

SOUTHERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY

New Haven, Connecticut

by

An Evaluation Team representing the
Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
of the
New England Association of Schools and Colleges

Prepared after study of the institution's
self-evaluation report and a visit to the Campus
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This confidential report reflects the views and analysis of the NEASC evaluation committee. The chairperson synthesized the reviewers' accounts and produced these findings. The report's content is based on the committee's assessment of the institution using the Commission's criteria for accreditation as well as the evidence provided by the institution. Committee members endorse all statements contained in this document. The purpose of the report is to help the Commission come to a decision about the institution's accreditation status and to assist the university as it advances its mission and goals.

Introduction

Members of the Southern Connecticut State University community were gracious and accommodating throughout the team visit, answering questions in a forthright manner, and arranging initial and follow-up meetings that were informative and well attended. Virtually the entire community is familiar with the Self-Study Report, the requirements of NEASC, and the object of the team's visit. The site team met with a range of different people, including faculty, students, administrators, staff, trustees, and a regent in one-on-one sessions, small groups, and open gatherings.

The team chair met three times with the president and once with the president and provost. Team members convened meetings with officers from finance, institutional research, advancement, information technology, facilities, enrollment management, financial aid, academic affairs, student affairs, athletics, in addition to deans, librarians, members of the faculty union and faculty senate. We arranged three open meetings, with the faculty (N~30), students (N~30), and staff (N~30). It is purely coincidental that the number of attendees was relatively identical in each of the three meetings.

The Self-Study Report included appropriate and functional electronic links. The workroom was well stocked with institutional reports, audited financial statements and additional materials relevant to each NEASC standard. These materials offered a comprehensive portrayal of the condition of the University. The President signed the Affirmation of Compliance form attesting to the institution's compliance with Federal regulations governing Title IV.

The site team chair made a preliminary visit to the University in April of 2011, and the full team visited on the days of October 16-19, 2011. Team members reviewed the University's Self-Study, the website and its links, materials gleaned from the web, and examined additional materials during the visit. Based on the team's readings, its meetings with a large and representative sample of the University's members, and extensive discussions over the course of our time together, we offer our best assessment of the University's implementation of the 11 standards outlined for accreditation by the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges.

This appraisal of the University follows its 2001 reaccreditation visit, its 5 year Report in 2006 and its progress Report in 2008.

Standard One- Mission and Purposes

The institution's mission and purposes are appropriate to higher education, consistent with its charter or other operating authority, and implemented in a manner that complies with the Standards of the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education. The institution's mission gives direction to its activities and provides a basis for the assessment and enhancement of the institution's effectiveness.

Southern Connecticut State University is currently part of the State University System of Connecticut. As a result of a gubernatorial mandate, the four campuses of the State University

System, the twelve Connecticut community colleges, and Charter Oak State College are being combined into a single higher education system. The University of Connecticut is not included in this reorganization. The new system will come into being on January 1, 2012.

Southern Connecticut State University is an urban, public, comprehensive institution that has evolved over time. Founded in 1893 as New Haven State Normal School, it was a two-year teacher training school. In 1937, the University was granted authority to grant bachelor's degrees. Ten years later, it teamed up with Yale University's Department of Education to offer a master of science degree. In 1954, the State Board of Education granted the University sole responsibility for this graduate program.

In 1959, the University began to offer liberal arts programs leading to bachelor's degrees in the arts and sciences, and was renamed Southern Connecticut State College. In the next two decades, the University expanded its offerings at both the undergraduate and graduate levels to include entirely new fields of study and research. In 1983, Southern Connecticut State College was renamed Southern Connecticut State University, and became part of the Connecticut State University System, along with Central Connecticut State University in New Britain, Eastern Connecticut State University in Willimantic, and Western Connecticut State University in Danbury.

Its current Mission Statement was adopted in 2007. It reads:

Southern Connecticut State University provides exemplary graduate and undergraduate education in the liberal arts and professional disciplines. As an intentionally diverse and comprehensive university, Southern is committed to academic excellence, access, social justice, and service for the public good.

A companion document, "Fulfilling the Mission: Pursuing Excellence, Fostering Leadership, Empowering Communities," adds the following language:

As a student-centered institution, Southern regards student success as its highest priority. We seek to instill in all of our students the value of the liberal arts and sciences as a foundation for professional development and life-long learning. Our students receive exemplary professional training and are inspired by the research, scholarship, and creative activity of our teacher-scholars.

Through tradition and innovation, Southern strives to empower every undergraduate and graduate student with the knowledge, skills and perspectives essential for active participation and impassioned, ethical leadership in our rapidly changing, global society. Within the Connecticut State University System, Southern leads the way in graduate education and produces the largest number of graduates in Health/Life Sciences, Education, and Social/Public Services.

A Strategic Plan Steering Committee made up of faculty, staff, administrators and students began work on a 2007-2012 Strategic Plan and Mission Statement. Once they completed their

preliminary work, the Committee sent the documents to the entire university community for comment. In order to elicit additional feedback, the University held town meetings. Based on the advice received, the Plan and Mission Statement were revised, refined, and even further tweaked. The institution experienced enrollment growth during the 1990s and 2000s, however, expansion may have peaked. While undergraduate enrollment is holding steady, graduate enrollment is declining. This latter trend is especially noticeable among part-time students. The University is strategizing how to manage this during the current time of financial downturn in the state and country.

The University leadership is populated with interims. The Interim President arrived at the University in 2010, appointed by a previous Chancellor who, along with the previous president stepped down in highly public circumstances. The Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Vice President for Student and University Affairs, the Director of Financial Aid, and the Vice President of Advancement are all in interim positions. Permanent administrators will be hired once the permanent president is appointed. Currently, a search is in place and the new CEO is expected to be appointed in December. Current trustees will identify a candidate for the permanent presidency. That decision will go to the new Board of Regents in January 2012.

Institutional Effectiveness

There is abundant evidence that the University is mission driven. To ensure the community's familiarity with the mission, the wording is inscribed on banners that hang in various university locations. There are also framed mission statements decorating classrooms and administrative offices. The University Strategic Plan drives fiscal, academic, and administrative decision-making. There are a variety of committees active on campus that support the mission and advance the institution.

However, we note constraints. Deans cannot be hired with tenure or retreat rights (system rule) and as a result are vulnerable and less able to make the tough decisions. This system creates a structure of weak deans who do not feel empowered. In the Promotion and Tenure process, deans make their recommendation before the file moves to the campus-wide faculty committee.

The governance divisions weaken communication and trust. The Faculty Senate meets in the absence of the president, the provost and the deans.

Because the Contract limits the salary that can be offered to faculty, in competitive areas such as nursing and accounting, searches commonly fail because of non-competitive compensation. The System determines the contract which means that the campus has few opportunities to influence negotiations.

Standard 2: Planning and Evaluation:

The institution undertakes planning and evaluation to accomplish and improve the achievement of its mission and purposes. It identifies its planning and evaluation priorities and pursues them effectively.

The site team confirms the self-study's assertion that since 2001, SCSU has focused on its planning and evaluation processes. Planning and evaluation are designed to be complementary and interrelated processes and are becoming embedded into the university's culture as well as systematic processes. The institution is continuing to enhance the coordination of planning, assessment, and evaluation and improving the integration of these efforts into the budget planning and resource allocation.

The University completed an 18-month long strategic planning process in 2007. The Strategic Plan reflects the institution's identity and aspirations through mission, vision, and value statements; and permits development of new statements that direct planning in a context of change, such as a document of Guiding Principles. A broadly representative 22-member University Strategic Planning Review Committee monitors the implementation of the Plan and makes recommendations to the President. This group now meets jointly with the University Budget and Planning Committee (charged with making recommendations concerning the university's annual funding priorities, annual operating and capital budget) to guide decisions in a time of fiscal constraint.

The plan's practical usefulness is shown, for example, in an Academic Program Plan drafted by the deans to help systematize academic program development, including possible new/discontinued programs, and resource needs. Another example is the President's spending plan report to the System Office and the Board of Trustees. Requests for new programs or for the university's faculty hiring plan are justified by specific linkages to the Plan. Annual budget requests and hiring requests are justified by reference to Plan goals as they move up from departments through deans to the provost (or from directors to vice presidents). The faculty appreciate their roles in strategic planning and want this work to continue. Although the present plan has almost reached its end date, SCSU has delayed starting a new plan until permanent senior leaders are appointed. The present plan continues to serve its purposes.

The President had been able to set aside a fund dedicated to Strategic Plan initiatives. This year, because of fiscal constraints, this fund is unavailable. The institution is concerned that this will delay the Plan's moving forward. The new strategic planning process, when it begins, should address specifically how initiatives can receive systematic access to funding.

Other planning is consistent with or guided by the Strategic Plan. Master planning is managed at the state university system level, but is campus-specific and based on campus inputs. State-level approvals ensure stability of long-term commitments but may prohibit some desired campus flexibility. Proponents of a new Diversity Plan look forward to its bringing focus to campus efforts. An IT Strategic Plan details needed improvements, although there are questions about how the Plan will be resourced. Both strategic planning and assessment/evaluation are supported by effective institutional research/assessment offices, and appropriate leadership roles are in place. Data relevant to student success, especially of lower division students, is available for complex analyses geared to both enrollment planning and retention interventions.

Library deficiencies which will be discussed in a later section are an exception to the rule that most of the University's units do well in evaluation and planning or are gaining strengths in this area.

The University grants special emphasis to enrollment management through the large Enrollment Management Council formed in 2006. The Council comprises all major stakeholders in the enrollment process (student service, academics, and financial) and is enhanced by a new administrative position. It is focused on empirical and practical information, aligning enrollment trends to demand and capacity. SCSU should continue this progression and maintain its staff and administrative leadership. Enrollment planning is supported by an effective institutional research function that also cooperates closely with efforts that support planning and assessment. Data relevant to student success, especially of lower division students, is available for complex analyses of student success factors. Monitoring of enrollment targets and projections is beginning to permit early adjustments that can lead to focused interventions.

Academic deans were enthusiastic about the usefulness of the enrollment-management process and expressed appreciation for their involvement in it. Deans use the data to shape programs and delivery modes, especially at the graduate level. Enrollment management informs decisions related not only to mission and service, but also to demand, capacity, and investment costs. The University should continue this work.

Evaluation

The University is committed to systematic and regular assessment of its effectiveness and uses data to improve performance. This work is supported by a new Office of Assessment and Planning, established in 2004, the Associate Vice President for Assessment and Planning, and the expansion of functions in institutional research. The campus makes focused use of general assessments such as BCSSE and NSSE. The visit team was impressed that the students we interviewed knew what NSSE was and understood its value to the institution. The institution's participation in VSA as an early adopter is reflected in a robust College Portrait presentation, although the site is in need of some updating. Information on student success/progression in a database maintained in the Institutional Research office helps to shape intervention programs and the First-Year Experience Program. As assessment has ramped up, the institution has supported data collection and analysis by adopting tools such as TK20 and Student Voice. The Office of Assessment and Planning provides support for departments implementing specific assessment processes as well as data analysis. Although the program review process faces challenges when submissions do not meet the minimum standards require, faculty and administrators specifically cited faculty development as a resource that assists faculty with the assessment process.

The team verified that SCSU has worked hard to develop both evaluation and assessment. The decision to build evaluation at the general level, as cited above, has contributed to understanding details about student success and directing appropriate interventions. Evaluation is integrated into the first-year experience program, and learning assessment is structured into the new general education program but is only beginning to take effect as each of the program's vertical tiers are

implemented. The institution has yet to accomplish a full learning assessment cycle in any general education area.

A new process for review of undergraduate academic programs is now well underway. It focuses on assessment of student learning and the evaluation of curricular successes (rather than focusing on the resources programs have). A self-study is prepared, evaluated by external reviewers, and then tested against 17 categories by a cross-disciplinary faculty committee. After a phase-in period that enabled outcomes to be formed and assessments to be designed, the full seventeen-step process is required. The Series E form reveals plainly that learning assessment success has been concentrated in those areas that have undergone a review. The process focuses on building the capacity of programs to demonstrate for themselves whether they are accomplishing their objectives for their students and curriculum. The process is developed and conducted by faculty and has only limited input from deans. Deans, however, do enter the process when results show need for improvement. There is a "connection to make" between the 7-year cycle of successes in assessment and evaluation (conducted by faculty), and the monitoring of shorter-term progress in ensuring academic quality (conducted by deans and monitored by such tools and annual reports). Processes should specifically be developed to bridge this gap.

Graduate education has a long-standing cycle of program reviews. Prospectively, faculty will add learning outcomes and an external review to the graduate evaluation process. The Student and University Affairs functions also use the standards of the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) as the basis for assessing its various units. This is commendable and is bringing positive results.

The institution is beginning to focus on student achievement and successes after graduation, and should be encouraged in this work.

Institutional Effectiveness

Planning and assessment are used to set directions and allocate resources, and are seen as complementary and interrelated processes. These have been embedded into the University's culture over the past several years. The institution deserves commendation for its progress in building the structures and integrating learning assessment processes into curriculum planning and program review. Further connections between faculty-governance and administrative processes are in order to maintain successes in learning outcomes assessment. Enrollment management—focused on both admissions and retention, as well as projecting enrollments for budget and capacities planning—has developed rapidly, and the institution should continue to direct resources and effort to this area. Strengths in communication and transparency will serve the institution well as it moves forward in planning and assessment.

Standard 3: Organization and Governance

The institution has a system of governance that facilitates the accomplishment of its mission and purposes and supports institutional effectiveness and integrity. Through its organizational design and governance structure, the institution creates and sustains an environment that encourages

teaching, learning, service, scholarship, and where appropriate research and creative activity. It assures provision of support adequate for the appropriate functioning of each organizational component. The institution has sufficient independence from any sponsoring entity to be held accountable for meeting the Commission's Standards for Accreditation.

The organization and governance of the University are appropriate to the institution and support its mission and purposes. The organizational structure shows clear demarcation of offices, positions, and lines of authority in the administrative and academic units of the University. The University maintains a system of some twenty-seven All University and Standing Faculty Senate committees that address a wide range of institutional issues. Representation on these committees crosses departments and, where appropriate, includes students. In addition, there are other discrete committees, such as the Enrollment Management Council, the Budget and Planning Committee, and the Strategic Planning Review Committee that include members from across the institution.

Information-sharing, institution-wide discussion of issues and transparency in decision-making are University values that are supported by established channels of communication. For example, the University conducts "Town Hall" meetings on specific issues at least twice a year, and the President holds open "University Dialogue" meetings two or three times a semester. Over the last two years, there have been seven resignations and retirements of senior-level administration and mid-level academic administration, resulting in appointments of new and interim persons to those positions. Specifically, the President, the Provost, the Vice President for Student and University Affairs, and the Vice President for Institutional Advancement are all on interim appointments. Three of the five permanent academic deans were hired in the summer, 2010. The rapidity and magnitude of change have, according to faculty and staff, interfered with the effectiveness of communication from these areas to faculty.

The governing board structure is also in the process of substantial change. State legislation on July 1, 2011 officially brought together the CSUs, the CCs and Charter Oak State College but allowed for the existing structure to remain in place during a transitional period until December 31, 2011. Under the existing structure, the University is one of four state universities overseen by a central Board of Trustees that consists of eighteen members, fourteen appointed by the Governor and four students elected from among the four Universities. The system is administered by a central office consisting of a Chancellor and staff. System staff oversees functional areas such as Academic and Student Affairs, Human Resources, and Informational Technology. Staff also bring campus representatives together at the state level through Standing Councils such as the Presidents Council, Academic Affairs Council, Employee Relations Council, etc. The Board of Trustees has determined the mission of each of the four universities, set general policies, and established tuition and fees. The By-Laws of the Board of Governors prohibit Trustees from having financial interest, stating that, "A trustee may not directly enter into a contract for a fee or be employed by the Connecticut State University System" (Art. I, Sec. 3).

After December 31, 2011, this Board will cease to exist. A Board of Regents will come into being consisting of fifteen members, nine appointed by the Governor, four appointed by legislative leaders, and two elected students. The Regents will oversee the four Universities of

the Connecticut State University System, the Connecticut Community College System, and Charter Oak State College. The Governor will appoint a President of the Board of Regents, and the Board of Regents will choose a Vice President to administer the Connecticut State University System. Further information about the organizational structure of the new Board of Regents governance system has not been made available. There is understandable concern that the impending changes in the governing body and in the constitution of the system to include community colleges may affect future resource allocations and may impact the mission of the University. Together with the instability of leadership at the University over the last two years, the changes in the state system have created a climate of uncertainty and apprehension.

The senior leadership of the University meets regularly as the President's Cabinet, and includes the four divisional vice presidents and the heads of Diversity and Equity Programs, Human Resources, and Information Technology. The members of the Cabinet promote collaboration across their areas of responsibility. For example, Academic Affairs and Student Affairs work together on the First-Year Experience and first-year orientation, and the Chief Information Officer addresses the specific needs of each area, such as establishing paperless processes for Human Resources and the Registrar's office. The CIO also promotes cost-sharing across campus and in fact across the entire Connecticut State University System through group purchasing of software and electronic databases. The Executive Vice President for Finance and Administration is noted particularly as holding open and collaborative discussions across divisions on all aspects of the budget. The Cabinet is a relatively small group that some mid-level managers view as too insular and would like instead for the President to operate an expanded version of the Cabinet, at least on some regular basis. In fact, the President does hold regular Cabinet meetings with deans but this information may not be widely known throughout the University.

The Academic Affairs division is organized into logical disciplinary groupings of five schools with Deans, who, according to the organizational chart, along with the Associate Vice President for Assessment, Planning, and Academic programs, the Associate Vice President for Academic Student Services, and the Director of the Library meet with the Provost as the Deans' Council. The Deans do not, however, have significant representation in governance committees. For example, according to its By-Laws, the Budget and Planning Committee does not include representation from the Deans group. Deans are not always included in appropriate processes. For example, there is no role for the Dean in the grade appeals process; the only potential role for a dean is to extend the deadline for appeal. In the program review process, Deans have no role in the review of graduate programs and only marginal involvement in review of undergraduate programs of approving the external reviewer and meeting with that reviewer to go over the report. Moreover, Deans expressed the view that the historical campus culture promotes faculty "going around" Deans directly to the President further undermining their authority.

The University operates one other instructional location in East Lyme, Connecticut, about fifty miles from the main campus in New Haven, where the M.S. in Special Education has been delivered since 1995. Other graduate programs in educational leadership and reading are planned for this location beginning in fall, 2011. The site is overseen by an Assistant to the Dean of the School of Education, and students are provided with access to all regular student services,

including access to library electronic databases, direct document delivery to their e-mail accounts, and interlibrary loan.

The Faculty Handbook provides detailed information about the structure of the University and the State System and about academic policies and procedures. Faculty are actively involved in policy and curriculum development and in ensuring the quality and integrity of the academic program through standing and special committees, such as the Undergraduate Curriculum Forum, the Graduate Council, and the Promotion and Tenure Committee. The Self-Study expresses some concern that the number of governance committees may have become too large and resulted in redundancy and even a certain atmosphere of competitiveness among those committees. For example, the Self-Study notes the Faculty Leadership Council and the Council of Academic Chairs as competing bodies with the Faculty Senate. Yet, in discussions with faculty, the team found the opposite view. Faculty representatives described the Faculty Leadership Council and the Council of Academic Chairs as means of coordinating information across different groups and not as a competitor to the Faculty Senate. Some faculty suggested that administrators may find sharing information with these additional committees as time-consuming. Another example of a possible blurred line of authority and effectiveness may be evident in the Self-Study's noting an interest on campus in combining the Faculty Senate and the Administrative Faculty Senate into one University Senate. The Administrative Faculty Senate has four standing committees, three of which are concerned largely with business operations of the Administrative Faculty Senate itself. The fourth committee considers applications for sabbatical leaves by administrative faculty. The Faculty Senate has a standing committee, the Personnel Policy Committee, that performs the same function for faculty. The President and Provost do not attend Faculty Senate meetings, losing an important opportunity to increase communication and to transfer information in both directions.

The University publishes a comprehensive Search Procedural Guidelines for Faculty booklet that covers all aspects of the search process including position request, search plan, interviewing, and job offer. The University has an Employee Handbook with clear statements about employment and disciplinary policies, working conditions, and benefits. The version available on the web is at least two years old. There is also a Student Employment Handbook with employment policies related to students, including a FERPA agreement to assure compliance with privacy regulations. The Student Handbook provides information about policies, activities, services, and other relevant student issues. The Student Government Association has a constitution that clearly outlines the relevant structure of the organization and the responsibilities of its members, and the Graduate Student Affairs Committee does the same through its Policy and Procedures Manual. Students serve on major committees, with, for instance, two slots on the important Undergraduate Curriculum Forum.

Institutional Effectiveness

Organizational charts show that offices have been moved or added in response to reviews of institutional priorities, such as the concern for comprehensive enrollment management resulting in the creation of the position of Associate Vice President for Academic Student Services. There is little regular and systematic review of the various governance committees. The Faculty Senate, for example, has a Rules Committee that reviews the By-Laws from time to time, and Senators

are elected to three-year terms, but there is no mechanism for regular evaluation of the body by faculty. As far as review of administrators, the President is reviewed on a regular basis by the Chancellor and Board of Trustees. According to the Faculty Senate President, the Faculty Senate had conducted a survey of faculty as an evaluation instrument about administrators, but that process has faded away.

Standard Four: The Academic Program

The institution's academic programs are consistent with and serve to fulfill its mission and purposes. The institution works systematically and effectively to plan, provide, oversee, evaluate, improve, and assure the academic quality and integrity of its academic programs and the credits and degrees awarded. The institution sets a standard of student achievement appropriate to the degree awarded and develops the systematic means to understand how and what students are learning and to use the evidence obtained to improve the academic program.

SCSU's academic programs are divided into the School of Arts and Sciences, the School of Business, the School of Education, the School of Health and Human Services, and the School of Graduate Studies. Together, they offer 59 undergraduate and 38 master's degrees, nine sixth year professional diploma programs, four graduate certificate programs, and one doctoral program in Educational Leadership. Some of their largest academic programs are Psychology, Sociology, History, Education, Business Administration, Communication, Nursing, and Social Work.

All programs are designed to address the Mission Statement which features "exemplary graduate and undergraduate education in the liberal arts and professional disciplines." It is interesting to note that graduate is mentioned before undergraduate education, but the University explained this by pointing out that SCSU is the flagship for graduate education in the CSUS.

SCSU uses shared governance to plan, implement, and evaluate its academic programs. For graduate programs, a structure is in place through the Academic Standards Committee (ASC), a standing committee of the Graduate Council. For undergraduate programs, the Program Review and Assessment Committee (PRAC), a standing committee of the University Curriculum Forum (UCF), oversees this work. Both bodies evaluate proposals for new and revised courses and programs, guide curriculum development, and conduct regular programmatic reviews. Both groups also provide academic oversight of university programs.

All programs have established policies and procedures for admissions, retention, and graduation to facilitate the achievement of learning outcomes. The Office of Assessment and Planning coordinates systematic assessment of student learning. Learning outcomes for undergraduate and graduate programs have been published on the University's website and in their respective catalogs. In addition, many programs have developed and published specific learning outcomes that reflect the knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors expected of students.

There is a consistent and clear flow of knowledge from the Liberal Education Program (LEP) to the academic majors. The First Year Experience (FYE) also plays a role. For example, LEP serves as the framework for the structure of learning experiences at the undergraduate level,

providing students with broad knowledge in the liberal arts and sciences as a foundation for more advanced disciplinary or professional coursework. Within each major, the curriculum is similarly organized to expose students to the more fundamental concepts of their discipline/profession in beginning courses and then progress to more specialized courses.

Course sequencing is structured so that students can progress from more introductory to more advanced content. However, the order of courses varies according to the major. Important to note is that many programs at the undergraduate and graduate level offer capstone experiences that enable students to synthesize the knowledge and skills acquired throughout their respective programs. Each program at the graduate level determines the capstone experiences available to its students: comprehensive exams, special project, or thesis.

The University is currently working on a plan that will ensure that all students demonstrate competency in accessing information resources and the use of contemporary and emerging technologies, information literacy and technological fluency. That plan, while under development, is close to being implemented. These are two competencies incorporated into the LEP requirements for undergraduate students and the FYE program.

The University is currently finalizing an Academic Program Plan that will assist in enhancing the institution's planning process. Developed by the Provost and deans in consultation with department chairs and faculty, the plan establishes both clear goals for academic programs and priorities for new and existing programs.

Undergraduate Degree Programs: At the University, the common core, known as All University Requirements (AUR), has been replaced by the Liberal Education Program (LEP). In the 2011-2013 University Catalog, SCSU has clearly stipulated the relationship between LEP and the major or concentration at the undergraduate level. The catalog also defines student learning outcomes for undergraduate students in their majors.

The current undergraduate degree programs utilize the AUR which provides a sound education for both B.A. and B.S. students. Some drawbacks to the AUR are its overreliance on introductory-level courses with no progression in level of difficulty, as well as its failure to formally integrate the courses into a cohesive program. In place since the 1970s, UCF commissioned the University-Wide Impact Committee (UWIC), one of its standing committees to study general curriculum reform for SCSU. After a ten-year process, the need for a new general education program surfaced. Effective in fall 2011, the Liberal Education Program was implemented to run parallel with AUR.

Curricula for all the majors include substantial intermediate and advanced undergraduate-level requirements with appropriate prerequisites and articulated guidelines for course levels. The B.A. degree programs allow for a greater selection of free elective courses than the B.S. degree programs due to the greater demands of the latter in coursework, internships and professional applications. Nonetheless, the B.S. degree programs aim to provide for a minimum of 12 credits of free elective courses.

General Education: SCSU is in the midst of its most sweeping reform to general education in 40 years. Implemented concurrently with AUR, LEP began its first phase of Tier 1 in fall 2011. While the AUR system contained the merit of exposing students to a breadth of content, it lacked a stated, coherent rationale and has only been slightly modified since its development. Apart from additions to the menu of courses fulfilling an individual AUR, the only significant modification to the AURs occurred in the mid-1980s, when the university began to require that students take three writing-intensive courses. The Writing Across the Curriculum Committee (WACC) oversees this writing-intensive program. Also important to note with regard to the AUR system is that SCSU's General Education Task Force recognized as a weakness that departments typically had ownership over certain subjects, making it difficult for other faculty members to teach these subjects.

The result of the reform was the new Liberal Education Program, which the UCF and Faculty Senate endorsed prior to its approval through a second referendum in spring 2009. Full implementation of the LEP started in September 2011 with the entering class of first-time, first-year students and freshmen transferring in fewer than 15 credits. During a transition period lasting until 2015, the university will simultaneously administer the AUR system of general education for undergraduates matriculating prior to September 2011 and the LEP system for students matriculating since September 2011.

Like any implementation of a new general education core, there have been some challenges. Two of the most significant have been staying true to the spirit of what was created and making adjustments to accommodate students' credit load. At this point in time, the LEP committee is also working on developing assessment for the learning outcome of Tier 1. Despite the challenges, SCSU faculty should be commended for their work and specifically for their innovative approach to general education. While LEP is 48 credits (and AUR was between 41 and 46), the program reflects the values of the institution.

Parallel to the development of LEP, the University also developed its First-Year Experience (FYE) program. This program represented collaboration between the divisions of Academic Affairs and Student Affairs. The FYE program is multi-faceted; it is intended to introduce freshmen to intellectual and creative inquiry through a course, INQ 101, and to expand upon new student orientation by offering freshmen a clearer sense of how to navigate the University. The University implemented its FYE program in fall 2007. Institutional assessments indicate that the FYE program has contributed significantly to increased retention rates. By fall 2009, first-year retention rates reached an 18-year high of 79%. Even two-year retention rates reached a 62.6%, the highest rate since SCSU began tracking these numbers a quarter-century ago.

While the 48-credit LEP incorporates both an intensive writing curriculum and FYE program into its general education, it articulates a conception of general education that is brand new to the institution. The LEP is built on three tiers: (1) Tier 1 – all of which must be completed within the first three semesters, emphasizes the development of specific competencies for college readiness, such as quantitative reasoning, critical thinking, and technological fluency; (2) Tier 2 – courses reinforce these competencies primarily oriented around non-discipline specific areas of knowledge, such as Global Awareness, Cultural Expressions, and the Natural World; (3) Tier 3 –

a capstone experience that revolves around a discussion of values emphasizing Aesthetic Reasoning, Civic Engagement, Environmental Awareness, Ethical Judgment, Human Diversity, and Rational Thought. The new program emphasizes depth and sequencing of learning throughout the program, representing a significant innovation to SCSU's approach to general education. It has also been designed to break down the typical barriers in subject matter that exist among departments in higher education. These competencies, areas of knowledge and experience, and values are now an integral part of the institutional learning outcomes for an undergraduate education at SCSU. They are: (1) Critical Thinking; (2) Communication; (3) Quantitative Reasoning; (4) Personal Effectiveness; (5) Technological and Information Literacy; (6) Areas of Knowledge and Experience; (7) Value-Based Discussions; and (8) Disciplinary Knowledge.

Given the importance of information literacy to NEASC and to student success in their future lives and careers, it will be critical that the University focuses squarely on this competency.

The new LEP will be more assessment-driven, enabling data-driven decisions to continuously improve student learning. The LEP director is facilitating the full development, implementation, and evaluation of the program. At the same time many departments have reviewed their programs to determine how the LEP will interface with current requirements and how the programs may need to be modified. Reviews have resulted in the revision of some programs. However, though many departments have not yet made their outcomes available electronically, it is projected that this will take place by the end of fall 2011.

The Major or Concentration: Undergraduates at SCSU have the opportunity to develop disciplinary and interdisciplinary knowledge in both introductory and upper-division courses. While upper-division sequencing is strictest in the natural sciences and the professional programs, they are less so in the fine and performing arts. Upper-division course sequencing in the humanities and social sciences is less structured.

Departments such as Education, Media Studies, Psychology and Recreation and Leisure Studies offer methods and theory courses for their majors. Philosophy and Geography require senior capstone courses. In some departments, like Physics, History, and Political Science both methods courses and capstone courses are required. In addition, many majors require undergraduates to take cognate courses in related disciplines. The professional programs have developed a curriculum that substantially connects the classroom with contemporary clinical practices and field experiences.

While SCSU offers a wide array of undergraduate programs that afford students the opportunity to develop knowledge and skills in specific disciplinary areas as well as opportunities to pursue interdisciplinary studies, there are no references to programs considered unique, groundbreaking or innovative as is the case for graduate programs. However, the University does offer innovative approaches to education and programs that have an important impact on the broader community. Among these programs are Communication Disorder, Social Work, Education, Nursing, and Physics. It is noteworthy, also, that 50% of the students at SCSU majoring in

STEM disciplines are women, and that the Nursing program is the only program of its kind in Connecticut to receive the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation grant three years in a row.

Graduate Programs: As stated in the University's graduate catalog, "the purpose of graduate studies is to provide for advanced and specialized learning under the direction of scholars and practitioners in full command of their disciplines" (SCSU 2011-2012 Graduate Catalog, p. 2). This is of particular importance for SCSU's mission statement of offering "exemplary graduate...education in the liberal arts and professional disciplines." As the flagship institution for graduate studies in the CSUS, the University seeks to uphold a particular standard in their graduate programs.

The university currently offers 38 master's degree programs, nine sixth professional diploma programs, four certificate programs, and one doctoral program. A second doctoral program in nursing education, in conjunction with Western Connecticut State University, as well as a M.S. in Applied Physics is currently awaiting Connecticut Department of Higher Education approval.

As outlined in the Graduate Council's Academic Standards Committee Handbook, to be approved for initial and continuing approval, all programs must have a clearly stated mission, philosophy, goals, and student learning outcomes that are appropriate to the degree and clearly reflected in course syllabi and student learning experiences. The programs at SCSU's School of Graduate Studies are rigorous programs that advance students' knowledge and skills beyond that acquired at the undergraduate level.

All faculty teaching at the graduate level are expected to demonstrate competence in teaching, engage in creative activities, and participate in university and community/professional service. Faculty members are selected to the graduate faculty by their academic department and their selection is forwarded to the Graduate Council. Over the past three years, 80 faculty have been added to the graduate faculty roster for a current total of 322 in 2010, representing 75% of the full-time faculty at the institution.

Degree requirements include specific learning experiences and outcomes appropriate to the discipline or profession. Students are expected to demonstrate mastery of a specialized area of knowledge through coursework and capstone experiences. Although faculty in programs that offer both undergraduate and graduate degrees are expected to assess the interdependence of the two programs as part of their graduate program review, this assessment is not consistently done across all programs. Although systematic processes to assess undergraduate and graduate programs have been developed and used regularly, existing graduate program review criteria do not include the expectation that programs demonstrate how assessment data are used to improve programs. As of this moment, graduate program review criteria do not call for external reviewers, as is the case with undergraduate program reviews.

There is a plan to re-visit the program review criteria in fall 2011 to require evidence that data are being used to improve programs. Criteria and procedures for external review of non-accredited programs will be developed in fall 2011 as well. Also, by spring 2013, the Graduate Council will address the issue of differentiated expectations for coursework at the graduate level.

Integrity in the Award of Academic Credit: SCSU offers a wide array of undergraduate and graduate degree programs that conform to common practices in American institutions of higher education in terms of length and name of degree. For example, like many undergraduate programs across the country, the B.A. and B.S. degree programs require a minimum of 120 credits and should be completed within four years if students beginning their programs do not need substantial developmental course work. In fact, because of a shortage of seats in introductory courses, approximately 1321 first year students were assigned Tier 2 classes as part of their schedules so that students would have the opportunity to graduate in four-years.

The University's graduate programs conform to practices common among other institutions. For example, the MSW degree requires 60 credits while the MLS degree requires 36 credits. No graduate program at SCSU requires fewer than 30 credits.

Through the University Catalog and SCSU website, students can find information regarding different ways to earn credits. For example, students can earn credit for prior experiential or non-collegiate sponsored learning in a variety of ways: Advanced Placement exams and College Level Exam Program. Veterans may earn credit for military experience through the Registrar's Office. Students may also earn up to 12 credits through the cooperative education program.

The university has also taken steps to assure its compliance with the credit hour requirements. In spring 2011, the UCF and the Graduate Council each passed guidelines for syllabi language that specifies to students that the course will require at least two hours of work outside of class for each hour spent in class. Yet, only 74% of courses clearly demanded at least two hours outside of class and only 4% explicitly detailed to students that there would be a significant amount of work to be performed outside of class.

The University is encouraged to pursue its plans. For example, to maintain and enhance the academic integrity of the degrees awarded, SCSU will: (1) improve its academic advisement processes; (2) the catalog will be corrected to include information on transfer equivalency, especially with respect to the new LEP and how to appeal decisions related to transfer of credits.

Assessment of Student Learning: The institution has made a significant investment in the assessment of student learning as evidenced by assessment activities conducted at the institutional and program levels. SCSU has a systematic approach to the assessment of student learning to promote academic excellence and improve academic program quality. Clear statements of student learning outcomes guide assessment, and assessment activities are coordinated through the University's Office of Assessment and Planning. The office assists academic units with all aspects of the assessment process. At the institutional level, the University participates in national initiatives such as the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and the Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA). Institutional-level assessment also includes the University's new First-Year Experience (FYE) program. The Office of Assessment and Planning regularly provides the university community with the results of these assessments, and the implications of results are discussed at the institutional and program levels.

Assessment of student learning is built into the LEP, at both the program and course levels. Each competency, area of knowledge, and discussion of values has identified outcomes. New and revised course proposals for the LEP are submitted to the UCF for approval and must specify which outcomes are addressed in the course and how student learning with respect to the outcome(s) will be assessed. Each area will have an assessment process to collect and analyze program-level data regarding student learning. Assessment processes for the remainder of Tier 1 competencies in the LEP is expected to be finalized by the end of fall 2011 and piloted during the spring 2012. Data collection methods and rubrics for Tier 2 areas will be developed by fall 2012 and piloted during spring 2013.

All programs are reviewed regularly based on an established seven-year cycle. At the graduate level, programs are reviewed on a five-year cycle. Faculty have discussed the possibility of extending the latter to more effectively use resources needed for programs to conduct internal assessment reviews as well as national accreditation reviews required for most of their professional programs. Although all graduate programs provide learning outcomes and methods of assessment as part of their five-year review, current review criteria do not explicitly require programs to describe how assessment data is used for improvement. However, as demonstrated in sample program reviews available to the visiting team, many programs do include this type of data in their self-studies.

Undergraduate and graduate programs report assessment findings when departments complete assessment updates that summarize their assessment activities and progress for the year, including changes in learning outcomes or assessment methods, data collected and analyzed, and examples of how data were used in program-level discussion making. Currently, according to the "e series" form, 73% of programs have provided evidence of using assessment data to improve their programs.

Assessment of student learning at the undergraduate and graduate levels is faculty-driven. Program faculty develop assessment measures, collect assessment data, and implement strategies to improve programs. Faculty play key roles in preparing self-study documents for the internal review of programs that includes assessment of student learning. The institution supports the program review process by providing departments with reassigned time credits to conduct assessment activities and technical support to collect and analyze assessment data.

Program review criteria will be reviewed and revised as appropriate to reflect this requirement. The Graduate Council will develop a process and timeline for the implementation of external reviews for non-accredited programs this academic year.

Institutional Effectiveness: The University is focused and driven by the belief that quality, integrity and effectiveness of its academic programs is of the utmost importance. The creation of the Office of Assessment and Planning provides evidence of the University's commitment in this area. The Office's role is critical in assisting faculty and departments at the undergraduate and graduate level in instituting student learning outcomes and in developing methods to assess and collect data for the purpose of making improvements. The University continually tries to refine these processes.

Standard Five: Faculty

The institution develops a faculty that is suited to the fulfillment of the institution's mission. Faculty qualifications, numbers, and performance are sufficient to accomplish the institution's mission and purposes. Faculty competently offer the institution's academic programs and fulfill those tasks appropriately assigned them.

Southern Connecticut State University employs 433 full time and 776 part time/adjunct faculty in the fall of 2011. Seventy-five percent (75%) of full time faculty hold the doctorate degree and 23% hold master's degrees, many of which are terminal. There is a corresponding percent of adjunct faculty with doctorates and master's degrees. Some 86% of the full-time faculty are tenured at the professor and associate professor level.

Faculty are represented by a collective bargaining agreement and are members of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP). A hiring freeze across the Connecticut State University System for new positions has been in effect since 2008, although exceptions have been made to fill twenty-four tenure track lines this fall. Provisions of the collective bargaining agreement require the percentage of part-time faculty load credits to be no more than 21%. Thus, special temporary full-time appointments of no more than two years have been used to fill the gap. Faculty appointed in this manner are eligible to apply for tenure track positions if available at the end of the term.

Approximately 16% of the full time and 11% of the part time faculty are from traditionally underrepresented groups. Faculty and administrators exhibited commitment to recruiting, hiring and retaining a diverse faculty as expressed in the University's mission. Search processes are explicit in this regard and a Minority Recruitment and Retention Committee supports and augments these efforts.

Faculty roles are clearly defined by the Faculty Handbook and each new hire attends a three-day orientation. The weighting of faculty responsibilities for promotion and tenure is stated in the Faculty Senate Promotion and Tenure Procedures as follows: teaching (called load credit in the collective bargaining agreement) is given a weight of 10, creative and scholarly activity a weighting of 5, service 4, and professional participation 2 and time in rank a weighting of 1. Departmental Evaluation Committees consider faculty portfolios for tenure and promotion, as well as an assessment by the Dean. These materials are then sent to the Promotion and Tenure Committee. Recommendations are then forwarded to the Provost for decision and action. As of this writing, Deans have requested departmental and disciplinary guidelines clarifying the process. This has raised some faculty concern about how this guidance will be used by the Promotion and Tenure Committee.

Faculty salary minimums and maximums are set for each rank in the collective bargaining agreement. Deans expressed some concern that the maximums in rank can make hiring candidates in professional areas such as business and nursing difficult.

Teaching and Advising

The teaching mission of SCSU's faculty is given primary weight in consideration for promotion and tenure and in annual evaluation processes. Generally, the teaching load for full-time faculty is 12 credits per semester. Some faculty who teach in the doctoral program or in information, library and computer science have side letters authorizing reduced teaching loads. Part-time faculty teach a maximum of eight credit hours or two courses per semester. Full-time faculty are expected to be available to students at least five office hours a week spread across at least three days. The students the team met expressed appreciation of faculty-student interactions both within and outside of the classroom, and teaching evaluation data for the last several years provide evidence of this satisfaction. Systematic classroom observation with feedback by peers is not routinely practiced at SCSU.

Faculty involvement in student advising is uneven by department across the SCSU. Faculty teaching in the INQ 101 course for freshmen students also serve as academic advisors for the first year, and many continue informally advising the students beyond that first year. Once majors are chosen, faculty may advise singly or in group advising sessions for common advising activities, and numbers of advisees vary by size of major and faculty inclination. Workshops on advising are frequently scheduled and are attended, in the words of one interviewee, by those most dedicated to advising and not those who most need the information.

Student evaluations of teaching are collected from each course each semester using a standardized form. Aggregate course data for the last several years indicate positive impressions of teaching and the classroom experience by students. Faculty on tenure track and temporary full time appointments are evaluated each year. Tenured faculty are reviewed every six years unless the faculty member requests more frequent review or the departmental evaluation committee has indicated a shorter timetable. This professional assessment is "not meant to mirror the promotion and tenure process but to provide evidence of the four areas of professional competence, research, service and professional participation" in the language of the collective bargaining.

Teaching is supported through a Teaching Academy, Freshman Year Experience Academy, and a Summer Technology workshop and such support is available to part-time faculty as well. In disciplines where there are numerous part-time faculty, course coordinators are used to train, mentor, and assess performance. For example, the English department offers a course called "Teaching College English" which is part of the training graduate assistants and part-time faculty, and is viewed as a model approach to connecting adjunct faculty with their full-time colleagues and sending the message of the importance of student learning.

Teaching innovation is supported through a curriculum fund and exemplary models are showcased annually. Excellence in teaching is recognized through annual awards for outstanding instruction. A new award recognizes the technological teacher of the year. Part-time faculty are also eligible for this award.

Faculty development is supported through a variety of activities that support teaching, learning, research, and curriculum improvement. In 2008, the University established an annual teaching

academy that includes a three-day conference during which nationally or internationally known speakers on issues of pedagogy are invited to present. A faculty mentoring process incorporates University faculty volunteers and provides opportunities for junior faculty to meet with paired senior faculty. Freshman Year Experience, the Liberal Education Program, and Writing Across the Curriculum efforts have all involved faculty working together on improvement of teaching and learning. Curriculum-related activities beyond what is considered standard are supported through the curriculum-related activities grant program.

Scholarship, Research and Creative Activity

The Faculty Annual Activity Report for the most recent year noted that 181 of the faculty published during the year. Of the publications, 338 were peer reviewed and an additional 201 were invited. Publication was supported by grants in 81 cases, with approximately half supported by SCSU or CSUS funds. During the same time period, over 100 faculty held an exhibit or performance and 575 presented at a peer reviewed and/or invited conference. Research is supported through a competitive University Research Grant process for up to \$5,000 per faculty member under Connecticut State University System and AAUP guidelines. In April 2010, the university committed to establishing a Creative Activity fund to support research; this is in addition to the CBA mandated funding. This additional amount is 0.1% of the university's operating budget. Sources for support for scholarly and creative activity include faculty development grants, curriculum related activities grants, minority recruitment and retention committee grants, and Connecticut state university research grants. Each is a competitive process. Through a relationship with Yale University, full-time faculty may apply for non-borrowing library privileges. Graduate students mentioned involvement with faculty on research leading to presentation and co-authorship of papers. The NSSE study of 2010 noted that a more limited number of undergraduate students had the opportunity to conduct research with faculty.

Institutional Effectiveness

The self study pointed out both the need for assessment of advising throughout the University and particularly with the implementation of the Liberal Education Program (LEP). The Faculty Development enterprise is both systematic and multi-faceted, with dedicated and enthusiastic staff committed to faculty excellence.

Standard Six: Students:

Consistent with its mission, the institution defines the characteristics of the students it seeks to serve and provides an environment that fosters the intellectual and personal development of its students. It recruits, admits, enrolls, and endeavors to ensure the success of its students, offering the resources and services that provide them the opportunity to achieve the goals of their program as specified in institutional publications. The institution's interactions with students and prospective students are characterized by integrity.

Southern Connecticut State University describes itself as a mid-sized comprehensive, metropolitan, public university that serves a student body of approximately 12,000 students.

73.3% of its total student enrollment is undergraduate students and the remaining 26.7% are graduate students. Of the total number of undergraduates enrolled, 85% are full time whereas 69% of the total number of graduate students are enrolled part-time. The data indicate that SCSU has a relatively diverse student body comprised of culturally, geographically, ethnically, and racially diverse students from 169 cities and towns in Connecticut ((94% in-state residents), as well as 36 states (6% out-of-state residents) and 39 international countries (.6% international students).

According to fall 2010 data, the racial/ethnic diversity of full-time enrolled students is 26.6% for undergraduates and 17.5% for graduate students; for part-time undergraduate students it is 31.4%, and for part-time graduate students it is 13.9%. During the same time period, the data indicated that 44.84% (5,365) of all students enrolled were between the ages of 20-24 years old.

The University's mission statement describes the institution as student-centered and states that student success as its highest priority. The material provided showcases services that are in place to assist interested students from widely diverse backgrounds with their admission, retention, graduation, and personal-social needs. Information on educational services and co-curricular and non-academic programs is available to prospective, new, and continuing students in print and online versions of the Undergraduate Catalog, the Viewbook, and other admissions publications.

Admissions

Southern Connecticut State University's admissions process is described as a holistic process tied to the institution's mission to provide exemplary graduate and undergraduate education in the liberal arts and professional disciplines.

Information pertaining to the admissions policies and processes are available on the institution's website, in admissions materials, in the catalog, and in departmental publications. Students noted in discussions with the site team that they are familiar with admissions procedures.

The University hired an Associate Vice President for Academic Student Services in February, 2011 to develop and lead a comprehensive enrollment management process that would work with students from admission through graduation. This new organizational structure should be beneficial to both the students and the institution.

Enrollment goals for both undergraduate and graduate students are established by the President and the Cabinet. The Enrollment Management Council recommends enrollment goals to the cabinet. The website and publications describe the Council's function different from that noted in the self-study report. Nevertheless, this Council has representation from offices and departments directly responsible for recruiting, enrolling, and retaining students.

The Enrollment Management Committee is a very large group consisting of 36 members, and this may be an opportune time to review its structure and other units involved in this work for the purpose of developing a more comprehensive and strategic approach to operational assessment, decision-making, and enrollment planning.

Undergraduate Admission

The overall enrollment has decreased from 12,254 in Fall 2001 to 11,964 in Fall 2010. The average SAT score increased from 938 in Fall 2001 to 959 in Fall 2010.

According to the VSA site 2008-2009 data, 20% of the University's entering students receive Pell grants.

The University has a diverse student population, and has witnessed a significant growth in total minority student enrollment from 18.6% (2,263) in Fall 2005 to 24% (2,875) in Fall 2010. During that same period, the total number of students with disabilities has increased. In 2010, the number stood at 520, an increase of 60 from Fall 2005. The enrollment of women appears to have remained stable over this six-year period.

In an effort to demonstrate its commitment to access and diversity, the University offers a well-funded and staffed Summer Bridge Program for about 120 conditionally admitted students who may enroll in one of two programs: Summer Educational Opportunity or Connecticut College Access and Success

The University also has expanded its services and offers admission to a new group of prospective students through the Fresh Start Program. The purpose of this program is to offer support to students who have experienced a poor start to college, and dropped from matriculated status, or withdrew from the university. This is a retention initiative. The Dual Admission Program provides Connecticut Community Colleges students with joint academic advising and simultaneous admission.

The University holds membership in the national Access to Success Initiative.

Graduate Admission

The University has experienced significant growth in full-time graduate enrollment to 919 FTE in Fall 2010 up from 697 FTE in Fall 2001, but overall part-time enrollment has witnessed a significant decrease to 811 FTE for Fall 2010 down from 1,106 FTE in Fall 2001.

The University works to maintain diversity in its graduate programs. Its part-time minority graduate students grew from 10.9% in fall 2005 to 13.9% fall 2010. Likewise, the minority full-time graduate enrollment increased from 15.2% in Fall 2005 to 17.5% in Fall 2010.

There is a two-stage process used for graduate admission: applications begin in the School of Graduate Studies, and then move to the discipline's graduate admissions council for review and decision.

Retention and Graduation

Under a new organizational structure initiated in 2010, the Associate Vice President for Academic Student Services supervises undergraduate admissions, registrar, and academic advising. This structure has allowed for more effective collaboration around retention.

In 2007, the University developed its first year experience under the strategic plan's umbrella, "student success is our highest priority." The divisions of Academic Affairs and Student Affairs worked collaboratively to restructure services in order to enhance academic success for entering and continuing students.

The University developed a comprehensive and innovative approach to serving the entering undergraduate student through the New Student Orientation, First-Year Experience, and First Year Academy. In contrast, no comprehensive support program is described for graduate students though the School of Graduate Studies, in collaboration with the Associate Vice President for Academic Student Services, are fleshing out an admissions and retention plan for graduate students. Systematic data collection and evaluation are noted as areas for future action.

The University also recognizes the need to offer support services to transfer students to ensure their retention and graduation.

Student Services

The current interim Vice President for Student and University Affairs, appointed in June 2011, served previously as Dean of Students. The strong student development philosophy is shared and implemented by a team of able professionals who possess skills and provide great commitment to University's mission and objectives.

The Division includes student programs and leadership, the career center, conferences, counseling and student development, health services, wellness, international and multicultural student affairs, orientation, residential life, student conduct and community standards, and dining services. Services and activities are appropriate to the University's mission and the needs of its students. Professional standards, which drive the philosophy, are well articulated and widely shared.

The students attending Southern Connecticut State University can utilize the many services afforded to them on the 171-acre campus consisting of buildings and recreational and learning centers. The Division of Student and University Affairs advances academic achievement and student success through co-curricular learning, bridging curriculum and co-curricular initiatives, disability services, tutorial and writing services, and study skills.

Students' safety and overall well-being are paramount and are attended to through campus safety, residential life, health services, the sexual assault response team, and suicide prevention.

Student growth, development and leadership are evident in the students' involvement in athletics and student government. The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) annually surveys the engagement behaviors of University freshman and senior students, measuring the contributions of these behaviors to effective educational practices.

The University was recognized in the U.S. President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll.

Institutional Effectiveness

Through a program of regular and systematic evaluation, the institution assesses its effectiveness in admitting and retaining students and the appropriateness of its student services to advance institutional purposes. Information obtained through this evaluation is used to revise these goals and services and improve achievement. Stronger attention should be given to the effective use of retention data to inform recruitment efforts and assess programs and services.

Standard Seven: Library and Other Information Resources

The institution provides sufficient and appropriate library and information resources. The institution provides adequate access to these resources and demonstrates their effectiveness in fulfilling its mission. The institution provides instructional and information technology sufficient to support its teaching and learning environment.

Resources and Access: Southern Connecticut State University's Hilton C. Buley Library functions within a constrained economic environment that has affected its operations. While the Self Study clearly communicates the Library's information resources and services and explains how they relate to the University's mission and strategic plan, the library employees were unaware of how the library connected to these institutional documents. As an example, library employees had little knowledge of the library's strategic plan which is referenced in the Self Study. Moreover, the library's departmental annual reports do not reference either the strategic plan's priorities or campus or library missions.

The library staff has experienced position reductions consistent with the economic cuts applied across the institution. Nevertheless the staff is professionally qualified and numerically adequate to administer the library, its information resources, and its services, although at lower levels than in the past.

The institution has a variety of consortia agreements that support its ability to provide access to necessary information resources for the fulfillment of its mission and purposes, especially with regard to electronic resources. This is important since the library's physical collections have long been a challenge. They were cited in the 1994 accreditation progress report resulting in an "additional report in Fall, 1995, detailing its progress in implementation of the additions to the Buley Library's physical resources." Because the Library's infrastructure had also been deemed inadequate, construction on a new facility began in 2005. However, a flood in 2006 resulted in the loss of millions of dollars worth of physical library resources. After the flood, construction resumed and in May 2008, the new library addition came on line. Construction halted again in 2009 due to depletion of funding and litigation over the construction. Then in the summer of 2011, the storage area in the defunct dining commons flooded, damaging special collections materials. Building up the electronic collections may compensate for some of the destroyed resources.

Student instruction and research consultations form an ongoing part of the library faculty's workload. Opportunities for faculty, staff, and students to make effective use of library and

information resources will be improved with the recent hire of a Bibliographic Instruction Librarian, who will be contributing structure and process to the library information literacy program. As more materials are available online, students will have access to more information. Interlibrary Loan is making increasing use of desktop delivery enhancing student satisfaction.

The physical building is recognized by all as a “needs improvement” area. For the last four years due to a variety of circumstances, the library has occupied half of the planned library space. The new wing, with its wood paneling, attractive carrels, pleasing carpeting, nice-looking color scheme, and large picture windows create an inviting and well used space by students who use the facility for studying. However, the building is overcrowded, the physical collections are packed, personnel are crammed, and departments that are unrelated to library functions but located in the library have limited the library’s opportunities to mature. There is no exhibit space, no room for special collections, and only one overheated and crowded library instruction room with seating for nineteen. Group study rooms are used as staff offices. The special collections are housed in a former dining commons that has suffered repeated water damage, continuing to put collections at risk.

With regard to instructional and information technology, there is only one full time staff assigned to the maintenance of the 120 classrooms across the campus. Student workers fill in the workforce. Fifty percent of the rooms contain document cameras despite the fact that faculty desire these as a classroom standard. This piece of data was indicated in the survey that was undertaken as part of the self study process to gauge faculty and student needs. As a result, several document cameras are available for loan. However, the limited staff and the shrinking budgetary resources make remediation challenging.

The CIO has a split appointment between the University System and Southern Connecticut State University. There are advantages and disadvantages. On the plus side, Southern has the ability to leverage University System resources for the campus such as the use of the System database administrator for SCSU. But, this also means that for a large percentage of each week there is no CIO on campus effecting response time and attention to local issues. Some of the areas where faculty and students seek attention concern the portal, classroom technology, and support in using academic technology. The Teaching and Learning Technologies Group (TLTG) has three employees. They send out a newsletter to chairs and deans about their services, but self report that many still do not seem to be aware of their services. While TLTG offers training and development opportunities to the campus, few avail themselves of the service, preferring one-on-one and just in time support instead. Overall, campus Information Technology (IT) is lightly staffed compared to its sister institutions. Adaptive Technologies is administered via IT, and they not only support the campus with their services but also buttress the community and other institutions in the University System.

Information and Technological Literacy: Students use the information and technology resources as an integral part of their education. One hundred and twenty creative and engaging subject specific research guides, done with LibGuides software and created in the last two years, are available for self education. The annual reports record the number of views but range from a high of 2000 to a low of 100. In the past year, library faculty performed 300 student research

consultations, and 187 one-shot formal library instructional sessions. No data was provided to demonstrate whether the sessions were at a level of proficiency appropriate to students' academic programs or professional field of study. The institution is in its infancy in incorporating information literacy skills into its general education program. As mentioned above the TLTG provides faculty with instruction on incorporating academic technology into their pedagogy.

Institutional Effectiveness: While annual reports with data are generated, LibQual was administered once, and sporadic local surveys run, there is no evidence that findings have been used to improve the effectiveness of library services. Individual student responses and course faculty responses to library instruction sessions are occasionally solicited and used by the direct instructor, but are not utilized for programmatic change. There is no evidence of regular, systematic evaluation of the adequacy, utilization, and impact of the library, information resources, and services.

There is evidence that IT has collected data on instructional and information technology, but the solicitation of those using the services is not regular and systematic. There is evidence that as a result of the latest IT survey an attempt was made to address issues with campus wireless access. However, it is difficult to substantiate that the findings were ever used to improve and increase the effectiveness of services such as classroom support and the portal. Overall, the library, information resources and services, and data to improve instructional and information technology are areas needing development.

Standard 8: Physical and Technological Resources

The institution has sufficient and appropriate physical and technological resources necessary for the achievement of its purposes. It manages and maintains these resources in a manner to sustain and enhance the realization of institutional purposes.

The University is located on 172 acres in the Beaver Hills and West Rock, New Haven neighborhoods. Of its 43 buildings, 15 buildings are used for academic programs and classes. Additionally, there is one off campus location in East Lyme, Connecticut which has been offering a M.S. in Special Ed since 1995. Beginning in fall 2011, graduate programs in educational leadership and reading will also be offered at the East Lyme location.

The building space totals 2,541,488 square feet. Of the total, 1,793,741 are assignable. There are the following primary buildings: the Moore Field House (includes exercise science, athletics, and recreation); Pelz Gymnasium; nine residence halls and four townhouses (2800 student residents); Engleman Hall (containing over half of all general-purpose instructional space, administrative offices, and 165 faculty offices); the Wintergreen Building; and facilities operations (the three buildings which house administrative offices and operations). Other primary buildings include Davis, Morrill, Jennings, Earl, Lyman, Buley Library, and the Adant Student Center.

The 2007-2018 Connecticut State University System 2020 Plan guides SCSU's capital improvements. The State Plan authorizes up to \$950M for system-wide capital improvement

including SCSU's portion which is at \$250.4M. These dollars will be used primarily for three new academic buildings, large-scale building improvements, code compliance, and infrastructure improvements.

From the period 2000 to 2009, five new buildings and one new building wing have been constructed to address rising enrollment and the evolving needs of the University. The Adanti Student Center, the Buley Library wing, two parking garages, a residence hall on the west campus, and the Engelman Hall classroom building were included in this group. A few highlights of key campus spaces are warranted here.

Engelman Hall contains over half of all general-purpose instructional space on campus, offices for academic/administrative functions, and 165 faculty offices, the Center for Adaptive Technology (CAT), teaching and learning department workspace for multimedia production and a 10-station facility for faculty and staff training.

The newly completed 135,430 gross square foot Buley Library wing, built in 2009, currently serves as the campus library. An additional 106,521 assignable square foot building, adjacent to the new wing, will be refurbished with the \$31.6M state bond proceeds funds during the next few years. This portion of the renovation will include a reading room, an information commons, and dedicated technology, exhibit and special collections areas.

The Adanti Student Center was recently completed and is a campus highlight. It contains student media (Southern News and WSIN Radio) and is also the home to a state-of-the-art fitness center, computer labs, the Barnes and Noble Bookstore, a spacious dining facility with patio seating, the Fireplace Lounge overlooking scenic West Rock, an elegant ballroom for formal events, and a movie theater.

Renovations that are planned to occur in 2012 include \$6.5M to be spent on the renovation of the former 23,000 square foot student center which will become the new home for the School of Business (enrolls 1266 students), \$4.4M to be spent on mechanical electrical renovations in Jennings Hall and another \$4.1M to be spent on mechanical electrical renovations in Earl Hall. New structures that are scheduled to come on line in the next five years include a \$73M, 58,294 assignable square foot Academic Science Building which will contain general purpose and specialized laboratory instructional classrooms and space for the departments of biology, chemistry, environmental studies, earth science, physics, and the Center for Math and Science Education, and \$15.4M to construct a new 1,200 vehicle parking garage. The Master Plan also calls for the following buildings, currently waiting for design: a \$54.9M, 47,657 assignable square foot Health and Human Services Building and a \$70.9M, 55,642 assignable square foot Fine Arts Instructional Center. Although these are in the plan, they will not be completed within five years.

Additional capital bond funds are earmarked to address code compliance/infrastructure improvements that, over a nine year period, will amount to approximately \$35M. Some of the items to be addressed with these funds include elevator repairs, synthetic surface replacement and protective painting of bleachers at Jess Dow Field, and roof repairs.

Local funds, in an amount between \$100K and \$200K, are annually allocated for small projects via the University Space Committee. This committee is composed of a representative body of elected faculty and administrators. It reviews submitted projects, prioritizes the projects, and forwards a prioritized list through the customary planning and budget steps for approval.

For many years, varied and assorted studies and assessments have supplied information and data analysis which form the basis for strategic facilities and technological master planning to address the appropriateness for the University's physical and technological resources. Whether it is the Facilities Master planning documents, originally constructed in 1993 and updated in 2009, the 2006 parking and traffic study, the 2007 American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment (a pledge to reduce the campus's carbon footprint), the 2011 Instructional Space Utilization Analysis, system-wide capital plans, the 1990 American with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, LEED certification standards, or the Emergency Management Plan, there is clear documentation of the need for and direction of the physical plant and technological environments.

The senior leadership team, consisting of the Executive Vice President and Associate Vice President of Capital Budgeting and Facilities Operations, are well respected for their openness and inclusiveness of staff and faculty in the facilities planning processes. Although there is an abundance of physical plant strategic direction documents, the timeline and funding schedules needed for timely implementation of these goals are often inconsistent. Deferred maintenance tends to be accomplished on an inconsistent, sporadic basis due to an unpredictable level of funding. Although the CSU 2020 Plan provides newly designed and appropriate campus spaces, the University is expected to handle the majority of the operating costs (energy, staff, technology) from its operating budget.

Many improvements have been made to the campus through upgrades and new construction. In particular, the residence halls, public spaces, student center and other newly renovated areas create an attractive university. At the same time, the physical spaces for student services, student health services, university police, institutional advancement, and financial services do not yet match the refurbished areas creating less than satisfactory service delivery and access.

Technology:

Five departments comprise the Office of Information Technology and include the Help Desk, the Network and Telecommunications Department, the Enterprise Applications Department, user services, and the CIO and associated staff. Related physical resource areas include the University Data Center, the Department of Teaching and Learning, the Adaptive Technology Lab, a large warehouse storage center, several small storage rooms, over 100 network closets, three public access computer labs, 40 departmental computer labs, satellite service centers, eighty-four classrooms containing workstations, network connections, and video projection equipment, seminar rooms, non-computer labs with network connections, computer/lab classrooms, seven classrooms with smart boards, a training facility, 3000 desktops, and the wireless service project, the second phase of which will be completed in 2011.

The University refreshes its computers every 3 years, its network infrastructure every 6-7 years, and the technology classroom equipment every 7 years. Due to limited resources and time constraints, the annual bond funds earmarked for technology via the CSU 2020 Plan are often impeded by funding delays and staff shortages.

These technological resources are maintained by a 36 person staff that has proven themselves to be among the best performing professionals in the University sector according to EDUCAUSE standards which measure performance according to expenditures per student FTE. These standards indicate that a reasonable range of expenditures per student FTE would be from \$750 - \$1350 per student. SCSU's per student FTE cost is \$610 which is well below the mean of this range.

The operating budget for information technology is \$5.7M, with \$3.4M allocated for staff salaries and fringe, \$1M earmarked for SCU 2020 equipment (this allocation was reduced by 20% this year due to statewide fiscal constraints), and the remaining \$1.3M allocated for annual operational expenses. This allotment is only 3% of the university's annual operating budget. The low budget percentage, the low expenditure per student FTE, the relatively small staff, and the less than full-time dedicated CIO, combine to jeopardize service and access to university technological resources.

Institutional Effectiveness

Among the documents and practices that inform the campus of its need to stay current in measurable, strategic ways, are the following: the Master Facilities Plan (at a minimum, reviewed every 5 – 7 years); the system-wide comprehensive technology infrastructure evaluation (reviewed every 3 years); the Connecticut University System 2020 Plan; the 2011 Instructional Space Utilization Analysis; the 2002 Facilities Condition Assessment; as well as the goals and objectives that are inherently part of SCSU's involvement with the national college and university effort via the American College and University Presidents' Climate Commitment; the University's Strategic Plan and Review Committee; the University Space Committee, Enrollment Management Council, the SCSU Foundation, and University Budget and Planning Committee.

Technological resources (staffing, annual operating budgets, and poor timing of capital request responses) create inconsistent service delivery.

Standard 9: Financial Resources

The institution's financial resources are sufficient to sustain the quality of its educational program and to support institutional improvement now and in the foreseeable future. The institution demonstrates, through verifiable internal and external evidence, its financial capacity to graduate its entering class. The institution administers its financial resources with integrity.

Southern Connecticut State University is located in New Haven, Connecticut, a city of approximately 130,000 people. One of six colleges in the region, it is devoted to teaching,

research, and public service. An enrollment driven campus, the annual operating budget of \$183.6 million has, as its main sources of revenue, the state operating appropriation (36.2% of total revenues), tuition and fees (43%), sales of auxiliary services (10.3%), grants and contracts (9.2%) and other (2%). Operating expenditures are devoted to instruction (36%), institutional support (14%), scholarships and fellowships (13%), auxiliary enterprises (12%), student services (10%), the library (3%), and operations and maintenance (8%), academic support (3%), and research, sponsored programs and public service (1%).

With the forecast for reduced state support for university operations in the next few years and slowing enrollment growth, SCSU will be challenged to continue achieving its fiscal operating margins. While the state appropriation has decreased, student and fee revenue has increased. As a result of falling state support, the University will be expected to generate new revenue sources to maintain academic and programmatic support. Despite budget swings, the University has managed to increase its operating net assets by \$12.4M between FY10 and FY09.

For the past three fiscal years, net operating revenues have increased by 6.46% from FY07 to FY08, 3.05% from FY08 to FY09, and by 3.34% from FY09 to FY10 due primarily to student tuition and fee revenue growing from \$69.2M in FY07 to \$84.5M in FY10. At the same time, the net change in operating expenditures increased by 8.49% from FY07 to FY08, 3.62% from FY08 to FY09, and decreased 1.67% from FY09 to FY10 primarily due to the savings achieved with the 2009 early retirement incentive program along with cost containment/cost saving measures accomplished via reduced energy consumption, an internal swap shop whereby all campus units can survey the web to locate materials and supplies that others have in abundance and are willing to offer to other areas in need, conservative spending, taking advantage of refinancing opportunities, lowering borrowing rates, reducing travel, while maintaining the operating reserve revenue goal of 5% set by the Board of Trustees for the Connecticut State University System. The university prides itself in consuming 65-70% of its funds on academic programs and purpose.

On an annual basis, the university budget process begins with the System Chancellor, in consultation with the System's Board of Trustees (BOT), issuing guidelines and policies to the campuses to guide in the formulation of their annual budgets. From there, campus budgets take shape locally in consultation with the president, finance officer, senior staff, and department heads. Taking account of the Strategic Plan and hiring needs, they formulate a proposed spending plan. This plan is then reviewed by the Strategic Planning Committee and University Budget and Planning Committee prior to submitting it to the BOT for approval. BOT approval generally occurs in July with a February mid-year review, again by the Board. As a result of pending union matters and an uncertain state budget, the Trustees approved the FY12 budget in September 2011.

In addition to using the annual budget process to engage campus constituents, the University also has at least two other committees, the University Strategic Planning and Review Committee and the Budget and Planning Committee, that review the current state of the budget. These Committees meet regularly and also receive periodic updates from the appropriate campus personnel. Moreover, the entire campus community is periodically invited to open budget

forums that are held throughout the year to disseminate information. The most recent of these forums, facilitated by the Executive Vice President for Finance and Administration, was held on October 6, 2011. The University president also writes a blog that contains budget information.

Since 1972, the Foundation, with approximately 67,000 alumni, has been providing financial resources to the University. Foundation staff work hard to match donor interest to university needs when soliciting gifts. They also connect with alumni relations, fundraising, and donor stewardship units to advance the University's mission. They use a Donor Bill of Rights as their standard for addressing donated funds. Fundraising efforts have contributed to campus programs and initiatives to include music, marine studies, athletics, and the newly named first endowed chair for special education.

On an annual basis, fundraising efforts have averaged \$1.7M over the last ten years. This year's annual fundraising goal is \$1.1M. Along with the unrestricted dollars needed for university priorities and new initiatives, emphasis will be placed on raising funds for the new School of Business, science programs in the School of Arts and Sciences, and the University's Southern Academy. For fiscal year 2010, total new gifts and commitments approached \$3M, with 57% designated for endowments, 30% for programmatic support, and 13% for general university support. Donor philanthropy resulted in the establishment of 14 new annual and endowed scholarships and two family foundations, the Stutzman Family and Werth Family, made major gifts to the university's music program and marine studies program, respectively.

External grant activity has resulted in additional funds that support mission driven activities. Examples of this activity includes a \$300,000 federal grant to help launch a new autism research center, a state-wide coalition to prevent violence against women on campus, scholarships for students (education, health sciences, and STEM disciplines), laboratory equipment (181 such awards in the last 3 years amounting to \$10.2M in funds) and a \$750,000 grant from the US Department of Energy for the creation of Connecticut's first research center devoted to nanotechnology, allowing for the creation of the CSUS Center for Nanotechnology and a \$600,000 National Science Foundation (PACe) grant to support an interdisciplinary project involving the departments of mathematics, computer science, biology, chemistry, physics and earth science.

Audits, subject to BOT review, are conducted every two years and include grants and financial aid. General Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) serve as guidelines for these reviews. Any findings are acted upon within one year for improved practices. Price Waterhouse Coopers (PWC) performs an annual external financial and information technology audit and, for the past 2 years, no new management letter with comments resulted from the annual audit. Earlier audits have routinely led to improvements in daily operations and long-term financial planning. Beyond the business practices highlighted in a variety of audits, there are a number of policies that guide internal business transactions. However, without evidence of a compendium of such policies, consistent and well honed practices are less than widely known.

To sensitize employees to the issues associated with university risk management, all employees are required to participate in ethical behaviors standards training. As part of the audit regarding key employees' role in managing risk, the University conducts various surveys and interviews.

Institutional Effectiveness:

Audits prepared and certified by a Certified Public Accountant will continue to provide third party review and feedback and, in years where a management letter lists recommendations for improved practices, the administration has shown evidence of evolving practices to satisfy documented concerns. Additionally, the University Strategic Planning and Review Committee and the Budget and Planning Committee post minutes of their conversations via the Web.

Standard 10: Public Disclosure

In presenting itself to students, prospective students, and other members of the interested public, the institution provides information that is complete, accurate, timely, accessible, clear and sufficient for intended audiences to make informed decisions about the institution.

Southern Connecticut State University, while converting many of its publications to an online only format, produces all of the traditional publications including the Catalog, View Book, Faculty, Staff, and Student Handbooks, Annual Report, and Alumni Magazine. Print publications and first-time web information are either produced or reviewed by the Office of Public Affairs. Web information currency is the responsibility of the owner of the content. No style guide exists for publications. The institution is migrating to a new content management system for web resources. The Office of Public Affairs has a demanding workload with a 12 member staff, only one of whom is assigned specifically to web information. Information published on its website is sufficient to allow current and prospective students to make informed decisions about their education.

Through daily announcements that feed to the institution's home page, the University informs the public of new information about itself, in addition to links to a number of resources for students and employees, such as Academics, Admissions, Student Life, Research, Athletics, and Human Resources. Contact information is available as a prominent "Contact Us" link on the home page in addition to an 800 number that is also visible, and a link to directory information. Detailed statistics and information about SCSU is included on the web pages from mission to not-for-profit status, and includes links for Fast Facts about the University and the Voluntary System of Accountability - College Portrait. Information about the institution's accreditation status is prominently and accurately displayed.

While there is information on the web about foundation reports (the Foundation's audited financial statements' availability is listed as a footnote within the body of the pdf reports), contact information for the controller who is responsible for audited reports, and general information about how to request printed copies of the Catalog, View Books, and applications, there is no notice of the most recent audited financial statement. The controller's page says, "In addition, the University Controller's Office manages the university's fiscal policies and

procedures, audits, and other tax and financial regulatory requirements.” It does not actually state that copies of the reports are available upon request.

In other areas the information is available, but not always easy to find. For example, licensure rates are not collocated centrally, but are published in departmental reports. The Catalog is available in its current form and past form on the web pages back to the 2006-2007 version at <http://www.southernct.edu/academics/coursecatalog/>, but if a student goes directly to the Undergraduate Catalog page (<http://www.southernct.edu/undergraduatecatalog/>) or the Graduate Catalog page (<http://www.southernct.edu/grad/currentstudents/graduatecatalog/>) there is no information directing them to the past catalogs.

Institutional Effectiveness: The University used the self-study process to gather information about its electronic and print publications. Through this process the issue of the difficulty of navigating the web site was identified. More precisely, the University discovered the difficulty of finding information. In order to mitigate the difficulty, students stated that they just use the search box to find the information they are searching for. As the projections in the self study note, the new web content management system implementation is an opportunity to help streamline the transparency and interconnectedness of the public disclosure information which is available.

In the self-study, the institution noted that there is no university-level systematic review of the website. There is no documentation of periodic review for either the web pages or print publications. Implementation of guidelines and processes to accomplish systematic reviews will assist with substantiating institutional effectiveness in maintaining currency of information in public disclosure.

Standard Eleven: Integrity

The institution subscribes to and advocates high ethical standards in the management of its affairs and in all of its dealings with students, prospective students, faculty, staff, its governing board, external agencies and organizations, and the general public. Through its policies and practices, the institution endeavors to exemplify the values it articulates in its mission and related statements.

Southern Connecticut State University expresses a commitment to integrity in the management of its affairs and demonstrates this commitment in its policies, publications, and practices. The catalog and other materials present SCSU’s expectations of its community members to act responsibly. In recent years, the University has provided opportunities for open discussion and for actions to be taken to address problems that have arisen.

As an institution authorized by the Connecticut General Assembly to offer courses and programs leading to undergraduate and graduate degrees, the University provides equal higher education opportunity for all qualified students. The University affirms the basic right of all members of its community to free inquiry, responsible discussion, and the uninterrupted pursuit of all activities generally associated with the operation of SCSU.

The University is bound by the state Code of Ethics and Freedom of Information Act, and as a public agency, by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act protecting the privacy of students. Detailed information is published in a number of University publications that inform the campus community, as well as the public, about the policies and practices that address expected behaviors for faculty, staff, students, administrators and board members. The policies and practices described in the AAUP Collective Bargaining Agreement as well as the Faculty Handbook, the Employees Handbook, and the Student Handbook communicate the expected rules of behavior for campus members.

The members of the Board of Trustees have been meeting their legal responsibility as a governing body, and when conflicts arise, indicate the policies governing behavior. (As has been mentioned earlier, this Board of Trustees will cease to exist on December 31, 2011. On January 1, 2012, a Board of Regents will be the successor body.) The University reviews its policies and practices regularly and attends to issues of affirmative action, promotion and tenure, employment, grievances, sexual harassment, and other organizational concerns through the president, cabinet, Board of Trustees, the human resources professionals, the Connecticut State University System Office, and the State of Connecticut. The University does not have an established institutional policy review committee, but the aforementioned structures appear to work for this institution.

The documents that were reviewed convey the institution's expectation that all members of the community adhere to Southern Connecticut State University's articulated principles of intellectual honesty and academic freedom, diversity, and respect.

The University's adopted Equal Opportunity Policy states that SCSU prohibits discrimination and harassment, and violators will be punished. On all appropriate publications and as well as on the University's web site, the EEO statement figures prominently. Additionally, the offices of Human Resources as well as Diversity and Equity offer workshops and seminars that educate and inform campus members of their legal rights and responsibilities to prevent discrimination and harassment.

The University's commitment to diversity is also confirmed by the framework it has established. It created a Diversity Plan, the Diversity and Equity Leadership Council, the Minority Recruitment and Retention Committee, and the Minority Recruitment and Mentoring Committee. Its partnership with the Special Olympics also conveys an important message. The university continues to address diversity, inclusion, and equity to support students, faculty and staff from diverse backgrounds. The Office of Diversity and Equity, led by the Executive Assistant to the President /Director, appears to provide university-wide leadership for institutional diversity initiatives.

While the catalogs, web sites, handbooks, and publications contain academic policies, and make clear the consequences of dishonest behavior, plagiarism is acknowledged as a challenge, due largely to the extensive use of technology.

The faculty and student handbooks articulate the University's commitment to academic freedom, and freedom of inquiry and expression. The University's research agenda is guided by policies that assure integrity and ethical behavior. The Research Protection Program (RPP), the Office of Research Integrity (ORI), the Institutional Review Board (IRB), and the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) provide oversight for ensuring ethical research conduct.

Institutional Effectiveness

The pursuit of institutional integrity is strengthened through the application of findings from periodic and episodic assessments of the policies and conditions that support the achievement of these aims among members of the institutional community.

All documents reviewed expressed the institution's expectation that all constituents' conduct would adhere to Southern Connecticut State University's articulated principles of intellectual honesty and academic freedom, diversity, and respect.

The offices of Human Resources and Diversity and Equity work collaboratively to plan and deliver orientation seminars and professional development programs for faculty and staff. The educational modules include information about affirmative action and equity initiatives.

The University's Diversity Strategic Plan has been three-years in the making, and a long-term goal of the institution. It is in final draft form, available for university review and comment, and very close to be adopted. The Plan is the work of a broad-based group of twenty-one campus members, and has been vetted by various stakeholder groups and constituents on campus. The goal of the Plan is to enhance the climate of the University, and is directly linked to the campus' Affirmative Action Plan to ensure the recruitment and retention of a widely diverse population.

The State mandates that diversity workshops be held on campus to promote civility and respect in the workplace. The University complies. An external consulting group has been used to facilitate the workshops. Following each session, satisfaction surveys have been administered and the data and information collected have been used to revise the workshops over the years.

The chief diversity officer's work is integrated into the various administrative divisions of the University. Likewise, the Office of Diversity and Equity has developed collaborative relationships across the campus.

Plagiarism and academic honesty are clearly covered in the student handbook, and there are also online guides available for students.

The campus review yielded concerns in the following areas. A centralized website that contains all handbooks and policy documents is not currently available. Having such a website location would provide greater ease in locating critical policy documents. The University administers many assessments and surveys but it is not clear how the results are used to advance recruitment, retention, diversity and equity, and management operations.

The State mandates diversity workshops and professional development training for faculty and staff. The Diversity Action Plan and the institution are committed to the recruitment and retention of a widely diverse population. The University also participates in the Access to Success initiative. The diversity orientation and training sessions for faculty, staff, and students only occur in a person's first year at the University, and there are no refresher courses offered. Absent are programs that capture the needs of transfer students.