

Report to the
Faculty, Administration, Trustees, Students
of
University of New Hampshire
Durham, New Hampshire
by
An Evaluation Committee representing the
Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
of the
New England Association of Schools and Colleges
Prepared after study of the institution's
self-evaluation report and a visit to
the campus October 19-22, 2003

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This report represents the views of the Evaluation Committee as compiled, interpreted, and edited by the chairperson. Its content is based on the Committee's evaluation of the institution with respect to the Commission's standards for accreditation. It is a confidential document in which all comments are made in good faith and with intent to be constructive. The report is prepared both as an educational service to the institution and to assist the Commission in making a decision about the institution's accreditation status.

**UNIVERSITY OF
NEW HAMPSHIRE**

Self-Study

Report of the NEASC Visiting Team

For its New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) accreditation review, the University of New Hampshire elected to undertake a focused self-study. UNH also provided a detailed report on compliance with NEASC's 11 standards. With approval of NEASC, a "mini site visit" structured around the 11 standards took place on May 1-2, 2003. The visitors for the mini site visit were Leslie Fleming, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Ohio University; Stephen W. Lenhardt, Vice President and Treasurer, University of Massachusetts; and David P. Roselle, President, University of Delaware. This team was provided with documentation, analysis, and interviews that are typical of a traditional self-study.

It is the unanimous opinion of this three member committee that the University of New Hampshire is in compliance with NEASC's 11 standards. In particular, these visitors complimented the University's efforts related to student outcomes assessment, enrollment management, fundraising, library and computer resources – all of which were noted in NEASC's 1999 interim report.

The University of New Hampshire's main self-study has focused on three areas central to implementing the "Academic Plan for the Future of the University of New Hampshire". Those areas are

- 1) The Undergraduate Experience;
- 2) Engagement Through Research and Scholarship;
- 3) Institutional Effectiveness

For the review of these three areas, the three individuals named above were joined by Elaine Albright, Dean of Cultural Affairs and Libraries, University of Maine; Michael Flushe, Associate Vice Chancellor, Syracuse University; Judith Ryan, Chief of Staff to the Chancellor, University of Main System; Lorilee R. Sandmann, Professor of Adult Education, University of Georgia; M. Beverly Swan, Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs, University of Rhode Island. All of us who visited are appreciative of the hospitality and courtesies we enjoyed while at the University of New Hampshire and we hope that our UNH colleagues might find helpful the observations and perceptions that we have included in our report.

Clearly the members of the study committee worked long and hard in the preparation of this report and produced a document that will serve the University well as a guide and a plan for future activities. Our conversations with a wide variety of members of the University community confirmed the accuracy of the report and shed additional light on some of the nuances of the issues about which the University is concerned. Members of the Board of Trustees, the Vice Chancellor of the state system, central administration, the Dean's Council, vice presidents, committee chairs, a wide spectrum of faculty members, members of the

administrative staff, and students were gracious to the visiting committee and candidly shared their perspectives on the issues raised by the self-study. We especially appreciated the manner in which Steve Hardy organized our visit and the assistance he provided to us all.

REPORT ON THE UNDERGRADUATE EXPERIENCE

Michael Flusche

Leslie Flemming

Judy Ryan

The University of New Hampshire (UNH) Committee on the Undergraduate Experience was able to draw upon the several reports of previous study groups, such as the General Education Study Committee, the Task Force on the Undergraduate Experience, and the Task Force on the Integration of the University Advising Center and Career Services. These reports, set in the context of the Academic Plan, provided a conceptual framework as well as relevant data for the UNH committee's deliberations. The UNH committee also sent out a number of surveys to various offices in the University and conducted focus groups to gather other valuable information. As a result, the report was grounded in a well developed context with solid data in support of its recommendations. It is fair, therefore, to say that the report of the Committee on the Undergraduate Experience has captured the best thinking of the University and has proposed a set of recommendations that represent the carefully considered views of the University community. In our many conversations with faculty, staff, and students, the visiting committee heard affirmation of the recommendations of the subcommittee.

The Report on the Undergraduate Experience

The report of the UNH committee was clear, concise, and well organized around the major subjects it chose to address: advising, creating a culture of undergraduate research, internships and other practical experiences, international education, and cultivating a sense of community through student life and learning. The report concluded with a set of general themes and recommendations. Overall, the picture that emerges from this report is that the University of New Hampshire is a very good institution that clearly is determined to be even better and is not afraid to identify areas in which improvement is expected. The honesty and candor of the report has enabled the NEASC committee to concentrate on its mission, namely, to provide collegial consultative support to our colleagues in New Hampshire as they plan for the future.

To improve the overall undergraduate experience, the UNH committee identifies two goals for the University: (1) the integration of the students' academic curriculum with the balance of the undergraduate experience, and, to facilitate that, (2) the integration of academic affairs and student affairs.

While students generally reported favorable experiences with their academic advising, the UNH committee recognized that there is room for improvement, notably in the knowledge of faculty advisors, the provision of incentives for faculty to invest more time and effort in advising, and in the use of computer technology. Perhaps most significantly, the adoption of the revised general education program, the “Discovery Program,” will provide a curricular structure that is more easily understood, explained, and fulfilled than the present general education requirements.

The self study cites the Academic Plan’s call for the University to “provide undergraduate students an innovative, high quality, coherent and integrated education experience.” The Academic Plan also urged that undergraduate research be “more integral to the academic experience.” Towards that goal, the UNH committee offered several practical recommendations: to recognize and reward faculty mentoring of undergraduate research, to integrate research more clearly in the undergraduate curriculum, and to monitor the Responsibility Center Management budgeting system to be sure that it does not discourage undergraduate research.

Internships and other practical experiences offer ways to satisfy students’ expectations that their college experience will include preparation for a job or a career. The data that the UNH committee gathered indicate that the University offers a wide array of opportunities for practical experiences, the most common of which are internships. Some are for credit, and some are for pay. The UNH committee was concerned that in the majority of cases, the link between the academic programs and the Internship Office of the University Advising and Career Center is “weak at best.” The UNH committee reports, however, that the Manchester campus is an exception to this lack of integration because of the creation in 2002 of the position of the Internship Coordinator. In order to enhance the experience of students on the Durham campus, the UNH committee made a number of recommendations to be implemented over the next five years: to clarify the meaning and expectations of an “internship” and to develop common course numbering; to assist all academic programs in developing a credit-bearing internship course; to provide greater centralization of information and resources for internships and more collaboration between academic programs and the Internship Office; and to recognize faculty supervision of internships as part of faculty load or the reward structure.

International education is identified as an essential component of the preparation of students to live in an internationally interdependent world. While the UNH general education requirement calls for students to complete a “foreign cultures” requirement, it appears that most undergraduates do not go beyond the minimum requirement. The University provides study abroad programs in seven countries in Europe and Asia, and permits students to participate in over 300 programs offered by other institutions as well as UNH faculty-led trips abroad. The International Affairs Dual Major links a primary major with in-depth study in international affairs. With the goal of strengthening the international dimension of the academic program, the UNH committee recommended several important steps: expand study abroad opportunities, develop permanent faculty appointments for International Affairs courses; and improve access to the International Affairs program through better coordination with college and faculty advising systems.

The University’s goal of cultivating a sense of community through student life and learning is fully in keeping with the larger goal of achieving the living and learning environment of a New

England liberal arts college. The University has a commendable array of campus activities and student organizations and student-oriented facilities such as the new Holloway Commons and the handsome Memorial Union Building to enrich the out-of-class experience of students.

Unfortunately, however, these and other important efforts do not solve a number of the same problems that afflict colleges and universities across the country, such as students' widespread abuse of alcohol and other drugs, difficulties in communicating about campus events, limited racial or ethnic diversity, limited support for students who live outside the residence halls, and the large number of students who leave campus on weekends.

To meet the difficult challenge of enhancing the sense of community on campus, the UNH committee makes several useful recommendations: to create a centralized communication infrastructure for co-curricular activities; plan themes for large-scale campus activities for all students that will extend through the year; initiate a yearlong program for first-year students such as the First-Year Discovery Seminars proposed in the new general education program; increase the diversity of students, faculty, and staff; and dissolve the disconnect between the UNH community and the students living off campus.

The UNH committee identified five themes in its report that cut through all the various topics and which it proposed to enhance the undergraduate experience:

- Work to enhance communication across campus;
- Work to enhance collaboration across programs and between academic and student affairs, including the implementations of the external consultant's recommendations on ways to further the integration of these areas;
- Build more deliberately on the work of previous committees;
- Increase coordination between expectations for faculty and the reward system;
- Develop a permanent assessment mechanism by formalizing the work of the assessment fellows group.

The NEASC committee was impressed with the efforts that are already underway in implementing some of these recommendations and urges the University to pursue them all in a vigorous manner.

UNH Manchester

Members of the NEASC visiting committee spent the better part of a day at UNH Manchester (UNHM) campus touring the facility, talking to faculty, staff, students and community leaders. All groups enthusiastically endorsed their institution, the role it plays in the community, the supportive atmosphere it offers students and the engaged, creative and dynamic teaching and scholarship environment experienced by faculty. In fact, the first comment at the faculty meeting was, "this is the greatest place in the world to teach."

The faculty and staff at UNHM are invested in student success. The size of the faculty and staff, small class size and caring environment help integrate the academic curriculum with the balance of the student experience. Students reported high levels of satisfaction with their academic

experience which has been transformational. They reported that their experiences include internships, research opportunities and engagement opportunities which have resulted in substantial learning, faculty connections and, in many cases, job opportunities upon graduation. When UNHM faculty were asked about plans for developing the undergraduate experience, they replied that they were already engaged in most aspects of the work recommended by the UNH Committee on the Undergraduate Experience, supportive of that direction and willing to collaborate with those at UNH to ensure its success.

All constituent groups told us that UNHM's connection with UNH was a net positive particularly in the following areas: the library, UNHM and UNH faculty collaborations on course development and research, and student cross-registration. While UNHM enjoys some level of autonomy it also benefits from the relationship with UNH.

In order for the University as a whole to benefit from the strengths of the respective strengths of the two campuses, the NEASC visiting committee believes that it would be valuable to give greater attention to the level and quality of communication between UNH and UNHM and to increase the level of awareness and understanding between the two institutions. In particular, it would be valuable for both institutions to share best practices and success stories with one another. It is perhaps significant to observe here that the student population of UNHM appears to be more diverse than is that of the Durham campus.

UNHM is a vibrant, learning community and it makes a difference for the students it serves and the City of Manchester. Some students told us they would not be involved in higher education if not for the existence of UNHM and business leaders reported that UNHM was central to the current and future success of their city and region.

Student Disturbance

The NEASC visiting committee learned of the recent and unfortunate riot in the streets of Durham by some UNH students who were upset over the elimination of the Boston Red Sox from the World Series playoffs by the New York Yankees. This latest confrontation with the local police, in the wake of previous violent events, was a source of great shame and anger to many students and the source of severe disappointment and frustration to members of the faculty and administration. The significant efforts on the University's part, with vigorous and courageous cooperation of student leaders, to forestall such behavior were unsuccessful. The University must once again seize this as a "teachable moment" to restate in a compelling manner the standards of behavior expected of members of the UNH community. It seems evident that only the character and the resolve of the entire University community will prevent any future occurrence of such dangerous and irresponsible behavior.

Observations

The NEASC committee was struck by the frequency with which the written report and the conversations on campus included the words *coherence*, *integration*, *coordination*, and

communication. It is powerfully evident that the members of the UNH community feel strongly about the value of re-establishing a sense of unity and connectedness in the students' and the faculty's experience of the University. That theme of coherence ties together a number of very positive aspects of the UNH community that we would like to commend:

- The creation of a new Vice Presidency for Student and Academic Services holds the promise of integrating student life functions and academic programs in such a way that both are enriched by the coordination.
- The new general education curriculum, the Discovery Program, is worthy of note for its potential to excite students as well as faculty and to stimulate both to think in new and creative ways about the purposes of a college education.
- The Center for Teaching Excellence has established itself as an effective resource for working with faculty members in the development of new ways to make the classroom the setting of engaging students' minds and emotions in the learning process. As the Discovery Program rolls out in succeeding years, and new modes of teaching are required, its value to members of the faculty will be even more evident.
- It appears that in contrast to previous contentious contract settlements with the faculty union, the current talks have quickly and amicably resolved the issues under negotiation. The NEASC committee hopes that this will usher in an era of cooperative and constructive relations between the union and the University.
- Finally, it is important to note that the University is blessed in having such enlightened, informed, and dedicated members of the Board of Trustees to oversee the operation of the University.

Suggestions

In the spirit of collegial consultation, with which the NEASC committee was brought into the self study process, we would like to offer some suggestions for the University's consideration as it moves forward with the planning and implementation process that the self study describes.

- Of the many excellent recommendations of the self study report, the University needs to identify which are the most likely to produce early significant results, and go after them quickly and vigorously, so that progress will be evident to all segments of the community. For each project, the University should identify a lead agent, who will be charged with developing an acceptable implementation plan and timeline for completion. For the efforts to be fully successful, faculty leadership and administrative ownership of the recommendations will be required.
- Although the RCM budgeting system was seen in a positive light by the vast majority of people with whom we spoke, many were concerned about its potential to yield unintended and untoward consequences. Therefore, the University should consider reviewing the impact of the RCM system sooner than the conclusion of five years. Among the dangers to be avoided are the reductions of resources available to the Provost and central administration to take valuable initiatives on behalf of the University, the distortion of academic priorities through unanticipated budget changes, or the creation of

functional “silos.” Also, the funding of--or the indirect cost recovery for--research institutes may merit special scrutiny.

- The new general education curriculum, the Discovery Program, holds great promise to re-energize the general education program. For it to achieve its greatest potential, it will require substantial administrative oversight and faculty leadership as well as faculty development and curricular innovations. Because of its innovative character, it may prove to be an attractive object for foundation and donor support.
- The very attractive goal of emulating the residential character of New England liberal arts colleges will be advanced by increasing the percentage of students living on campus and by exploring options for making affordable housing – a problem in the Durham area – available to new faculty members. The Campus Master Plan includes strategies for achieving both of these important objectives. We encourage the University to move as aggressively as possible with these plans.
- Increasing the diversity of faculty and students must remain a high institutional priority if the University is to provide the richest educational experience to its students. The recruitment of a larger number of faculty members from underrepresented populations continues to have special urgency and will require specific initiatives and leadership. Members of minority populations—such as various ethnic and racial groups and the gay, lesbian, bi-sexual, and transgendered community--very often need to see more people like themselves well represented in the University to foster a feeling of comfort and support. They also need to see concrete action on the part of the University to increase diversity in order to have confidence that the commitment to diversity is real. Experience has shown that the achievement of greater on-campus diversity requires administrative leadership and on-going commitment and innovative actions.
- The Study Abroad program is a wonderfully rich education option available to students and faculty alike. But in its present loosely coordinated state it presents a dangerous potential liability to the University because of the many risks involved in foreign study today. The NEASC committee strongly suggests that the University act immediately to require close coordination of all study abroad programs offered by the University and strict adherence to established guidelines and procedures.
- The vision of providing to students the education experience afforded by New England liberal arts colleges seems to the NEASC committee so attractive and appropriate for the University that we suggest great energy and imagination continue to be invested in creating on-campus programs to so enrich the lives of students that they remain on campus in substantially greater numbers on weekends and are so invested in constructive and rewarding campus activities that the excesses often associated with student behavior are substantially reduced.

Report On Engagement through Research and Scholarship (ETRS)

**Lorilee R. Sandmann
Elaine M. Albright**

Overview

“Engagement through research and scholarship is a mutually beneficial collaboration between the University of New Hampshire and community partners for the purposes of generating and applying relevant knowledge to directly benefit the public.”

Building on 140 years of land, sea and space-grant tradition, the University of New Hampshire (UNH) with its strategic theme of engagement through research and scholarship, is developing the next generation of higher education institution. This initiative can be a defining characteristic of UNH for years to come.

The accreditation process was used as an opportunity to do substantial conceptual and strategic planning around engagement as an institutional value and organizing theme. In the Academic Plan for the Future of the University of New Hampshire (2002-2007) as well as in the self-study report, this strategic theme has: an identifiable definition (relevant to UNH’s particular history and mission); an emerging leadership structure; a beginning inventory of campus-wide engagement activities; exemplar engaged initiatives; some designated resources; and an established set of needed and reasonable goals and actions.

These components were confirmed in the NEASC team’s on-site meetings. What was also confirmed was that work to date is foundational and provides a framework for moving into the implementation stage. Further, there appears to be a special “open space” in attitude and time to advance this engagement agenda. Members of the University community and key stakeholders seem genuinely enthused about this perspective and approach. While many faculty members have been doing engaged work, they have not necessarily been recognized as such. Given the relative size and scale of UNH, there exists the potential to create a national model of an engaged research and scholarly institution. Within this environment, the visiting team offers the following suggestions.

Suggestions

As the self-study indicates “engagement” through research and scholarship is a relatively new concept to the UNH community. To realize the hoped-for potential, the team concurs with the self-study assessment that a more systematic, centralized, coordinated focus must occur. The institution should consider prioritizing the projections of the self-study with special and concurrent attention to the items one and two below.

Embedding an Engagement Ethos

Identified as one of the projections, there is a need to create a University culture that values, supports, and promotes engagement. This will start with a clear rationale for why it is important for the state and region, for the institution, and for faculty to undertake engaged scholarly work. A pervasive understanding of the conceptualization of engagement through research and scholarship will need to be developed. In some cases this will mean better understanding the tenets of engagement and how to frame engagement as research and scholarship. Unpacking this conceptualization from the traditional “service” function of the University will help in its clarification. Additionally, involving community partners, wherever appropriate, will reinforce the underlying values. Community partners are defined as those external to the university.

Campus conversations about engagement through research and scholarship should precede any discussion about revising the existing standards for promotion and tenure. Such conversations can draw from well-known writings (by Boyer, Lynton and others) and scholarly practitioners. With a shared common understanding of broader conceptualizations of scholarship, it may be found that rewarding quality scholarly engagement is possible within existing guidelines. While these discussions need to occur at many levels within the institution, it is especially important that such discussions occur with deans, department chairs and within departments, where standards of promotion and tenure are interpreted and applied. The traditional college axiom of “publish or perish” may need to be restated and values realigned to be inclusive of the goal to encourage a more engaged approach to research and scholarship. Faculty forums, internal faculty champions, annual faculty awards recognizing excellence in engagement through research and scholarship, and other proposed suggestions will be important strategies within this framework.

To embed an engagement ethos throughout the University, intentional, widespread integration of engagement in institutional planning, resource allocation, and assessment must receive attention. This integration best takes place within and across colleges and outreach units, with particular efforts to cascading down to academic departments. Traditional liberal arts departments should not automatically assume no role in engagement through research and scholarship.

There must be a planned strategy to address faculty and administrator socialization into an engagement culture. This includes hiring considerations, new faculty and administrator orientation, and intensive faculty development. A particularly helpful strategy is to identify faculty mentors and support groups already involved in engaged scholarship. Experienced faculty could be identified to coach others in how to initiate, implement, and sustain mutually beneficial community-connected scholarship.

Developing High Impact, High Profile Interdisciplinary Initiatives

Simultaneous with creating a University culture that values and promotes engagement, it is suggested that investments be made in developing a few high profile, high impact interdisciplinary initiatives. The institution has excellent existing or emerging examples in several institute initiatives. These emerging initiatives appear to be “smart and strategic,” responsive to state needs, and based on UNH strengths and unique capacities. (Other information

sources, including community stakeholders on the Engagement, Outreach, and Public Service Advisory Board, can be just as useful in identifying state needs as conducting a formal statewide needs assessment as identified in the projections.) While no one model will be universal, as these initiatives are developed careful attention should be made to ensure that basic engagement principles are modeled in each initiative. The institution should investigate whether responsibility-centered management creates obstacles to interdisciplinary engagement.

Supporting Structure

The NEASC committee agrees that a centralized structure to support the strategic plan for engagement is necessary. A centralized organization will help to guarantee that appropriate communication channels and resource allocations exist. It will facilitate the collection of information about current and potential engagement activities and can identify faculty interested in participating in interdisciplinary engaged activities. On-campus and off-campus partners will have a common point of contact allowing for better connectivity, coordination, and support.

The current plan to have the Office of the Vice President for Research and Public Service be the central administrative office for engagement activities is logical and builds on an already strong relationship between faculty research and funding agencies. The recent dotted line relationship between the Associate Vice President for Research and Public Service and the Office of the Provost acknowledges the integrative quality of engagement and the needed collaboration between academic programs and research. Involvement of the college deans in all stages of the engagement process will be critical to the success of integrating the concept of engaged research and scholarship as a core campus value. To distance any faculty initiative from the colleges, especially those targeting scholarship, will dissipate colleges' overall effectiveness, credibility, and ability to coordinate and support faculty activities beyond the traditional classroom.

Assigning Cooperative Extension faculty to colleges is endorsed by the NEASC committee. It will strengthen the effectiveness of both units. The information, contacts, and perspectives that can be generated in such an environment will lead to a melding of strengths and values that encourage a more engaged approach to scholarship.

Because the culture and reward structures of extension and research faculty have been different, it will be important to ensure that this new alignment lead to mutual respect and appreciation of the differences rather than one culture subsuming the other.

Investing in Engagement

To date an institutional resource plan has not been developed to support this strategic theme. It is suggested that such a plan be made explicit to indicate the existing investments being made from central administration as well as investments being made by colleges, centers, institutes, and outreach units. This plan can also document how these investments are leveraging additional resources. Further, such a plan should articulate the expectation for revenue generation to support the enterprise.

Defining and Measuring Success

At the onset and with coordination with the Office of Institutional Research, it is suggested that a set of metrics be developed for accountability and documentation purposes. The survey of faculty engagement was a first cut at the assessment of the current status of engagement. Further data collection could include undergraduate as well as graduate student involvement in engaged scholarship. Specific benchmarks and measures of productivity and impact should be those that are meaningful and useful to the institution and to key stakeholder groups, therefore the measures should be developed collaboratively.

Communicating Internally and Externally

As in the case of developing a measurement strategy in the very early stages of implementation, the NEASC team confirms, as indicated in the projections, the need for a strategic communication plan. This plan ought to focus on creative means of regularly communicating the engagement agenda and its progress and results, both internally as well as externally. In-reach will be as important as outreach in this communication scheme.

Coordinating Outreach Functions

UNH has several units with significant outreach responsibilities in Cooperative Extension, Computer and Information Services, the Division of Continuing Education, the University Library, and New Hampshire Public Television. These units must more proactively coordinate with the University's teaching and research functions. Their boundary-spanning capacities are critical to the engagement agenda. They should also capitalize on distributed and distance learning technologies to create access to the extended education and engagement activities.

The Manchester campus of UNH, with its many professional graduate programs and its urban environment, has readily adopted the model of an engaged institution as a core value and as a common practice. Faculty, students and community participants speak highly of their experiences in such a connected environment and look forward to working with their colleagues in Durham to expand their opportunities.

REPORT ON: INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

**Stephen W. Lenhardt
M. Beverly Swan**

Background Information

The Council of Institutions of Higher Education of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges emphasizes the importance of measuring institutional effectiveness. The institution should evaluate and use the results of that evaluation for “its improvement.” The University of New Hampshire has selected Institutional Effectiveness as one of three focus areas for its NEASC ten-year comprehensive evaluation.

The University of New Hampshire has a strong planning and evaluation process. The process is a complex one involving the identified Responsibility Centered Management (RCM) units and integrates planning, resource allocation, implementation and assessment. In preparation for the accreditation visit, the University appointed an Institutional Effectiveness Committee with representatives from academic areas, financial planning, human resources, and campus recreation. The Dean of the University of New Hampshire-Manchester also served on the Committee.

The Academic Plan for the Future of the University of New Hampshire 2002-2007 was developed by the University Academic Planning Steering Committee, convened by the then-President and then-Provost. The Institutional Effectiveness Committee’s charge was/is to evaluate the plans of the RCM and their consistency with the University’s Academic Plan. Such unit plans had not only to support the Academic Plan but also accommodate the Campus Master Plan and the Capital Campaign Plan. The process is ongoing.

The University used a Case Study approach to evaluate its progress. The four case-study areas studied were: 1) The College of Liberal Arts; 2) The School of Health and Human Services; 3) The College of Engineering and Physical Sciences; and 4) the University’s Central Administration.

In order to evaluate the efforts of the University in light of Institutional Effectiveness, especially in the areas identified in the case studies, members of the NEASC Visiting Team met with the President, the Provost, the Vice Presidents and the Council of Deans collectively, with the Provost individually and with groups of deans. Other meetings were held with representatives from the Office of Institutional Research, Business Services Directors, assessment faculty members from the College of Engineering and the Department of Nursing, and the Institutional Assessment Committee. Representatives of the Board of Trustees, including the Chairman, also met with representatives of the NEASC Visiting Team. Representatives of the NEASC Team visited the Manchester Campus and conducted meeting with representatives of that campus. The finding is that each area identified in the case studies as well as other areas on campus have made significant progress.

An Academic Program Review process is in place and is supported at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. It crosses college lines, and the results are used for program improvement, adjustment or, discontinuation. This is a time-consuming process and backlogs can occur, but that has not lowered the requirements placed on departments nor has it curtailed the use of external evaluators. The University should be commended for this process and for instituting a process that can show visible benefits for high quality programs (e.g., programs labeled “Programs of Distinction” are eligible for additional resources).

The University uses data to inform its decisions. UNH is an early adapter of the use of Web-based communication. Data are readily available on the Web, and departmental profiles are created on a regular basis by the Office of Institutional Research (IR) and available electronically to those areas conducting program reviews (as well as to others). These data, coupled with the institutional memory resulting from the long-term commitment of the staff in IR, lend credibility to the University’s decision-making processes.

The University’s goal is to “close the loop” between and among planning, resource allocation, implementation and assessment. This strategy has resulted in a proactive planning and assessment process rather than a reactive one (i.e., having in place plans and strategies to address issues as they arise rather than respond in a crisis mode). This is a real process resulting in strong alignment of diverse groups (e.g., student advising and academic departments; public service and institutional mission).

Examples of “Closing the Loop” are evident throughout the campus. The focus on student outcomes in the College of Engineering, for example, provides a basis for curriculum improvement and guides the administration in the allocation of resources. Assessment and survey instruments in the Department of Nursing do much the same.

The University is to be commended for having in place mechanisms for evaluation, for recognizing that additional processes were necessary and designing an integrated approach for “using their plans”, and using the data and information to make change within the institution. It is not unusual for universities to have plans, but to keep them dynamic and use them as a implementation tool is a very positive difference that is in evidence at the University of New Hampshire.

Strengths Related To Institutional Effectiveness

1. Ingrained and positive campus culture and values support existing structures and decisions. Size of campus, management structure, and location all combine to make it work--
-“Good of the whole is a core campus value.” (President Hart) Faculty, administration, staff and students ask questions about themselves that would make UNH a better place and then put programs in place to move in that direction.

2. Responsibility Centered Management contributes significantly to Institutional Effectiveness because it is an “entrepreneurial” way of doing business. Recruitment, retention, marketing for student success must work for RCM to work.
3. Balance between RCM and central planning assures that University principles and culture are maintained as the new budget approach works.
4. Collaboration between the Academic and Financial sectors of the University is close and constructive.
5. Student advising is aligned directly with programs.
6. Strong Academic Program Review Process with results.
7. Strong, supportive and articulate Board of Trustees who recognize University’s responsibilities for educational programs within the University and the need for contributions to the State (e.g., Economic Development) outside of the University. In other words, the Trustees valued the multiple missions of a university.
8. Strong, respected and committed Office of Institutional Research whose members have a long history with the University and therefore a long institutional memory, which helps with the process of evaluation.

Suggestions

1. Prepare a very short version (Mini Executive Summary) of the Academic Plan (and other plans) and disseminate widely to all faculty and staff. This will allow even broader buy in and facilitate assessment of progress. (Some felt that there was complete buy-in at the administrative level and differing levels of buy in and awareness at the faculty level. The NEASC Visiting Team feels that everyone at all levels of the university should be conversant with the institutional plans.)
2. Proceed with the scheduled review of RCM with broad campus involvement. This should include all aspects of RCM, including the credit weighting process and interdisciplinary rewards. While RCM is scheduled for a five-year review, the capability for interim adjustments and refinements must continue to be part of the process if it is to succeed.
3. Clarify the roles of the Central Budget Committee (CBC) and the Institutional Effectiveness Committee. A model to adopt might be the maintenance of the CBC as a standing committee with the systematic appointment by the President of an Institutional Effectiveness Committee on a term basis (e.g., every year or two with a

short time line) to evaluate the progress of assessment and “Closing the Loop.” Such a group with a focused charge could ensure that appropriate data are available and being used, report on the progress on the academic plan and recommend adjustments (keep plan as a living document and not a shelf document). Such activity would inform the CBC process.

4. Allocate some funds centrally (“off the top”) for new initiatives that are interdisciplinary or across units. While it might not be the reality, there is a perception among many that RCM does not allow for this.
5. Institute an annual reporting structure to evaluate progress of plan (s). This would feed into the periodic review mentioned above (See #3.).
6. Continue process of academic program review at both the undergraduate and graduate levels and make outcomes assessment a more visible part of those reviews. Include in this review the evaluation of the new curriculum (Discovery).
7. Integrate alumni surveys conducted by the Office of Institutional Research with those alumni surveys conducted by other units (e.g., Nursing).
8. The Manchester Campus is symbolic of an institutionally effective organization. The relationship with the main campus requires ongoing monitoring to ensure continuing academic integration.

The University of New Hampshire is to be commended for 1) identifying a process (loop) that includes planning, resource allocation, implementation and assessment and 2) for working in a collaborative way to close the loop and to design (and use) an integrated planning system that will serve the University well. Through the use of data and by continuous evaluation with an eye toward improvement, the University is well on its way to having a process that will serve it and its students and faculty well, will demonstrate to internal and external constituencies the institutional effectiveness of the University and will be emulated by other universities.