

ADVANCEMENT SECTION

FINAL REPORT OF A COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION VISIT

TO

NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY
Fargo, North Dakota

February 13-15, 2006

FOR

The Higher Learning Commission
A Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools

EVALUATION TEAM

John Campbell, President Emeritus and Professor of Animal Science, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK 74078 (Team Chair)

Sue Day-Perroots, Dean of Extended Learning, West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV 26506

Fred Hurst, Interim VP for Extended Programs and Dean of Distance Learning, Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, AZ 86011

Shitala Mishra, Professor of School Psychology, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ 85721

Donald Pederson, Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, AR 72701

R. Marcus Price, Professor of Physics and Astronomy, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM 87131

Bonnie Saucier, Professor, College of Nursing, Indiana State University, Terre Haute, IN 47809

John Schuh, Distinguished Professor, Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, Iowa State University, Ames, IA 50011

Elizabeth (Betty) Stevens, Associate Vice Provost for IT Partnerships and Associate Dean of Continuing Education, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506

James Van Etten, Professor of Plant Pathology, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, NE 68588

Contents

I.	Overall Observations about the Organization	3
II.	Consultations of the Team	3
	A. Honors Program in Retrospect and Prospect	3
	B. Assessment/Learning Outcomes	4
	C. Expanding Distance Education (DE)	5
	D. Diversity Developments	5
	E. Student Retention	6
	F. Enrollment Management (EM)	6
	G. Student Scholarships/Graduate Fellowships	7
	H. Student Affairs	7
	I. Lobby/Lounge Space for Financial Aid Office	7
	J. Concern Regarding PeopleSoft	8
	K. Distance Education/Information and Technology Services (ITS)	8
	L. Learning Management Systems (LMS)	8
	M. Graduate/Doctoral Program Development	9
	N. International Students/Programs	9
	O. Student Housing Developments	10
	P. External Research Support	10
	Q. Research Facilities and Equipment Needs	11
	R. Research Park/Economic Development Aspects	11
	S. NDSU Libraries	11
	T. Majors/Degrees Offered	12
	U. Evidence of Academic Proficiency of Graduates	12
	V. Faculty-Staff Development Program	12
	W. Biochemistry at NDSU	13
	X. Office of Institutional Research (OIR)	13
	Y. NDSU Needs Noted by Faculty and Shared with HLC Team Members	13
III.	Recognition of Significant Accomplishments, Progress, and/or Practices	14
	A. Accomplishments	14
	B. Physical Facilities Added/Planned at NDSU Since 1996 HLC Team Visit	15
	C. Summary and Coda	19

I. OVERALL OBSERVATIONS ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

North Dakota State University (NDSU) has a rich history of providing world-renowned advances in education, research, and service. Founded in 1890 as the state's first land-grant institution, NDSU has advanced its standing among peer institutions and the public of North Dakota each decade.

Since the 1996 HLC Team visit, profound changes in the basic components of institutional excellence—people, programs, facilities, and funding—have been brought about at NDSU. This occurred, in large part, because of a shared vision emanating from an enthusiastic, high-energy, people-oriented, highly respected president who inspires high aspirations, unity of purpose, and an unwavering commitment to individual and institutional excellence among all constituent groups of the institution's family. Numerous faculty and staff persons said, "We feel empowered; our president has excellent instincts for including all stakeholders in making timely progress at NDSU."

Examples of the noteworthy growth and transformation of NDSU the past seven years brought about through the collective efforts of faculty, staff, students, and administrators on campus, and supportive higher education leaders, alumni, and other constituents off campus include addressing and making timely progress in resolving the twelve (12) concerns expressed by the 1996 Team (please see Part II.C. of the Assurance Section). Still other examples are cited in Part II, **CONSULTATIONS OF THE TEAM**, and in Part III, **RECOGNITION OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS, PROGRESS, AND/OR PRACTICES** that follow in the Advancement Section.

II. CONSULTATIONS OF THE TEAM

A. Honors Program in Retrospect and Prospect. An Honors Program represents an opportunity to attract additional academically-talented students interested in a nurturing environment that provides opportunities not associated with mainstream classes. Honors classes typically have fewer than 25 students and are often team-taught to maximize opportunities for participants to benefit from a mix of faculty that provides special educational experiences associated with differing experiences, philosophies, and approaches to teaching.

Participants in the NDSU Honors Program enjoy a dedicated library and study area reserved for their use, and have ready access to faculty contributing to the program. Students organize lectures in the Scholars Forum series, enroll in honors sections of several General Education courses, may select from nine multidisciplinary courses, and publish an annual journal on creative writing.

NDSU provides a separate day for orientation of students participating in the Honors Program and others with high ACT scores. Dedicated leadership for the Honors Program is provided by an Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs and by the Chair of the Modern Languages Department. A plan for further development of the Honors Program

has recently been provided by a consultant, and is anticipated to enhance awareness by prospective students of this program.

Notwithstanding the above, after reviewing the Honors Program at NDSU, the HLC Team concluded that, as currently constituted, the Honors Program is quite modest in terms of offerings and enrollment. The Team believes an important opportunity exists to expand the Honors Program in terms of number of students participating, courses offered, and in the range of academic enrichment experiences available to students. The Team commends NDSU for emphasizing that “Students are Paramount” as well as the desire and commitment to take NDSU to the “Next Level of Excellence.” The caliber of students who will help take NDSU to higher levels of excellence will want and deserve opportunities to expand and enrich their educational experiences. A more visible and viable Honors Program is recommended. Providing student scholars the opportunity to participate in a formalized faculty-sponsored, undergraduate research program would be a useful adjunct to an expanded Honors Program.

- B. Assessment/Learning Outcomes.** Assessment of student learning is a high priority among faculty and administrators at NDSU. Numerous departments and programs, including Accounting; Agribusiness and Applied Economics; Cereal and Food Science; Child Development and Family Science; Communications; Computer Science; Educational Leadership; English; Fine Arts; Health, Nutrition, and Exercise Science; Interior Design; History; Mechanical Engineering; Microbiology; Nursing; Physics; Plant Pathology; Plant Sciences; School of Education; Sociology and Anthropology; University Studies; and Visual Arts provided written examples during the HLC Team site visit of how assessment of learning outcomes has led to changes in individual courses and/or in curricula. The Office of Student Affairs also has provided commendable service in identifying learning outcomes for student experiences outside the classroom. Importantly, these outcomes are measured systematically.

The written reports noted above that were shared with the HLC Team represented every college at NDSU. Changes in programs and in courses are notable, e.g., in the Department of English in connection with ongoing changes in the First Year Writing program and in the Vertical Writing projects. Students who begin and complete their collegiate studies at NDSU will benefit at least three times during their undergraduate studies from changes in courses and/or curricula made in response to information/data gleaned from findings associated with the assessment of learning outcomes.

Assessment of student learning at NDSU is highly structured, founded in assessment plans for each department/program, and well-practiced through the annual assessment reports filed by each unit. Assessment focuses on direct measures of student learning and can be supported by additional indirect measures of student learning. Learning outcomes for individual departments are based on the knowledge and skills believed essential for maximal student success throughout their respective careers.

Departments receive timely responses to their annual assessment reports. The responses provide support for current activities that are productive and provide encouragement for movement to the highest levels of the “Levels of Implementation.” Departments and programs are encouraged to focus on the learning outcomes of greatest significance and those that provide opportunities for significant advancements in academic achievements of students. As noted above, faculty provided an overwhelming response to a call for

written example assessment techniques and achievements during the HLC Site Team Visit.

- C. Expanding Distance Education (DE).** DE has been recognized widely as a keystone of future growth at NDSU. Importantly, steps were taken to enhance the visibility of DE by combining Distance and Continuing Education with the graduate program under the leadership of a well-trained, highly capable Dean. An experienced, effective Director was selected to provide leadership and supervise the operations associated with distance delivery. This assertive manager is credited with playing an important role in the rapid enrollment increases in courses presented by means of electronic delivery. Development of a reporting pathway through the Dean of Graduate and Interdisciplinary Studies, and then to the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs (P/VPAA) has signaled the importance of distance delivery of classes to members of the NDSU family.

Although the exponential growth in number of students enrolled in electronically-delivered courses cannot be expected to continue at the present pace, the creation of a Distance Education Advisory Committee has provided emphasis, focus, structure, and rigor to the program. Early discussions among members of this important committee are expected to emphasize faculty issues and concerns. These include developing appropriate reward structures, considerations of faculty workloads, and developing suitable descriptions of expectations and assigned responsibilities.

Interestingly, an increasing number of students on campus, and in the vicinity of Fargo, are enrolling in classes taught by means of electronic delivery. This enables those who need part-time and some needing full-time employment to complete courses online and, thereby, provide greater flexibility in scheduling employment that enables them to continue their education without incurring large debt loads.

As discussed in Part E of the Assurance Section, the HLC Team encourages NDSU to implement plans to expand its offerings of courses and degrees via distance education.

- D. Diversity Developments.** Meaningful strides have been taken at NDSU, and opportunities abound for further development of a more diverse faculty and staff. These are recognized as an important responsibility of administrators. About 21 percent of the faculty are people of color and approximately half of them have an international background.

The development of a successful transfer agreement with the Ansal Institute of Technology (AIT, India) has led to an extended sabbatical by an Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs. This individual is seeking to develop additional agreements with other universities in India, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, and Thailand. The results of these activities will become apparent during the 2006-2007 academic year and are expected to increase in subsequent years.

The creation of a Diversity Council that reports directly to the President and is co-chaired by the P/VPAA and Director of Equity and Diversity will lend synergy to all entities related to diversity at NDSU. The Diversity Council obtained the services of a nationally recognized consultant who conducted a campus diversity climate survey. The consultant's report, based upon the diversity survey, formed the basis for an action plan that has been an ongoing point of discussion at meetings of the President's Council, the President's Cabinet, Deans and Directors, as well as at University Senate meetings. Campus-wide training sessions on diversity and anti-racism extend from the NDSU administrative structure to its residence halls.

The HLC Team commends NDSU for its assertive efforts to increase the number of Native American students enrolled in its Pharmacy program, and recommends that similar efforts be made in Nursing and additional programs to increase the enrollment of minorities in other academic programs.

- E. Student Retention.** The retention of students is a close ally of recruiting students at NDSU. Two programs mentioned here serve to improve student skills, which in turn, contribute to student retention. They are also indicative of the strong linkages between the Offices of Academic Affairs and those of Student Affairs.

The Academic Collegiate Enhancement Program, funded through the Office of Student Affairs, reported 2,295 tutoring contracts during the 2004-2005 academic year. The Center for Writers, supported by the Office Provost and Vice President of Academic affairs, assists more than 900 students each semester through individual conferences designed to improve the writing skills of undergraduate and graduate students. These programs supplement other student services, such as those provided by the Counseling Center, that contribute to student success, improve student satisfaction, and importantly, enhance retention among students.

Notwithstanding the above, the HLC Team concluded that the six-year cohort graduation rates are low and need to be improved. Giving greater emphasis to this aspect of institutional health and life should be addressed in ways that result in improved retention/graduation rates.

- F. Enrollment Management (EM).** Enrollment management has received heavy-duty support from the President. For example, space was doubled at a regional National College Fair event, professional assistance was obtained to create attractive displays, and members of the upper administration (including the President, Vice Presidents, Deans, and Chairs) have been present to greet and meet with prospective students. A structured business plan has been developed to address challenges created by the declining number of high school graduates of North Dakota. Additional staff has been employed to implement the plan. The number of first-year students from Minnesota was greater in Fall 2005 than the number of new students from North Dakota. This statistic is evidence that the expanded enrollment management plan for first-year students is working. Separate plans have been developed for Distance Education (described previously) and for international students. Enhancements in the number of international students are anticipated to address issues of potential limits of cross-cultural experiences for domestic students while concurrently enhancing opportunities for increasing the number of graduate students enrolled in areas related to business and technology. Continued administrative emphasis and priority on these initiatives are recommended by the Team.

- G. Student Scholarships/Graduate Fellowships.** The “Momentum” Capital campaign provides convincing evidence of NDSU’s commitments to enhancing its scholarship programs for undergraduate students and in supporting stipends for graduate students. Of the \$75 million goal for the campaign, the largest single amount, \$30 million, is targeted to support increases in the number and amount of undergraduate scholarships to be awarded. Another \$10 million includes funding for additional graduate stipends and for research equipment to be used by graduate research assistants.

These planned additional investments in students represent further evidence of NDSU’s dedication to attracting top students and providing them with tools for successful, productive careers following completion of their academic studies. This commitment is recognized and appreciated by students and represents a major reason for the strong

working relationships that have been developed between them and the administration of NDSU.

Based on feedback received from graduate students at NDSU, the Team recommends that NDSU give consideration to the inclusion of health insurance in graduate assistant compensation packages.

- H. Student Affairs.** The recent reorganization of Student Affairs holds promise of moving NDSU into an excellent position to serve as an institutional model of a “student-centered” university. A possible way of adding to such a leadership role is in the area of enrollment management, whereby NDSU may benefit from a greater focus on the manner in which it adapts to increasing opportunities associated with off-campus and “virtual” student recruiting and retention. Initially, the HLC Team recommends that NDSU consider developing a method of tracking the retention and degree-completion rates of off-campus, nontraditional students. Having such information might well prove useful in developing recruiting and retention programs/services for this growing group of students. Another example to consider is how off-campus and distance-learning students could best use the “Student Involvement Transcript” by applying it to their participation in local/professional leadership activities.
- I. Lobby/Lounge Space for Financial Aid Office.** When HLC Team members visited the Office of Student Financial Aid they were surprised at the space restrictions, particularly for students waiting for assistance. Team members noted that only three or four students could wait comfortably in the space available. During certain periods of the academic year, when many students need service from the Office of Student Financial Aid, no comfortable place is available for them to wait for assistance. The HLC Team recommends that a study be conducted, and as funding becomes available, a remodeling project be initiated aimed at serving students more comfortably in this important area.
- J. Concern Regarding PeopleSoft.** The HLC Team received considerable concern from NDSU personnel regarding the implementation of PeopleSoft throughout North Dakota government, K-12, and higher education organizations. Two HLC Team members met with the state CIO and learned of challenges as well as successes of what the CIO described as an “underfunded and understaffed” statewide enterprise system deployment. NDSU representatives expressed strong concern about this problem, e.g., regarding their priority to implement the Grants and Contracts module to facilitate research initiatives. This is an obvious challenge that needs further attention to be resolved.
- K. Distance Education/Information and Technology Services (ITS).** At the time of the 2006 HLC Comprehensive Team Visit, the Distance Education unit and ITS were being reorganized to better address and serve the campus mission. As trends of distance education evolve, NDSU will need to be cognizant of the changing nature of online education—both in its impact on institutional resources and in the changes occurring in student populations. Learning Management Systems offer numerous amenities to faculty and students that include access to references, grades, consultations, course content, and others—often having an exponential byte growth unprecedented in other systems (e.g., Student Information System, financials, and Human Resources), Distance Education/Information and Technology Services (ITS).

It is important that NDSU be ever-mindful that anticipated growth in online course/program/degree offerings will place an increased demand on student services, particularly as it engages international audiences. Help Desk hours will need to be available during nontraditional times as will access to academic counselors, financial aid services, and basic registration and payment functions.

- L. Learning Management Systems (LMS).** Blackboard 7.0 is the current LMS being implemented at NDSU. This LMS includes options that enable faculty to implement Virtual Classroom, Chat, and Discussion Board, which facilitate greater depth and range of student input for both campus-based courses and those delivered off campus by electronic technology. Students benefit from special features of Blackboard that permit their organizations and study groups to post and share files, send emails to selected individuals or all members of a group, and/or to distribute announcements.

This special means of supporting classroom activities will be a valuable tool in assisting off-campus students by facilitating their participation in numerous activities held in conjunction with class assignments. Students at off-campus sites will be able to participate in small group activities as effectively as on-campus students participating from their residence hall or other place of residence. Evidence of the effective use of this tool by faculty is noted by the fact that NDSU had approximately 1,000 courses being taught to 20,000 students enrolled the Fall 2005 semester. There were more than 76,000 accessions of information on this system one day in mid-October.

The HLC Team recommends that continued emphasis and priority be given to these timely initiatives.

- M. Graduate/Doctoral Program Development.** The planned expansion of new graduate programs during the past six years is maturing, and slower growth of additional programs is anticipated. However, new programs will need to be developed in response to demands identified by requests for services and by opportunities created by continuing growth of NDSU. Expected continued successes of faculty in securing external research grants and contracts will create opportunities to offer additional graduate assistantships having increased stipends and health insurance benefits. Thus, the number of graduate students is expected to increase in research areas supported by major external funding.

Growth in the number of graduate students in certain disciplines, including those related to business and technology, is expected to increase as a result of international recruiting activities. The twinning agreement with the AIT (India) is a major step in the planned development of increased enrollments of international students.

Planning for the increase in graduate students, including international students, has involved essentially all areas of the campus community as well as Residence Life. For example, plans for a second Living Learning Center to mirror the current structure will increase the number of apartments reserved for graduate and international students. Additionally, service areas in the Division of Student Life are participating in planning to meet the needs of an increasing number of international students.

The impact of distance education on graduate programs is expected to include certificate programs and opportunities to offer timely courses to place-bound students. The Education Leadership program serves as a model for offering the majority of courses in a program by Distance Education with a limited number of courses requiring attendance at the main campus.

- N. International Students/Programs.** The director and staff of the Office of International Programs work with the faculty in bringing a significant international focus to academic programs at NDSU. Currently, 90 courses offered in 26 departments throughout seven colleges include an international focus. As part of the General Education requirement, students complete a minimum of three credit hours in coursework having a cultural

diversity component and three credits of course work having a global perspectives component.

Of the more than 1,600 graduate students enrolled at NDSU in 2005, 440 (about 29 percent) were international students (200 from India). With projected expansion in the use of electronic delivery of programs/degrees on a global basis, the number of international students is expected to increase significantly.

Currently, there are 15 active exchange agreements whereby NDSU students travel to partner institutions in Australia, Africa, Western Europe, Mexico, and Scandinavia. Some 135 NDSU students participated in Study Abroad Programs in 2005-2006. These exchange partnerships bring undergraduate students from Denmark, Sweden, France, Mexico, South Korea, India, and other countries to study at NDSU.

An agreement is in place with the Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey (ITESM) for NDSU students to participate in any of three options: (1) International Programs in Spanish or English, (2) courses in English in seven disciplines, or (3) courses offered in Spanish within numerous majors taught by ITESM. Moreover, each option is available at any one of the seven ITESM campuses in Mexico.

Growth of international programs and in the number of international students is a high priority and has strong administrative encouragement and support. The twinning agreement with the AIT (India) will result in an anticipated 150 students enrolling each year on the NDSU main campus. Distance Education will provide additional opportunities through selected courses where expertise is available at NDSU, but not at the receiving institution. The existing agreement provides a blend of student services from NDSU and AIT, control of courses by NDSU faculty, and curricula at AIT that mirror course offerings at NDSU. This agreement provides the structure for additional agreements that may be developed in India, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Thailand.

Continuing publicity of international activities pertinent to the campus are available through the campus newsletter "It's Happening at State," as well as at meetings of the University Senate, by email messages that maintain awareness of current progress in developing additional international connections, and in identifying to the campus community that international programs are and will remain a key facet of plans for future growth at NDSU. The HLC Team recommends continued emphasis and priority on the above initiatives.

- O. Student Housing Developments.** Additional new facilities to increase the number of residence spaces available, and to increase the diversity of housing opportunities, were completed recently. These additions were focused on meeting the needs and expectations of graduate and international students. As such, the additional living spaces were integrated into the plan to increase student numbers with an emphasis on graduate and international students. Although overflow housing at the beginning of each fall semester has essentially been eliminated and occupancy remains high throughout the academic year, plans for the near term future continue to emphasize housing for graduate and international students. For example, a second Living Learning Center with a capacity of 220 students has been proposed to the State Board of Higher Education. This will be discussed with the appropriate committees of the North Dakota Legislature. Current plans for additional housing for undergraduate students involve remodeling and renovation of Churchill Hall, which will provide space for an additional 40 students. These important efforts need and deserve continued institutional support and priority.

- P. External Research Support.** Rankings released by the National Research Foundation for 2003 indicated that NDSU ranked 122nd in total expenditures among the more than 600 research universities in the United States. NDSU was in the top 100 research universities for expenditures in six NSF categories, including both total and nonfederal research expenditures in science and engineering, chemistry, and physical sciences. Expenditures for equipment to support this research increased from less than \$2 million in 1996 to more than \$9 million in 2004. The “Momentum” Capital campaign includes \$10 million dedicated to obtaining additional research equipment and for stipends for graduate students to assist in conducting research in various fields of study. The HLC Team recommends continued emphasis and priority on this timely efforts.
- Q. Research Facilities and Equipment Needs.** Needs for additional equipment and graduate students will be addressed, in part, by the \$10 million to be allocated from the “Momentum” Capital campaign and from items included in successful applications for external research funding. These resources supplement annual allotments provided by the P/VPAA to individual colleges, and by start-up packages awarded to new faculty members. Internal small grant programs provide opportunities for faculty to request modest amounts of funding to obtain small equipment and supplies needed for their research programs. These institutional efforts to provide improved and expanded research facilities and equipment should be sustained.
- R. Research Park/Economic Development Aspects.** The Research Park is a win-win opportunity for faculty and students and an economic development engine for area businesses. The Research Park has attracted high-tech industries that have brought favorable-paying employment to the community and produced an economic ripple effect in the regional economy. Major reasons for relocation of high-tech companies in the Research Park include access to the professional expertise of the NDSU faculty and the reliable pool of highly trained NDSU graduates available. The economic impact of construction of two buildings, Research I and Research II, has been estimated at \$81.9 million. The direct economic impacts of growth at NDSU was \$75.9 million in 2004—an increase from \$12.4 million in FY 2000. These and other economic impacts of NDSU on the regional economy explain why continued growth of NDSU, and its broad-based research activities, are warmly received and encouraged by area business and community leaders. The HLC Team strongly recommends that NDSU continue giving priority to these initiatives and recent developments.
- S. NDSU Libraries.** The NDSU libraries will benefit from the “Momentum” Capital campaign with at least \$1.5 million to augment (1) current campus budgetary allotments, (2) the annual campus supplemental funding of \$350,000, and (3) allocations from student fees (in FY 2006 were \$214,000). The Libraries received gifts that permitted remodeling of a student reading lounge and have received a \$500,000 challenge grant to be used for additional improvements in library facilities.

Off-campus space for storage of infrequently requested books and related resources has created additional space on campus that is being utilized to create an environment more open and inviting. Materials stored off campus are available to students and faculty through a twice-daily shuttle service. Plans to offer open access to these materials are in progress.

Renovation of the lower level of the Library provided reading and study lounges for students and space for multipurpose computer clusters. More than 300 computers are available for student and public use in the main library and its branches. The libraries currently have more than 10,000 e-books and 6,000 full-text periodicals available for

faculty and student access. Extensive increases are expected to continue in the growth of digital library resources.

To support both undergraduate and graduate education as well as to expand research, continuing and distance education, the HLC Team recommends that NDSU strive to enhance financial support of its libraries.

- T. Majors/Degrees Offered.** During the period of years from 1996 to 2005 at NDSU, 18 undergraduate majors were added, one was deleted; 10 undergraduate minors were added, one was deleted; 14 MS degrees were added, one was deleted; and the number of doctoral programs increased from 19 in 1996 to 40 in the 2005-2006 academic year. Further expansion of degree programs, as needed, are encouraged by the HLC Team.
- U. Evidence of Academic Proficiency of Graduates.** Students graduating from NDSU who volunteered to participate in the 2004 Academic Profile scored higher than volunteers of peer institutions for reading (67 vs. 43 percent), critical thinking (22 vs. 6 percent), writing (17 vs. 12 percent), and mathematics (33 vs. 8 percent). Based on the above data, the weakest of the four categories, writing, is being addressed by the Vertical Writing Project (VWP) at NDSU. To assist in enhancing writing skills, the General Education requirements for writing are being increased from six to nine credits, and the two current writing-intensive courses taught by the Department of English are being expanded to six courses with focus on related disciplines. The new Vertical Writing standards will become effective with the 2007-2008 academic year. The HLC/NCA Team recommends that the VWP be expanded. Departments should be encouraged to develop or modify a course within their curriculum/curricula to meet the standards being developed by the General Education Committee. (The HLC Team understood these would eventually require approval from the University Senate.)
- V. Faculty-Staff Development Program.** Recognized and appreciated opportunities for professional development of faculty and staff are exemplified by the President's grant program. This important support provides up to \$1,000 of expense monies for faculty and staff to participate in professional meetings and development programs. The program was utilized by 858 faculty and staff during the 2004-2005 academic year and it provided in excess of \$800,000 to participants. The HLC Team recommends that this useful program be given priority for continued funding.

Approximately 100 faculty and staff participate in the monthly Pedagogical Luncheon series where topics include techniques in teaching, assessment of student learning, use of the Personal Response System (please see Assurance I.C.), and implementation of the Vertical Writing program. ITS conducts workshops on the use of Blackboard and implementation of all upgrades. Numerous workshops have been conducted and meetings held to provide information about implementation of the ConnectND (PeopleSoft) project. New faculty participate in a two-day, information-rich workshop prior to the beginning of each academic year. This helps assure that they are knowledgeable about services and opportunities available to them and students.

Faculty participation in development (sabbatical) leaves has not reached the desired level. Additional efforts are being made to encourage faculty to participate in this attractive program. Faculty have opportunities to participate in the developmental leave program following three years of service at NDSU and receive 75 percent of regular salary during their sabbatical leave experiences. Low participation in the developmental leave program was noted in the 1996 HLC Team Report. The 2006 HLC Team recommends that a

survey be conducted of eligible faculty members in an attempt to determine why this important opportunity for faculty development is not being utilized more extensively.

W. Biochemistry at NDSU. The 2006 HLC Team members were surprised to learn that biochemistry is barely visible at NDSU. Apparently in yesteryears, biochemistry was a separate department. Now, the four remaining biochemists are members of the Chemistry Department. Biochemistry does not appear in the departmental name. Importantly, biochemistry is an integral part of several pre-professional and graduate degree programs. The 2006 HLC Team members who reviewed the Biochemistry Program perceived that the four biochemistry faculty members must have large teaching responsibilities that make it difficult to maintain a level of external funding needed for a vibrant, productive research program. The Team encourages NDSU to address this need and opportunity.

X. Office of Institutional Research (OIR). Based on information gleaned from NDSU personnel, the HLC Team members concluded that the OIR is not being consulted at the frequency and level it should. As NDSU enhances its ability to utilize PeopleSoft for acquiring and analyzing data, the OIR will be a rich institutional repository for useful data including student retention, level of program/degree success, and placement as well as summary data related to institutional improvements resulting from the assessment of student academic achievement. The HLC Team believes NDSU planning could be enhanced even more by using a larger proportion of direct measures of student learning, and recommends this approach be considered.

Y. NDSU Needs Noted by Faculty and Shared with HLC Team Members

- Additional laboratory space for teaching
- Additional research space for graduate students
- Additional research equipment
- Assistance with spousal employment

III. RECOGNITION OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS, PROGRESS, AND/OR PRACTICES

North Dakota State University has made many timely changes since the 1996 HLC/NCA Comprehensive Team Visit. In particular, the Team noted the following accomplishments, major program developments, significant progress, and/or noteworthy innovative practices.

A. Accomplishments

- **Private Capital Campaign.** In October 2005, the NDSU Development Foundation announced the \$75 million “Momentum” Campaign—the largest capital campaign in NDSU history. This private fundraising effort was designed to maintain the “momentum” needed to continue the pursuit of new levels of institutional excellence underway at NDSU. Campaign objectives include \$30 million for student scholarships; \$13 million for the College of Business Administration building; \$10.5 million for new teaching endowments; \$10 million for the Annual Fund to give greater flexibility in putting technology in the classroom, purchasing additional

laboratory equipment, bringing eminent lecturers to campus, as well as assisting graduate students in their research endeavors; \$8 million for the Bison Sports Arena project; \$1.5 million for the NDSU Libraries; and \$1.5 million for priority projects at the Equine Center. More than \$70 million had been received in gifts and pledges when the February 2006 HLC Site Team was on campus.

- **NDSU Ranked Nationally for Post Doctoral Researchers.** The March 2006 issue of *The Scientist* magazine ranked NDSU 34th among the top research institutions in the *The Scientist's* survey of best places for post doctorates to work in North America. The institutional list included Cornell University, Duke University, Harvard Medical School, University of Iowa, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, National Institutes of Health, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and Vanderbilt University. Important criteria cited for selection included collaborative, intellectually challenging environments, flexibility in designing and conducting research projects, and quality of research facilities.

In 2005, North Dakota State University was ranked among “Research Universities with High Research Activity” by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching in its new basic classification of United States Colleges and Universities.

- Creating a new level of institutional excellence through heightened camaraderie, inspiration, enthusiasm, morale, pride, unity, and commitment among faculty, staff, students, alumni, and other friends and constituent groups is exemplary and closely connected with recent visionary advancements, others underway, and still others virtually certain to follow.
- NDSU has demonstrated commendable effectiveness in developing individual and community loyalties and support for the institution as reflected in support by alumni and friends of NDSU. These include numerous large gifts, e.g., that of a five-story building in Fargo by an alumnus that has been remodeled for important teaching and service programs, corporate partnerships, and citizens’ advisory groups. Private fundraising is about adding greatly needed additional/new resources to a winning educational enterprise. Impressively, these are all occurring at NDSU.
- Increasing external support of research through gifts, grants, and contracts from less than \$25 million in 2000 to more than \$100 million in 2005 is particularly noteworthy.
- Feedback received during the Open Forums indicated a high level of commitment and dedication to developments and progress made at NDSU the past seven years. Seeing individuals on and off campus wearing Bison apparel reflects their high level of pride in NDSU.
- Reading in various publications of NDSU that “students are paramount” has a special inviting ring to students considering their alternatives regarding the college or university in which they will continue their educational endeavors.
- NDSU audits and business practices are appropriate and comprehensive.

- Program expansion plans for Distance Education are timely.
- Innovative classroom techniques (e.g., PRS discussed in Assurance I.C.) are noteworthy.
- Inexpensive taxi service for students to/from Fargo/campus is appreciated by all users, as are the NDSU shuttle services that circulate on campus and the buses that provide reliable transportation between the main campus and the Downtown campus.
- Accessibility of faculty, staff, and administrators to students was cited by students as being special.
- Noteworthy GPAs of athletes (Please see Assurance Criterion Two 1.).

B. Physical Facilities Added/Planned at NDSU Since 1996 HLC Team Visit.

- **Wellness Center.** In 1997, students voted to approve a \$38 per semester fee increase to finance construction of a Wellness Center. The NDSU Wellness Center was dedicated in October 2001. It houses the student health service, a fitness center for students, and drop-in childcare facilities. It also includes a one-story medical clinic with examination rooms, offices, and a pharmacy as well as a two-story building with a student lounge, locker rooms, a running track, workout equipment, and an aerobics room. The center also offers individual counseling and wellness education in fitness, nutrition, and smoking cessation.

Importantly, student gratification with and utilization of the facilities was so favorable that in 2004 students enthusiastically approved increasing their Wellness Center fees to \$80 per semester to finance expansion of the Wellness Center—a \$12 million project that will double its size. Construction will begin in 2006 with a projected completion in 2007.

- **Research and Technology Park, Inc. (RTP).** A groundbreaking ceremony for the NDSU Research and Technology Park, Inc.—a nonprofit organization established in 1999—was held in May 2000. The park soon became the site of leading research in electronics, polymers, coatings, and nanotechnology. Designed for NDSU researchers to join with private industry in pursuing their interests in developing new technologies, methods, and systems, the park's cornerstone tenant was Phoenix International (a corporation owned by the John Deere Corporation), which manufactures electronic controls and sensors. Another new business that built in the park was Alien Technology (AT). This first plant of its type in the world will produce commercial quantities of “Radio Frequency Identification” tags for retail and supply-chain users. Also in the RTP is the Research II building that houses the Center for Nanoscale Science and Engineering. This 75,000 sq ft building was dedicated in October 2004 and has sophisticated cleanroom research space and highly advanced research equipment that support scientific studies in microelectronics, coatings, and “high throughput” science.
- **The NDSU Downtown, Fargo Building.** This former Northern School Supply building was donated by an alumnus of NDSU. It has been transformed into an interdisciplinary facility that houses the Department of Visual Arts, major

components of the Architecture and Landscape Architecture Department, and the Tri-College University office for coordinated programs of Concordia College, Minnesota State University-Moorhead, and NDSU. The five-story facility is both an actual and a symbolic link to the community. The \$10 million remodeling project was dedicated in September 2004 and includes studios, classrooms, a woodshop, digital media room, gallery, and sculpture area.

- **College of Pharmacy Project.** In the fall of 2002, this \$2.95 million remodeling of three floors of the Pharmacy building and a new two-story construction project (the “Walgreens Wing”) was completed and dedicated. Included are three classrooms equipped with computers and state-of-the-art instructional technology, conference rooms, and faculty offices. Also added was an innovative “Concept Pharmacy Laboratory” that facilitates training in all aspects of contemporary community pharmacy practice.
- **Equine Science Center.** Dedicated in October 2003, the 400-stall “state-of-the-art” horse barn (600 ft x 134 ft) makes it possible to expand the Equine Science program. Considering the fact that projected high school enrollments in North Dakota give minimal reason to expect significant increases in enrollment of students from North Dakota for the foreseeable future, and knowing that there are many outstanding students from other states (e.g., California) who seek education and training in the Equine Sciences but who cannot gain admission to quality Equine Science higher education programs, the HLC Team is confident that this high-quality program could be expanded. Indeed, there is an existing opportunity to enroll students who have excellent academic credentials, and the family financial support needed to pay out-of-state tuition/fees as well as the boarding costs/fees to have their favorite horse nearby. Clearly, this is a distinct opportunity to provide an expanded program and enhance the budget concurrently.
- **Minard Hall Addition.** The \$3.2 million Minard Hall addition was dedicated in October 2003. It includes seven new classrooms and a Coffee Cart area. In essence, it combines the arts with the humanities and social sciences by joining the Music Education Building and Festival Concert Hall with Minard Hall.
- **Criminal Justice and Public Policy Building.** Located in Fargo, this facility was dedicated in October 2003. Formerly, it housed a sorority at NDSU and subsequently, the YWCA. Remodeled to include classrooms, computer clusters, and offices, the building is home to the Department of Criminal Justice and Political Science as well as the Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute.
- **Horticulture Demonstration and Research Plots.** These plots were dedicated in October 2003 to include annual and perennial plants, an iris collection, NDSU’s historic day lily collection, as well as plans for a rose garden and turf research plots.
- **New and Coming Resident Hall Facilities.** NDSU students have access to the new Living Learning Center and F Court facility. The F Court apartment building in University Village was opened and available to students in Fall 2002. With 30 modern two-bedroom apartments, the \$2.3 million three-story residence hall replaced the original F Court destroyed by fire in October 2000. The Living Learning Center melded residence and classroom space and opened in Fall 2003. The \$8 million residence hall project has 80 studio apartments, 24 four-bedroom apartments, and two classrooms. Construction has been completed on the new \$11.0 million Bison Court apartments that replaced the former Bison Court built in 1957. The new facilities

provide the added amenities and privacy desired by today's students. Additionally, construction is underway on a 72-room hotel at the RTP. This \$4 million facility is aimed primarily for visitors conducting business at the research park. It will also serve as a teaching laboratory for students enrolled in NDSU's Hospitality and Tourism Management Program. This facility will be given and deeded to NDSU in seven years.

Importantly, the Living Learning Center has been so enthusiastically accepted by students that a second unit is planned. The proposed new structure will be constructed adjacent to the current building and will form the second part of an eventual quadrangle designed to provide living areas for expanding enrollments of graduate and international students.

- **New Business Administration Building.** Plans for new construction extend well beyond the development of additional living areas for graduate and international students. Indeed, plans for additional construction include a new building for students, faculty, and staff of the College of Business Administration. The facilities will also house the Department of Agribusiness and Applied Economics, thereby providing enhanced synergy for joint programs, activities, and services among faculty of two colleges.

Plans for the five-story structure include an auditorium, seven tiered classrooms, seven additional classrooms, three computer classrooms, two computer clusters for student use, two student study lounges, and a Business Assistance Center in support of local and regional businesses.

Although the building will be located on the west side of the NDSU campus—and within walking distance of other classroom buildings—it will be on the intra-campus bus route that circulates throughout campus and provides dependable transportation to/from classrooms and other campus buildings and facilities. Large parking areas are planned to accommodate parking for members of the business community and others who wish to park near the site of daytime and evening classes.

Major funding for this important Business Administration facility will be \$13 million of private donations from the \$75 million “Momentum” Campaign of NDSU. More than \$70 million had been received in gifts and pledges when the February 2006 HLC Site Team was on campus. Construction has been authorized by the North Dakota Legislature and is anticipated to begin in 2007.

- **Memorial Union Renovation/Addition.** Students voted overwhelmingly to renovate 92,000 sq ft of the existing Memorial Union (MU) and to support the construction of a 54,000 sq ft new addition. The \$22 million project will be financed through revenue bonds to be retired by increased student fees on a credit hour basis (current MU bond fee is \$2.75 per credit hour with a maximum total of \$33 per student per semester). Planning for the project was, in large part, developed and coordinated by the student-led Memorial Union Advisory Board with strong support from the NDSU Student Government. Student leadership for financing the renovation and added new space speaks well for the favorable working relationship between students and administrators of NDSU.

Important features of the project include expanded space for student lounges and dining areas, an enlarged ballroom, provisions for additional meeting and breakout rooms, increased space for student organizations, and an upgrading and partial

replacement of the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning system. Additionally, students voted for a “one-stop-shop” that calls for cross-trained staff to provide services for the Business Office, Counseling Center, Financial Aid, and Registration and Records. Currently, the MU opens at 6:00 A.M. and closes at 10:30 P.M. Plans are for the greatly renovated/new addition to remain open on a 24-hour basis and to provide continuous food service.

The project is to be completed through a series of coordinated phases to permit continuing heavy use by members of the more than 200 student organizations at NDSU. The 2006 HLC Site Visit Team observed firsthand how well the project is moving along with minimal inconvenience to users. It is scheduled for completion in Fall 2007.

C. Summary and Coda.

Since the 1996 HLC/NCA Team Visit of NDSU, the institution has successfully brought its most precious resource—dedicated, diverse, resourceful, tenacious people—to bear on the challenging opportunities at hand. The time-tested, dependable force that has consistently sustained and empowered students, faculty, staff, alumni, friends, and supporters of NDSU to facilitate the important recent changes, has been the power and inspiration associated with and emanating from visionary leadership, which begins at the top.

The profound, steady progress made at NDSU during the past seven years in enrollment—both undergraduate and graduate—in private fundraising, in physical facilities, in the size and scope of external grants and contracts, in the assessment of learning outcomes and the benefits that accrue there from, in the effective use of technology in the classroom, in employee salaries and benefits relative to the peer group, and on many other important fronts, reflects a noteworthy uptick in the level of morale and positive “can-do/will-do” attitudes that prevail throughout the institution and among its many loyal supporters.

Decisions associated with the planned expansion of distance education domestically and globally, graduate enrollment, discovery and scientific findings together with the economic development that routinely follows, and how effectively NDSU serves its constituents and broad support base will determine, in large part, the transformation that evolves for future HLC/NCA Team(s) to evaluate.