The “Report of a Comprehensive Visit to Cleveland State University (October 25-27, 2000)” (http://csuold.csuohio.edu/ncassc/ss/ssmp.htm) for the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education and the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, notes four key concerns and challenges (Section VII, p. 64). The University has addressed these concerns and challenges as detailed below. (Note: The PeopleSoft™ concern is found is found on pp. 29-30 of the Report.)

Concern 1: Enrollment Challenge

“The present enrollment management plan does not serve the institution well in addressing enrollment issues. Continuing declines in enrollment over the last decade negatively impact on programs, revenues, and all other areas of the University.” —2000 Report from the Commission

University’s response

Over the past decade, the University has explored a number of strategies to grow enrollment, enhance retention and increase degree attainment. In 2006, it sought advice from two major consulting firms, Stamats, Inc. and McKinsey & Company, on the various internal and external forces affecting growth and various strategies for re-aligning resources to realize expected outcomes. From this consultation, the University administration developed a strategic plan to grow enrollment 18% over the next six years. Specifically, the Roadmap for Enrollment Growth plan outlined a strategy to increase enrollment from 15,142 students (fall semester 2006) to 18,000 students (fall 2012) by increasing new student enrollment and by enhancing retention efforts. To this end, the University allocated new resources to incorporate best practices into its marketing and communication program, to hire new personnel to expand recruitment efforts into new markets and to create a new merit-based scholarship program to attract highly competitive first-year students to the University. So, too, additional resources were allocated to expand instructional resources, build a degree audit program for each major and create a one-stop student support center to increase retention and promote student success.

As a result of these efforts, the University realized a modest but steady increase in enrollment during the first two years after implementing the plan and then a noticeable gain in year three. By fall semester 2009, new undergraduate enrollment increased by 28%, new graduate enrollment increased by 25% and total University enrollment increased by 9% (see Table 3.1).
In order for the University to meet its strategic enrollment target of 18,000 students by 2012, new student enrollment must continue to grow steadily and increased numbers of continuing students must maintain enrollment through degree attainment. Student retention on all fronts—undergraduate, first-year, transfer and graduate—is critically important to building the enrollment base. Thus, a major campaign is underway to improve retention, progression to degree and degree attainment.

The first major effort of the retention campaign occurred in fall semester 2008, when the University fully implemented its plan to increase the admissions standards for first-year students. During the past nine years, the University had retained between 57% and 66% of its first-time, full-time students and graduated between 26% and 32% of them within six years. These new admissions standards were adopted with the specific purpose of enhancing first-year retention and, ultimately, increasing degree attainment. As indicated in Table 3.2 on the next page, the fall 2008 entering class had a more competitive academic profile and higher first-year retention rate compared to the class that entered in fall 2003. The University hopes that retention and degree attainment will be enhanced by enrolling a more competitively prepared class of first-year students. Each entering new cohort will be identified, monitored and tracked in order to effectively guide students through the enrollment and graduation pathway.
The second major effort recently took shape with the formation of a new Division of Enrollment Services and Student Affairs. In April 2010, this new division was created to integrate all student services units into a single organizational structure with the specific purpose of delivering a pro-active, data-driven, collaborative strategy for successfully guiding students to degree completion and career fulfillment. The State of Ohio’s Strategic Plan for Higher Education calls, in part, for significant gains in enrollment, retention, degree attainment and job placement within the state over the next decade. So, too, the University System of Ohio has adopted a new performance-driven funding formula to recognize and reward institutions’ performance on these strategic outcomes. Thus, it is incumbent upon the University to align its operations and resources toward fulfillment of these goals. To this end, the Division of Enrollment Services and Student Affairs now joins marketing and recruitment, admissions, registration, financial aid, a one-stop service center, student life, health and wellness, counseling, disability services, international student support services, veteran support services, career services, orientation, transfer student support services, residence life, recreational services and ombuds person into a single, collaborative team, all working towards the end-goal objective of successfully graduating students and assisting them with securing and/or advancing their career objectives.

The third major effort took place immediately following the creation of this new division, at the urging of President Berkman wherein the University’s Faculty Senate established the Ad Hoc Committee on Undergraduate Success. The Faculty Senate has expressed a genuine interest and solid commitment toward developing strategies to ensure students have a clear and sustainable path to graduation and that measurable gains in retention and graduation are realized over time in order to

### First-Year Student Retention

**Fall 2003 v. Fall 2008**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First-Year Full-Part-Time Students</th>
<th>First-Year Full-Time Cohort</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>NUMBER OF STUDENTS</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FALL 2003</td>
<td>989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FALL 2008*</td>
<td>1181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HS GRADE POINT AVERAGE</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FALL 2003</td>
<td>2.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FALL 2008*</td>
<td>3.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ACT SCORE</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FALL 2003</td>
<td>19.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FALL 2008*</td>
<td>20.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FIRST YEAR RETENTION</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FALL 2003</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FALL 2008*</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6 YEAR GRADUATION RATE</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FALL 2003</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EST. 2013/14</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*New Admissions Standards
advance the institution’s competitive standing and ranking among peer institutions.

Finally, the University has an established goal, submitted to the State, of increasing degrees awarded during the next five years at the rate of 2%, 2%, 3%, 4%, and 4% successively (see Notes and Assumptions behind CSU’s Projections [http://www.csuohio.edu/committees/selfstudy2010/documents/Notes and Assumptions bgind CSU’s Projections.doc] and Notes to Strategic Plan Metrics [http://www.csuohio.edu/committees/selfstudy2010/documents/Notes to Strategic Plan Metrics.doc]). This goal is based on projections for 20 enrollment-related areas. The Institutional Accountability Report for the University Strategic Plan [http://www.csuohio.edu/committees/selfstudy2010/documents/Institutional Accountability Report Jan. 2010.xls] submitted in January 2010 reflects the projected enrollment based on these 20 enrollment-related areas.

Conclusion about Concern 1
Since 2000, the University has made great strides in enrollment management. A consulting firm was hired to provide strategies to increase enrollment and realign resources for expected growth. The retention campaign had three major efforts: increased admission standards, creation of the Division of Enrollment Services and Student Affairs, and assembling of an Ad Hoc Committee on Undergraduate Success.

Concern 2: Financial Resources
“Unforeseen expenses and inadequate budget controls had led to the use of reserves and other resources to balance the budget and have resulted in measures that could compromise the academic enterprise. The draw down of institutional reserves demands difficult decisions in order to insure the continued financial stability of the institution.” —2000 Report from the Commission).

Furthermore, the visiting team required the University to submit a progress report to the Commission (as described in Section IX pp. 68–69):

A progress report on the financial status of the institution that shows that the budget has been stabilized, and that the institution has made progress in assuring that it has adequate reserves. The report is to be submitted December 1, 2003.

At the time of the NCA visit, a budget shortfall of approximately 7 million was anticipated for the current FY 2001 budget and the FY 2002 budget. The administration has put into place several strategies to address the problem, including reducing part-time faculty costs, freezing vacant positions, and reducing various administrative budget lines. It is the intent that positions will be frozen only until July 2001, to allow for adjustments to the current FY 2001 budget. The Planning and Budget Committee is currently discussing ways to adjust the FY 2002 to meet the anticipated shortfall.

Cleveland State University has a history of managing its resources effectively, assessing and improving its programs, and exploring alternate and new ways of functioning. The University has the governance, planning, and decision-making processes to assist it in developing a plan to stabilize its resource base and continue the University’s progress in the future. It is expected that the institution will continue to obtain and effectively manage an adequate level of financial resources to carry out its mission, from a
combination of state support, tuition and fees, grants and contracts, improved efficiencies and effectiveness in operation, and private giving. The required progress report should document how the University has managed the anticipated deficit, give evidence of how the University is addressing the restoration of its reserves, and describe plans to expand the base of finances resources for the University.

**University’s response**

A progress report on finances was submitted to the NCA in December 2003. From the Staff Analysis of the Institutional Report dated June 14, 2004, the following was reported regarding the concerns stemming from the 2000 site visit:

“CSU’s [progress] report addressed [cited] issues, focusing on the deficits projected for FY 01 and 02 and the restoration of its reserves.

- Budget surpluses of $4M and $6M were realized in FY 01 and 02 respectively. To achieve these results, the University placed hiring freezes on all non-instructional positions, eliminated non-instructional positions, controlled the hiring of part-time faculty and graduate assistants, and increased tuition 9% in summer 2001 and 6% in spring 2003.

- A $25.2M reserve balance as of June 2003 was achieved, built on the operating surpluses in FYs 01, 02, and 03.

- Financial challenges. CSU will receive $1.2M less support from the State in FY 05, and is taking steps to control its expenditures. It plans to enhance its revenue base by increasing graduate and undergraduate enrollment, opening new centers on the city’s west and east sides, and enrolling the first class in the Honors Program.

...CSU has addressed the significant challenges identified in the 2000 team report. Headcount enrollment, which was at 15,400 in fall 2000, is at 16,250 in fall 2003. Increasing enrollment to enhance revenue is a goal of the strategic plan. The University has also implemented a budget model based on the ‘responsibility center management’ that assures the integration of strategic and financial planning. It finds itself in a stronger financial situation than in 2000, including operating surpluses, higher reserve balances, and improved ratio scores (as measured by the Ohio Board of Regents).”

As noted in Chapter 5, CSU has concerns over the tenuous nature of the state’s ability to fund higher education at appropriate levels. While the University must work within the context and boundaries set by the state, CSU has utilized many “efficiencies” and is moving ahead strongly under the leadership of the President with Mission Differentiation. The creation of the new Centers of Excellence will not only provide intellectual focus for the institution, but it is hoped that they will be economic engines for the regions and attract major research funding.

**Administrative Systems: Impact of PeopleSoft™**

The 2000 Report from the Commission noted that concerns regarding PeopleSoft™ student administration and human resources software were repeated at several meetings during the Site Team’s Comprehensive Visit (pp. 29–30).

A Progress Report to the Commission, dated March 10, 2004, noted that the University was undergoing a project to upgrade the system (Section 1 of report). The following is a report on the “PeopleSoft Stabilization” that took place from 2000–2003:
– In late 1999 and early 2000, CSU had suffered continued enrollment losses resulting from a failed PeopleSoft ERP implementation. The Board of Trustees approved $4.5 million towards a plan to fix and stabilize the academic implementation. SoftLink was contracted and, at any given time, approximately 10 consultants were on site working to resolve problems. Two external consultants were put in charge of managing the academic conversion (i.e., converting the electronic records from 1982-1998 from the legacy system to PeopleSoft). This was a critically important part of the project since several earlier attempts at conversion had resulted in no students being converted. The consultants had previously resolved a similar problem at the University of Minnesota (a conversion of legacy academic records). The approach that had been developed at Minnesota became the “standard” approach as schools converted to PeopleSoft. The work during the project had to expand the approach to include the conversion from quarters to semesters that took place as part of the implementation of PeopleSoft.

– Core Strategy: A group that included CSU staff and the two external consultants systematically worked through each of the functional areas identifying what was working, what was not working and what was missing. When fixing what was not working, the group addressed both the processes as well as the business practices. They identified and “cleaned” corrupt data. For example, over a million rows in the student financials area had to be scrubbed.

– Key Strategies: CSU staff members were assigned to all efforts so that the University would retain the knowledge in-house once the project was over and the consultants were gone. Data cleanup was comprehensive; when the group found examples of data issues, they searched for all such data problems and addressed each one. They extracted “lessons learned” as part of every effort. Also, they did not do any “autopsies”—the goal was to fix the problems, not lay blame. As the project progressed, the group developed recommendations for reorganizing in a way that would better support the new enterprise software.

– Highlights: The group converted academic histories for 172,371 students. They successfully addressed such critical issues as academic standing, satisfaction with academic progress, billing, and single transcripts for students with both pre-conversion and post-conversion course work. In addition, they implemented and integrated the College Board Financial Aid System, PowerFAIDS. While many different issues addressed during the project, both large and small, there were two issues that had the highest visibility during 1998-2000. One was the fact that academic history was not converted. The other was the myriad of issues related to financial aid. A major effort during the project was a detailed analysis of all financial aid disbursements. This analysis was needed to support CSU’s interaction with the Department of Education and included a thorough audit of the previous two year’s activity. Among other things, this involved a complex cross-checking of academic records to determine eligibility. Earlier versions of PeopleSoft contained significant deficiencies; the financial aid module itself contained several critical deficiencies. This was one of the reasons that PowerFAIDS was brought in. The group noted that the University of Minnesota was running PowerFAIDS in parallel with PeopleSoft during the first couple years on PeopleSoft.
Parallel to this cleanup effort was the 2001 hiring of an experienced CIO familiar with ERP implementations. The various enrollment areas of Registrars, Financial Aid, and Admissions were reconfigured to adapt to the new ERP environment. Campus 411, a one-stop service center for students, was started.

By 2003, the systems environment was considered stable and producing consistent, reliable results. It is currently working as projected and desired.

“[Higher Learning Commission] STAFF ACTION: Accept the report focused on the financial status of the institution. A progress report on assessment is due 9/1/05. The University’s next comprehensive evaluation is scheduled for 2010-2011.”

Conclusion about Concern 2
The visiting team cited the University for employing “inadequate budget controls,” which they determined had forced CSU to use reserves and other resources to stay financially solvent, endangering the security of the institution’s future. The team recommended several actions, which included hiring freezes, so as to place the University on a better financial footing.

The progress report submitted in December 2003 addressed the 2000 report issues, citing actions taken since the site visit. The Commission’s Staff Analysis of June 14, 2004 confirmed that the University adequately addressed these financial issues.

Since the 2004 Staff Analysis of the progress report, the University has been on solid financial ground, as described in Criterion 2 of this Report.

Concern 3: Integrated University Culture
“CSU, in many ways, functions as a collection of individual enterprises that do not support and complement each other. It needs to have a more integrated university culture.”

—2000 Report from the Commission

University’s response
Many efforts have been made to make the Cleveland State environment more interconnected in order to offer a better learning experience for its students (also see Chapter 5). In addition, the interplay of various units allows for its faculty, staff, and administration to increase quality as well as make the organization easier to navigate for all internal constituents (student, staff, faculty, administration). New positions have been created to aid undergraduate students, as described below.

The Vice Provost of Undergraduate Studies position was instituted to assist the integration of undergraduate education across the colleges. The Vice Provost of Undergraduate Studies has the following reporting to her: the Comprehensive Learning Center, Advising, Honors, Curricular Affairs, and General Education. (Note: The Comprehensive Learning Center was restructured as the Tutoring and Academic Support Center.) This position integrates undergraduate student activities and programming inside and outside of the classroom. The goal is better undergraduate retention, academic success and greater service to our students. Reporting to the Vice Provost are the Director of Undergraduate Curriculum (formerly Director of General Education) and the Director of First Year Experience (http://library.csuohio.edu/services/firstyear.html), both initiated in 2006 as
interim positions but have since been made permanent. The Director of Undergraduate Curriculum position was instrumental in facilitating the new General Education requirements which were first implemented in 2007, and continues to work with the University Curriculum Committee as well as consults with faculty teaching General Education courses, and coordination of assessment activities in these courses. The Director of First Year Experience coordinates freshman experience activities, overseeing Introduction to University Life (ASC 101), and working in partnership with Student Life, Advising, Orientation, and Learning Communities on activities such as new student convocation and orientation.

In March 2010, the President announced the merger of Enrollment Services and Student Affairs into a new division and named an Interim Vice President with 25 years of experience in these domains. The goal is to provide a seamless system of support and services for students from admissions through graduation. The role and function of this new position is detailed in Chapter 7.

In addition to the merging of Undergraduate Studies under the new Vice Provost, several initiatives have commenced in Student Life, including:

- **Faculty Friends Program:** An opportunity for students and faculty to get to know each other outside of the classroom. Students eat lunch at the Main Classroom Café or dinner at Viking Residence Hall with a selected member of the faculty. For the pilot, there will be 10 sessions (five at lunch time, five at dinner time). We expect about 300 students to participate.

- **Project SERV** ([http://www.csuohio.edu/academic/serv/](http://www.csuohio.edu/academic/serv/)) Designed to assist military veterans with their transition from soldier to civilian to student. Classes have been designed specifically for veterans to help them in that very important first year of college. In addition, support is provided for veterans who have taken college-level coursework previously at CSU or elsewhere.

- **Service Learning partnerships:** The first is with the History Department – with several history courses providing community service support to the historic Cleveland Cultural Gardens ([http://www.culturalgardens.org/](http://www.culturalgardens.org/)). Student Life is also co-teaching a class in service teaching with the School of Social Work.

- **Faculty and Student Service Volunteers:** Faculty and students volunteer together to perform community service in the Cleveland community on Make a Difference Day and “Do-Gooder” Day.

- **City Club of Cleveland** ([http://www.cityclub.org/](http://www.cityclub.org/)): Fridays 12:00-1:30 pm. A collaboration among the City Club of Cleveland, CSU Political Science Department and Student Life. Faculty members accompany a small group of CSU students to attend certain Friday noon lectures featuring world leaders and experts on certain important issues at the City Club of Cleveland.

- **Campus 411** ([http://www.csuohio.edu/enrollmentservices/campus411/](http://www.csuohio.edu/enrollmentservices/campus411/)): Designed as a one-stop service center that assists students with any questions regarding their admission, academic record, financial aid, registration, and student account. Campus 411 has both a centralized walk-in and call center to accomplish its mission: to provide a centralized location
Campus 411 receives accolades on occasion from concerned parents and students attesting to our excellent provision of customer service. William Sweeney recently emailed us on January 22, 2009 at 9:55 the following laudatory remarks: “During the last several years, our daughter Julianne has been attending CSU and in an effort to help her out on various issues, I found myself using Campus 411 numerous times. Helping both of our children via Campus 411 even if it was for only questions/answers or simple explanations was extremely helpful to all of the Sweeney family...I wish to acknowledge all of the 411 staff that have helped us time and time again. The system works and is an invaluable asset to students and parents. I worked at CSU with the University Police Department as a Detective and retired in 1997, and we have never had anything close to the Campus 411 operation. Thank you for you and your staff in doing a great job!”

where the University community is effectively and efficiently served, resolve issues in support of educational goals, and empower students to manage their academic life.

Campus 411 experiences walk-in traffic between 4,000 to 8,000 students in January, and between 8,000 to 11,000 students in August. The Call Center receives between 14,000 to 18,000 calls in January, and between 26,000 to 30,000 calls in August. Since the advent of Campus 411 in the summer of 2004, the number of complaints and disputes to the President’s Office has diminished significantly. Campus 411 receives at most three student complaints or disputes taken to the President’s Office per year.

Campus-wide Committees
The breadth and scope of these committees demonstrate that the University works together in a fashion that has become second nature. A complete list is found at the Faculty Senate website (http://www.csuohio.edu/organizations/faculty-senate/standing.html).

Learning Communities
Instituted in 2007, Learning Communities (http://www.csuohio.edu/learningcommunities/) are “student-centered models” for the delivery of education that feature five components proven effective to support academic achievement:

– Clustered courses organized around a provocative, unifying theme;
– Cohort participation where 25 students attend small classes together;
– Easy access to faculty, to develop positive, supportive relationships;
– Field trips and co-curricular activities that extend learning beyond the classroom; and
– Academic supports and services that contribute to engaged learning and balance.

Being in a community helps students balance the academic and social dimensions of university life, and research shows that students who participate in Learning Communities are more likely to achieve higher grades and graduate in 4–5 years.
CSU’s location allows for the unique advantage that makes the city a classroom. Learning extends beyond the classroom, taking full advantage of area landmarks, museums, and resources to stimulate intellectual growth.

- Highly motivated and engaged faculty collaborate to integrate course content, assignments, and cocurricular activities that foster active and engaged learning.
- An embedded librarian serves in each Learning Community and assists students as they develop information literacy and complete intellectually challenging assignments.
- Peer Mentor Coaches serve as excellent role models and support student transition from high school to the demands of university life, coordinating study groups and facilitating positive learning activities.

Learning Communities are designed for first-year students to provide them with a powerful supportive system to help them make a smooth transition into the rigorous demands of university life. It is an exciting way to experience the first year of higher education, with smaller classes, interesting and intellectually challenging coursework, positive interactions with faculty and peers, and lots of cocurricular activities.

Common Reading Program
Initiated in fall semester of 2007, this program allows for all freshmen students to “create a shared learning experience that fosters student engagement, retention, and personal development beyond the classroom.” This is a collaborative effort between the Michael Schwartz Library and the First-Year Experience Program.

Centers of Excellence
As described in detail in Chapter 7, these Centers were developed in response to the Chancellor’s call for Mission Differentiation and are models of interdisciplinary activities. For instance, the Center for 21st Century Health Professions prepares high-quality health care and bioscience industry professionals. The Center is a natural collaborative for the College of Science and the College of Education and Human Services’ programs.

De-centralized Advising
While the University still has an Advising Center (http://www.csuohio.edu/academic/advising/), a change was made in 2008 to ensure that all academic colleges had full-service advising centers (Law is the one exception, offering several mechanisms (http://www.law.csuohio.edu/prospectivestudents/) for advising students). This was an effort to increase responsiveness to students who had declared majors. The Advising Center website provides a guide (http://www.csuohio.edu/academic/advising/determining.html) for students to determine their advising office.

Unified Conference Services
At the time of the last NCA comprehensive site visit, each college worked independently to secure event locations around the campus. Since that time, a University-wide Conference Services Center was developed, which provides a centralized and seamless system of reserving space on campus.

Additional University Responses
Several intercollegiate undergraduate and graduate degree programs exist along with several certificate programs that take advantage of expertise across Colleges and serve the needs of both students and the Northeast Ohio community:
Bachelor of Arts in Organizational Leadership (http://www.csuohio.edu/campuses/lakeland/documents/OrgLeadershipDegreeInfoSheet.pdf): Urban Affairs in collaboration with the College of Business and the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CLASS)

Master of Education in Organizational Leadership (http://graduatestudies.csuohio.edu/catalog/?view=entry&EntryID=338): College of Education and Human Services (COEHS)/CLASS/College of Business Affairs, College of Urban Affairs

Master of Education in Sport Management/Exercise Science (http://graduatestudies.csuohio.edu/catalog/?view=entry&EntryID=338): COEHS and Business

Master of Education in Community Health Education (http://graduatestudies.csuohio.edu/catalog/?View=entry&EntryID=338): COEHS and Business

Juris Doctor (JD) and Master of Business Administration (MBA (http://www.law.csuohio.edu/academics/dualdegreeprog/)): College of Law/Business

Master of Science in Nursing/MBA (http://www.csuohio.edu/cehs/departments/nursing/grad/mba.html): CEHS/Business


Master of Arts in Global Interactions (http://www.csuohio.edu/class/politicalscience/Graduate/MAGI.html): CLASS/Business/Law

JD/Master of Arts (or Science) Environmental Studies (http://www.csuohio.edu/gradcollege/programsnapsh/mevjd.pdf): Law/Engineering/Science


PhD in Urban Education: (http://www.csuohio.edu/gradcollege/programsnapsh/phdue.pdf) COEHS/CLASS/Urban


Conclusion about Concern 3

Through a concerted effort of all colleges and supporting units of the University, CSU strives to break down barriers between colleges and units to establish an integrated campus serving the best interests of students, faculty, staff, and the Northeast Ohio community. This is evidenced by the University’s creation of the positions of Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies to streamline students’ navigation of the academic offerings among the colleges, Student Life’s ongoing community-building activities, and the many intercollegiate programs at CSU.

Concern 4: Assessment

“Certain areas have made progress in assessment, but assessment efforts are uneven across the University, and the process of assessment needs to be more thoroughly ingrained in the academic culture.” — 2000 Report from the Commission

Furthermore, the visiting team required the University to submit a progress report to the Commission (as described in Section IX pp. 68–69):
“A progress report on assessment which demonstrates implementation of assessment across the institution. The report is to be submitted September 1, 2005.”

The 2000 Report from the Commission states further: According to the levels of implementation defined by the North Central Association, Cleveland State University falls in a zone that crosses levels one and two. The institutional mission statement and University Assessment Plan affirm the commitment to student learning and to using student outcomes assessment for the improvement of student learning and academic programs. A number of academic units and many support units have moved beyond affirmation to the definition of specific goals, identification of assessment techniques to measure selected goals, administration of the instruments, and changes in practices and programs based on their findings.

However, the pattern of implementation is very uneven across academic units. Review of the files indicated a gap between the strategies originally identified and the most recent unit reports. In other cases, the measures applied appeared to have little direct relationship to actual learning outcomes. In a third category, there was simply a lack of information.

We recognize that the recent transition to semesters may have diverted attention and energies from the original intents regarding assessment. We also recognize that unit plans will undergo revisions, with or without such major disruptions. However, it would be unfortunate for the University if the momentum generated by the initial planning and the persistent efforts of the Assessment Committee were dissipated by the uneven participation and responses.

It is therefore recommended that the University file a progress report on assessment with the North Central Association in 2005. The report should provide an accurate accounting of the student outcomes assessment activities of all the academic units in the prior two years, provide examples of changes linked to major results in each of the Colleges, and indicate any planned changed in University-level policy and approaches.

University’s response

A progress report on assessment was submitted to the NCA in August 2005. From the Staff Analysis of Institutional Report dated December 16, 2005, the following was reported regarding the concerns stemming from the 2000 site visit:

“In its report of the October 2000 evaluation visit, the team observed that the CSU assessment efforts were uneven across the University, and that an assessment culture is not ingrained in the University culture. In this progress report, the University presented evidence of its progress in developing a culture of assessment since the 2000 evaluation visit.

– Town hall meetings in each of the eight colleges focused on desired attributes of a CSU graduate and stimulated many conversations about student learning.

– Office of Student Learning Assessment established to encourage pursuit of excellence in student learning outcomes of academic and other programs offered at CSU.

– Faculty-led studies of general education assessment are on-going.

– Annual assessment reports are reviewed by Assessment Council and given written feedback. In 2005, 95% of required reports were received.
Faculty review programs outside of their colleges and expand their knowledge of assessment measures and techniques.

Assessment of student support services is well established. These areas are aware of their challenges, and the Director of Student Learning Assessment works to improve the overall understanding of the values of assessment implementation.

“CSU acknowledges that challenges remain in assessing learning in the general education core as of this report, the faculty senate has not formally documented goals and objectives for the general education program. A committee is working to revise the general education program with input from the studies on student needs and best practices found in such programs, during the fall 2006 semester.

“...Overall, the [University] demonstrates a diligent, conscientious approach to responding to the 2000 evaluation team’s recommendations. In the five years since the evaluation visit, it has addressed its assessment challenges and prepared a document that demonstrates a deeper understanding and appreciation for the value of assessment. Staff is encouraged by the University's response, its collection of data, and its efforts to use the data to improve student learning. CSU is making significant progress toward achieving an institutional culture that focuses on student learning outcomes while also allowing for variations in the climates and cultures of its eight colleges.

“Since the visit of the evaluation team, the University has taken steps to retooling its assessment processes in general education, in program assessment, and is linking student assessment outcomes to planning, budgeting and general resource allocation. All of this is coordinated in the Office of Student Learning Assessment, which also focuses on staff development and implementation and evaluation of the assessment plans. All disciplines have reviewed and revised their outcomes goals. Assessment is becoming internalized, a part of the culture of the institution, and serves the College’s vision as a learner-centered institution.

[Higher Learning Commission] STAFF ACTION: Accept the report focused on assessment. No further reports are required. The institution’s next comprehensive evaluation is scheduled for 2010 – 2011.”

The outline below identifies the continuing steps being taken, and emphasizes CSU’s commitment to a participative and transformative assessment culture that places students’ learning at its core:

- Town Hall Meetings and Assessment Roundtables involving faculty, staff, administration, and students from all colleges and support service units are conducted on a needs-based basis (Town Hall Meetings were held in 2005 and 2009; Roundtables are more frequent), and are aimed at comparatively analyzing current and desired assessment strategies that promote learning as well as accurately inform instructional and administrative decision making. These types of events encourage campus community members to showcase their achievements in terms of student learning assessment, in addition to investigating in a collaborative fashion potential ways in which to strengthen curricula, pedagogy, and assessment.

- Assessment mini-grants (http://www.csuohio.edu/offices/assessment/grants.html) designed to support the creation of professional learning communities among faculty and staff with a vested in-
interest in refining the assessment plans used in their academic programs and/or support service units.

- **Curriculum-based assessment alignment** engaging faculty in the General Education (http://www.csuohio.edu/academic/ged/) program as a way to “map out” the connections among program goals/objectives and outcomes, course-level goals/objectives and outcomes, and assessment tools and strategies, in light of the specific skill areas promoted across all General Education classes.

- **Annual assessment reports** (http://www.csuohio.edu/offices/assessment/guidelines.html) are reviewed by teams of peers made up of both faculty and staff members as a way to expand as well as disseminate their knowledge of effective assessment tools and strategies. According to the most recent assessment cycle data, over 92% of reports have been received, reviewed, and responded to by teams of 20 faculty and 15 staff members.

- Assessment of student learning in both academic program and support service units is well established, as demonstrated by a range of actions. For instance, the Fenn College of Engineering (http://www.csuohio.edu/engineering/) has submitted a grant proposal intended to revise/revitalize the first two years of their engineering program by designing “learning communities” to attract and effectively retain diverse students (including female students, a specific target population). As far as support service units are concerned, the Center for International Students and Programs (http://www.csuohio.edu/offices/international/) has initiated an effort to overhaul the Assessment Plan (http://www.csuohio.edu/offices/assessment/overview.html) in an attempt to formalize specific ways that have been proven useful in informing the whole unit on various aspects of student learning.

- **Participation in local, regional, and national conferences** has increased the visibility of faculty and staff members as experts in student learning assessment in their respective areas. To support such areas in the future, a team of CSU representatives – both faculty and staff members – submitted a presentation proposal for the 2009 NCA/HLC Conference. The topic is closely related to the revisioning/revising process focused on assessment of student learning in academic programs as well as student support services, thus revealing the ongoing nature of assessment on our campus.

- Involvement of faculty, staff, students, and administration in the continuous process of updating the Office of Student Learning Assessment website. (http://www.csuohio.edu/offices/assessment/)

- Recognition of academic programs and student support service units that have gone successfully through a process of revising their assessment plans, by featuring such success stories in a series of Peer Speeches and Assessment Exchange (newsletter).

More detailed information on assessment is found in Chapter 6.

**Conclusion about Concern 4**

The visiting team cited the University for using “uneven” assessment practices and encouraged CSU to place a focus on student assessment so that it would be “ingrained” in the culture of the institution. It was recommended that the University
submit a progress report that detailed the actions taken toward improving student assessment over a two-year period.

The progress report submitted in August 2005 addressed the 2000 report issues. The Commission’s Staff Analysis of December 16, 2005 confirmed that the University had adequately addressed these student assessment issues and no further action was required.

Following the Commission’s Staff Analysis (December 16, 2005) confirming the University’s adequate means of addressing previous student assessment issues, CSU has taken specific steps to continue the high quality work done thus far. At the same time, the institution has proposed a set of actions aimed at enhancing the culture of assessment across campus (see also Office of Student Learning Assessment).

Additional Review Comments from the 2000 Commission Report

In addition to the Concerns and Challenges listed in the Report from the 2000 visit, the Visiting Team made 11 suggestions and/or points of “Advice for Institutional Improvement” (Section VIII pp. 65–67). The following are these suggestions and/or advice and how the University has responded.

Continuing Education

“CSU may wish to reconsider the Continuing Education Dean’s reporting line so that he can serve as a member of the Provost’s Deans Council. Even if the reporting line is not changed to its previous arrangement, it would be advantageous to have the Dean participate as a full member of Deans Council (as he previously did). The Deans Council is an important body for sharing information and discussing issues pertinent to the institution’s academic enterprise, and the Dean of the Division of Continuing Education should be involved in such deliberations.”

— 2000 Report from the Commission

University’s response

When the 2000 Self Study was prepared, the Dean of the Division of Continuing Education was reporting to a vice provost. Shortly thereafter, that position was eliminated through restructuring. The Dean’s reporting line was changed back to the previous arrangement of reporting to the Provost, and the Dean was again a full member of Deans Council. The Dean retired in 2002, and a new Dean was appointed, but the reporting line to the Provost has remained the same.

The Deans Council expanded to become Provost’s Cabinet in 2007, and the Dean was part of this group until fall semester 2009, when the Provost decided to return to two groups.

The 2000 Report from the Commission states further:

There appears to be a lack of complete understanding and appreciation for the role and self-supporting status of the Division of Continuing Education at CSU. For example, a self supporting unit needs to maintain a healthy reserve in order to plan and deliver both new and existing programs, replace and upgrade equipment, cover planned and unforeseen yet critical expenses and simply to cover operating costs. Also, an institutional hiring freeze that includes the Division runs counter to its ability to deliver programs and generate revenue for itself and the institution.
University’s response
Subsequent to the self-study, vacant program director positions that had been frozen were approved for filling and were filled in 2001 and 2002. These positions have been crucial for program and client development. Subsequent searches have consistently been approved. It should be noted that the Division has received financial assistance, especially for new initiatives that serve credit students. In FY 2004, the Division began to receive hard dollar support for its newly-founded English as a Second Language program, since it serves degree-seeking international students. Also, the Division received permanent and one-time funding for the Center for eLearning, established in 2006. (The Center moved in 2010 to a different division.) In 2008, the Provost committed $163,000 in one-time funding to the Division to assist with Cole Center enhancements.

The 2000 Report from the Commission also states: The University should reassess the practice of allowing all academic units to develop and operate non-credit programs independent of the Division of Continuing Education. By permitting this practice, the institution runs the risk of duplication and increasing costs as well as confusing the community.

Student Affairs
“The institution needs to develop a culture that reflects the importance of a student friendly, student focused, and student supportive collegiate environment. The institution should seriously consider conducting an institutional climate survey to assess the needs, attitudes, and feelings of the student body.” — 2000 Report from the Commission

University’s response
The Office of Planning, Assessment, and Information Resource Management (http://www.csuohio.edu/offices/planning/) coordinates the collection and analysis of climate and satisfaction surveys; results of these can be found at the Institutional Research and Analysis website (http://www.csuohio.edu/offices/iraa/survey/survey.html). These surveys are administered to students and faculty and include the following:

– The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)
– Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) Freshman Survey
– Your First College Year (YFCY)
– Non-returning Students Survey
– Senior Satisfaction Surveys
– Higher Education Research Institute (HERI).
These survey results inform the University when making programmatic and structural changes. This is detailed further in Chapter 8.

**Title IX Compliance and Athletics**

“Title IX responsibilities need to be accomplished with a sense of purpose and consistency. The institution’s plan should demonstrate a desire to achieve both the letter as well as the spirit of Title IX. While progress has been made, there remains much room for improvement.”

—2000 Report from the Commission

**University’s response**

The Department of Athletics completes the NCAA Financial Survey and the Equity in Athletics Disclosure Act Survey on an annual basis. In 2004 Cleveland State began competing in women’s soccer adding approximately 24 student-athlete opportunities for women. Currently, the University’s General Counsel’s Office is preparing to conduct a survey of the CSU student body to assess interest in intercollegiate athletic participation.

“Title IX compliance requires a sense of purpose and consistency. The institution’s plan should demonstrate a desire to achieve both the letter as well as the spirit of Title IX. While progress has been made, there remains much room for improvement.”

—2000 Report from the Commission

**Facilities/State Funding Policy**

“With appreciation for the complexity of their task as the statewide coordinating board for Ohio, the team urges the Regents to consider carefully the effects of the Board’s policy that funds facility operations and maintenance on the basis of the full-time equivalent (FTE) students.

“Our assumption is that the primary purpose of the Board’s facilities policy is to protect the impressive investment the people of Ohio have made in hundreds of buildings for their public universities. Beyond question, in order to assure maximum years of usage, buildings at state campuses should be kept in good state of repair and operation—roofs intact, boilers and chillers working, entrances accessible, walls painted, floors safe, foundations sound—with buildings, in general, clean and healthy and conducive to a learning environment.

“The current policy substantially accomplishes its purposes at residential institutions. But it does not accomplish its purposes to the same degree at an urban institution, and we doubt this result is the Board’s intention.

“Given the greater intensity of usage on an urban campus with facilities that often are in use outside the usual 8 to 5, Monday to Friday schedule, and with a significant percentage of commuting, part-time students, the simple FTE approach does not drive sufficient dollars to achieve the same effect on a residential campus.

“One way or another, the consequences are borne by the students on the urban campus. Over time at the institution, which receives relatively less state funding, the physical facilities provided students would be less well maintained. Or, the institution will have to divert money from support of the academic
program to building upkeep, which weakens the academic programs. Or, the institution will have to charge higher tuition in order to make up for the state support that does not match the rate of wear at the urban institution, which increases the financial burden on students at such an institution.

“The simple reality is that with the current FTE policy, the Regents penalize some Ohio citizens—those who enroll at campuses with significant percentages of nontraditional students. Again, we doubt this is the intention of the Regents.

Differential funding makes sense for the academic programs of different kinds and levels. Differential funding—with a factor of intensity of usage, for example—also makes sense for facilities at different kinds of campuses. The visiting team urges the Board of Regents to consider adjusting its funding policy in regard to operations and maintenance of University buildings.”

—2000 Report from the Commission

University’s response

The 2000 NCA Self Study Site Team expressed concern that urban universities like Cleveland State were disadvantaged because the Ohio Board of Regents (OBOR (http://regents.ohio.gov/)) was funding facility operations and maintenance expense on the basis of full-time equivalent (FTE) students. The Site Team felt that because of the significant percentage of part-time students enrolled at urban institutions, an FTE basis meant less consideration for maintaining facilities at Cleveland State versus one of Ohio’s residential campuses. (An FTE, full-time equivalent, is simply a manner in which to aggregate student credit hours of instruction. If 1 FTE is equal to 15 student credit hours per semester, then 1 FTE is equal to one student taking 15 credit hours, or three students taking 5 credit hours each, or fifteen students taking 1 credit hour each.) The premise is that urban institutions have a different profile of student who takes less credit hours that are spread throughout a longer day and week, thereby putting more wear and tear on an urban university. Residential campuses’ profiles are geared toward more traditional operating hours and experience more single students taking a full load of credit hours. A briefing of the history of Ohio higher education funding is provided by hyperlink (http://www.csuohio.edu/committees/selfstudy2010/documents/Introduction_The_history_of_Ohio_funding.pdf).

The reality is that Ohio’s income tax and sales tax revenue bases have been, and continue to be, ravaged by the continuing economic recession spawned by the global credit crisis that began in 2007. Lower sources of public revenue mean cuts, or no growth in the budgets of Ohio’s state agencies and institutions. Before the impact of the recent recession, an appropriate level of higher education funding was not a state budget priority. This began to change with the adoption of the state’s FY 2008-2009 budget as a new governor and the legislature realized that higher education success translated into trained, qualified employees for the workplace and was a key to the economic re-vitalization of the state. In exchange for additional state funding, the universities agreed to freeze undergraduate tuition levels at the FY 2007 levels. Throughout the economic crisis, the state has resisted making major reductions to the State Share of Instruction (SSI). While this is an encouraging and appreciated sign, the under-funding of higher education in the years prior to FY 2008 had taken its toll. Under better economic conditions,
the change to a total cost approach to the funding formula would mean an increased flow of subsidy dollars to state institutions, provided they achieve successes in certain outcomes. Some of this increase could be dedicated to facilities maintenance. In the current environment, it remains to be seen if the total higher education appropriation is sufficient enough to permit an increased level of funding to each institution so that urban campuses may direct more funding to facility maintenance.

**International Programs**

“If indeed CSU desires to become an ‘internationally respected, world-class’ university, its efforts in this area will need to be greatly enhanced, including increasing the Center’s resources. It is not clear, however, that this is an appropriate goal for the University at this time. Given the institution’s mission and its limited resources, the University and Center may already be doing all that should be done at this time to internationalize the institution. Even so, CSU can be proud of its modest yet solid and respectable efforts in this area.”

—2000 Report from the Commission

**University’s response**

Each college has adopted a strategy to “internationalize” its programs, moving toward increasing the global awareness of its students through the strengthening of internationalizing its programs and course offerings. Two examples are the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences ([http://www.csuohio.edu/class/student/international.html](http://www.csuohio.edu/class/student/international.html)) which has placed an emphasis on international experiences for its students, the College of Education and Human Services’ Confucius Institute ([http://www.csuohio.edu/cehs/confucius.html](http://www.csuohio.edu/cehs/confucius.html)) which seeks to facilitate student and faculty exchanges with partner universities in China.

**Miscellaneous Commission Concerns**

The following items from the 2000 Report from the Commission were addressed previously in the description of the new positions of VP of Undergraduate studies, General Education Director, activities in the realm of Student Life, the creation of Campus 411 and Learning Communities, inter-college programs, and the advent of the Signature Themes and their Centers of Excellence:

- The University needs to explore ways to develop a comprehensive array of student support services that are integrated and cohesive in nature. To address this critical issue, the institution should consider the identification of a Chief Student Affairs Office who would provide leadership and direction in order to build a better university with a sense of connectivity and belonging.

- The University should consider allocating the appropriate level of resources to achieve a vibrant and exciting campus life.

- Strategies that promote breaking down units or autonomous and independent thinking silos need to be pursued. Bringing people together to address common issues and concerns would improve morale and communication.