

**REPORT OF A VISIT TO
OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY**

STILLWATER, OKLAHOMA

October 9-11, 1995

for the

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

EVALUATION TEAM

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I- INTRODUCTION

This is the report of a comprehensive evaluation for continued accreditation at the doctor's-degree granting level of Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma, conducted for the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education on October 9-11, 1995.

Oklahoma State University was founded on December 25, 1890, as Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College. The institution has been continuously accredited since 1916 by the North Central Association. Its previous comprehensive evaluation occurred in 1985-86, and the only evaluation since that visit was to the Kyoto, Japan, campus in 1993. That campus has subsequently been closed because of financial pressures.

The team studied the self-study report prepared by the institution, together with many other materials supplied before and during the visit. The team interviewed all major administrative officers, deans, many department chairs, members of important faculty and student government committees, members of the Board of Regents, and many other faculty, students, and staff. Members of the team examined minutes of meetings of the Board of Regents and the Faculty Council, looked at institutional publications, reviewed financial records and institutional data, inspected the library and other facilities, and held open sessions for any members of the faculty or staff or student body who wished to speak with the team. The director of the University Center at Tulsa met with members of the team in Stillwater, and some members of the team visited the OSU College of Osteopathic Medicine's campus in Tulsa. Because OSU-Okmulgee and OSU-Oklahoma City are separately accredited by the North Central Association, no contact was made during the visit with those campuses.

The self-study report was developed during the period of a great transition for the university. The process was begun before the current president arrived and during an interim period in the office of the provost. It was clear to the team during the visit that much has changed—both in culture and particulars—in recent months. Thus, there was perhaps more need for reliance on materials during the visit and interviews conducted by the team than might have been the case otherwise.

The remainder of this report is organized as follows: Section II outlines, briefly, that Oklahoma State University meets the general institutional requirements; Section III reviews the criteria for accreditation and provides a summary of institutional strengths and concerns. Section IV contains advice and suggestions for the institution, not a part of the evaluation. The team's recommendations and the statement of affiliation status make up the concluding Section V of the report.

The team expresses appreciation to the Oklahoma State University for the thoroughness of the institution's preparations for the visit and for the warm hospitality and openness with which the team was received. The support staff were extremely helpful in every respect, making the work of the team much easier.

II. GENERAL INSTITUTIONAL REQUIREMENTS

The self-study and other documentation provided for the team demonstrate clearly that Oklahoma State University does indeed meet the general institutional requirements. Its formal mission statement has been made public and is appropriate to an institution of higher education. OSU is a degree-granting institution, conferring degrees through the doctor's level, with legal authority to operate and grant degrees through the Oklahoma State System of Higher Education.

Its governing board is made up of public members, eight of whom are appointed by the Governor, while one serves ex officio as President of the State Board of Agriculture. The Board of Regents has the usual and necessary legal power to establish and review basic policies governing the university, subject only to the coordinating functions exercised by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education. It has sufficient autonomy to assure the integrity of the institution, and it has designated the President of OSU to serve as the executive officer. The OSU Board of Regents approved the institution's affiliation with the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the North Central Association.

OSU employs a well-qualified faculty, having appropriate degrees from accredited institutions, with more than 90% of its faculty members (other than teaching assistants) being full time. Its faculty has appropriate roles in developing and evaluating all the institution's educational programs. OSU offers degrees at the bachelor's, master's, specialist, and doctoral levels, all appropriately named and compatible with the institution's mission and based on recognized fields of study. It conferred a total of 3,588 degrees in 1994-95. Its undergraduate degree programs incorporate an institutional general education requirement, which individual colleges may supplement with additional requirements.

The admissions policies are consistent with the mission and appropriate to the programs, and OSU's practices conform to those policies. OSU's students have access to necessary learning resources and support services. The institution has an adequate financial base, with regular external financial audits. Documents demonstrate the appropriate use of resources to support educational programs, and OSU's financial practices, records, and reports demonstrate fiscal viability.

OSU provides adequate descriptions of its educational programs, policies, resources, and charges in its catalog and other documents. It accurately discloses its standing with accrediting bodies, and it makes available accurate financial information upon request.

III. EVALUATIVE CRITERIA FOR ACCREDITATION

The team examined in detail the extent which Oklahoma State University satisfies the evaluative criteria for accreditation. This section discusses each of those criteria and documents the team's findings.

Criterion One

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

Oklahoma State University re-examined its mission several years ago, in part as it began to put in place an assessment program. As a result of discussions on campus, a new mission statement was developed and adopted by the Board of Regents on June 18, 1993. It is a clear statement which elaborates on the traditional mission of a land-grant university. It appears in the catalog and other publications of the institution.

Oklahoma State University's catalog and other materials further amplify specific purposes of the institution and its particular programs. All of these are consistent with the broad mission and are appropriate to an institution of higher education. They clearly identify and position the institution within the arena of Oklahoma's higher education system.

It is clear to the team that Oklahoma State University satisfies Criterion One.

Criterion Two

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

The team spent a great deal of time examining the effectiveness of Oklahoma State University's organization of its human, financial, and physical resources into educational and other programs designed to accomplish its purposes. We reproduce our findings in this section under several sub-headings.

1. Governance

The governing board of Oklahoma State University is the Board of Regents for the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical Colleges, which has constitutional responsibility for five institutions in the state of Oklahoma - Oklahoma State University, Langston University, Oklahoma Panhandle State University, Northeastern Oklahoma A&M College, and Conners State College of Agriculture and Applied

Science. This board contains nine members, eight of whom are citizens appointed by the governor for eight-year terms; the ninth is the president of the State Board of Agriculture, *ex officio*. The OSU Board of Regents has full authority to govern Oklahoma State University, subject only to the powers of the State Regents for Higher Education, Oklahoma's coordinating board mechanism. The State Regents do play certain key roles in the operations of OSU; for example, the State Regents set admissions policies affecting OSU.

The OSU Board of Regents meets eight times a year and consists of a dedicated group of public citizens who are deeply interested in and committed to OSU and the other institutions under their authority. Relations between the board and the president appear excellent, and a high level of trust is apparent. Members of the team met with four members of the Board of Regents, including the present chair and a past chair. That meeting made it clear that the board relies on the president for leadership and has a good understanding of the difference between setting policy and managing the institution. The board does a lot of its work through three standing committees—Academic Affairs, Policy and Personnel; Fiscal Affairs and Plant Facilities; and Planning and Budgets. The committee structure was changed in 1990, perhaps in part as a result of a concern expressed by the 1985-86 North Central team about the attention paid by the board to agriculture.

Board members demonstrate a good understanding of the issues at OSU. It is clear that they care deeply about the land-grant mission of the institution, and it is also clear that they are very pleased at the progress OSU is making under the new leadership of the institution.

In July of 1993, the board had a workshop facilitated by the Association of Governing Boards. That session included a critique of the performance of the OSU Board of Regents, and several improvements in board operations have been implemented as a result of this workshop. In particular, it was this workshop which led to a reduction in the number of board meetings and a restructuring of items requiring board action, which resulted in a greater ability of the board to pay attention to policy concerns rather than routine administrative items. The interest of the Board in having this workshop and in self-examination and improvement is certainly commendable.

The OSU Board of Regents is concerned about the admissions standards recently imposed by the State Regents for Higher Education. The increase in the ACT score requirement for admission from 21 to 22 is seen as possibly affecting access to OSU.

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The OSU Board does plan to work with the State Regents to try to resolve these concerns in a productive way.

The president of Oklahoma State University, appointed in 1994, serves at the pleasure of the OSU Board of Regents. There is a formal process of evaluation of the president by the board, which includes a self-assessment of the president and an individual survey of board members. In this first year, the board and the president have been intent on the goal of improving recruitment and retention of students and reconnecting Oklahoma State with the people of the state. The board is very supportive of this student-centeredness as well as very committed to outreach to the people of Oklahoma.

The president has spent much of his first year in recruiting an administrative team. The positions to be filled when he arrived included the vice president for business and finance, executive vice president for academic affairs, deans of education and business administration, vice president for multicultural affairs, athletic director, and football coach. All but the academic affairs and multicultural affairs positions have now been filled, and it appears that the president is assembling a strong administrative team.

The president meets weekly with his executive group of chief officers, and two groups have been established that have played a key role in the changes put in place at OSU during the past several months. The first of these is the University Budget Committee, chaired by the provost/vice president for academic affairs and containing the other vice presidents, the deans, the chair of the Staff Advisory Council, the chair of the Faculty Council, the president of the Student Government Association, and the president. The second is an informal group of administrators dealing with enrollment and retention matters. A number of significant steps to improve retention and recruitment of students have arisen in the discussions of this latter group which, however, has no official standing.

The faculty play primarily an advisory role in the governance of Oklahoma State University. The basic mechanism for faculty participation in university-wide governance is the Faculty Council of 27 members, representing all major academic units of Oklahoma State University. The Faculty Council is presided over by and gives advice to the president. The executive organization of the Faculty Council involves four individuals - the immediate past chair, the current chair, the vice chair (or chair-elect), and the secretary. In addition, the colleges have faculty councils which provide advice to their respective deans.

The Faculty Council provides advice to the president in the following areas: academic standards and policies; budget, campus facilities, safety and security; faculty matters; long-range planning; retirement and fringe benefits; rules and procedures; and student affairs and learning resources. The council meets on a regular basis and also provides the mechanism for faculty grievance of promotion and tenure proceedings. Although the council has no rule-making power, its resolutions require explicit administrative action - acceptance or rejection.

The faculty have large prerogatives and major responsibilities for the conduct of matters in two areas: promotion and tenure and the undergraduate and graduate curricula. Most departments operate their promotion and tenure system of evaluation through faculty committees. The content, organization, and direction of the curriculum is primarily in the hands of faculty for initiation of new programs, re-evaluation of on-going programs, and modification of existing programs, though the Faculty Council plays no significant role in curricular matters.

2. Finances

Following a significant downturn in state appropriations in the mid-1980's, state funding has slowly but steadily increased, except for 1993-94. As a consequence of the slowdown in state support, the university has had to turn to other sources of revenue. For example, since 1985 state appropriations have declined from 44 percent of the total budget to 40 percent in 1994. Over the same period, tuition and fees have risen from 12 to 15 percent of the total budget and sponsored research has increased from 6 to 10 percent of the budget. As for other publicly assisted universities, non-state appropriations are likely to represent an increasing proportion of the university's budget in the foreseeable future.

Overall, bond indebtedness for auxiliary enterprises is at a conservative level. However, the high vacancy rate in the dormitories does limit funds available for renovation needed to attract more residents. This issue will require some creative solutions.

Salaries are low, and that continues to be a concern. In addition, proposed changes in the state retirement plan have raised serious questions among faculty and staff.

Refinements have been introduced in the financial planning process. The university is to be applauded for establishing a campus-wide budget committee with broad-based participation. Although the committee appropriately does not make allocation

decisions, the process does bring a spirit of openness and opportunity for broad based discussion of key budget issues. Also, budget allocations to units are being linked to performance results based upon an established performance plan. For example, the performance plans for academic units include goals for instruction, research, and extension. The performance measures undergo continuous reviews and refinement.

The university's financial statements are audited by an international, independent firm of certified public accountants selected by the Oklahoma State University Board of Regents. The latest audit report was an unqualified opinion. There were no material issues raised in the management report accompanying the audit report.

The internal audit function is well designed and executed. The chief internal auditor reports to the executive secretary of the Oklahoma State University Board of Regents. The office is well staffed with highly qualified and experienced personnel. No scope restrictions are placed on the work of the internal auditors.

The responsibilities of financial operations and business management have recently been combined with the office of the vice president for university relations and public affairs. This will put in one place much of the responsibility for internal management of the institution outside the academic area together with the representation of the institution to its external constituencies, including state government. This new arrangement appears to be off to a good start, relying on the good staff already in place in both of these areas.

Before leaving financial matters, it is certainly appropriate to mention the OSU Foundation, a separate organization, but one that exists to develop financial support from the private sector for the programs and purposes of OSU. A new president arrived in 1992, and the first-ever capital campaign of OSU is in its initial stages, with very encouraging success to-date. The foundation seems well poised to provide additional substantial resources to sustain and improve the programs of OSU.

3. Facilities

The physical plant of Oklahoma State University is attractive and well maintained; it is clearly a resource. Approximately \$172 million has been expended on the physical plant in the last decade. A Campus Master Plan 1997-2001 has been submitted for review and consideration by the Board of Regents. The plan has evolved from previous plans and contains the goals expressed by the current president in his vision statement for the university. It places emphasis on the student experience and

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recognizes that deferred maintenance needs for residential facilities and general university facilities (particularly laboratories) must be given a higher priority.

The Noble Research Center, Wellness Center, Fractionation Research facility, the renovation of the Physical Sciences Building and Cordell Hall are just a few of the projects completed since the last NCA visit. Early next year, the College of Education will move into newly renovated Willard Hall, a multi-story collection of high-tech classrooms, laboratories, and faculty offices which will help to centralize the presently dispersed college. A fiber optic network is being installed throughout the campus.

Passage of the Higher Education Bond Issue of 1992 provided most of the funds for capital improvement; these funds will continue to be available during the next decade. However, this decade is expected to be one of fixing up the old rather than building the new. Oklahoma State University also benefits from Section 13 (land given the university when the state was settled) revenue.

Oklahoma State University's educational television facilities are excellent. ETS provides the technology, facilities, personnel and management expertise to deliver courses electronically via satellite and two-way compressed video. Two broadcast studios and three classroom studios provide the access and equipment for educational programming.

While much has been accomplished with regard to the physical plant of Oklahoma State University, the concern expressed in the NCA report of 1986 about library storage and patron space does not appear to have been resolved. However, it seems that a temporary solution has been worked out, and consideration of construction of a remote storage facility is still a possible long-term solution during the next 4-5 years. In the short-run, 9-18 months, storage space will become available in Murray Hall and the basement of the library; that additional space will be adequate for at least three years. In addition, during the longer range period the library will receive a basic renovation.

Oklahoma State University can be proud of its efforts in developing its physical plant resources during the past decade. The plant supports effective teaching and learning, and its Master Plan 1997-2001 gives evidence that the physical plant can continue to support the university's mission in the future.

4. **Faculty and Staff**

Faculty resources appear to be sufficient to execute the mission of the university. Although faculty staffing levels have declined over the last decade, the reductions appear to have been dispersed sufficiently to have had no critical impact on the core programs of the university. The faculty are highly qualified and well regarded by the students.

Despite apparently significant efforts, no progress has been made in increasing the diversity of the faculty. Similarly, only eight percent of the full professors are women. Clearly, progress in these areas is needed.

Tenure and promotion criteria are appropriate. The decisions originate in the department and go to the dean of the college. In some colleges, there are advisory mechanisms to the dean, but in others, the dean has sole authority and responsibility. All recommendations are reviewed by the vice president for academic affairs, who consults the Faculty Council in any cases of doubt.

To the extent a campus-wide faculty development program exists, it is not well known nor does it appear to enjoy widespread participation. Some department heads were not aware of the existence of such a program. Some units participate only on an ad hoc basis. Several units reported the unavailability of faculty sabbaticals due to funding constraints. Given the university's priority on undergraduate education, it is important that faculty development for improving teaching be given great prominence and support by the central administration.

Recognizing that faculty salaries are low relative to other "Big 8" and "Big 10" universities as a whole, the new administration has given this issue a high priority. For example, an interim faculty salary increase is being awarded in November, 1995.

Faculty morale is good. Faculty members are highly dedicated to their work, work hard, and demonstrate considerable loyalty to the institution. They are optimistic about the future of the institution under its new leadership.

The team was impressed with the staff whom they met. They are capable and competent and share the good morale of the faculty.

5. **Student Life**

In February, 1995, the office of university assessment conducted a study on student satisfaction on the Oklahoma State University campus. Although the return rate on the inventory used in the study was only 27 percent, the students who responded rated their overall satisfaction with their collegiate experience at Oklahoma State University significantly higher ($p=.01$) than the national norm group.

Students who spoke to the NCA team members during our visit to the campus continue to feel that the campus is well maintained in its physical appearance, the variety of intramural activities is good, they are listened to by the administration on important issues which affect their lives, and they are made welcome. There are some areas which they would like to see receive more attention than at present. First, graduate teaching assistants are still not perceived as being competent, although the institution has made strides to rectify this with the new "No Rookies on Rookies" policy of not placing inexperienced instructors before freshman classes. Second, computer labs are not fully meeting the demands of the student population, though a new technology fee has enabled the opening of some major new lab facilities close to student residences. Finally, there is concern that the student activity fee structure is being used to fund activity which appropriately should be funded through the academic tuition mechanism.

In residential life, there is a strong Greek system at Oklahoma State University, and the dormitories are not fully occupied. There is thought being given to a number of improvements which might increase the attractiveness of the dormitories, including some facility renovations. But basic problems of inadequate parking and policies which some students feel are restrictive make this a difficult problem.

The student affairs administration is seen by students to be helpful and quite involved in improving the campus climate for students. The annual goals and objectives of the administration are developed with the full participation of students at the unit or program level. Student governance extends to units which administer programs and student activities. Students seem to take seriously their roles on the committees which make decisions on the development, funding, and implementation of student life activities.

6. **Library**

In the 1986 review, there were several concerns expressed about the library, including limited space. The team suggested that some of the collection be moved to a remote storage to free up some space. Other concerns were installation of automated

equipment (the installer was inexperienced) and the library's ability to continue its membership in the Association of Research Libraries (ARL).

Five libraries are located on the Oklahoma State University main campus: the main Edmon Low Library and four branch libraries that specialize in architecture, curriculum materials, patent and trademark, and veterinary medicine, respectively. Two of these and associated staff have been added since the last visit by NCA and represent the fruits of efforts that have been undertaken to improve and enhance the availability of services to constituents. The College of Osteopathic Medicine at Tulsa has its own library, about to be expanded, linked electronically to the Stillwater library system.

The university library started a new phase of planning and reorganization with a change of leadership in 1987. This included a change of title from university librarian to "dean of libraries" with an accompanying greater voice in campus decision-making. Planning for the future was initiated and is on-going.

The need for additional space in the main Edmon Low Library has been a concern for some time, as noted above. Currently there are only 1,150 seats in the library, reflecting a gradual reduction over the past few years. This is too little to serve users, since the Low Library has about one million visits a year. Staff estimate that 15-25 percent of students and faculty are regular users, while almost all university constituents are occasional users. To date there has been no resolution of these space problems. However, there appears to be a plan similar to the library's proposed solution in the offing as a short-term (3-5 year) plan. This plan involves conversion of the subbasement and the conversion of Murray Hall.

The on-line computer system became operational in 1991, and a library resource fee was established for its maintenance and future development.

Acquisition of books and serials is a continuing problem in an era of rampant inflation of publishers' prices. User views on the sufficiency of the collection vary, depending on the discipline and degree of connectivity between the staff and faculty user. Where interest or pressure to purchase have waned, the collection is falling behind. On the other hand, at least one department head noted receiving courtesy calls regarding need. Comments on the quality of the collection ranged from "dismal" to "dissatisfaction is the rule of thumb." Overall, the consensus seemed to be that the library was sufficient for undergraduate purposes, but not for graduate program purposes. The current estimate is that during FY1997, there will be a \$750,000 shortfall in the materials

budget. This is due to increased costs of materials, expiration of some special grants, etc.

Users clearly noticed that the staff are attempting to alleviate some of the collections problems by the increased use of technology and quick, reliable interlibrary loan service. Moreover, they are appreciative of the increasingly user-friendly atmosphere and the turn-around time for requests.

7. **Schools and Colleges**

College of Agricultural Sciences & Natural Resources

In the past ten years the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources (CASNR) has changed significantly in both its structure and programs, although programs of instruction, research and extension continue to focus on meeting the needs of the people of the state. Undergraduate degree programs in general agriculture, mechanized agriculture, and plant pathology have been discontinued, but new programs added in agribusiness (jointly with the College of Business) and environmental sciences. Master degree programs in dairy science and poultry science have been eliminated and a multidisciplinary Ph.D. program added in plant science. Employer demand for graduates remains strong although some new programs such as environmental sciences do not yet have enough experience to precisely estimate the demand for graduates.

Undergraduate education provides a major focus for college planning and faculty activity, and teaching is a component of both annual merit salary reviews and tenure decisions. Faculty evaluations are based on the percentage appointment among the activities of instruction, research and extension and it appears possible to attain tenure on the basis of teaching alone, for an exclusively instructional appointment. Teaching improvement is encouraged by the activities of the college's Teaching Effectiveness Committee and the college participates in regional programs with other land-grant colleges of agriculture to improve the quality of instruction. A regularized sabbatical policy provides opportunity for rejuvenation and renewal of academic skills which also helps the teaching program. Graduate education is linked to the research mission which itself is driven by state needs, both in basic and applied research. Citizen input into the research agenda is accomplished through the district and state advisory committees derived from the county-level advisory committees that help guide extension programs.

Assessment is a function of department-level activity and is accomplished through a variety of tools such as student exit interviews, analysis of performance in capstone

courses, performance on examinations developed by professional societies, performance in specific key courses and others. In several departments, assessment has led to changes in curriculum requirements and improvements in particular courses.

College of Arts & Sciences

The College of Arts and Sciences is the largest and most complex of the colleges at Oklahoma State University. It has responsibility for instruction at the bachelor, master, and doctoral level in selected disciplines and multidisciplinary areas. It also awards certificates in area studies, as complements to disciplinary degrees. The college is characterized by strong collegial leadership, by commitment to its multiple missions, by commitment to quality undergraduate education, and by strong research programs in a number of areas.

The college, which provides about 95 percent of the general education courses, has had some difficulty in providing the requisite number and distribution of seats for general education in the past several years. This has resulted in difficulties for students attempting to meet degree requirements within a reasonable period of time. This fall's increase in the freshman population, coupled with the "No Rookies on Rookies" policy, placed special burdens on the college in the past year. However, university support in meeting these challenges was strong and swift. Thirty new faculty were added and alternate arrangements were made for graduate assistants.

Undergraduate major programs in the college vary widely in size. During the past few years a number of programs and options with low demand have been eliminated or merged. The college is to be commended for the support it accords to the honors program.

Graduate programs are offered at the master level in twenty-two arts and sciences disciplines and in fourteen disciplines at the Ph.D. level. The large majority of graduate students are from Oklahoma. Faculty in all disciplines are expected to maintain active research programs and scholarly activities. Research in the biological sciences is very active, but the college has not yet realized the full potential for multidisciplinary work. In order for this to flourish, the institution must provide active support.

There is some evidence that faculty in the college are beginning to feel increasingly pressured as they genuinely try to accommodate the need to do more at the undergraduate level, maintain graduate programs, aggressively seek outside funding, and sometimes attempt to perform outreach activities. There is also some resentment at

what faculty perceive as a lack of a reward structure for undergraduate teaching that parallels the rewards for research. Despite some evidence that individual departments are adjusting their assignment/reward structures to permit faculty to opt for a larger teaching role and be rewarded commensurately for it, faculty believe that there is more lip service than tangible reward. Although there is much to commend in the College of Arts and Sciences, like much of the university, its focus on teaching tends to be reactive rather than proactive. There is no formal - or even informal- program of instructional improvement through small grants that might at least echo the "seed money" concept that supports research.

College of Business Administration

The College of Business Administration is the second largest academic unit on campus, comprising almost one-fourth of the undergraduate student body. In 1995, a new dean was selected, following the retirement of the predecessor who provided stable and solid leadership for almost two decades. The college is optimistic about its future for several reasons.

Enrollment is turning around after a decade of decline. The newly instituted technology fee is enabling the college to provide much needed resources to increase the availability and use of computers. The new master's program in telecommunications, offered in conjunction with the College of Engineering, is being well received in the market place. Extension programs continue to thrive. The college is successfully increasing its use of distance learning. The new dean enjoys broad based support.

The challenges will be to continue to integrate leading edge technology in the classroom, currently hampered by classes being held throughout the campus, inhibiting the consistent use of technology. Overall, modernization of the classrooms is needed. Faculty salary levels also will be a challenge in faculty retention. As with other colleges of business, increasing diversity of both the faculty and student body will require continuous vigorous effort tempered by patience and understanding of the supply pools.

Finally, the college will begin in 1996-97 preparing for its re-accreditation by the American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business. The new standards will cause the college to examine carefully its mission and involve its stakeholders in charting its future. With appropriate university support, the college should enjoy national recognition in a number of areas, in addition to its currently highly regarded accounting and MBA programs.

College of Education

The mission of the College of Education is that of generating knowledge about teaching, learning, and human development, and applying that knowledge to improve education and development for all individuals. The college, with its focus on learning throughout the life span, has applied its resources to implement its commitment to a broad spectrum of education and human development needs. The chairs of departments within the College of Education are supportive of this mission and describe their faculty as being committed to producing graduates who have both depth of knowledge in their major field and breadth of knowledge outside their majors.

College faculty have had active involvement in the adoption of the general education requirements. Likewise, the requirements of the State Department of Education were developed with the active involvement of college faculty. The office of the associate dean assists departments in the compilation of data which tracks the satisfaction of students with their educational preparation once they have graduated from the university. Reports prepared by this office confirm the expectation that the college is being supported by the central administration of the university as it carries out its mission to serve the people of the state and region.

In 1991, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) removed its accreditation of the college following an on-site visit to the institution. The NCATE review cited weaknesses in conceptual design of the curriculum and in the delivery of the curriculum among the factors which influenced its decision. The college appealed the NCATE decision and in 1993 that appeal was denied by NCATE.

The position of dean of the college has been filled only since August, 1994. The new dean has the support of the faculty and students of the college and that of the central administration. The present dean of the college and the department chairs are confident that the entire faculty will work to address the NCATE concerns in preparation for another accreditation review soon.

College of Engineering, Architecture & Technology (CEAT)

The academic programs of the college are organized into seven schools of engineering, a School of Architecture, and a Division of Engineering Technology. The schools of engineering are: Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering, Biosystems Engineering, Chemical Engineering, Civil Engineering, Electrical Engineering, General Engineering, and Industrial Engineering and Management.

The college has developed general education requirements that consist of courses in English, humanities, and social sciences. General education courses that are applicable toward a degree from the college must be selected from the CEAT approved list of courses. Adherence to this list and general compliance with the requirements are good.

Undergraduate programs in engineering are accredited by the Engineering Accreditation Commission of the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (EAC-ABET); the Bachelor of Architecture program is accredited by the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB), whereas the Bachelor of Architectural Engineering is accredited by EAC-ABET. Most engineering technology programs are accredited separately by the Technology Accrediting Commission of the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (TAG-ABET).

Faculty of the college are energetic, hardworking and productive. They are very active in their respective professional societies and are generally well connected with practitioners in industries in the region. This has made it possible for the school to maintain strong partnerships with more than eighty companies. Several members of the faculty have been elected to the National Academy of Engineering and they are rated among the top ten professors out of 400 that teach courses through the National Technical University (NTU), which offered courses electronically at 500 corporate sites.

Quality of admitted students has increased, as judged by the average scores achieved on the ACT by entering freshmen. The college offers options for students who discovered that they aren't suited for the professional schools to which they were admitted originally. Other supportive programs to enhance student success are: the Scholars Enrichment Program for gifted students, Women in Engineering to develop and support female enrollment and success in CEAT, multicultural programs that are directed at increasing the number of minority graduates and a placement service that assists students with obtaining on-campus interviews for job referrals for temporary as well as permanent employment. Graduates of CEAT are well received in industry and sought after in many companies because of the reputation of other OSU alumni, many of whom are chief executive officers of technological companies in the region.

Concerns raised by the faculty revolve around resources to increase salaries and to upgrade facilities that run the risk of becoming substandard if not maintained or replaced before long. This is particularly true for certain undergraduate laboratories. However, the college is raising funds to build a modern building dedicated to the

Advanced Technology Research Center (ATRC), where interdisciplinary research cutting across many specialties of the college will be conducted. Another concern that came up with some frequency in discussions centers around the relative importance of teaching and research at OSU in the daily activities of faculty and around tangible incentives to reward excellence in each area. Many faculty indicated that they feel that the allocation of resources to encourage and reward excellence in instruction lags behind public assertions that put a premium on the quality of the undergraduate experience at OSU.

Graduate College and Research Office

The Graduate College administers regulations and standards specified and established by the graduate faculty (the "faculty" of this college). The graduate faculty is divided into five subject matter groups which determine and monitor their own membership from throughout the faculty at large. Graduate education at OSU is changing with the addition of multidisciplinary graduate programs such as Environmental Science, Natural and Applied Sciences, and Plant Science. Additional cross-departmental programs are arising. The Graduate Faculty Council is elected by the graduate faculty and acts as its executive committee; this council works with the dean in developing and administering policy. The graduate faculty selects its own members; they are periodically reviewed and must demonstrate scholarly activity during the previous five years.

The dean appears to act as a coordinator of several programs involving graduate students. Examples are: an orientation week program for graduate students where they learn computer skills (if required); how to find out about financial support; use of library, internet training. The dean is also involved in ensuring the training of students to be teaching assistants.

The dean of the Graduate College is also the vice president for research, an arrangement which appears to work well, especially in light of the growth of multidisciplinary research and graduate programs. The University Research Council consists of the representatives of the collegiate deans who are the research officers of their respective colleges. The council operates to assure proper consideration of research projects that are especially multidisciplinary in nature, and it provides a mechanism for consideration of administrative problems and policies.

There is some planning (e.g., there is a list of proposed core facilities and "strategic research thrusts for public and private partnerships"). Overall, however, there is not a

comprehensive plan for the strengthening of research at OSU within the context of a formal strategic planning process for the institution.

There is considerable significant research being done at OSU. Particularly commendable is the development of interdisciplinary research programs. More mention of and publicity about OSU research achievements would be desirable.

College of Human Environmental Sciences

The college (CHES) is composed of three departments (Design, Housing, and Merchandising; Family Relations and Child Development; Nutritional Sciences) and one school (Hotel and Restaurant Administration). Each science-based program focuses on the reciprocal relationship between people and their natural, constructed, or social environment. Bachelor, master, and Ph.D. degrees are awarded. B.S. degrees granted increased 34 percent over the last ten years while faculty FTE's decreased by 17 percent. According to the dean, this decrease reflects a decrease in adjunct and part-time faculty, who were replaced with tenure track faculty, i.e., the quality is higher even though quantity may be slightly reduced. Scholarly activity has increased.

In 1990, a strategic planning effort resulted in reorganization of departments, reallocation of resources refocused several programs. A number of courses were eliminated.

During the past ten years the facilities in the College of Human Environmental Sciences have been improved considerably. Among others, the hospitality teaching center for Hotel and Restaurant Administration (\$3.3 million) includes food preparation and serving areas, and a new experimental foods laboratory is in place. Overall, the College of Human Environmental Sciences has highly specialized and unique (to OSU, nationally or internationally) laboratory facilities. The dining room that serves as a class room is beautiful; it is open to the public. Everywhere there are plaques with donors names.

A real strength is the college's interaction with the employers of their students - who also are donors to their programs. For instance, the College of Human Environmental Sciences Associates are from many states, they meet quite regularly; some come to campus to give lectures or hold mock interviews to teach job application skills. These associates also act as mentors to students and assist in the internships that many students are required to take in the summer.

College of Osteopathic Medicine

The college was founded in 1972, as a separate state-supported institution. It opened its doors in 1974 and graduated the first class in 1977. In 1988, it was merged with OSU.

The main campus contains 16 acres along the west bank of the Arkansas River in Tulsa with a modern 3-building complex. The Center for Advanced Medical Education is expected to be completed in 1996. It will house an expanded library, telemedicine center, and extensive conference facilities. On the south campus, half a mile away, is an office building and medical bookstore, and Health Care Center (opened in 1981), a clinical teaching facility which can accommodate up to 3,000 patient visits a month - providing teaching and health care for western Tulsa. There is also clinical training of students at two private hospitals and fifteen community hospitals throughout the state. Dispersing students during training is part of their philosophy of primary care, with special attention to smaller communities.

This year 2,300 persons applied for 88 positions in the entering class. Students do well on external tests (last year 88 took the board exams and only one failed the first time).

The college is accredited by the Bureau of Professional Education of the American Osteopathic Association. The most recent accrediting report did not find any major problems; the few concerns indicated are being addressed, with solutions either achieved or in process. The accrediting team spoke favorably of the college's new curriculum, which stresses problems-based learning.

Both the college and the general university are excited about the merger, seeing potential for reinforcement of OSU's historic land-grant mission of outreach to the people as well as the potential for interdisciplinary and inter-campus research which may lead to graduate programs involving the College of Osteopathic Medicine in the near future.

Facilities are good, the morale seems high, and the college appears to be producing very good results, despite quite low rankings in expenditures per student, compared with peer institutions around the country.

Veterinary Medicine

The College of Veterinary Medicine has been an integral part of Oklahoma State University since its establishment in 1946. In addition to the central program leading to the Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM) degree, there are active master's and Ph.D. programs in three departments: Veterinary Pathology; Veterinary Parasitology, Microbiology, and Public Health; and Physiological Sciences. There is also a post-doctoral training program for interns and residents through the departments of Medicine and Surgery, and Veterinary Pathology, and the Oklahoma Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory. The college is fully accredited by the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA). At the time of the team's visit, the college was preparing for its next AVMA accreditation site visit, which will occur in November of 1995. The college is currently in the process of an exhaustive self-study.

The College of Veterinary Medicine has an active research program with strong collaborative ties to the laser program and to various research programs in the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources. The college has over 90 active, funded research programs. As part of the college's planning, a number of areas of exceptional strength have been identified within the college, and major efforts are made to support research in these areas as well as to promote individual initiative research programs by faculty members. The college is housed in a well-maintained facility. A portion of the 50-year-old basic sciences building is currently undergoing renovation. The college has a well-maintained and staffed library as an integral part of the basic sciences building.

The College of Veterinary Medicine plays an active role in the extension and outreach programs of the university. The college is responsible for the Oklahoma Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory which is adjacent to the college and is the only comprehensive such laboratory in the state. The college also has major responsibility for operating a teaching hospital with a large patient population and a significant ambulatory field service. With the combination of the teaching hospital and the ambulatory field service and the diagnostic laboratory, the program provides a sufficient case load both in terms of volume and variety of experience for the training of both pre-DVM and post-DVM students. In addition to the teaching hospital and diagnostic laboratory, the college also has three cooperative off-campus animal health care systems: Arbuckle Wilderness, Oklahoma City Zoo, and Oklahoma City Animal Shelter.

The college receives its funding from the state through a separate mechanism from the remainder of the campus, but operationally there appears to be close interaction between the president and the dean. The college has a well-organized set of goals and future plans which are oriented towards improving the resources, particularly support from sources other than the state. These goals and plans also provide encouragement for the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education to increase student fees and tuition in an effort to support the over-all instructional and research mission. As with most veterinary schools, reorganization of curriculum and other resources to provide students with the most up-to-date and state-of-the-art training is an ongoing process and the sign of a healthy college.

8 . Extension & Outreach

As Oklahoma's major land-grant institution, OSU has as one of its three missions the extension/outreach of educational programs and services to external audiences. University extension programs and services flow from college-based extension units and are delivered by college faculty or college-approved faculty. Nearly half of the OSU faculty have participated in one or more program activities. These programs and services include: upper-division, professional and graduate credit courses and programs; short courses, conferences, and workshops; teleconferences; and problem solving assistance to individuals, groups and organizations. Provided both on and off-campus, these programs and activities cover a wide variety of disciplines and use a variety of delivery techniques including satellite and two-way compressed video.

The Cooperative Extension Service provides outreach through all Oklahoma counties and provides research based programming delivered to households, schools and communities. The president has included cooperative extension as one of his areas of emphasis and tries whenever he is away from the campus to visit county extension offices.

The organizational structure of university extension is decentralized. Each of the seven colleges participates in extension/outreach. The College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources and College of Veterinary Medicine receive state funds directly and manage their programs through the respective dean's office. The other five colleges, the College of Arts and Sciences, College of Business Administration, College of Education, College of Engineering, Architecture and Technology, and College of Human Environmental Sciences receive state funds through the Office of University Extension. These funds support extension directors and staff who report to the appropriate college dean. Currently, the extension base budget is about two percent of

the total OSU state funding and, through innovative college-based programs, multiplies itself by a factor of eight. In addition, the units provide many public service programs that are not necessarily revenue producing. The college units are responsible for the development, promotion, and coordination of their extension programs and public service activities. The Office of University Extension provides centralized services which support the activities of the colleges; it also manages the independent and correspondence study program.

The University Extension Council, chaired by the dean of extension, provides the main coordinating and policy formulation group for extension/outreach. The council meets frequently to facilitate communication, discuss mutual concerns, develop interdisciplinary programs, and recommend administrative procedures and policy changes. Representatives from the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources and the College of Veterinary Medicine attend when appropriate.

OSU extension and outreach programs began to serve the people of Oklahoma approximately 100 years ago with programs of practical training for farmers and youth clubs. The role of university extension has changed in important ways during the past decade. For example, distance learning, typified by compressed video instruction, is supplementing traditional extension instruction; indeed, OSU has become a national leader in the field of distance education, which goes beyond the traditionally strong Cooperative Extension Service associated with the mission of the land-grant institution of the state. However, extension/outreach at OSU still faces challenges such as faculty losses and the faculty reward system, the need to communicate more effectively both externally and internally, the need to resolve the issue of accountability for funds and program outcomes, and the need to be able to respond in a timely basis with programs and services that are of a general university nature.

9. Computing and Information Services (CIS)

Developments of campus-wide significance to information technology have occurred since the last review by NCA: three main studies about various aspects of computing have been carried out and a master plan for information technology has been developed. Academic computing, administrative computing, and infrastructure for information technology have improved as a result.

Computing and Information Services (CIS) provides computing services to all areas of the university to support instruction, research, and administrative activities. These services include training, user counseling, help on computer-related topics such as

diagnostics, communication, purchasing, installation of microcomputer networks, and Novell networks.

CIS provides public microcomputer labs in many buildings on campus. They are equipped with Apple Macintosh and IBM-compatible microcomputers, dot-matrix and laser printers of very high quality and are supplied with a variety of popular software packages for a wide variety of specialized purposes: word-processing, statistical analyses, terminal emulation, database storage and retrieval, spreadsheets, and programming in a variety of languages. In addition, users may bring their own software for individual use in the labs. Many labs are also operated in conjunction with particular colleges such as Engineering, Architecture and Technology, and Business Administration, for example.

The microcomputer labs have extended hours of operation daily to allow faculty, students, and staff easy access to the computers. Students and faculty can access the mainframe systems through dial-up access, remote terminals, or terminal clusters located throughout many campus buildings and residence halls.

Interviews with students, faculty and administrators reveal the excitement and appreciation for computing and information services at Oklahoma State University, but review of the self-study and discussions with faculty, staff, and administrators all indicate that concerns exist regarding the challenges facing computing and information technology at OSU. They center around the provision of financial resources to continue current operations, to enable maintenance of equipment and upgrading of hardware and software to continue to increase access for students, and to meet the growing need for training and technical support of current and future users. In addition, exactly how recent developments in computing will help OSU continue to carry out its mission is not yet clear.

10. The University Center at Tulsa

Since the last NCA accreditation visit, the multi-institutional University Center at Tulsa has grown to about 4,800 students, 1,000 of whom are in OSU programs. In December of 1994, OSU entered into an instructional contract with the center for 1995. As a provider institution at the center, OSU course and program offerings are mandated by the State Regents policy . A 173,000 square foot facility was completed in 1988, which includes sufficient classrooms, staff, and faculty offices, a 60,000 volume library, sufficient computer and science laboratories, including some classrooms equipped with digital interactive video equipment enabling course delivery from the

main campus. A new 235,000 square foot facility will soon be completed and will double student capacity and add additional instructional facilities for the growing student population. At present the supporting services (libraries, computer laboratories, etc.) are sufficient. There is a daily courier service from the main library in Stillwater. Since 1988, OSU has had a full-time program coordinator assigned to the center who reports to the provost and vice president for academic affairs. While enrollments at the center are up 8%, with OSU enrollments up 21% in student credit hours, the future of the center remains in some doubt due to an unstable political climate. Nonetheless, the course and program offerings now in place are operating in a manner consistent, in quality and character, with the offerings at the main campus.

11. Admissions

Because of declining enrollments in the recent past, admissions has been a concern at Oklahoma State University. This concern has to be seen also in the light of the action of the State Regents for Higher Education in increasing admission standards for OSU and the University of Oklahoma. A number of steps have been taken to make the institution more attractive to prospective students, particularly to high-ability prospective students. One of those is the very well-publicized new policy of "No Rookies on Rookies," under which OSU will not place an inexperienced teacher in charge of first year students. Some considerable success in admissions is evident this fall, with student numbers up and more than 850 high school valedictorians among the student body this year.

The Office of Admissions is central to the initiative to increase enrollment, especially at the undergraduate level. At the same time, the office is charged with administering the new, higher, and more restrictive admission standards set by the State Regents. In an attempt to preserve as much student access as possible, the 8 percent limit on admissions under the "alternative admissions" category may need to be revised upward. This may place more pressure on the admissions office to develop more detailed criteria for use of the exceptions category if more students attempt to gain admission through this route. In addition, it is possible that, with an expanded use of the exceptions category, the recruiting mission of the high school and college relations office may come into conflict with the goals of the admissions office to maintain a public perception of a fair, equal, and unbiased admission decision-making process. As the pool of high school graduates increases over the next few years, and the public becomes more aware of the efforts to improve undergraduate education, recruiting may become easier and the potential for conflict reduced.

Criterion Three "The institution is

accomplishing its educational and other purposes."

The team examined a great deal of evidence about the accomplishment of OSU's purposes. Individual colleges and programs have reassuring data about the placement of students with employers and the success of students in graduate programs. Faculty preparation for their responsibilities is high, research opportunities are satisfactory at both the graduate and undergraduate levels, and extension and outreach activities are extremely fine, consistent with but broader than the traditional purposes of a land-grant institution.

1- Curriculum

Commensurate with its mission as a land-grant university, Oklahoma State University offers a comprehensive program of undergraduate instruction through six colleges: Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources; Arts and Sciences; Business Administration; Education; Engineering, Architecture and Technology; and Human Environmental Sciences. The curriculum includes a traditional liberal arts offering as well as engineering, architecture, business, business-related programs, educational and applied sciences. Both Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Sciences degrees are offered through 86 different bachelor programs, some with specialization or special emphasis programs. The faculty have the responsibility for organizing, evaluating, and altering the curriculum. The requirements for each major are codified and organized into a single publication available to all students: *Undergraduate Programs and Requirements*. Each major has its own requirement sheet which spells out in detail the expectations of the faculty for successful completion by a student of the requirements for a degree in a specific major and/or option. Issues which cross college lines are addressed by a campus-wide curriculum committee which is advisory to the dean of undergraduate studies, who reports to the provost and vice president. The team feels the undergraduate curriculum could be enriched by a more systematic approach to inclusion of coursework designed to promote understanding and acceptance among students of differences in ethnicity, culture, and gender.

OSU has a university-wide program of general education that mandates a minimum of forty semester hours in approved general education courses. Individual colleges determine the particular requirements for their students within the prescribed structure; they may require more, but not less, than the university standard. The areas required include six credits of English composition, three credits of American history, three credits of American government and six credits in each of the following areas: analytical

and quantitative thought, humanities, natural science, social and behavioral science. Substitution may be made for more advanced work in an area when related to the need for more sophisticated background. Students are also required to take an international course and a scientific investigation course.

Proposals for general education courses are submitted to the General Education Committee through the dean of undergraduate studies and are reviewed against a set of defined criteria. New courses may be given temporary approval to allow experimentation. There appears to be some unevenness in the application of the criteria by successive committees based on philosophical grounds and on the quantity of courses available at any one time. There is also a separation between the authority to determine the courses to be offered and the responsibility to offer the courses, without any clear resolution mechanism. Currently, there are some problems with the number and distribution of courses, and with the availability of international courses.

The nationally recognized university honors program strengthens the OSU curriculum by providing academically talented students throughout the university the opportunity for participatory learning in a small class setting. Students in the program are able to take honors sections of regular catalog courses and special interdisciplinary honors courses. Of special significance to students in the program is the opportunity for sustained research with a faculty advisor. Plans are in place to extend the enhanced academic opportunities of the program to co-curricular activities that will help integrate the program into other aspects of the university community.

There are other special programs available to undergraduate students, including the Bachelor of University Studies, designed for a student who needs more flexibility to attain his or her educational objectives. There are also a number of study abroad opportunities, including the Semester at Sea Program. The Kyoto, Japan, two-year curriculum was terminated recently, because of financial constraints.

OSU also offers a large and comprehensive graduate program with 65 masters degrees, 45 doctoral degrees, and 5 specialist degrees available. This represents a reduction from the offerings at the time of the last review. There is appropriate coverage of field, consistent with OSU's mission, and the quality is certainly satisfactory.

It is clear that OSU's offerings are not only consistent with its purposes, but provide a means for accomplishing those purposes. Because of the relatively low level of funding of the institution, and because of the increasing emphasis on the quality of the

undergraduate experience, it will be essential for OSU to make resource allocation choices so as to sustain appropriate quality at both the graduate and undergraduate level. Otherwise, the faculty will have difficulty in continuing to provide strong and comprehensive graduate education as well as excellent undergraduate experiences in as many areas as are currently offered.

2. **Assessment**

The OSU assessment program, in accordance with the mission of the university, aims to help students in their quest for fundamental knowledge by enhancing student learning and academic achievement. To this end the assessment program seeks to gather evidence: (a) of academic readiness that will allow "advisors to more accurately place students in college level courses," (b) of writing, reading, and thinking proficiency resulting from the general education curriculum that will adequately prepare them for success "in their major courses and in their careers," (c) that will alert faculty and advisors of the need for academic intervention "designed to increase overall student performance and retention." The instruments used to gather the evidence relevant to (a)-(c) are appropriate.

The Office of University Assessment implements assessment activities and policies determined by the Assessment Advisory Council. This council consists of seven faculty members, five administrators, and one student. Faculty appear to be involved in other aspects of the assessment process, including the development within each department of a departmental outcomes assessment model. It is not clear, for reasons explained below, that there is an overall assessment plan that is "institution-wide in conceptualization."

In setting up their assessment plan, OSU was guided by NCA requirements and by requirements from the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education (OSRHE). NCA states, "...that faculty and administrators are using the information provided by the assessment program to make plans, set timetables, and allocate resources is ... critical." In like manner, OSRHE states that the results of assessment should contribute to and be "an integral part of the institution's strategic planning and program review process to improve teaching and learning." Except for occasional feedback within a few departments, there is no evidence that there is a strategic plan for the use of the results obtained from the assessment activity. Although there were student focus groups used to determine the meaning of student satisfaction surveys, it is far from clear that this will result in meaningful institutional improvement in teaching and learning. It is, however, a step in the right direction. While some departments have made favorable

curricular changes in response to their assessment efforts, there has not been a sharing of these improvements with other elements of the university. As a result, improvements in one discipline that may stimulate like improvements elsewhere have often gone unnoticed.

The situation in assessment is related to the current status of planning at OSU (described under Criterion Four). The team recognizes that the new leadership of the institution is not yet a complete team and that the immediate problems to be solved have prevented focused attention on these important related areas. Without rapid attention to the implementation of the assessment efforts underway, it is unlikely that weaknesses identified through assessment will be corrected or that the strengths revealed by the process can be maintained. A key part of correcting this situation will be to change the attitude about assessment in several colleges and departments on campus, so that it is seen by faculty generally as an essential and helpful means of improvements rather than as an imposed and artificial bureaucratic process.

In summary, there is ample evidence that OSU is accomplishing its purposes, but there are also weaknesses which need real attention when a permanent provost and vice president for academic affairs is in place.

Criterion Four

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

Oklahoma State University has been through a difficult period, with declining enrollments and state resources and internal problems which led to a change in leadership. The institution's ability to weather this period and emerge with clear signs of improvement is perhaps the most persuasive evidence that the institution can continue to accomplish its purposes.

The vitality of the governing board is one clear indication of the strength of the institution. Its self-assessment retreat in 1993 (described above) led to significant changes in board operation and its ability to sustain and improve the institution. The new president has moved quickly to put in place a new team, make some helpful organization changes, and begin to structure more useful budget and planning mechanisms. The somewhat improved resource base of the institution, the initially-successful capital campaign now beginning, and - perhaps most important - the quality and commitment and loyalty of the faculty and staff are key elements in place which give assurance about the future.

There are, however, some concerns which the team has, particularly about planning. In ascertaining whether an institution can continue to carry out its purposes, the review team looks partly to institutional planning documents, normally described in the self-study. The Oklahoma State University self-study was virtually silent on this dimension of the university activity, although it did allude to elements of planning by colleges and departments. It is important, therefore, to clarify the sources which inform this commentary: they included the Oklahoma State University 1995 Academic Plan, the spiral-bound volume on Academic Program Review; and information derived from interviews with central administrators, deans, department heads, and faculty.

Planning activities have been part of the institutional history of the past decade. Some of these have been administratively-driven; some are the product of local deliberations while others are externally mandated by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education (OSRHE). They have varied in the degree of formality, and in the particular formats employed. The last formal phase of the process was enmeshed in a context of funding shortages; increasing costs; declining populations; and a state-wide planning initiative to preserve quality, reduce program duplication, and encourage collaboration among institutions, the result of which would likely be selective program elimination. Any such process inevitably provokes contention. It was further complicated at OSU by internal conditions, which included changes in the leadership of the institution.

The long-term institutional reallocation process established in 1993 had two defined phases: an administrative review conducted by the Administrative Review Committee in conjunction with Peat Marwick consultants, geared toward restructuring and cost-savings; and a comprehensive review of academic programs. Phase I, conducted by Peat Marwick, resulted in a 17% cut in administrative budgets. It did not result in immediate reorganization, given the changes in university leadership. Phase II involved the creation of a committee to draft a vision statement, define the criteria for program review, and establish the process to be followed in determining recommendations. Despite evidence that the committee defined criteria and debated on the other tasks, its activities did not continue. One faculty member described the institutional process as sterile, and credited the deans with having responded intelligently. A series of college academic program reviews documents a shift in the process to the colleges and departments. Several colleges, such as Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources, developed extensive strategic planning documents which continue to guide their activities. Budgetary cuts in 1993-94 were accommodated by the combined savings from Phase I and the college/department plans. Nine "low productivity" programs were eliminated. Two new

master's programs - Telecommunications Management and Hotel and Restaurant Administration - which had strong external support were added.

The 1995 OSU Academic Plan submitted to the Regents delineates the university's intent to increase outside funding from public and private sources; to increase the diversity of its faculty, staff, and student body, to improve recruitment, retention and graduation rates; to implement the "No Rookies on Rookies" policy; and to serve the people and the state through enhanced extension and outreach efforts. It notes also the review of the course inventory and subsequent deletion of 87 of 243 inactive courses (1988-1994). An appendix to the plan lists all degree programs by colleges and level, along with a priority ranking to add new positions to enhance the undergraduate experience, general education, and the international course dimension; and to add strength to priority programs and graduate programs. It further indicates that the program review process will continue into 1996.

The 1995 Academic Plan represents the transition away from the earlier planning efforts and to the new administration whose first-year has been marked by issues identification and developing the expectation of improvement. The deans have been asked to provide performance plans responding to these issues and a number of remedial actions have already been taken. Faculty perceive in these initiatives the emergence of a university plan.

The infrastructure for university-level identification of priorities is, or soon will be, in place. The selection of key administrators, complemented by the institution of the University Budget Committee and the existing Academic Standards Committee of the Faculty Council, guarantee the staffing and deliberative agencies to assist in these processes.

The president has laid out an ambitious agenda in a vision statement which was part of the self-study. It is important that the university community and the president jointly put in place a stronger and more visible central core of clear institutional values, directions, and plans, linked to effective assessment which provides feedback for continued improvement.

Criterion Five "The institution

demonstrates integrity in its practices and relationships."

The team examined a variety of publications, considered policies and procedures, and examined the practices of the institution in the light of its mission and the traditional values of higher education.

Oklahoma State University's publications are honest, and the practices of the institution conform to its announced policies. There is clear commitment to academic freedom from the Board of Regents throughout the institution, and there has been no issue in this area for many years. There is a high level of concern for honesty and for the decent treatment of individual members of the community and of the public. The Board of Regents operates in the open, and the team found a remarkable openness during its visit, as office after office cooperated in making available whatever information was requested. The process of the visit itself was reassuring about the integrity of the institution.

General compliance functions appear to be in good condition. The institution is working on a policy on conflict of interest, in accord with federal grants administration expectations. An interim policy is in place, with a final policy expected within one year. OSU has appropriate grievance procedures for the resolution of contested matters.

In the area of intercollegiate athletics, the mission is the development and implementation of regionally and nationally competitive athletic programs as an integral part of the overall educational mission by the university. The program pledges to operate in harmony with the university's stated mission and commits itself to the intellectual, cultural, physical, and social development of its student athletes.

In pursuit of this mission, the team found that appropriate authority necessary for the undertaking of intercollegiate activities has been granted by the OSU Regents. The board adopted athletic policies which allow the university and the department to conduct activity to achieve its mission. To date, the institution is in substantial conformity with Regents policies and seems to have been successful recently in holding all constituencies accountable for their actions. The president is the direct supervisor of athletics and is involved at appropriate times in policy and management decisions. Major decisions on the conduct of intercollegiate athletics are made in similar fashion to those of the rest of the institution. Decisions on budget are reviewed by the Fiscal Integrity Committee after initial approval and recommendations by the Athletic Council.

In January of 1993, a significant step for compliance was taken by hiring an athletic compliance coordinator (ACC) reporting directly to the president of the university. That person is charged with providing advice on, and implementation of, programs for rules education, compliance monitoring, and investigation of allegations. The directive for institutional compliance began with the strong statement of policies by the Board of Regents and adopted in 1988. That statement is reviewed annually by the athletic department coaches and staff. It

serves as a continuing statement of intent to comply with all relevant rules and regulations governing intercollegiate athletics.

The NCA evaluation visit found that there exist a well articulated mission and a set of educational opportunities in the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics which should allow it to make a substantial contribution to the quality of life for students, faculty, staff, and the general community.

Student athletes admitted to Oklahoma State University meet admission criteria at least equal to the initial eligibility standards set by the NCAA. The graduation rate of student athletes entering the university during the years 1984-86 remained level at approximately 30%. This rate was approximately 14% lower than the general student body. However, it was encouraging to note that the graduation rate for the 1987-88 entry class of student athletes was 48% versus 47% for the general student population. It appears that the support programs which include pre-enrollment assessment, the use of advisors, and mandatory study halls are beginning to show positive results.

Finally, the team examined the issues of diversity and affirmative action. The affirmative action program at OSU was initiated in 1993 as a result of a recommendation contained in a 1990 status review. It was approved by the Board of Regents, and published in July, 1995. The special projects and activities in this area are developed, implemented, monitored, and assessed by the office of the associate vice president for multicultural affairs, which was created in 1992.

Special programs prominently featured in the self-study are: 1) the minority lectureship program that brings teachers from minority groups to OSU as lecturers (discontinued but likely to be reinstated), 2) the minority faculty incentive awards program aimed at increasing the number of African American faculty, and 3) the minority incentive fund intended to help retain minorities after they have been hired. The intent of these programs is clearly stated; however, an assessment of the extent of their success has not been elucidated in the text. Discussions with faculty and administrators reveal that while intentions are laudable and efforts expended may have been great, the increase in the underrepresented minority faculty and staff is modest.

The self-study also points out that OSU has made significant strides in improving recruitment and retention of minority students, particularly American Indians. The university has given much attention to admission standards and related student "persistence." Exemplary approaches to affirmative action and diversity for both faculty and students have been

developed by several colleges within OSU, including the College of Education and the College of Engineering, Architecture, and Technology.

There is a pronounced under-representation of women and persons of color in middle and upper administrative positions and in upper faculty ranks, though the initiatives mentioned above are steps in the right direction. The institution could be doing more to build pools of women and minority candidates internally for key positions. Statistics are difficult to interpret regarding relative pay scales; however, it appears women tend to be paid less than men in several instances where job titles were the same. The institution should consider conducting a study of salaries and correcting any problems identified.

The institution may wish to consider ways (both through the curriculum and through extra-curriculum programs) to involve the university community in improving understanding and acceptance of diversity on campus and, in particular, assisting students to become more open, tolerant people able to live effectively in a diverse world.

Strengths

1. The University has an attractive and well-maintained physical plant with lovely grounds. The telecommunications facility is an especially impressive resource.
2. A strong nationally-recognized honors program provides challenging intellectual experiences and aids OSU in the recruitment of able students.
3. The climate on campus is very positive, with a new optimism that builds on long-standing loyalty, dedication, and attachment to the institution by faculty, staff, and students.
4. There is a clear focus on undergraduate education with a new emphasis on the student, which has energized the community and been well-received by external constituencies.
5. Oklahoma State University has excellent extension and outreach programs, which go beyond the traditionally strong cooperative extension service.
6. The University has made strong progress in computer facilities and services for both academic and administrative support.
7. The environment at Oklahoma State University encourages faculty involvement in developing interdisciplinary graduate and research programs.

Concerns

1. While OSU has taken a number of significant steps during the past year of transition, it has not yet fully developed a visible central core of clear institutional values, directions, and plans—with critical self-assessment—all linked to but transcending collegiate programs and goals.
2. Faculty salaries continue to be very low, and, although some ameliorative steps have recently been taken, the problem of salary compression remains.
3. There is not as yet full understanding of, buy-in to, and implementation of assessment as a means of program improvement.
4. The library has a serious space problem, noted even in the NCA report of 1985-86, which has not yet been solved, though a temporary resolution is under way.
5. The large unfunded liability in the state retirement system, and the projected move away from TIAA-CREF, are of serious concern to faculty and staff and may cause significant recruiting problems in the future.
6. There is a pronounced under-representation of women and persons of color in middle and upper administrative positions and in upper faculty ranks, though a recent matching fund for minority faculty positions is a step in the right direction. The institution could be doing more to build pools of women and minority candidates internally for key positions.

IV. OBSERVATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR INSTITUTIONAL IMPROVEMENT

This section is advisory only. Making any changes or improvements mentioned is not a requirement of Oklahoma State University's continued accreditation. The team hopes these suggestions will be helpful to the university.

1. Despite recent efforts to rectify gender-related salary inequities, there is a perception that inequities continue to exist. Hence, the institution should consider conducting a rigorous study of salaries and correcting any remaining problems thereby identified.
2. It is suggested that Oklahoma State integrate its student financial assistance programs into a comprehensive and coherent recruiting and retention strategy, consistent with the institution's land-grant mission.
3. Given the new emphasis on the quality of the undergraduate experience, the administration must be sure that both the climate of expectations and rewards and the allocation of resources support this emphasis; e.g., the absence of centrally funded grants for teaching and curricular improvements may send an inadvertent message.
4. The institution may wish to consider ways to involve the University community in improving understanding and acceptance of diversity on campus, and, in particular, assisting students to become more open, tolerant people able to live effectively in a diverse world.
5. The administration should be careful to involve faculty in the planning of facility improvements which affect their teaching and research.

V. TEAM RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE

The team's recommendations for action, including its recommendation to continue the accreditation of Oklahoma State University, are shown on the attached Worksheet for the Statement of Affiliation Status. The team's reasons for its recommendations are:

The self-study report and the documents examined by the team provide clear evidence that the general institutional requirements are fulfilled.

The self-study report and other documents clearly indicate that Oklahoma State University has a well-understood and publicly announced mission, consistent with its history as a land-grant institution. That mission guides the Board of Regents, the administration, and the faculty and staff in decision making; it is entirely consistent with the values and purposes of higher education generally and includes a general education component together with educational program of sufficient breadth and depth.

The institution has a strong faculty, a dedicated board, and a vigorous new administration. Its financial resources are adequate, and it has a very attractive and well-maintained physical plant, with adequate support facilities and services for its educational programs.

Oklahoma State University has successfully come through a difficult few years of declining enrollments and leadership problems. Its board and new president have tackled those problems effectively, and there is clear evidence - through enrollment increases, heightened morale, new internal processes and quality controls - that the institution is moving vigorously into a new area of new service to the people of Oklahoma. It has an assessment plan and is putting in place a planning mechanism, though there is still much implementation work to be done on both. The team has identified in its report some particular areas for attention in the immediate future, as soon as the complete administrative team is in place.

In its financial dealings, its treatment of faculty and students, and its relationships with the communities it serves and the general public, Oklahoma State University clearly demonstrates the values of honesty and integrity, with adherence to its mission and purposes. Its good reputation in Oklahoma and beyond is well-deserved.

The team keenly recognizes how much has been done at OSU just in the past year and a half since the change in the presidency. It is confident, based on the evidence it examined, and particularly on what has been achieved in this short period, that OSU deserves continued accreditation. The team recommends that the next comprehensive evaluation occur in 2005-2006.