

NCA “Strengths and Concerns” from 1996 Site-visit

Source: “Report”

Strengths (not rank ordered by the Consultant-Evaluator Team):

- The University community is united behind the new President
- The faculty and staff display deep loyalty, dedication, and a positive attitude
- Students are enthusiastic and of high caliber.
- The faculty have a strong and effective commitment to teaching.
- There are many opportunities for faculty development.
- There has been a commendable increase in the acquisition of grant funds in the last few years.
- The Teaching Support Center and outreach services enjoy wide acceptance by and support of the faculty.
- The assessment program is well-developed and faculty participate at all stages.
- The university has developed innovative uses of technology to support instruction.
- There is evidence of exceptional academic attainment in several programs.
- The university provides leadership in a number of cooperative efforts in the state and region.
- Extension personnel are responsive to the needs of clientele throughout the state.

Concerns (again, not rank ordered by the Consultant-Evaluator Team):

- Salary levels and salary compression present a problem to faculty and staff recruitment and retention.
- Causes of low undergraduate retention and graduation rates need to be identified and addressed.
- Demographic projections for North Dakota present an enrollment challenge for the university.
- A number of graduate programs have low enrollment and some have low stipends that impact enrollment.
- Women are under-represented on the faculty; some feel undervalued and unsupported.
- There is under-representation of Hispanic, African American and Native American students and faculty in the university.
- There is a lack of cross cultural experiences in the curriculum and life of the university.
- There is not a widely shared understanding of the criteria and rules for tenure.
- There is inadequate faculty participation in the developmental leave program.
- An inadequate proportion of the institutional budget is committed to library acquisitions and services.
- Additional instructional and research equipment is needed in selected areas.
- State funding for repair and renovation of facilities is low compared to the need.

Advice and suggestions (offered for consideration but not for required action by members of the university):

- The university should develop a comprehensive enrollment management plan.
- The university should develop and implement a five-year plan to raise salaries to the average of the institution's peer groups.
- The university should develop and implement a plan to coordinate all outreach programs.
- The policy and procedures for review of tenured faculty should be clarified.
- Consideration should be given to offering release time for faculty preparation when they are new to offering education through distance delivery.
- More collaboration between student affairs and academic affairs related to student outcomes programs, for example, between Project Success and the Skills for Academic Success program, could be productive.
- Funding from whatever sources for tuition for spouses and dependent children would be well-received.
- Consideration should be given to the appointment of an ombudsperson who would provide direction and counsel to interested faculty, staff, and students .

(End of listing, page 70 of report)