



SAGINAW VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY
December 2003

Dear Colleagues:

This past term, we have reflected on the first forty years of our institution—on where we have been and where we should go from here. There is really nothing magical about round numbers of years, but human beings like to measure things in that way, and once every ten years our University faces a different kind of measurement—a comprehensive review by our accrediting agency, the Higher Learning Commission.

Accreditation is one of the hallmarks of American higher education. It is a process that can produce enormously positive and helpful results for our University and for those we serve. The written report you now hold in your hands—developed in anticipation of a visit by a team of academics and administrators from peer institutions, scheduled for March 8-10, 2004—represents the contribution of insights, ideas and information from many, and the painstaking and scrupulous synthesis of this data by a few. Thank you to all who participated in this process.

Unlike the nine other program-specific accreditations earned by our colleges, this review process has asked us to look at the University at-large. It has required us, and given us the occasion and the opportunity, to examine virtually every aspect of our institution and to make our own critical judgments as to how we are performing and where we should improve. Now that we have completed our self-study, these judgments will be assessed with the perspective of outside evaluators, who will read this report prior to visiting the campus to see for themselves what has been accomplished since the last self-study in 1994.

Since then, SVSU has grown and changed in ways that are both dramatic and subtle. We are now a more mature institution with higher quality academic and support programs, solid enrollment growth, and a stable financial base that should allow us, albeit with sacrifice, to weather Michigan's current economic storms. We have enhanced our reputation as an institution of opportunity and choice and are playing an ever-greater role as a cultural and intellectual resource for the citizens of East-Central Michigan. And as this Self-Study Report demonstrates, the University meets all the "General Institutional Requirements" and "Criteria for Accreditation" and has made significant progress in addressing areas of concern cited by the 1994 evaluation team.

And yet a great deal remains to be done. Our current re-accreditation effort coincides with the culmination of our most recent five-year planning cycle represented in *Next Steps 2000-2005*, which figures so prominently in this Self-Study Report. Our challenge beyond *Next Steps* will be to consolidate the gains of the past forty years and continue to make SVSU an institution of which we can be proud.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric R. Gilbertson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "E" and "G".

Eric R. Gilbertson

Saginaw Valley State University

Self-Study

Executive Summary

Introduction to Self-Study Document

Background

Saginaw Valley State University is guided by the following Mission and Vision, outlined in the planning document *Next Steps 2000-2005*:

Mission: The University produces value for the Region, State and Society by preparing highly qualified graduates who contribute to the betterment of a culturally diverse world and by providing intellectual and cultural opportunities that enrich the lives of people.

Vision: Saginaw Valley State University will provide academic and professional programs and services for its students at the highest levels of quality and value, and be recognized as among the finest teaching universities in the United States. Our graduates will rise to key positions in economic, political, cultural and civic leadership and will distinguish themselves and our University through their accomplishments and service. Our University will also be the premier cultural and intellectual center and resource for the schools, governments, businesses and people of the East-Central Region of Michigan.

Saginaw Valley State University has been continuously accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association since 1970. SVSU's most recent re-accreditation occurred in 1993. The purpose of this self-study is to apply for re-accreditation once again.

Accreditation is a voluntary process of peer review by a non-governmental accrediting body. Accreditation is granted to an educational institution based on its demonstration that it meets all the criteria set by the accrediting agency. Accreditation is important to a U.S. educational institution because without it, students would not be eligible for full financial aid, and a degree from a non-accredited program has less value in the marketplace.

Furthermore, the institution would not be eligible for federally-funded grants and might have difficulty attracting qualified students. The comprehensive accreditation of the university also affects the professional accreditations of individual graduate and undergraduate programs within the institution, which have been granted, in part, because they are associated with an accredited institution. More importantly, perhaps, the accreditation process also aids the university in continuously improving its work toward fulfilling its Mission and Vision.

Self-Study Process and Report Structure

To present a coherent and comprehensive picture of this institution, this self-study is organized around the university five-year plan, *Next Steps 2000-2005*, with the approval of the Higher Learning Commission.

The institution's two-year self-study process demonstrates that Saginaw Valley State University meets all the General Institutional Requirements; these and the Criteria for Accreditation are addressed in relevant chapters, and identified at the beginning of each.

More than 100 people across campus contributed to this process through participation in committees, subcommittees, workshops and focus groups; this number increases considerably if those who participated in surveys and interviews are also included. This Self-Study Report has been produced by a Steering Committee in collaboration with an Editorial Board.

Steering Committee: The Self-Study Steering Committee was chaired by the Vice-President for Academic Affairs, who appointed the Assistant Vice-President for Academic Affairs as the Self-Study Coordinator. Steering Committee members included Vice-Presidents of the four major units within the university, faculty, and staff.

The Steering Committee served as the oversight and coordinating body, evaluating data and report drafts as they became available, with special responsibility for addressing the cited issues of concern from the 1994 Evaluation Team Report. The Steering Committee approved all drafts and final documents produced by the Editorial Board. The chair of the Steering Committee was also responsible for communication with both the HLC/NCA and the university community.

Editorial Board: The Editorial Board, chaired by the Self-Study Coordinator, was responsible for the coordination and production of the University Self-Study Report based on information and analysis provided by the Operational Committees named below, organized around the goals defined in the university five-year plan, and in compliance with the General Institutional Requirements (GIRs) and Criteria for Accreditation defined by the Higher Learning Commission/NCA.

The Editorial Board correlated the goals and objectives of *Next Steps 2000-2005* with the GIRs and Criteria for Accreditation. The Editorial Board also conducted a number of workshops for committee and subcommittee chairs, as well as forums about the self-study process, for faculty, staff, Board of Control members, students and community. The goal of these forums was not only to inform people about the accreditation process but also to recruit people to become involved in the process, in order to make it as inclusive as possible.

The Editorial Board then organized, identified, and categorized the information, resources, evidence, and documentation provided by the four Operational Committees, and drafted and produced the Self-Study Report under the advisement of the

Steering Committee. The Editorial Board also developed and maintained a resource room and an electronic portfolio to disseminate the final report. In addition, the Editorial Board has published a regular newsletter, *The Self-Study Update*, to keep the university community informed about the self-study process and its progress.

Operational Committees and Subcommittees: Using the mission and goals defined in *Next Steps 2000-2005* as a model, four Operational Committees were created to carry out the work of the self-study:

- University Mission, Planning, and Governance
- Academic Programs
- Resources
- Campus Culture

These four Operational Committees were charged as follows:

- To provide the context/description for the assigned area of university organization/culture.
- To gather and interpret data, providing patterns of evidence to demonstrate progress toward the established goals and criteria.
- To provide an evaluative summary of strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for improvement in the area under scrutiny, based on the evidence gathered.

Each of the four Operational Committee chairs, who served as members of the Steering Committee and as *ex officio* members of the Editorial Board, organized subcommittees; the subcommittee chairs comprised the membership of the four Operational Committees.

Overview of the Self-Study Report

The Self-Study Report includes an Introduction and eight chapters as well as appendices:

- Introduction to Self-Study Document
- Chapter 1: SVSU: Overview and History
- Chapter 2: Accreditation History
- Chapter 3: Mission, Planning, and Governance
- Chapter 4: Resources
- Chapter 5: Academic Programs
- Chapter 6: Campus Culture
- Chapter 7: Conclusion
- Chapter 8: Request for Re-accreditation
- Appendices

The Introduction addresses the self-study process and provides an overview of the Report. Chapter 1 presents an overview of the institution and its 40-year history. Chapter 2 details the accreditation record of the university and responds to issues raised in the previous HLC/NCA evaluation team report.

Chapters 3-6 represent the work of the Operational Committees and subcommittees. They are organized around university structures and the goals and objectives of *Next Steps 2000-2005*, with cross-references to the relevant General Institutional Requirements and Criteria for Accreditation defined by the Higher Learning Commission, which are presented at the beginning of each chapter.

Chapter 7 presents the findings of the self-study, bringing together the conclusions from each chapter. Chapter 8 is the formal request for re-accreditation.

Appendices include the table cross-referencing the GIRs and Criteria for Accreditation, the Basic Institutional Forms, the Self-Study Electronic Portfolio website, selfstudy.svsu.edu, and the Acknowledgements. The university intends to maintain the electronic portfolio as part of an ongoing evaluation process once the evaluation team has made its report.

Chapter One

Saginaw Valley State University: Overview and History

Mission, Vision and Profile

Chapter One of this Self-Study Report introduces the institution's Mission and Vision and the six goals which have guided university planning, as outlined in the document *Next Steps 2000-2005*:

1. **Academic Improvement:** The University will develop and deliver academic programs that provide the highest quality intellectual preparation for its students and which both motivate and enable those students to reach their full personal and professional potential.
2. **Program Qualitative Distinctiveness:** The University will enhance the value of all its programs by developing several qualitatively distinctive programs that achieve and deserve recognition as among the finest such programs offered by teaching universities [Comprehensive I] in the United States.
3. **Enrollment Management:** The University will increasingly become an institution of choice for students while remaining an institution of opportunity.
4. **Technology:** The University will make a qualitative step forward in employing technology to enhance teaching and learning, improve institutional efficiency and expand access to educational opportunities, and achieve a "state-of-the-art" level of technological capability among teaching universities [Comprehensive I] in the United States.
5. **Campus Culture:** The University will create and sustain a culture and environment that fosters and supports the personal and intellectual growth of its students, faculty, and staff.
6. **Public Service:** The University will make significant and sustained contributions to the quality of life and become the premier cultural and intellectual center and resource for the

schools, businesses, governments and people of the East-Central region of Michigan.

This chapter discusses the context in which SVSU was founded and developed and also previews the key themes that have emerged from the self-study. It highlights a decade of growth and transformation in the faculty, staff, and student body, the physical plant, as well as the curriculum and campus culture. The university was founded as part of a national commitment in the 1960s to expand opportunities for higher education; this chapter presents a brief history of the institution, now in its 40th year.

The Michigan university system is unique in the constitutional autonomy of each of its 15 universities; this autonomy has significant implications for funding, governance, program development, and student enrollment at all state universities, including SVSU.

Organizational Structure and Governance

As a mature comprehensive university, SVSU now is building a distinctive reputation through a well-defined Mission and programs to support its purpose: providing educational opportunity for the region that created and still sustains it. SVSU is organized into five colleges: Arts & Behavioral Sciences; Science, Engineering & Technology; Business & Management; Education; Crystal M. Lange Nursing & Health Sciences. The university offers 68 undergraduate programs of study and an additional eight graduate programs, each with a number of subspecialties for a total of 20, as well as post-masters' certificate programs. SVSU is classified as a Masters I institution according to the Carnegie Foundation classification. Graduate programs at SVSU are primarily part-time professional programs geared to enhancing and expanding career development opportunities for students.

The University has a consistent history of growth; for all but two of the past 40 fall semesters, enrollment has exceeded that

of the previous year. The growing student population both at the undergraduate and graduate levels has access to expanded facilities and technology that are among the most modern in the state, and the faculty are dedicated to student-centered teaching. The large numbers of new faculty hired in recent years, coupled with the broader, more diverse base of students, have brought new aspirations for the institution, including several new graduate programs, a new communication-intensive General Education program, and multiple new majors and minors.

More than 600 people work full-time and over 300 work part-time at the university. SVSU has had collective bargaining relationships with two groups of its employees since early in its history. The Faculty Association, affiliated with MEA/NEA, began in 1972; unions for secretarial and custodial staff followed and merged in 1989. These collective bargaining relationships have implications for both short-term and long-term planning.

1.3 Current Outlook

Recently, expansion has been mitigated by statewide financial issues. For the first time, the State is now providing less than half of SVSU's General Fund budget – considerably less than is obtained from tuition income. The university now needs to fine-tune its planning process to continuously improve the quality of this university in a changing environment.

Chapter Two

NCA/HLC Accreditation History

2.1 SVSU Accreditation History

Saginaw Valley received NCA accreditation in 1970; accreditation at the master's level was granted in 1974. SVSU's comprehensive accreditation has been continuous since then, and the University met all Criteria and GIRs for accreditation in our 1994 visit. Thus, during this past decade of growth and maturation, the University has been able to support accreditation for nearly all professional programs, including, most recently, the 2003 AACSB accreditation for the College of Business and Management.

The 1994 Evaluation team submitted a report favorably reviewing the institution on the basis of all GIRs and Criteria, noting that "the institution meets the General Institutional Requirements as specified by the North Central Association Commission."

The 1994 team commended the consistent support of the Board of Control for the quality of academic programs. It also commented positively on the faculty commitment to teaching and service as well as "extensive faculty credentials in scholarly activities." The accreditors noted that students also reported satisfaction with faculty and their programs of study. Overall the 1994 team concluded that "Saginaw Valley State University is a strong institution committed to meeting the needs of its unique student population."

2.2 Response to Issues from Previous HLC/NCA Reports

The 1994 evaluation team in its report identified three major issues that "warrant immediate and serious attention" (p. 41): General Education, Assessment, and Multiculturalism and

Diversity. Interim reports submitted by the university laid out plans for addressing these issues: the General Education/Assessment interim report, submitted in 1995, presented a plan for both General Education revision and Academic Program assessment. A separate Diversity report, submitted in the same year, outlined the University's strategy to deal with issues of diversity and affirmative action.

Since the time when SVSU submitted those interim reports, it has developed an entirely new General Education program and moved forward with both of the other issues.

General Education: In response both to these concerns and to institutional needs, SVSU has developed a completely new General Education program, which responds fully to all of the concerns expressed by the 1994 evaluation team. The new program is administered by a contractually defined governing body, the General Education Committee, which reviews new courses submitted to this program and is responsible for the standardized testing component of the program assessment. Departments carry out individual course assessments and forward reports to the General Education Committee, which is responsible for overall program assessment leading to continuous improvement of the program.

Assessment: Individual units have created assessment plans; these individual plans must now be consistently integrated into a campus-wide effort. The number of academic programs that have received professional accreditations has furthered academic assessment efforts and those programs have provided significant leadership in implementing assessment practices for all academic programs. A survey conducted to determine academic department levels of program assessment activities revealed that much assessment activity has been focused on individual classes without clear reference to overall program goals. The process of General Education reform furthered efforts in academic program assessment. Now that General Education assessment has become well-established, attention has returned to other academic program assessment.

Diversity: In 1991, the Board of Control adopted a statement on cultural diversity which “reaffirmed its commitment to equality of opportunity by creating and nurturing, by leadership and example, an environment of genuine understanding and appreciation for differences among peoples. While within the university there are and should be certain shared values, a diversity of ideas and perspectives must be encouraged.”

Building from this and from HLC concerns, other planning documents including *Next Steps 2000-2005* have continued to identify diversity as an institutional goal: “Improve and sustain a campus culture that values diversity and practices freedom of inquiry, respect and integrity in human relationships” (11).

Under the leadership of several successive diversity officers, multiple diversity initiatives have been carried out, including task forces on curriculum, workshops devoted to faculty and staff development, and a variety of cultural programs. The perception has been that these efforts have been uneven; partly this is a misperception, because these various efforts have not always been visible across the campus and community and were not integrated into a comprehensive diversity plan that fully defined and supported a coherent set of university goals and objectives.

The Special Assistant to the President for Diversity Programs, appointed in Fall 2002, has assumed responsibility for developing and implementing a campus-wide diversity plan, and for insuring compliance to all legal requirements. The Affirmative Action and Institutional Diversity plans are being built on the university’s strategic plan.

Institutional planning and use of data for decision-making:

The process used in creating SVSU’s current planning document, *Next Steps 2000-2005*, directly addresses both institutional needs and concerns raised by the 1994 report. *Next Steps 2000-2005* is regularly updated by the Board of Control; the process of developing the next planning cycle has already begun. Within this framework, the Board of Control delegates

broad responsibility for institutional planning to the President. In addition to the President's Planning Council and the University Planning Officer, multiple task forces are charged with advising the President on key issues; the recommendations of task forces may lead to implementation decisions. To inform planning, the Office of Institutional Research collects information related to all units. In addition, all units have multiple advisory bodies, which likewise provide important information to govern decision-making.

The 1994 report also included discussion of issues directly affecting students, such as Student Affairs, the library, class size, and curricular offerings. Meeting the needs of a more diverse student body which has grown and includes a new on-campus population has informed the university response to those concerns, as this Report demonstrates.

2.3 Conclusion

For a time, institutional growth outpaced the ability to develop appropriate new structures and processes consistent with a mature institution. The university has often found it necessary to focus on the immediate, pressing issues characteristic of transformational change. Although SVSU has not yet accomplished all of its goals, especially in the areas of diversity and assessment, this report will demonstrate that considerable progress has been made.

Chapter Three

Mission, Planning and Governance

3.1 Introduction

As SVSU has grown, university processes and governance structures have adapted to reflect the changes of the past decade. Each of the six goals outlined in *Next Steps 2000-2005* is used, in varying degree, by all divisions of the University to shape unit planning. Each goal is described with Indicators and Key Actions, and the corresponding unit or units responsible for carrying out that aspect of the goal is identified.

3.2 University Planning

SVSU's planning cycle is coordinated by the President, reporting to the Board of Control, and implemented by the President's staff. Planning is informed by various task forces and committees appointed to address specific issues.

3.3 Governance Structures

3.4 Division-level Governance

As noted in the previous report, since its founding SVSU has been governed by a traditional hierarchical structure with input processes; governance occurs within the two collective bargaining agreements described previously. The current President, Dr. Eric Gilbertson, came to SVSU in 1989. Reporting to the President are four Vice Presidents who form the President's Planning Council. This body monitors progress toward institutional goals and makes the necessary revisions to the five-year strategic plan. The President and his Planning Council work with the Board of Control to achieve university goals.

The Board of Control is the legal governing body of the university; the Board delegates administration of the university to the President. The Board has eight members appointed by the Governor for eight-year terms. Because the state does not have a higher education governance structure, the Board has the control and authority to set university direction, although it is impacted by the funding decisions of the state legislature and by the consultative relationships with other state public universities.

The President's Planning Council, composed of the four Vice Presidents (Academic Affairs; Student Services & Enrollment Management; Administration & Business Affairs; and Public Affairs/Executive Director, Development & SVSU Foundation), serves in an advisory capacity. Each of these is responsible to manage his/her respective unit and contribute to the attainment of university goals.

The President's Staff consists of the four Vice Presidents; the Deans of the five colleges; the Executive Director of Information Technology; the Special Assistant to the President for Diversity Programs; the Special Assistant to the President for International Programs; the Executive Assistant to the President/Planning Officer; the Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs; the Administrative Assistant to the President/Secretary to the Board of Control. Information is shared and communication across units occurs in this body. Recent reorganizations within the division of **Administration and Business Affairs**, as well as the combining of Student Affairs with **Student Services & Enrollment Management**, have been designed to enhance institutional effectiveness.

Colleges are managed by deans, who report to the Vice-President for Academic Affairs. The college deans are responsible, within Faculty Association contractual provisions, for faculty hiring and evaluation, course scheduling, and curriculum planning. Department chairs remain in the faculty bargaining unit and their authority is limited by the faculty contract.

Faculty Governance is articulated by the Faculty Contract. This contract establishes four standing committees to review and make recommendations on curriculum proposals and faculty evaluation: the Curriculum and Academic Policy Committee (CAPC), General Education Committee (GEC), Graduate Committee (GC), and Professional Practices Committee (PPC). SVSU has no faculty senate. The curriculum committees' recommendations are ratified by vote of the full faculty and forwarded to the Administration. Decisions are subject to funding, scheduling, and staffing implementations by the Administration within collective bargaining agreements and under the authority of the Board of Control. Recommendations of the PPC for faculty tenure, promotion, and discipline likewise are made to university administration and the Board of Control.

3.5 Conclusions

- The past decade's growth and transformation have been accomplished within the administrative structure described. Due to careful planning and conservative fiscal management, SVSU has been able to maintain quality services:
- All administrative levels are responsive to student needs and use student (and alumni) feedback in their on-going planning process.
- *Next Steps 2000-2005*, the university strategic plan, established measurable objectives and outcomes. It also identified those university units responsible for key actions. However, this plan is not well known or understood by the campus community, except as it becomes the specific responsibility of a particular unit. Feedback and communication mechanisms are not yet uniformly in place, though progress is being made.
- The relationship between long-range planning and resource allocation is not always evident. Planning for resource allocation is highly centralized and the rationale for decision-making is not always clearly understood.

- All relevant units will need to continue to find ways to work effectively within the collective bargaining agreements.

Chapter Four

Resources

4.1 Introduction

The university has positioned itself as a cost-effective institution, able to maintain a resource base that enables it in large part to achieve its objectives. Its expenditures per FYES(Fiscal Year Equated Student) remain the lowest of the Michigan public universities. There is no funding formula in Michigan for the state support of universities; decisions on appropriations, bond issues, and other direct state support are directly legislated.

4.2 Financial Resources

SVSU and its sister institutions in Michigan have experienced the impact of a poor economy and deficit state budget. In spite of financial pressures, the university administration has protected vital academic programs and student support services, as well as the employment of current faculty and staff.

SVSU's FY04 General Fund budget of \$67 million comes primarily from three sources: state appropriations (42%), tuition and fees (55.2%), and external funding (2.8%). Reflecting the trends of the past several decades, SVSU, like most state institutions, now is more "state assisted" than "state supported," depending more upon tuition for revenue than it does the State of Michigan – a level of dependence that is not likely to change.

SVSU's prudent and financially sound management is evidenced by the following:

- Operations consistently within available resources for general operations, auxiliary activities, and capital projects
- Steady and consistent revenue growth
- Lower per student spending than any public university in Michigan
- Annual external financial audits with no material findings.

Additional sources of income include the SVSU Foundation, an independent corporation, which engages in fund-raising and donor relations activities designed to further the university's Mission, providing additional funding support to the university for scholarships, endowed faculty chairs, and various other programs. Both the fund and the contribution base have grown substantially in recent years. Institutional grants have also played a significant role in funding university initiatives.

4.3 Human Resources

SVSU has sought to attract, retain, and develop individuals who possess a range of relevant qualifications and skills, within the context of a “cost-effective” institution. In keeping with the mission to foster a diverse campus, SVSU seeks to recruit new employees who reflect the heterogeneity of the region, state, and world.

In 2002, Human Resources was reorganized into two separate departments:

1. Employment and Compensation Services (ECS), which manages staffing, compensation, benefits, policies, etc. This department operates as a service center and measures its performance to its stakeholders.
2. The Staff Relations department, which provides administrative support for developing new staffing, compensation, learning and development tools. This unit also negotiates labor relations issues with the two unions.

SVSU has an employee benefit advisory group that studies health care/insurance issues; the result has been a wide range of options for employee benefits.

4.4 Physical Plant Infrastructure

The University Campus Master Plan, last updated in 2000, has guided the development of the campus and serves as a reference for future development. SVSU has a modern physical plant infrastructure that supports the university's Mission. The campus provides a safe, secure, and comfortable learning environment for students, staff, and visitors. New student residences serve the increasing on-campus population.

The square footage of all facilities has doubled in the last ten years and nearly tripled in the past fifteen years; over the past year, square footage has increased 19%. Despite the impact of budget constraints which have precluded the hiring of new staff, SVSU's physical plant employees remain committed to providing a high level of service, emphasizing departmental self-improvement processes, and continuously measuring performance.

4.5 Information Technology

Information Technology Services provides university and community access and training to computer, telecommunication, and network technologies. In 1999, SVSU's comprehensive self-analysis prior to *Next Steps* defined three primary objectives for technology:

- Increase academic utilization of technology
- Upgrade the computing infrastructure
- Upgrade administrative systems.

To accomplish these objectives, SVSU created a new division of Information Technology Services (ITS) and a new position of Executive Director reporting to the President. ITS is now strategically aligned to undertake technology initiatives and to

coordinate and allocate resources appropriately. Grant funding has been a significant factor in the upgrading and integration of all aspects of technology.

4.6 Library

Over the past three years, the Melvin J. Zahnow Library has undergone major renovation. This \$10.6 million project added 21,000 square feet, including a fourth floor, to the existing library building. The new facilities, dedicated in September 2003, include a library instruction lab, collaborative work-rooms, small group study rooms, and a Student Technology Center. Library collections and electronic information resources have increased substantially.

4.7 Conclusions

- SVSU is financially administered on a sound and prudent basis. As the financial data indicate, the institution has operated in a cost-effective manner, has maintained sufficient reserves, and has had the ability to survive economic downturns. Annual audits consistently have been positive and substantiate reported financial information.
- The university has initiated improvements to hiring processes, with a focus on diversity, and has implemented a new performance management process for all administrative and support staff. The impact of these changes remains to be evaluated.
- The campus provides a safe working and living environment. A majority of campus facilities are new and a deferred maintenance plan is in place. However, the current budget climate places more pressure on the institution to identify and implement operating efficiencies.
- The university has dramatically upgraded technology and greatly expanded training opportunities for

students, faculty, and staff. Institutionalized support of technology integration, originally supported by grants, will need to be addressed in future funding.

- The university library has undergone major renovation and expansion. Its online services have likewise expanded greatly. Adequate resources will continue to be necessary to fund rising costs of subscriptions, materials, and services.
- SVSU needs to prepare for the impact of an optimal size environment (around 10,000 students, 1700 living on campus) and plan for future tuition rate decisions, any further physical plant expansion, and resource allocation strategies. The university must continue aggressive pursuit of operational efficiencies through process improvement programs. All of these concerns should be addressed in the next phase of planning.
- The allocation of resources is not completely understood across campus, as budget development is generally a centralized process. However, a linkage between resource allocation and the planning process is evident in the regular review of *Next Steps 2000-2005*, where there is clear demonstration that resources have been allocated in support of SVSU's mission and goals.

Chapter Five

Academic Programs

5.1 Introduction

SVSU's decade of expansion and maturation is evident in all aspects of its academic programs. Founded as an "institution of educational opportunity" for the region, SVSU has maintained that commitment even as the growth of the past decade has allowed the university to develop programs of qualitative distinctiveness and expand the diversity of its curriculum to better reflect the increased diversity of its student body and faculty. Goals and objectives for academic program development at SVSU, derived from its Mission and five-year plan, are consistent with the expectations of the Higher Learning Commission and inform the evaluation of program development processes at SVSU. As SVSU has grown and matured, its programs have both reflected institutional changes while maintaining a strong commitment to the institutional mission.

Saginaw Valley State University's five colleges provide effective academic programs at the graduate and undergraduate levels, appropriate to the institutional mission, including a newly revised General Education program and a number of professionally accredited programs, as well as a wide array of traditional majors, minors, and certification programs.

5.2 Undergraduate Programs

Saginaw Valley State University offers 68 programs of study leading to ten Bachelor degrees. As noted above, these programs are housed in five colleges. A significant number of these programs are professionally accredited, the most recent being AACSB accreditation for the College of Business and Management in 2003.

Program offerings are consistent with the aspirations of SVSU students, many of whom are first-time-in-college students seeking to enter professions such as teaching, health care, social work, business, and engineering. The colleges vary significantly by size and types of programs and consequently have different challenges. The traditional Liberal Arts departments carry a heavy load of service courses for General Education and professional programs. The same can be said about the traditional science disciplines, such as biology, physics, mathematics, and chemistry, in the College of Science, Engineering & Technology. It is an ongoing concern to ensure that, in the press of providing sufficient introductory courses to meet the high need at this level, the requisite number of upper division courses are offered to allow students to graduate in a timely manner. An additional issue in this regard is the desire of highly trained faculty to be able to teach in their area of specialization and enhance their own professional development, while they meet the demands of multiple constituencies within their departments.

5.3 General Education

The General Education Program, newly revised and in its third year, transcends college lines and is administered by a contractually-defined committee of elected faculty members and administrative appointees. The General Education Committee (GEC) has become one of the four major governance committees of the institution defined by the faculty contract, and monitors the assessment and curriculum development of the program. The revision was carried out in response to the 1994 evaluation team report and an extensive assessment of the old program. The process involved faculty across the institution as well as administration. This revised program is structured into ten categories with program goals — critical thinking, logical reasoning and effective communication — derived from the mission for General Education. Multiculturalism is embedded in each of the categories and integrated into the curriculum in numerous ways.

5.4 Graduate Programs

Over the past decade SVSU has gone from three graduate programs to eight, with a subset of specializations within College of Education Masters of Arts in Teaching (MAT) and Education Leadership (EdL) programs, bringing the number of concentrations to 20. SVSU is classified as a Masters I institution using the Carnegie Classification. Graduate programs at SVSU are Masters' level professional programs that meet the same community needs as the undergraduate professionally accredited programs; their creation is often prompted by local business and community leaders. Programs provide professional development for part-time students already working in their fields and seeking to enhance their credentials in order to move into leadership positions. In Fall Semester 2003, 612 new graduate students were enrolled. That number included 33 international students. Graduate program enrollments has recently been decreasing. Consequently, a number of task forces have been charged to assess their viability.

Graduate programs are administered by Coordinators appointed by their college deans. Faculty members teaching in a graduate program are drawn from the undergraduate teaching faculty and must make application to the Graduate Committee, as stipulated in the Faculty Contract.

The Director of Graduate Admissions reports to the Office of Student Services & Enrollment Management. The Director works closely with the Graduate Program Coordinators and occasionally brings issues to the Graduate Program Advisory Council, established to discuss common administrative issues among the Graduate Program Coordinators. This Council is an advisory body only. Policy proposals or proposals for curriculum revision must go to the Graduate Committee for any action to be taken.

5.5 Academic Program Development

The continuing enrollment growth and expansion of SVSU as a relatively young institution provide the context for understanding the program development process at the university. As the university has grown, so have the number of academic and professionally accredited programs. The strategic plan *Next Steps 2000-2005* has affirmed the commitment to building programs of qualitative distinctiveness.

The university has a number of endowments which support visiting artists and scholars and guest lectureships. In addition, six Endowed Chairs have been recruited over the past seven years to help build qualitatively distinctive programs, enhance the institution's ties with the community, and generate grant funding to support new initiatives. The main venue for curriculum development, however, is the academic departments.

The policies and procedures governing curriculum development and revision are formalized and integrated into the SVSU *Faculty Contract*. Any changes to the curriculum must be recommended to and voted on by the Curriculum and Academic Policies Committee (CAPC), the Graduate Committee (GC), or the General Education Committee (GEC), and ratified by the faculty at large and approved by the university.

5.6 Academic Program Assessment

A significant portion of the university curriculum lies within professionally accredited programs or General Education. The professionally accredited programs and accompanying assessment activities have made a substantial contribution to instituting academic program assessment at SVSU. The experience of these programs has contributed to more mature assessment practices in other programs. An increasing number of colleges and departments use assessment activities to evaluate their work and guide their planning. The process of revising General Education has been particularly instrumental in engaging the

entire university community in an assessment process. Overall, academic program assessment has been instituted at varying levels within colleges and departments. Many faculty have become familiar with assessment processes and practices, and they have incorporated assessment measures into their classrooms. An increasing number of departments use this assessment data to revise their programs. The results of these activities are not fully integrated into university-wide planning, however, and academic program assessment is not yet fully institutionalized.

5.7 Faculty Development

Growth and accomplishment in effectiveness of classroom teaching, scholarly and creative achievement, and service to the institution are specified criteria in the *Faculty Contract* for appointment, tenure, and promotion. Evaluation processes are also delineated in the contract; recommendation for tenure, promotion, merit awards, and sabbaticals are the responsibility of the Professional Practices Committee (PPC), a body of elected faculty members and administrative appointees. Mentoring practices are in place in several colleges and departments.

Teaching: SVSU takes pride in its strong commitment to undergraduate teaching; 73% of classes are taught by full-time faculty and the mean class size is 23. Faculty members are typically hired through national searches that have allowed the university to recruit PhDs from highly ranked graduate programs across the country. SVSU also has recruited a significant number of international faculty, contributing a global perspective to the workforce and curriculum. Faculty come to Saginaw Valley with a strong commitment to teaching while maintaining a high level of scholarship, participating in knowledge production within their various disciplines. This, in turn, enhances their teaching.

Because average class size at SVSU is small, students benefit from direct interaction with regular faculty even in lower division classes. Although the institution does use a significant

number of adjuncts to staff courses, these are often professionals in their fields, such as teaching, educational leadership, business, and nursing, and bring their “real-world” experience to the classroom. With the implementation of the revised General Education program as well as the growth of Basic Skills courses, new training seminars for adjunct faculty have been instituted.

SVSU offers a variety of faculty development programs in the area of teaching, coordinated by the Director of Instructional Support Programs, who conducts workshops, coordinates the Faculty/Staff Development calendar, and tracks the various activities scheduled there. Most notable of these activities is the Faculty Summer Institute. Initiated seven years ago, it provides a week-long seminar for new faculty, introducing them to the university and focusing on translating disciplinary expertise into effective undergraduate teaching practices. Effective teaching is the most significant consideration in tenure and promotion decisions.

Scholarship: Although Saginaw Valley is primarily a teaching institution, its faculty are active scholars, as can be seen in the size of the *Faculty Research Bulletin*, a compendium of faculty research activity, published annually. Faculty have published books and articles, presented papers at conferences, taken leadership roles in their professional organizations, and garnered grants. Faculty members often combine research and scholarship by involving their students in scholarship and by contributing to the scholarship of teaching. Faculty are also supported in their scholarship through a contractually defined fund for each faculty member and a variety of internal funds, and through the services of the Office of Sponsored Programs, which helps faculty secure external funding, including Fulbright Scholarships. The last decade has also seen an expansion of library services, including the recently completed renovation of the library which enhances both teaching activities and scholarship.

Service: The university depends on faculty service in a number of areas to accomplish its mission, and these activities are rewarded in processes for tenure and promotion. Service on

contractually defined university committees such as the Curriculum and Academic Policies Committee, Graduate Committee, Professional Practices Committee, and the General Education Committee is an important aspect of faculty professional development at SVSU. Faculty also serve on the Honors Committee, the Library Committee, the Public Safety Committee, search teams, grade grievance hearings, and award committees. This is in addition to the time faculty spend in department activities, curriculum revision, assessment activities, and advising student organizations.

In addition, faculty participate on the various task forces organized to address a variety of university issues, from diversity to graduate program enrollment to General Education assessment. They also engage in faculty development activities ranging from grants workshops to diversity and technology training workshops. Many faculty participated in the committees and subcommittees that produced this self-study. While service obligations sometimes weigh heavily on faculty, such service is also an opportunity for faculty to be engaged in the larger issues of higher education. Because all curricular issues are acted on by the full faculty, faculty have an obligation to be informed on issues beyond their own departments and to consider the issues of the university overall.

5.8 Academic Program Support/Instructional Support Programs

Students' academic success at SVSU is supported in multiple ways. Academic Advising, conducted by the Student Services & Enrollment Management unit, guides students in planning their course of study. Under the management of the Office of Academic Affairs, the university offers a number of Basic Skills courses to assist academically disadvantaged students gain the skills necessary for successful college level work. SVSU also has in place a number of instructional support programs, as well as the technological infrastructure necessary to enhance student success in its programs and to ensure that student learning

objectives are met. The Writing Center, the Math Resource Center, and the Tutoring Center all provide assistance to students as well as support for faculty. The newly renovated library also provides a number of instructional support services, including the new Student Technology Center. New technology has increased library access in multiple ways and enriched the scholarly resources available to students and faculty well beyond what would formerly have been available to a regional state university.

5.9 Conclusions

- SVSU offers appropriate undergraduate program for its mission, supported by a variety of academic support programs. While these programs and their support systems are well-used and effective, better communication is needed between Student Services & Enrollment Management and the colleges to enhance program planning. Program planning primarily takes place at the department or college level, frequently outside the university-wide context. Many faculty members have expressed lack of familiarity with *Next Steps 2000-2005* and do not see its relevance to the work of their departments.
- SVSU has thoroughly revised its General Education program in line with recommendations from the 1994 evaluation team report. The program is in its third year of operation and assessment measures have been undertaken; the effectiveness of the program cannot yet be fully determined since no cohort of students has yet gone through the full program.
- Academic program assessment is most consistently carried out in professionally accredited programs and in the General Education program. Most other programs and departments utilize some assessment measures, at least at the course level, and some use the outcomes to revise courses and programs. However, assessment is uneven across all academic programs and has not been institutionalized into processes for

program development and resource allocation. Adjunct faculty are rarely included in assessment activities.

- The *Faculty Contract* defines the major areas of faculty development: teaching, scholarship, and service. These considerations are used in hiring, tenure, and promotion decisions. As is consistent with the mission, the major criterion in evaluation processes is exemplary teaching. Evaluation processes are contractually defined and have a long history. With the growth of the faculty, some may view these processes as inefficient, and the work of the Professional Practices Committee and evaluation teams as overwhelming. However, others feel strongly that these processes are effective and should be maintained.
- SVSU has a unique structure for graduate programs admissions student advising and student advising, necessitating effective communication between units to ensure that decisions made are in the best interests of students.
- In spite of financial pressures, the ratio of full-time to part-time faculty has remained about the same over the past decade. General Education requires instruction by full-time faculty; many adjunct faculty teach basic skills courses, however. SVSU has used adjunct instructors from the community since the university began; some fill teaching positions where resources limit the possibility of full-time faculty. Others, however, bring specific expertise from their profession to their teaching. This is especially true in the Teacher Education programs. In other colleges, the use of adjunct faculty to teach introductory classes helps SVSU maintain a consistently low average class size, and few upper division classes are taught by part-time faculty.

Chapter Six

Campus Culture

6.1 Introduction

As outlined previously, the University has experienced both growth in numbers as well as changes in its student population.

6.2 Campus Environment

There has been a deliberate and funded commitment to attract more highly qualified students to SVSU even as the university has remained an institution of opportunity for the region. There has also been a shift in student population from primarily non-traditional students commuting from off-campus to a significant number of students living on campus. This has meant an increase in the number of residences and expanded services and activities to help students adjust to life on campus and to support their academic success while maintaining services for the majority of students who commute.

The expansion of the campus environment has created many new classrooms and offices for faculty and staff. The Evening Services Office has long served to meet the needs of faculty who teach evening and night courses.

6.3 Diversity

In *Next Steps 2000-2005*, the University expresses its commitment to fostering diversity on campus and to creating an environment that attracts and retains a diverse student body, faculty and staff. Over the past decade a number of task forces, committees and planning bodies have addressed diversity issues in the curriculum, in employment, in campus life and in community relations. Individual units, including all colleges, have

developed strategies for fostering a campus environment that reflects the institutional goal of diversity. Under the leadership of several successive diversity officers, training opportunities in diversity areas, special programs and outreach programs have been established. These and additional programs have also been supported by state and community grants.

The current Special Assistant to the President on Diversity is developing a comprehensive strategic plan for diversity that incorporates the various student support activities, faculty and staff development workshops, unit-level planning groups, advisory boards, curricula proposals, and hiring initiatives into a unified approach that is well understood across the campus and in the community. Working with the Employment & Compensations Services department and all division heads, including college deans, the Special Assistant to the President on Diversity has ensured that workforce statistics are current and compliant with federal regulations.

While some campus units such as the Office of Minority Student Services, the Office of Disability Services, and the International Programs Office serve the needs of particular constituencies, it is their common goal to integrate these students fully into campus life. All campus units are committed to addressing issues of diversity and to ensuring the well-being and academic success of all students.

6.4 Student Life

Students express a high degree of satisfaction with SVSU. Student Life programs and events continue to grow at the university. All student organizations are registered through the Campus Life Center and have either a faculty or staff member as their advisor. The new Student Center, which opened at the beginning of the 2003/2004 academic year, has provided an attractive physical space for student organizations that is conducive to a variety of activities and brings together residential and commuter students. The Campus Life Center along with Residential Life programs provide support services to all

students involved in co-curricular activities, including intramural athletics, leadership development, and volunteer opportunities.

The Student Association, SVSU's student governing body, represents the interest of SVSU students through participation on many University policy-making committees and the Board of Control. The Association provides leadership for a variety of social and educational activities, although some students feel that it has been too narrow in its focus and would like to see greater representation from a wider spectrum of the student population.

The student newspaper, *The Valley Vanguard*, is published every other week during Fall and Winter and once a month in the summer. A weekly newsletter, *The Student Happenings*, highlights campus events. *The Student Handbook*, published annually, provides essential information on academic and other support services, recreational activities, university policies and procedures on such issues as sexual harassment and alcohol abuse and student rights and responsibilities as defined in the Code of Student Conduct along with due process procedures. A University Ombudsman works with the Student Association as well as with individual students who need assistance with university policies and offices.

Academic Support Programs: As noted previously, SVSU Graduate and Undergraduate Admissions, as well as Academic Advisement and Financial Aid/Work Study, are part of the newly combined unit of Student Services & Enrollment Management. This unit also includes Tutoring Services and a Career Placement Office. Minority Student Services, the Office of Disability Services and the Office of International Programs are also part of this unit. However, other instructional support services, such as the Writing Center, the Math Resource Center, and the Student Technology Center, are part of Academic Affairs. Course scheduling is also the responsibility of Academic Affairs.

Support programs are well used, although those students most at-risk academically are less likely to use these services than those already doing well and seeking to improve. Cooperation and communication between Student Services & Enrollment Management and the Office of Academic Affairs is essential for the academic well-being of SVSU students.

Academic Integrity, Student Conduct, and Academic

Records: All SVSU students are expected to conduct themselves as responsible members of the university community and to respect the rights of their fellow citizens. SVSU's Code of Student Conduct includes a policy on academic dishonesty. Charges of violations of the Student Conduct Code, including academic dishonesty, are referred to the Coordinator of Student Conduct. *The Student Handbook* outlines due process procedures for dealing with alleged violations of the student conduct code. *The Faculty Contract* also defines procedures for grade grievances.

The Registrar's Office follows common professional standards as outlined by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) to ensure the integrity of its practices related to the academic record of its students, specifically student transcripts. The major responsibility for developing and implementing new policies lies with the Registrar.

Intercollegiate Athletics: SVSU is an NCAA /Division II Program through the Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (GLIAC). The Athletic Department supports nine men's sports teams and eight women's teams with over 500 student-athletes. Student-athletes maintain a minimum 2.85 GPA overall and the department graduates a minimum of 55% of its student-athletes annually. *Cardinal Athletics: the Student-Athlete Handbook* defines NCAA rules, university policies and procedures, and highlights available support services. The Athletic Department has hired a fulltime compliance officer, and rules related to NCAA compliance are upheld on all levels.

Campus Safety: Although serious crime on campus is quite rare, the presence of more students on campus at night has intensified campus security and personal safety concerns. The Campus Police Department schedules active officer patrols, uses video surveillance systems, and works collaboratively with other campus units such as Residential Life. A number of instructional programs are offered by the Police Department in areas such as alcohol and drug education, rape defense, self-defense, and personal property protection.

6.5 Public Service

The activities of Saginaw Valley State University in the area of public service are varied and broad and support the intended purpose of the University to “produce value for the Region.” Faculty and staff share their expertise by serving on advisory and governing boards, through the performing arts, in K-12 classroom presentations, judging science fairs, and establishing business/industry partnerships in the science and technology arena. SVSU’s six endowed chairs have special responsibilities to build programs that link the university and the community. Students also engage in internships and fieldwork projects that foster their interaction with the community even as it furthers their academic goals. In addition, students are active community volunteers, and “Cardinals in Action” assists in matching students and student groups with non-profit social agencies and short-term and ongoing community service projects.

The Vice President for Public Affairs oversees and cultivates government and community relationships and directs fundraising activities, another key venue for university/community interaction. Community support for the university can be seen in the generous capital donations and endowments for buildings and programs. The SVSU Foundation Board, the Board of Fellows, and the Alumni Board are formal bodies connecting the university and the community. These formal bodies, however, also represent further ties to local business leaders, government officials, school teachers, and former students working in a variety of professions. It is through these networks of human

contact, based on service at the local, regional, and national level, that the purpose of the university becomes manifest. SVSU also sponsors a number of community events, many funded by community endowments. These include lecture series, musical performances, art exhibits, and special events such as the Martin Luther King Day Banquet. The University also offers personal and professional enrichment opportunities through an Institute for Learning in Retirement, as well as a Center for Business and Economic Development (CBED) which also administers the Office of Continuing Education. The College of Business and Management sponsors a Family Business Program and hosts a breakfast for the group several times each year, to which faculty and staff are invited.

New campus facilities, including a conference center, a theater and recital hall, banquet rooms, and a regional library available to the public, have also attracted the wider community to become more involved in campus life. The Conference and Events Center schedules and caters both campus and community events.

University Communications: The University's image in the community is the responsibility of the Office of University Communications. The media relations officer serves as the main representative between the university and the community. A variety of newsletters and special publications inform both the campus community and the larger community about the life and work of the institution.

The university website increases access to university offices and information, from tuition rates to emergency warning systems. Employment opportunities are posted online, as is a weekly calendar of events. Online versions of more traditional publications enhance their accessibility. A Website Advisory Committee oversees university websites to ensure integrity and accuracy of information. A content management system is being implemented so changes in websites can proceed more efficiently and units can keep their websites current.

6.6 Conclusions

- Students report high levels of satisfaction with the academic programs and support services provided by SVSU. A continuing challenge for the institution is to meet the needs of all SVSU students with a variety of programs, course offerings, support services, and facilities.
- The changes in the student population, the expansion of physical space, the increase in cultural activities, the expansion of student activities, and the growth of student organizations have contributed to an enriched campus life. As new possibilities emerge, there are new challenges to be addressed. Units such as Disability Services, Residential Life, and Campus Safety have experienced increased pressures on their resources to meet the needs of growing constituencies.
- New residence halls and a new Student Center have been built to meet student needs. New programs have been developed to serve new constituencies, even as long-standing programs have been retained. Student satisfaction surveys indicate that students are pleased with new on-campus facilities, health services, and recreation/intramural programs. The impact of these services will need continued assessment.
- Efforts to increase diversity must continue: the goal is for SVSU to more fully reflect the community which it serves. The comprehensive diversity plan being developed must be well-known across campus and in the community.
- SVSU has developed many links with the community, both formal and informal. Over the past decade, SVSU has become a more significant presence in the area and more people come to campus to use the facilities and participate in programs and athletic events. Campus outreach has also increased through student internships and fieldwork, volunteer activities, and service on community boards. Because SVSU is not centrally

located within a community, however, it must continue to develop essential links to enable it to respond appropriately to community needs. The impact of outreach programs will also need to be assessed, especially in a time of diminishing resources.

Chapter Seven Conclusion

Summary of Chapter Conclusions

The conclusions from the Self-Study Report are summarized as follows:

SVSU: Overview and History

The University has grown and matured significantly since the 1994 NCA accreditation visit and the next phase of institutional planning should be reflective of what has been learned through this self-study process.

Accreditation History

The University continues to be an effective institution of higher education, meeting all the requirements and criteria for accreditation and working in accord with its own strategic plan. All issues raised in the 1994 report have been addressed to varying degrees. A new General Education Program has been established and is being assessed.

Campus-wide assessment efforts are reflected in the number of professionally accredited programs in each of the colleges; *Next Steps 2000-2005* also is reflective of planning informed by assessment. However, efforts are uneven across units and most

assessment activities are specific to departments or programs and do not clearly inform larger planning processes.

The university has articulated a clear commitment to diversity and has engaged in a number of task forces and activities to promote multiculturalism and diversity in curriculum, campus culture, and in relations with the larger community. These efforts need to be integrated into a comprehensive diversity plan. The responsibility for developing such a plan rests with the Special Assistant to the President for Diversity Programs.

Issues of Institutional Planning have also been addressed. *Next Steps 2000-2005* involved the university in a much more comprehensive planning process with clearly defined goals and objectives and associated assessment processes. This plan has not served as a planning framework across all campus unit, however; some divisions have organized their work more purposefully in the context of this plan than others.

Mission, Planning and Governance

The university has undergone a significant physical expansion, growth in its faculty and staff, and growth and change in its student body. The University has defined limits on its growth and in this next stage will be focusing more on further development of distinctive programs.

The university needs to marshal its human, physical, and financial resources as it moves into the next stage of strategic planning; as the mission is reviewed, new measurable goals and objectives must be defined to further that mission. Progress toward meeting goals must be assessed and revisions need to be guided by those assessments. All stakeholders must be involved in this process.

The growth and transformation of the university has necessitated organizational restructuring. The effectiveness of that restructuring needs to be assessed.

Resources

Tight budgets will continue to provide a challenge in the foreseeable future. The University maintains its commitment to remaining a cost-effective institution in a changing budget climate, and planning processes must reflect this change. Because of changes in state allocations to universities, Michigan universities have become “state assisted” rather than “state supported.” This has meant external grants and endowments have become more important as financial resources for the university, and community engagement more significant than ever.

Academic Programs

Academic programs have grown in all five colleges to meet the needs of a growing and changing student population. The average class size has remained small, in part due to the use of part-time faculty in lower level and some specialized courses. The number of full-time faculty has grown significantly. Faculty are evaluated primarily on teaching, as is consistent with the mission of the institution, but scholarship and service are also important considerations in the tenure and promotion processes. The faculty are productive scholars and the institution supports that scholarship through unit funding and through the support of the Office of Sponsored Programs, which helps faculty secure external funding.

A new General Education program has been established and is being assessed. Otherwise academic program assessment remains largely college- and department- based. Professionally accredited programs are the most actively engaged in assessment and have given leadership on this issue to other programs. While assessment is used to revise programs, it has not yet been consistently linked to program development and academic planning.

The number of graduate programs offered at SVSU has expanded over the past decade, although enrollments have declined recently. Task forces have been established to evaluate graduate

programs in each college. Graduate programs at SVSU are primarily professional for working adults going to school part-time, with a cohort of international students. This is consistent with the mission of the institution. These programs are administered through individual colleges; however, with some functions, such as Admissions and Financial Aid, are carried out through the Student Services & Enrollment Management division, necessitating close communication between program coordinators and other staff.

Some aspects of university practices require ongoing examination. SVSU students' initial academic advising occurs in the division of Student Services & Enrollment Management, a unique model. Based on the Faculty Association Contract, faculty are not required to advise students (though the Colleges of Education and of Nursing & Health Sciences have developed internal advising processes). Because advising and other student support services are thus administered separately from academic programs, advisors must make every effort to fully understand all programs, and communication between units will continue to be essential for student success. This will be even more important as electronic registration is fully implemented and students take full responsibility for their course and program planning. The degree audit process must be clearly communicated to students, and students with questions must be encouraged to seek further advising.

Campus Culture

Campus culture has flourished over the past decade. The growth in the number of students living on campus has led to new energies and activities that have engaged both resident and commuter students in campus life. Students report a high level of satisfaction with all aspects of campus and academic life at SVSU. The campus has also become more diverse; a number of task forces have examined the issue and a new Special Assistant to the President for Diversity Programs has been hired to help ensure the well-being and success of all students. The university has not yet accomplished all that it needs to do in this area and

while there are multiple activities and programs sponsored by units across campus, these have not yet been integrated into a comprehensive plan with clear, assessable goals and objectives.

New buildings and new programs have been made possible in part by capital fund and endowment campaigns, which have increased the community's stake in the university and made an impressive number of new facilities and programs possible. Links between the campus and community have become stronger through the campaigns themselves and through the resultant programs the campaigns made possible. The university boasts six endowed chairs, an unusual number for a campus this size. Their presence has been made possible through these endowments, with the understanding that they have a special responsibility to build distinctive programs to link the university and the community.

Chapter Eight

Request for Reaccreditation

As this Self-Study Report demonstrates, Saginaw Valley State University meets all the General Institutional Requirements of the Higher Learning Commission. Further, SVSU also provides patterns of evidence, highlighted in this Executive Summary, that it meets all five Criteria for Accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission. These General Institutional Requirements and Criteria are linked to SVSU's five year planning document, *Next Steps, 2000-2005*, around which this self-study is organized.

On the basis of this self-study, Saginaw Valley State University seeks reaccreditation by the HLC/NCA. The full text of the Self-Study Report is available at selfstudy.svsu.edu. Chapter sub-sections in this Executive Summary correspond to sub-sections in the full document and the electronic portfolio. Print copies are available on request.

