assessment activities and as adjunct or visiting faculty will contribute to the continuous improvement of our professional preparation programs, whatever the field. In addition, faculty will be encouraged to gain outside experience in the professional world for which they prepare students. Expanding our networks of internship and practicum sponsors and the linkages that facilitate the integration of community service into the curriculum will further strengthen our students' preparation for the world of work and community responsibility, while providing valuable service to our external collaborators.

Finally, the System must look to partnerships with businesses, foundations, and state and federal government agencies to increase resources for new initiatives that will benefit students and communities. We also must work with external groups to promote advocacy and recognition of the System's significant contributions to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

The Accountability Imperative

The State System of Higher Education always has regarded accountability as a critical responsibility. Examples include full financial disclosure, conscientious compliance with the provisions of *Act 188 of 1982* and with Board policies governing fiscal and managerial practices, adherence to all applicable state regulations, rigorous application of social equity policies and guidelines, regular academic program review, accreditation of the individual institutions and of numerous academic programs, involvement of councils of trustees in decision making, and annual executive management review. In all these ways, the State System has demonstrated educational, managerial, and fiscal accountability to the Commonwealth and to its various constituencies. Recently the System initiated a multi-faceted program of internal auditing to insure the efficiency and accountability of specific functions at the universities, in the Office of the Chancellor, and across the System.

In the new higher education environment, we must broaden accountability and communicate more effectively what we are doing. The System, therefore, will undertake significant new activities in four areas: insuring assessment of student learning

outcomes in all academic programs, developing System-wide core accountability measures, institutionalizing the principles and processes of continuous improvement, and enhancing communication with internal and external constituencies.

Assessment of Student Learning

Assessment plays an indispensable role in a learning-centered university. That role, along with the process it entails, has been summarized succinctly by Thomas Angelo in the November 1995 issue of the AAHE *Bulletin*:

> "Assessment is an ongoing process aimed at understanding and improving student learning. It involves making our expectations explicit and public; setting appropriate criteria and high standards for learning quality; systematically gathering, analyzing, and interpreting evidence to determine how well performance matches those expectations and standards; and using the resulting information to document, explain, and improve performance. When it is embedded effectively within larger institutional systems, assessment can help us focus our collective attention, examine our assumptions, and create a shared academic culture dedicated to assuring and improving the quality of higher education."
>
> (Angelo)

Assessing what students know and are able to do and comparing these findings to department and university expectations for student learning are complex processes, involving qualitative and quantitative methods. In the past decade, faculty across the country have worked to develop a means to assess students' mastery of knowledge, their proficiency in critical thinking, communication, and problem-solving, and their development of the professional attitudes and values expected of college graduates. Most universities, including State System universities, engage in various forms of assessment, but it is a process still under construction. In accord with the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools' monograph, "Framework for Outcomes Assessment," the Board of Governors expects each university and academic department to develop and refine outcomes assessment strategies suited to its programs and students, and to use the findings to improve teaching and learning. Recognizing, however, that faculty and administrators can learn much from colleagues at sister universities, the System will encourage the sharing of assessment ideas and accomplishments and provide incentives to accelerate implementation of this critical feature of learning-centered universities.

While the major purpose of assessment is continuous improvement of student learning, the process also has an accountability dimension. A Board of Governors' policy, reflecting the expectations of Middle States, may help insure, as well as communicate, the System's accountability in this regard. In addition, within the next few years, reports will be issued to interested groups, verifying the institutionalization of outcomes assessment in the System, illustrating how it is being carried out from university to university and program to program, and citing the specific improvements in courses, programs, student achievement, and the learning climate at System universities. Such reporting can give our publics a better understanding of the nature and impact of our increased focus on learning.

Common Core Accountability Measures

The System has regularly collected, maintained, and reported on standard indicators of performance: enrollment, retention, graduation rates, degrees granted, faculty numbers and qualifications, academic program offerings, student pass rates on licensure examinations, staffing configurations, and fiscal operations. With demands for greater accountability increasing, the System plans to expand its database, to provide opportunities for comparison with other Systems, and to improve the process and content of reporting to policy makers and other constituencies. A task force will review existing accountability measures in the State System and at other

institutions and develop a commonly accepted set of definitions for performance measurement.

A System-wide student satisfaction survey, an alumni survey, and an economic impact study will yield additional data for improvement of learning and accountability. Data on faculty productivity have been collected annually for the report prepared by the Joint State Government Commission, but the System intends to develop an approach that will reflect more meaningfully and accurately the nature, range, and quality of faculty work.

While there may be concern about the reallocation of resources that these accountability efforts will require, the cost of failing to provide accurate data to legislators, parents, and others would likely be much greater.

Continuous Improvement

A continuous improvement process, derived largely from the *Education Pilot Criteria* for the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, is being implemented in administrative and support units across the System, including the Office of the Chancellor. System leaders are providing the impetus for this initiative, as well as the opportunity to share information about what is working. Continuous improvement is expected to become a way of life in the State System. Not only will it enhance how we serve various internal and external clientele, the continuous improvement "ethic" also will increase motivation, hone the professional skills, and improve the job satisfaction of our managerial and support staff. Like outcomes assessment in academic units, the continuous improvement process will insure management accountability.

Enhanced Communication with System Stakeholders

Continuing conversations, surveys, focus groups, and other forms of communication with our students, alumni, trustees, employers, members of the communities our universities serve, and statewide leaders in business, health care, education, and government will be a critical part of the System's emphasis on accountability. Whether we are assessing the effectiveness of students' performance in the workplace, the satisfaction of alumni with their educational preparation, or the future needs of regional employers, strong relationships and ongoing communication with the full range of groups who have a stake in the quality of State System universities are critical.

While seeking input from a broad range of groups, we also must communicate broadly a strong, consistent, fact-based picture of the State System of Higher Education. Today's communication technologies make it possible for us to "tell the State System story" to people across the Commonwealth and across the nation. Accountability will mean little if we fail to communicate to the general citizenry, and to policy makers, parents, public school partners, alumni, business leaders, and others, what the State System of Higher Education is, who and how it serves, and the many ways that it adds value to Pennsylvania.

With this plan, we call for a new emphasis on outreach, new efforts to explain the System's distinctiveness, and a more intensive and integrated approach to promoting the State System to prospective students, employers of our graduates, and potential partners. This comprehensive communications effort will reinforce the System's vision of an accountable, collaborative, increasingly integrated network of universities focused on learning. It will be directed toward building understanding of our shared commitment to continuous improvement, increasing utilization of the services we offer, securing the resources needed to support our mission, and developing the case for support of public higher education as a whole in Pennsylvania.

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To focus on learning, achieve greater integration and collaboration in programs and services, and be responsive to the publics that we serve, four strategic goals, each supported by a number of recommended actions, are offered. Effective action on these goals is already in progress. In other cases, this plan will provide the springboard for further study and action.

We shall expand access to new and existing clientele, with attention to the increasingly diverse and nontraditional student members.

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania expressed an ongoing commitment to expand access to higher education for all of its citizens in the legislation that created the State System of Higher Education in 1982. Act 188 mandated the mission of the 14 System universities "to provide high quality education at the lowest possible cost to the students." While quality and cost are the primary considerations, System universities always have interpreted access as more than simply admission to the institution. Access includes the opportunity to participate in a broad range of academic programs, including graduate programs in applied fields, as well as support services and co-curricular programs that expand and reinforce classroom learning. Although admission to a particular program or university cannot always be guaranteed, access to the State System of Higher Education is available to all qualified Pennsylvanians.

During the past decade, state appropriations fell far short of enrollment growth, compelling the System to initiate an enrollment management policy in 1991, to insure quality. The numbers of high school graduates seeking a college education are rising, and increasing numbers of adults also are seeking educational opportunities at the undergraduate and the graduate level. The System continues to be committed to expanding participation in higher education by rural Pennsylvanians and to providing a nurturing environment for students of diverse backgrounds and socio-economic status. Given the opportunities created by new technologies and new efficiencies within the State System of Higher Education, we should be able to expand educational access to citizens of the Commonwealth at the same time that we continue to enhance the quality of our educational programs.

Public concern is growing in Pennsylvania, and elsewhere, about the many college students taking more than the traditional four years to complete a baccalaureate degree, thus increasing the cost of their education while limiting the institution's capacity to enroll new students. Recent studies show that the major reasons for extending the time to degree are financial constraints, which require students to reduce their course loads or "stop out" of school due to lack of money; and the emphasis on maintaining a high grade point average, which leads many students to drop or repeat difficult courses and sometimes to change majors. Although most State System students who wish to graduate in four years are able to, few incentives are offered to encourage timely graduation.

In December 1993, former SUNY Chancellor Bruce Johnstone in the AAHE *Bulletin* advocated a shift of focus in higher education from "teaching productivity" to "learning productivity." Johnstone argues that enlarging class sizes and increasing faculty teaching loads, in most cases, will not lead to greater productivity in higher education without unacceptable losses in quality. Student learning productivity, however, can be significantly increased:

> "Most students, with the appropriate curricula, pedagogy, technological support, and incentives, can meet our learning goals in less time and at less cost than they currently do under our conventional instructional modes and incentives."
>
> (Johnstone)

While many may disagree with some of Dr. Johnstone's specific recommendations (such as reducing vacation periods), few can quarrel with his basic premise. By increasing learning productivity, we would not only improve efficiency, but also expand access.

To provide the nurturing environment called for in the System's equity plan, *Excellence and Equity*, and to insure greater access to learning for the growing and increasingly diverse pool of eligible students within the Commonwealth, the State System should take the following actions:

- Continue to strengthen our efforts, particularly as outlined in *Excellence and Equity*, to increase the recruitment, retention, and graduation of minority students in the State System universities.

- Increase retention and completion rates not only through continuation of the current range of support services, but also by improving academic advising, adapting more effectively to students' varying learning styles and rates, and expanding opportunities for students to work on campus. (Studies show such students are more likely to graduate than those who work off-campus.)

- Revise the Enrollment Management policy and current enrollment bands to permit growth at universities where demand is greatest.

- Explore the possibility of differential tuition and fee charges, within a Board-approved framework, to give individual universities greater flexibility in serving their particular regions and clientele.

- Implement an electronic multi-university application process that will enable prospective students to identify all System universities they would consider attending. Students unable to enroll at one university due to limited program capacity, rather than lack of qualifications, may be referred to a comparable program at a sister university.

- Using the existing Visiting Student Program policy as a framework, create an "academic passport" to facilitate transfer among System universities and enable students, with advance approval, to receive full credit for courses completed at a sister university.

- Use distance education technologies to access courses from sister (or other) universities and participate in consortia involving other colleges and universities and electronic delivery systems to continue providing access to some limited enrollment academic programs and enhance the quality of others.

- Expand access to State System graduate programs through sharing resources, using distance education technologies, and developing more flexible and imaginative program structures and course scheduling, recognizing that more working adults are seeking graduate education, but are unable to pursue it in the traditional manner.

- Actively support and pursue resources for programs of access and retention for people with disabilities and those who are economically and socially disadvantaged.

- Collect data regularly to determine how well the university's (or department's) course structuring and scheduling meet the needs of particular student groups; recognize that some needs may be most effectively met through non-credit offerings and, where warranted, expand these offerings.

- Develop means to insure that commuting students, part-time working students, and students learning primarily through distance education have access to instructional resources and support services and opportunities for interaction with faculty and peers.

- Re-examine the traditional structures (e.g., three-credit courses, 15-week semesters) in which learning is framed, and experiment with new structures and methods (e.g., curricular modules or self-paced "mastery learning") that will provide greater flexibility and enhance learning productivity. Develop incentives, as well as means, for students who wish to shorten the time to graduation to do so.

- Seek external funding to support scholarships or other financial assistance for students who would otherwise be unable to remain in school.

- Continue to provide incentives for enrolling students who contribute to diversity, including international students, thereby enriching the campus climate for learning.

We shall enhance and expand learning opportunities for Pennsylvanians and others through information and communication technologies.

Technology is changing the face of higher education. It is changing how we know and think about knowledge, how we teach and learn, how we communicate, and how we do business. It has changed drastically what students must know and be able to do to live and work effectively in the 21st century. As knowledge in most fields has increased exponentially, the expectation that students, even graduate students, should "master the body of knowledge" in a given discipline no longer prevails. Rather, faculty must agree on the framework of facts, concepts, and modes of inquiry that students at different levels require, then insure that students have the skills to acquire, interpret, apply, communicate, and synthesize relevant information and knowledge from a wide variety of sources relevant to the discipline. The availability of appropriate technologies will be essential in teaching and learning these skills.

Technology also is changing the entire concept of "going to school." The availability of traditional degree programs and custom-made learning opportunities completely online is increasing each year. While most forecasters agree that online learning will not render the college campus obsolete, it will threaten the survival of those colleges and universities not prepared to offer such opportunities. Networked learning will erase the barriers between various levels of education, provide online diagnosis and remediation to meet needs, tailor learning experiences to individual learning styles, and provide for assessment of performance and certification of results. The time to prepare for this dramatically different mode of education is short. But the System's growing technological capacity, coupled with our faculty's flexibility and ingenuity, will enable us to be competitive in the dawning Information Age.

The System's commitment to developing and using information and communication technologies quickly, yet judiciously and efficiently, has been reinforced by the creation of a new System-level division for information technology. Among the recommendations for which this unit will provide System-wide leadership are the following, many of which are already in initial stages of implementation:

- Establish System-wide guidelines and standards for ongoing development of the technology and information infrastructure; continue to build, refine, and expand access to SSHEnet to strengthen communication within and among System universities.

- Bring the System's "virtual library"—linking all 14 universities, the branch campuses, and the Dixon University Center—online as quickly as possible, and develop a comprehensive plan for library resource purchasing and sharing, including electronic provision of key disciplinary and professional journals.

- When in the best interests of the universities, aggressively pursue System-wide licenses and hardware discounts and establish contractual agreements with major vendors at the System level to facilitate purchasing by individual universities.

- Collaborate with other organizations within the state—e.g., other colleges and universities, libraries, school districts, intermediate units, hospitals, and government offices—to expand telecommunications capacity to schools and communities that lack access to the benefits of the electronic revolution.

- Establish an Instructional Technology Professional Development Network within the System to support ongoing faculty and staff development programs focused on applications of technology to strengthen teaching and learning, to insure that students acquire the technological know-how they will need, and to facilitate continuous improvement in operational processes and in administrative services to students.

- Use the System-wide Distance Education Advisory Committee and other internal and external resources to identify needs and coordinate planning for distance education that will enable the System to expand access, while making the most efficient use of limited resources.

- Provide incentives and resources for entrepreneurial exploration of the more dramatic applications of technology now emerging in the higher education environment.

We shall strengthen the match between the State System's educational programs and the needs of students and the state.

More than ever before, public and independent higher education institutions are finding that their educational programs—credit and non-credit, undergraduate and graduate—must be developed carefully to address the interests and needs of students, parents, employers, communities, and regions. While State System universities have a long tradition of responsiveness to the needs of their regions, our challenge now is to match the System's collective strengths, in the liberal arts and sciences and in professional programs, to the changing educational needs of students, particular regions, and the state as a whole.

The continued vitality of State System institutions depends on ongoing examination of what our students—most of whom will live the majority of their lives in the 21st century—must know and be able to do to pursue productive and fulfilling careers, to contribute to their communities, to be successful partners and parents, and to be able to adapt to the career and life changes they will face. The quality and currency of General Education programs at State System universities will be critical in meeting these needs. No longer can any college establish a General Education framework intended to stand for a decade or more. Continuous review of these curricula, assessment of student learning, and prompt improvement and refinement are tasks that should be assigned to the very best faculty and rewarded by university-wide recognition, respect, and cooperation.

In addition to understanding students, we must understand and respond to employers' needs—the knowledge and skills they expect in college-prepared workers. Assessment of student learning outcomes, feedback from employers and advice from professionals in the development and review of academic programs will help assure strong links between the academic programs of the State System and the many fields in which our graduates will pursue careers. We must do a better job through academic advising and career counseling of directing students toward fields appropriate to their interests and abilities, and where there are growing career opportunities, and away from those where they may have difficulty finding the kind of position for which they have prepared.

Graduate education in applied fields is becoming increasingly important. Many companies and organizations have come to expect a graduate degree or at least some continuing education for higher level positions. Not surprisingly, then, many of our own graduates, as well as others, are interested in pursuing advanced study. Graduate and continuing education will take more diverse forms in the future, to which System universities—often working in collaboration with one other—must adapt. New certification programs, programs provided to a particular clientele at the work site, those offered partially or entirely through distance education technology, "weekend colleges," and other innovative models (already introduced by some colleges and universities) will be needed for the System to remain competitive. All of this has implications for faculty development, as they are expected to adapt not only to students' diverse learning styles, but also to new formats and frameworks for learning. Moreover, as master's level programs assume greater importance at some System universities and doctoral programs continue to be enhanced at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, special attention must be given to supporting the research, scholarly activity, student mentoring, grant-writing, and professional consultation that are expected of graduate faculty.

Among the recommendations offered to strengthen the match between the State System's educational programs and the needs of our diverse student population and the state are the following:

- Encourage and support ongoing review of General Education curricula at all System universities to insure that rigorous attention is being paid to the quality and currency of the curricula, including evaluating and revising the curriculum as a whole and individual courses in response to findings from outcomes assessments and to emerging student and employer needs.

- Regularly collect data on state and regional needs and employment markets and make such data available not only to university planners and career development officers, but also to academic advisors, faculty, parents, and students.

- Implement a coordinated approach to development of new academic programs within System universities to provide a context for collaboration and insure that we do not develop greater capacity for preparation in some fields than the employment market and state needs warrant.

- Expand and enhance services and program offerings at Dixon University Center and more fully develop the Center's potential to serve as the catalyst for development of consortial graduate programs, utilizing distance education, technologies and targeting statewide and Capital region needs.

- Develop needed processes, criteria, and funding to implement a highly selective Academic Incubator Program, which would provide short-term allocations of resources to a particular university or universities to support unusually high start-up costs (for equipment, personnel, facility renovation, etc.) for new academic programs that respond to the major initiatives of this plan.

We shall optimize the management and development of System resources.

Resource constraints—now and in the future—are an underlying assumption and a recurring motif in this plan. A parallel theme is the possibility for using resources more imaginatively and efficiently, and for developing new ones. The initiative to focus on learning offers a new touchstone for planning and resource allocation, while our call for the System to function as an "integrated network" stresses the potential of resource sharing, partnerships, and other activities to stretch available resources. The accountability is such, at least partly, because future resources may depend on it.

The System's adoption of continuous improvement principles has produced savings in administrative operations. The intent of the painstaking reviews of operational systems and processes is to improve services, while increasing productivity and reducing costs. Careful management and development of human resources, including cross-training to enable people to perform in several areas, providing appropriate "career ladders," and offering incentives, recognition, and rewards for outstanding performance are well-tested approaches to increasing productivity.

The System and the individual universities must have clearly developed priorities for reallocation of funds saved from various efficiencies, including reduced or eliminated functions and programs, as well as priorities for the use of new resources. The opportunity to receive new or reallocated resources can be used as an incentive for identifying savings, increasing efficiency and productivity, or securing external funding. The following recommendations encourage and reward the development of new resources and the innovative management of current ones:

- Continue to seek opportunities to take advantage of the System's size to achieve economies of scale in purchasing goods and contracting for services.

- Explore opportunities for resource sharing among System universities and with neighboring colleges and universities, including shared appointments of staff or faculty; joint purchases and use of major equipment; cooperative efforts in data collection and assessment; shared managerial expertise; and jointly planned faculty and staff development programs.

- Examine, at the System and university levels, opportunities for contracting services, when it is possible to save money without losing quality.

- Explore, at the System and university levels, new avenues for fundraising, and new ways of generating revenue from university products or services.

- Review the current "cap" on out-of-state enrollment, and current out-of-state tuition rates, to determine if the additional revenue that could be generated from increasing the numbers of non-resident students at some universities warrants adjustment in existing policies.

- Encourage and support efforts to secure grants from all possible sources; seek modification of state regulations that impede our ability to process and accept grants and contracts.

- Encourage and fully utilize the Capital Facilities Planning and Programming Process to insure that over the next decade, facilities planning and renewal will complement academic and other planning, with close attention to student needs.

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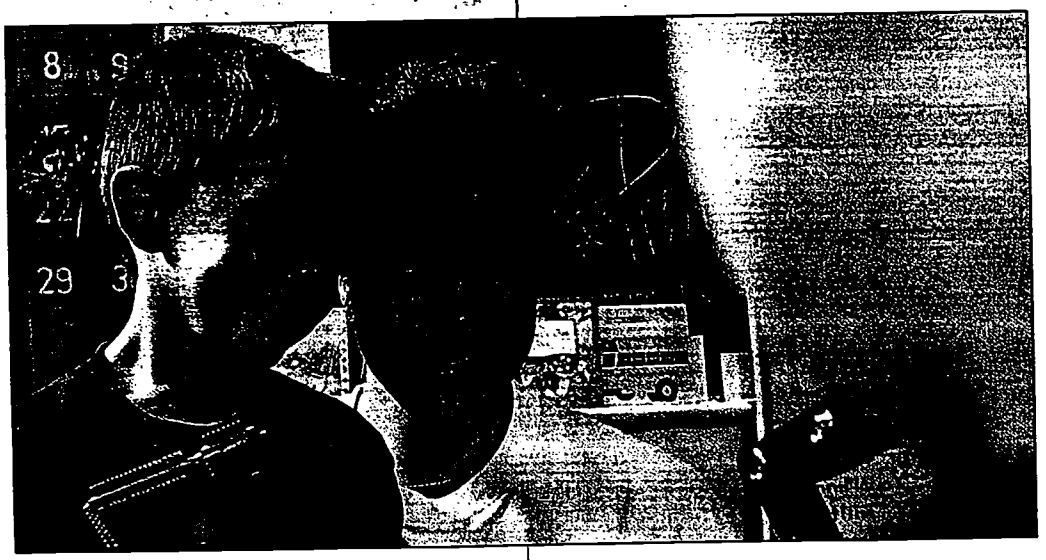
Integration and Implementation

Integration of the major themes and goals in this plan with the System's current equity plan and ongoing university planning processes—and integration of planning across the major functional areas of the universities and the System as a whole—will be the key to implementation of the System-wide strategic plan. Each university, in consultation with its council of trustees, will develop goals that reflect the System plan, incorporate these goals into their five-year planning process, and present implementation strategies during annual institutional meetings with the Chancellor. Annually, the System's Executive Council will develop and, through the Chancellor, recommend to the Board of Governors a number of shared goals and strategies that will be acted upon to implement and continuously update this plan. The Executive Council also will regularly review integration efforts and progress on implementation, and may choose to appoint a System-wide advisory committee to support the continuous development, review, and coordination of these activities at all levels. The Chancellor will provide reports at appropriate intervals to the Board of Governors on the System's progress in implementing the plan.

An additional key to successful implementation of the plan is the budget process. If the System's strategic plan is to serve as a critical leadership tool for shaping the System's agenda and providing direction for System and university priorities, a process and provisions must be in place for budgetary support of the efforts of the universities to make the changes and improvements called for in the plan. At the university and System levels, annual budget requests shall include funding provisions for action on the major initiatives of the plan, as well as the shared goals that are to be identified annually. These may include processes for redistributing current resources, enacting cost-saving efficiencies, requesting innovative special purpose appropriations, and identifying new external funding sources. Whatever the strategies and processes, integration and implementation of the plan must be dynamic and responsive to a financially difficult environment that is poised, nevertheless, for significant change.



Appendix A: The Planning Process

Structure and Phased Development of *Imperatives for the Future*

Act 188 of 1982 requires the Office of the Chancellor to conduct periodic comprehensive planning for the State System of Higher Education. The Academic and Student Affairs Division, with the support of a Planning Advisory Council, has the responsibility to oversee development of a comprehensive plan which helps guide and advise the Board of Governors and the System. In the spring of 1994, the Chancellor announced that a new planning cycle should begin, building upon the current System plan, *Priorities for Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education during the* 1990s, and setting directions for the System, as we move into the next century. To accomplish this goal, a phased planning process was designed to provide maximum input and review from all constituencies. At each stage of the five-part planning process, a draft formulation of the plan was available for review, comment, and evaluation by all involved. The outline below offers a synopsis and the outcome of each step of the process.

Phase I: Organization and Consultation
Fall 1994

During the initial phase, the Chancellor appointed the Planning Advisory Council (PAC). A complete list of the membership is included in Appendix D. The Planning Advisory Council was charged with developing a framework for a concise set of System-wide recommendations intended to help advance the public and academic mission of the State System of Higher Education between now and the year 2001. As the third major plan developed since the establishment of the System, the new plan was to build upon traditions and expand upon themes articulated in earlier planning efforts. The key element of the System's new plan was to be its responsiveness to a changing environment. It was to be comprehensive and strategic, yet able to complement and include all System planning activities.

Beginning in August 1994, the vice chancellor for academic and student affairs and members of the planning staff visited each of the 14 universities to discuss issues which confront the universities and to understand their collective view of the future.

Following these campus visits, several full-day meetings of the Planning Advisory Council resulted in the production of two documents: *Planning Assumptions* and *Issues & Challenges*, which incorporated information gleaned from the visits.

Under the sponsorship of The Pew Charitable Trusts, a Pew Higher Education Roundtable* was held at Dixon University Center in October 1994, the first such System-wide roundtable in the nation. Fifty leaders from System constituency groups participated in the opportunity to openly discuss concerns and hopes for the future and to explore in detail the many diverse perspectives on the System. A list of participants is included in Appendix D.

During the fall of 1994, additional planning meetings were held with the Pennsylvania Association of Councils of Trustees, the Board of Student Government Presidents, and the Pennsylvania Association of Rural and Small Schools.

Phase II: Orientation, Discussions, Deliberations/Task Groups
Spring 1995

The academic and student affairs planning staff synthesized and summarized over 52 specific topics identified by the Planning Advisory Council. Based on further deliberations with PAC, these issues were organized under six major themes: (1) Vision, Image, and Accountability; (2) Access and Enrollment; (3) Collaborative Leadership; (4) Future Academic Directions; (5) The Learning Enterprise and; (6) Resources. Six task groups comprised of representatives from a wide array of stakeholders were formed with the purpose of producing a set of foundation papers to be used for developing and writing the System plan.

Members of each of the groups are listed in Appendix D. These groups worked vigorously during the spring of 1995, with over 300 combined hours dedicated to this agenda. Each task group produced a paper which carefully weighed the discussions, analyses, and data presented during their meetings and which was representative of major concerns facing the System.

Phase III: A First Draft
Spring/Summer 1995

A second session of the System's Pew Higher Education Roundtable was convened in the spring of 1995. The papers developed by the task groups and the roundtable provided the planning staff and PAC with sufficient material to develop an initial draft of the emerging plan entitled, "Foundation Paper" in the spring of 1995. After being presented to and reviewed by the PAC in August, this document was subject to extensive editing and revision. As the fall 1995 semester began, the outline of a System plan had emerged, and a draft was available for broad constituent

* The Pew Higher Education Roundtable is a national laboratory that seeks to identify "best practices" for academic restructuring.

review. This initial draft was presented to the System's Chief Academic Officers at a retreat in June 1995, and later shared with the Executive Council. In addition, meetings on the draft plan were held during this time with the Board of Student Government Presidents, the Academic Affairs Advisory Committee, and the Chief Student Affairs Officers.

Phase IV: Constituent Input and Review
Fall 1995 and Spring 1996

Throughout the fall of 1995 and spring of 1996, feedback on the draft planning document was sought. Guided by the continuing deliberations of the PAC, faculty and public planning forums were held. In November of 1995, the Executive Committee of the Pennsylvania Rural Economic Development Council, a statewide group of political, business, and educational leaders concerned with the well-being of rural Pennsylvania, was briefed on the planning process. In the same time period, the new plan was proposed and tentatively titled "Strategic Directions for the State System of Higher Education." Faculty planning forums then were conducted to enable System faculty and other members of university communities to react to the draft document, have input in its development, and be involved participants in the planning process.

The vision statement and a summary of the draft plan were presented December 6, 1995 at a Board of Governors conference. A special meeting of the Board's Academic and Student Affairs Committee was held to discuss the goals of the plan as part of the April 18, 1996 Board meeting. Additional public forums to obtain feedback on the emerging plan were held with community, business, and political leaders from the Northern Tier counties on June 12, in Tioga County, Pennsylvania, and with the Pennsylvania Association of Councils of Trustees (PACT) on June 26, 1996.

To solicit additional input and reactions, the text of the draft was placed on the System's World Wide Web site, and notice was sent to each university and its faculty that the plan could be read via the Internet. Comments were sought and received using the System's e-mail network.

Phase V: Evolution of a Vision Statement and a Penultimate Draft
Spring/Summer 1996

The extensive dissemination and discussion of the draft planning document generated a wealth of suggestions for change and revision. Many comments were positive, some negative, and some contradicted the suggestions of others. All, however, were offered in the spirit of collegiality and intended to enhance the quality of the document. For much of the summer of 1996, the planning staff was engaged in a major redrafting of the document. As part of this process, Professor Steven Centola of Millersville University of Pennsylvania and Professor James Coolsen of Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania assisted with matters of tone and with several of the concerns expressed about earlier drafts of the plan.

Extensive editing and redrafting produced a new document. This draft was circulated to the Planning Advisory Council, the System's Executive Council, the Chief Academic Officers, and other committees and groups. A cogent and succinct statement of the plan's direction, philosophy, and vision was developed. This vision statement was shared with each university president and discussed extensively during the Executive Council retreat, June 17–18, 1996, at which time the Council expressed support for the vision statement. On June 19, 1996, the vision statement was presented and discussed at a Board of Governors conference, and with several changes suggested by members, received their positive response.

In August, a revised penultimate draft, with the vision statement, was distributed to all of the groups that had reviewed it earlier, and preparations were made for presentation and adoption of the new System plan, *Imperatives for the Future*, by the Board of Governors.

Appendix B: The Context for Planning

Planning does not take place in a vacuum. While developing this document, State System researchers consulted numerous economic and demographic databases to better understand what the future may hold for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and its citizens. Below is a list of key elements, identified in a scan of the environment, that will impact the future of public higher education, in general, and the State System of Higher Education, in particular. Following the key elements is a list of internal factors, including strengths and challenges, and several planning assumptions that grew out of the environmental scan.

External Factors

- Pennsylvania's population is growing slowly (2 percent since 1980). Projected population growth between 1994 and 2010 shows an increase of 554,800 new Pennsylvanians for a cumulative growth of 4.6 percent.

- The number of high school graduates will increase significantly (20 percent) within the next decade, nationally and in Pennsylvania, with more of these young people seeking higher education. This expansion will not be evenly divided, as the numbers in eastern counties are projected to increase at a rate greater than in western counties.

- Pennsylvania's minority population is the fastest growing in the state. Minorities composed 13 percent of the population in 1994, but will grow to 16 percent by 2010 (2,078,180). The largest single group projected to increase is the Asian population (133 percent increase since 1980). The African American population is projected to increase by 9.7 percent by the year 2000, and the Latino, by 2.6 percent.

- Currently observed patterns of migration within the Commonwealth will further concentrate the population in urban and suburban areas.

- Among all states, Pennsylvania is noted for having a large percentage of senior citizens. Currently 15.3 percent of the Commonwealth's population is age 65 or older. The United States average is 12.5 percent. In the next 25 years, the median age will increase from 35 to 42 years of age.

- Pennsylvania will continue to have the nation's largest number of rural residents (currently 3.7 million, or 31 percent of the total population in the state).

- The rate at which citizens participate in higher education has increased significantly—from 44 percent in 1983 to 69.1 percent in 1994. It is anticipated that this proportion will either remain constant or rise slightly in the next few years.

- Economists estimate that the wage gap between high school graduates and college graduates is widening. The college premium—or additional estimated income for college graduates—is now 96 percent, meaning that a college graduate can expect to earn almost twice the amount that a non-college graduate will earn in lifetime earnings. The economy is placing added emphasis on education and technological literacy. Average wages for high school graduates have fallen from $28,000 to $21,000 during the last decade.

- Approximately 73 percent of all State System students receive some form of financial aid.

- The current transition in Pennsylvania's economy from heavy industry and manufacturing toward service and technology will continue. In 1980, manufacturing provided almost 1.3 million jobs to the Commonwealth. The service sector of the economy accounted for approximately 900,000 jobs at that time. By 1995, the employment and economic pattern was almost exactly reversed. Service activities contributed 1.5 million jobs to Pennsylvania while manufacturing was, in 1995, responsible for 900,000 jobs. This stunning reversal of trends is stark testimony to the kinds of economic dislocation and change which have taken place within the Commonwealth in the past 15 years.

- Students seeking access to State System universities will assess the value of a college degree based upon the flexibility of scheduling and degree completion requirements, demand for differing instructional methods that include technology and recognition of individual needs, and the expectation of gainful employment related to the course of study.

Internal Factors

- State funding of System universities will not increase significantly in future years, and students, their families, and the legislature will urge that tuition increases be held down.

- Knowledge and its accessibility will continue to increase exponentially, and universities will be expected to provide students with accrued knowledge, in addition to the skills needed to acquire, interpret, apply, communicate, and synthesize information and knowledge.

- Higher education competitor institutions (e.g., state-related entities like the Pennsylvania State University and private colleges and universities) are becoming more aggressive, agile, and accountable in response to client needs and expectations and to key environmental factors.

- Although System universities will continue to be residential campuses serving a traditional base of undergraduate students, increasing numbers of adults, including rural and senior citizens will seek service, often through alternative delivery systems, ranging from nontraditional hours and locations to distance learning and technologically mediated instruction.

- The demands for accountability for performance, concrete measures of student outcomes, faculty productivity, and managerial efficiency and effectiveness, and the requirement to demonstrate the value of a System structure will increase significantly.

- As the nature of teaching and learning and societal expectations change, much attention must be given to defining, evaluating, and rewarding faculty work and managerial performance to insure the reward structure matches institutional needs and priorities as well as individual and unit accomplishments.

- Increasing student diversity will derive not only from racial, ethnic, and age differences, but will extend also to differences in socio-economic background, college readiness, emotional stability, physical challenges, and learning disabilities.

Information from the environmental scan has helped identify certain strengths and challenges to be considered and addressed in the years to come.

Strengths

- Given our collective history as teacher preparatory institutions, each university in the System has a strong teaching orientation and a history of commitment to students and their needs. Comparative data shows State System faculty spend more hours in the classroom than their colleagues at state-related institutions. State System faculty teach, and do not rely on graduate student teaching assistants to carry out undergraduate education.

- State System faculty salaries are among the best in the nation for comprehensive public regional universities. This has enabled universities to recruit and retain doctoral faculty in almost all disciplines.

- System universities offer over 200 undergraduate degrees within 32 academic program areas and an additional 107 different graduate degrees. This represents extraordinary breadth, and attests to our ability to meet the needs of the citizens of Pennsylvania.

- State System universities are fully accredited and are geographically and economically accessible to a significant percentage of the Commonwealth's population.

- Fourteen residential universities in either rural or suburban locations provide a comfortable and safe environment for students. National crime statistics show System universities are among the nation's safest.

- Almost 94,000 students are enrolled in System universities, and they come from all counties in the Commonwealth.

- By the turn of the century, we will have 500,000 alumni residing in the Commonwealth.

- System graduates hold numerous leadership and executive positions in government, business, and education throughout the Commonwealth and the nation.

- Our tuition rates are among the lowest in the Commonwealth (second only to community colleges).

- State System universities represent an enormous physical resource of over 750 buildings and 4,291 acres of land. The 547 education buildings of the System have a replacement value of $1.5 billion.

Challenges

- A continuing decline in the financial support base from the Commonwealth (from 67 percent of operating funds in 1984 to 46 percent projected for 1996) is expected during the next few years.

- The need to raise larger proportions of the revenues necessary to meet our mandated mission of access and low cost is increasing.

- The physical distances between campuses requires extra time and resources to govern and manage the System effectively. Video conferences can, in part, overcome the limitations of distance in the areas of student advising, supervision, and administrative meetings.

- Our current technology infrastructure will be enhanced to support recent developments in communications, connectivity, and technologically mediated instruction. Existing networks support the flow of data but will need extensive expansion to support future demands for video-based instruction and conferences.

- Of over 547 buildings on System university campuses devoted to educational usage, almost 30 percent are 60 years old or more. Because 30 percent of System educational facilities were built before 1955, extensive maintenance and renovation of existing structures is a major ongoing and expensive activity.

- Personnel and human resource costs now account for over 80 percent of the Educational and General budget, leaving little room for flexibility to commit resources elsewhere.

- The complex array of programs, degrees, and campuses within the System makes it more difficult to communicate and foster a consistent and positive image of who we are. The name State System of Higher Education has little currency outside Harrisburg. Most images of the System are of individual universities, thus making advocacy for all a difficult task.

- Our recent moves toward continuous improvement and more visible accountability measures to communicate who we are, what we do, and how well we are meeting those goals have not had time to take effect.

- Enrollment patterns in the last three years have shown a decline of 5,477 students from 99,850 in 1992 to 94,373 in 1995.

- Student faculty ratios for the same time period also have declined from a System average of 18.3:1 to 17.1:1.

Based on these strengths and challenges, a number of planning assumptions were advanced.

Planning Assumptions

- Although System universities will continue to be residential campuses serving traditional students, new populations, including some rural adults and senior citizens, will be served through distance education technologies—often in cooperation with other institutions or organizations. Through such technologies, we will also increase access to our universities. These strategies will be particularly important for the western universities, where the traditional college-age population is declining.

- Demands for accountability—student learning outcomes, faculty and staff productivity, addressing state needs, and demonstrating the value of the System structure—will increase significantly.

- State funding of System universities will not keep pace with cost increases; the public, as well as the legislature, will continue to exert pressure to hold tuition and other costs down. Along with appropriation budget requests, the state will require information about university efforts to reduce costs and operate more efficiently.

- New academic programs and research or service initiatives will be needed to meet critical state and student needs in changing times. In some cases, such programs will be launched through internal reallocation of funds and restructuring of programs. In others, universities will require "start-up funds" for several years to initiate needed programs.

- As the nature of teaching, learning, and societal expectations changes, much greater flexibility will be needed when interpreting, assigning, evaluating, and rewarding faculty work in order to match varied individual strengths and interests with an array of institutional needs and insure that the reward structure reflects clearly defined institutional and departmental priorities.

- As knowledge and its accessibility continue to increase, higher education will be expected to provide students with skills in acquiring, interpreting, applying, communicating, transferring, and synthesizing information and knowledge (as opposed to mastering "bodies" of knowledge). This has significant implications for curriculum and classroom teaching.

- Increasing student diversity will derive not only from racial, ethnic, and age differences, but also from differences in family background and social/emotional readiness for college. Many students will exhibit serious adjustment problems and learning disabilities that must be addressed before they are able to benefit from higher education.

- Given the emphasis of students on preparation for professional employment, State System universities, and the System as a whole, will have to give increasing attention to the "match" between academic programs and the numbers of students enrolled in them and the actual and projected job market in Pennsylvania, where most System university students choose to reside after graduation.

Appendix C: Summary of National and State Trends Affecting Higher Education

Changes in the Number and Characteristics of Current and Future Students (Nationally)

- The number of high school graduates is projected to increase for at least 10 years, from 2.5 million to 3 million per year. Even so, the total may not exceed the 1975 high of 3,186,000 for decades.

- From 1996 to 2005, higher education enrollments are projected to increase by 7 percent, from 15 to 16 million. Public institutions will account for 78 percent of all enrollments. All of this growth will be in undergraduates, as the number of graduate students is expected to decline 0.7 percent. Enrollments at four-year institutions will grow from 9 to 10 million (61 percent of total), and male enrollments will outpace female (women will still make up 55 percent of all students).

- During this same period, the number of associate and bachelor's degrees conferred should increase by 5 percent and 6 percent respectively, while the number of master's degrees granted should fall nearly 8 percent, and the number of doctorates awarded should remain unchanged. Bachelor's degrees are projected to account for 57 percent of all awards. The number of men receiving

master's and doctorates will plunge 14 percent and 15 percent respectively, but the number of women obtaining a doctorate will increase almost 22 percent.

- Many more disabled students, especially those with learning disabilities, are enrolling in colleges and universities. From 1988 to 1994, the percent of full-time freshmen with learning disabilities more than doubled, from 15 percent to 32 percent.

- Almost one in two 16–24 year-old full-time college students were employed in 1993, and about 25 percent worked at least 20 hours per week. The figure for full-time students working in 1970 was 34 percent. About 85 percent of part-time college students were employed in 1993, and 75 percent of them worked at least half-time.

- Higher education opportunities may not be available to an increasing number of economically disadvantaged children. In 1992, 14.6 million students 17 or younger were living below the poverty level. For African-Americans, 46 percent were in that category, compared to 39 percent of Latino children and 16 percent of Caucasian children.

- From 1984 to 1993, the percentage of students using computers in secondary schools nearly doubled (38.5 percent vs. 70.4 percent). Availability of technology is correlated with socio-economic status. The disparity between low income (bottom 20 percent) and high income (top 20 percent) students in 1993 was about 30 percent.

Major External Trends in Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania population is growing slowly:

- It has increased only 2 percent since 1980 to 12,052,410 in 1994 (still 5th largest in nation).

- It was almost unchanged from 1970 to 1990.

- It is projected to grow to 12,658,220 by the year 2010 (most of this growth will be among minority populations).

Characteristics of Pennsylvania population:

- It has the largest rural population (3.7 million, or 31 percent of total).

- 69 percent of residents live in urban areas, many in Pittsburgh and Philadelphia (only two other cities have at least 100,000 residents: Erie and Allentown).

- About 35,000 residents leave per year, many of whom are young and well-educated.

- Minorities composed 13 percent of the population in 1994, but will grow to 16 percent (2,078,180) by 2010.

- Asians are the fastest growing population (133 percent increase since 1980).

- Only Florida has more residents over the age of 65 (15 percent of Pennsylvania population is over age 65 now, will increase to 19 percent by 2020).

- The median age of the population in the Commonwealth is three years older than nationally and will be 41.5 years old in 2020.

Pennsylvania educational trends

- After years of decline, the number of high school graduates is increasing; by 2004 the total in Pennsylvania will be 19 percent higher than in 1993.

- Higher education participation rates increased from 44 percent in 1983 to 69 percent in 1994, well above the national rate of 54.5 percent.

- Pennsylvania drop-out rates are lower than nationally (9 percent vs. 11 percent).

- From 1983 to 1990 the State System accounted for 52 percent of higher education growth; most of that increase was attributable to women (up 31 percent since 1983) while the number of men enrolling in college is decreasing (especially in graduate programs).

- Part-time and nontraditional enrollments are increasing significantly.

- The growth of high school graduates is greatest in southeastern Pennsylvania.

- Pennsylvania has the third largest number of colleges and universities (219) in the nation.

Pennsylvania economic/government/technological trends

- The Commonwealth's economy is stagnant with continued loss of manufacturing jobs and large numbers of workers in recession-prone industries.

- Housing in urban and rural centers is deteriorating and the need for affordable housing is growing.

- The gap between the resources of rich and poor continues to widen.
- Pennsylvania has a highly skilled workforce, high-technology businesses, good basic schools and colleges/universities.
- The state is ideally located with respect to large markets and transportation to global markets.
- Higher education has moved from priority item to discretionary item for funding.
- About 75 percent of State System graduates remain in Pennsylvania after graduation.
- State appropriations funded 67 percent of System operating costs in 1984, but only 46 percent in 1996.
- 86 percent of Pennsylvania colleges and universities used distance education to offer courses in 1995–96.

Workplace, market and career trends (*Pennsylvania*)

- By 2005, minorities will constitute 27 percent of the workforce.
- Workplace issues include job restructuring, job sharing, telecommuting, skill-based pay, flexible work schedules, and continuous improvement.
- The greatest job growth in Pennsylvania will include private health services (+95,180), marketing and sales (+91,816), food services (+74,913), management (+58,799) and clerical (+50,777).
- Other fields where gains are expected include construction, finance, insurance, and real estate. More modest gains are expected in education.
- By 2000, nearly 15 million Pennsylvanians will be working in the service sector followed by manufacturing (954,000), retail trade (933,200), and government (687,000).

Percentage change in jobs, assuming moderate economic growth, between 1992 *and* 2005 (U.S.)

Home health aides	+138%
Human services workers	+136%
Personal and home care aides	+130%
Computer engineers and scientists	+112%
Systems analysts	+110%
Physical and corrective therapy workers	+93%
Physical therapists	+88%
Paralegals	+86%
Occupational therapy assistants/aides	+78%
Special education	+74%

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Appendix E: References

The following publications contributed to the development of the State System's plan and include information, evidence, explanation, research findings, and arguments supporting a number of the recommendations in the plan:

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Appendix F: *Excellence and Equity: A Plan for Building Community in Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education*—Executive Summary

Purpose and Overview

The Equity Plan, the successor policy document to the *Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity Plan: A Prospectus*, is designed to meet three major objectives: 1) to serve as the policy reference for System-wide equity and diversity efforts for the remainder of the decade; 2) to serve as the policy and procedural blueprint for efforts of the System's individual universities; and 3) to clearly articulate the State System's vision for the future

and its moral and legal commitment to making that vision a reality.

The Equity Plan relates directly to the *Prospectus*, which provides essential information regarding the System's equity goals and procedures to date: to *Priorities for Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education during the 1990s*, which provides the philosophical foundation on which the goals of the Equity Plan have been developed; and to *Emphasis on Values*, which reaffirms the centrality and criticality of equity as a fundamental element of academic excellence.

The establishment of community overlays all elements of the Equity Plan. This dynamic concept defines environments in which difference is not merely tolerated but celebrated, and which are characterized by common goals and values and mutual respect and responsibility. Through community the System universities will advance from the ideal of diversity to the ideal of pluralism, attaining the interdependent goals of equity and excellence. Thus, the quantitative and qualitative measures of achievement take on added meaning and relationship. The Equity Plan challenges everyone at a university to be actively involved in the creation of a welcoming, nurturing climate in which students, staff, and faculty develop and flourish personally and professionally. This will promote understanding, tolerance, respect for others, and, ultimately, community; and also will better prepare System graduates to be productive, contributing members of an increasingly diverse society and workforce.

The plan's major subject areas are: 1) students, 2) personnel, and 3) economic opportunities. Each is addressed from the perspective of the present status of the System, the goals of the System, and recommendations regarding strategies and resources for goal attainment. The personnel section also addresses the vitally important issue of gender equity.

Students

The key, inter-related aspects of the plan's student section are access, retention, and graduation. The plan recognizes the need for enhanced access for Black and Latino students. Equally important is the quality of the curricular and extra-curricular life of all students without limitation or reservation due to age, race, sex, ethnicity, socio-economic background or status, religion, physical condition, or affectional orientation. System-wide goals and university minimum performance standards for the enrollment of Black and Latino students have been calculated, based on Commonwealth demographics and projected high school graduation rates, and on university performance during the term of the *Prospectus*.

The Equity Plan also provides suggested strategies and lists of "promising practices" for recruitment, retention, and graduation of racial/ethnic minorities. Campus climate probably is the primary factor which determines the quality of the students' academic performance and defines what type of relationship the student will retain with the university as an alumnus.

Personnel

All members of the university, regardless of their employment category or pay grade, are contributing components of the university enterprise. Therefore, the contribution of all members of the university family is important to the achievement of community.

The Equity Plan presents guidelines for establishing and evaluating hiring goals, and mandates that each university have an affirmative action plan to define goals and monitor qualitative progress. It also addresses principal issues of System policy and objectives related to gender equity, persons with disabilities, and veterans.

Recognizing its responsibility to address the specific needs of women and to bring them fully into the life and operation of the universities, the State System reaffirms the commitment, initially made in the *Prospectus*, to adoption of the guidelines developed by the American Council on Education (ACE) Commission on Women in Higher Education. Additionally, it declares its total opposition to the pernicious and destructive practice of sexual harassment, and mandates that every System university develop and implement a written, comprehensive sexual harassment policy. The Equity Plan provides additional information and guidelines in support of this requirement.

Persons with Disabilities and Veterans

Persons with physical disabilities as well as those with learning disabilities fall within protections accorded by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Moreover, the implications and applications of ADA are not limited to students, but include faculty, staff, administrators, and, in some instances, the public.

The Equity Plan addresses the minimum ADA requirements for each System university and also provides a list of external resources from whom additional assistance and/or information can be obtained, and a list of promising practices as guidelines for interacting with persons with disabilities.

The Veterans' Preference Law applies to System universities in the conduct of all instructional and non-instructional faculty, administration, and management positions that are filled by means of search-and-screen procedures. It should be used as a tie-breaker in cases where a veteran and a non-veteran are equally qualified for a position.

All universities engaged in federal contracting also must comply with the Vietnam Era Veterans' Act. This act requires, in part, that "the party contracting with the United States shall take affirmative action to employ and advance in employment qualified special disabled veterans and veterans of the Vietnam era."

Economic Opportunities

Although the provision of quality, affordable education to the citizens of the Commonwealth is the State System's primary mission, the actual influence of the System extends well beyond the geographic boundaries of the universities. Moreover, as publicly owned institutions, the System universities probably are the most widely monitored of Pennsylvania's many higher education operations. One way the System demonstrates that it practices the equal opportunity that its policies declare is by ensuring that economic opportunities within the universities are extended to minority and women business enterprises.

In the absence of national or statewide comparison figures for economic opportunity activities, the Equity Plan presents a summary of the System's recent scope of participation with minority- and women-owned business enterprises (MBE/WBEs) and offers recommendations for increasing that participation.

Requirements

In pursuit of community through diversity, each System university will:

- Design and implement an affirmative action plan which will be updated annually;
- Design and implement a university equity plan which, as a minimum, will address the university's plans and goals in the areas of students, personnel, and economic opportunities;
- Submit no later than February 1 of each year a report of equity performance during the preceding academic year;
- Participate in a bi-annual symposium on effective programs and practices; and
- Receive a detailed review of its equity program.

Responsibilities

The responsibilities addressed in the Equity Plan are voluntary responsibilities which all members of the university family are urged to accept, since all will benefit from the type of organizational change which lies at the heart of the plan.

Such change will not occur instantaneously but, if sustained, the objective of moving the System to a position of pre-eminence in addressing this most challenging issue can be achieved. Review and analysis of other states, confirms that the colleges and universities most successful in addressing diversity passed through three stages of change.

The first stage is removal of barriers to participation. The second stage consists of the colleges and universities helping students to achieve. And the final stage is changing the learning environment through assessment, learning assistance, improved teaching strategies, and curricular reform.

Presidential leadership is paramount to achieving the Equity Plan goals. However, faculty, student life administrators, staffs, students, and the Office of the Chancellor also must be actively involved. The Equity Plan presents lists of recommendations for each of these constituencies.

Conclusions

The Equity Plan is comprehensive in scope but its content is not all-inclusive. The plan minimizes requirements and maximizes the challenge and opportunity for each university to contribute to the State System's achievement of community. The ultimate success or failure of this effort is not so much a question of new resources as a question of dedication and application of existing resources and commitment to a principle. Within the treasured university tradition of freedom of intellectual inquiry and rational discourse, there is room for difference of opinion about how the goal will be accomplished without denying the goal's legitimacy nor the System's commitment to making it a reality.

The complexion, complexity, and composition of the world society already has undergone dramatic change. Diversity is a reality. The issue is how and with what style and quality the State System of Higher Education will adjust its operations to effectively and efficiently accommodate diversity.

Excellence is what the System proclaims, diversity is what we face, and community is what we seek. The Equity Plan recognizes that, as a university executive has stated, "Community with diversity is an act of creation rather than an act of tradition."

Mission of the State System of Higher Education

In accordance with *Act 188 of 1982*, the enabling legislation for the State System of Higher Education, "...the primary mission of the System is the provision of instruction for undergraduate and graduate students to and beyond the master's degree in the liberal arts and sciences and in applied fields, including the teaching profession." Specific objectives are:

- To strengthen the Commonwealth through its ongoing commitment to excellence in education at the lowest possible cost to students in a broad range of baccalaureate and selected graduate programs consistent with student aspirations and regional, state, national, and international needs.

- To provide undergraduate and graduate instruction for students to and beyond the master's degree in liberal arts, sciences, the professions and other applied fields, including the teaching profession, with opportunities for research, artistic effort, and scholarly achievement and personal growth consistent with the legislated mission of the System, and graduate instruction at the doctoral level as provided by *Act 188 of 1982*.

- To provide upper division opportunities for students who obtain the first two years of postsecondary education at other institutions.

- To provide associate degree programs, including preprofessional transfer preparation, essential to serve unmet educational needs in particular geographical areas.

- To provide continuing education and community and public services in accord with the needs and aspirations of citizens and the social, cultural, economic, and technical needs of the Commonwealth.

- To meet specialized, statewide education needs and provide public services to the Commonwealth, responding as a System or in cooperation with other Pennsylvania colleges and universities.

- To serve as regional social, intellectual, and cultural centers.

- To participate in and help provide leadership for the economic revitalization and development of the Commonwealth.

Adopted: October, 1984

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