Self-Study for Reaccreditation  
State University of New York at Albany 

For the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools
was accomplished with a remarkable degree of civility and consensus and has left the University better prepared to cope with the 1980s. The current system of planning, budgeting, and evaluation grew directly out of this experience and provides the context for the present Middle States review.

This seeming sudden watershed had actually begun several years earlier. In 1970, the campus was still defining its future in terms of the lofty 1968 Master Plan. However, when the assumption of growing resources gradually changed, Albany experienced several years of steady-state resources as support formulae were thinned and budgetary standards were adjusted downward. For example, as enrollment increased by 15 percent from 1970 to 1975, the number of faculty declined marginally, and plans for additional construction were shelved.

Another important development occurred in 1970, when the campus began a system of professional program assessment (using external peer evaluators) for each of its graduate programs, and later, for undergraduate programs as well. An evaluation procedure was instituted under the direction of the Graduate Academic Council, which by 1976 had concluded assessments on all doctoral and master's programs using 98 separate teams of consultants. A few of the early evaluations confirmed a general impression that several graduate programs were only partially developed and needed several years and more resources to achieve University ambitions for them.

By 1974-1975, several factors focused campus attention on the need for a vigorous assessment of its programs and for setting priorities among them:

1. It became clear that the enrollments and resources projected in the 1968 and 1972 Master Plans were not going to be realized. The state's fiscal condition was worsening, and preliminary signs in Albany indicated that budget cuts were in store for at least a two-year period. The campus needed to prepare to respond constructively.

2. Students' interests had shifted away from once-popular fields of study to other fields (this trend was accelerated by the end of distribution requirements). Minor internal reallocation of resources had occurred, but it could not keep up with the enrollment shifts, and this left some schools and departments under-enrolled and others under-staffed.

3. Several graduate programs had been introduced with the expectation of future resources and now needed additional development. Campus resources were spread too thinly to offer a full range of graduate and undergraduate programs of high quality.

4. The budgetary erosion of the early 1970s had bankrupted the even-handed, "across-the-board dribble" approach to resource allocation. The campus needed to make hard choices among its programs.

5. As President Benezet announced his intent to step down as president at the end of 1974-1975, he wanted the campus to prepare for his successor by assessing the University's status and by developing options for the future.

With this as background, the Select Committee on Academic Program Priorities was established, and its members encompassed a variety of campus perspectives and constituencies. Operating under the assumption of steady-state resources, the Select Committee carried out its charge in four months and submitted its report in May 1975.

The committee recommended the phasing out, by termination or suspension, of six doctoral programs, three programs at the master's level, and three at the undergraduate level. In several other instances, the committee identified a need for further study and suggested that subsequent reviews of some programs be undertaken. The committee also recommended that five programs be given a high priority for increased resources; it recommended no change in the status of 80 percent of the total programs on campus.

The Select Committee, then, represented a distinct break with the past in two significant respects. First, it publicly recognized and acknowledged that the campus could not adequately fulfill all its missions as previously defined—it could not do everything at once and do it well. Secondly, it broke with the pattern of individual program evaluation which encouraged sequential and isolated decisions about program development and resource allocation. Decisions were simultaneous instead of sequential; no recommendations on individual programs were made final prior to examination of the whole. This laid a substantial foundation for the budget reductions in January and February of 1976.

Emmett Fields assumed the presidency in July 1975 (deeply grateful that Louis Benezet had already implemented the Select Committee's recommendations). In his first discussions both on and off the campus, Fields charted new directions: an alliance between the University and its community; a unique mission based upon the University's presence in the largest government complex outside of Washington, D.C.; a mutually reinforcing relationship between the research capacity of the faculty and the state's needs to address significant policy problems. The change was not popular with everyone, of course, but the general climate was receptive.

From the beginning of his presidency, Emmett Fields believed that program quality, imbalances in workload, and Albany's unique mission all required and justified the reallocation of resources to priority departments. He was joined in this belief by the vast majority of the campus community. The Select Committee, for example, felt a certain frustration that the budget reductions had created a climate which led to the implementation of its negative recommendations, but not its positive ones.

As was the case the previous year, faculty leadership was consulted, and they recommended a new committee which was named the Task Force on Priorities and Resources. Its formation was hastened and given urgency by a swiftly evolving series of budget reductions beginning in January 1976. [The campus was scheduled to lose 103 positions and $1.8 million, and decisions were required within a very narrow time span.] The Task Force was appointed on January 20, 1976, with a deadline of March 1.
Figure 2

THE UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY
PLANNING FOR THE 1980's

Basic Planning Parameters

- Campus Mission Statement (1977)
- Reaffirmed Commitment to Ideals of a University
- Made Explicit Commitment to Policy Analysis & Public Service

Academic and Administrative Plans

- Programs & Priorities
- Three Year Development Plans for Each Unit
- Updated Annually
- Specific Unit Level Priorities for Action and Proposed Action Steps

Action Steps Toward Implementation

- Budgetary Plan and Resource Allocations
- Formation of Study Groups to Address Problems of Campus-wide Character
- Implementary Action by Schools, Depts. and Divisions
- Implementation of Space Utilization Plans
- Ongoing Monitoring of Equipment Utilization

Evaluation and Feedback

- Evaluation of Programs & Policies of Campus-wide Character
- Surveys of Entering Students, graduating seniors, & other special surveys
- Collection of Data on Educational Outcomes
- Attrition Studies
- Special Studies of utilization of resources, space and equipment

Unit Level Evaluations

- Academic Program Reviews
  Develop Departmental Indicators of workload, quality, and effectiveness
- Annual reviews of unit and Institutional Progress toward Goals

Internal Factors
- Program Profile
- Faculty Profile
- Resource Constraints
- Facilities Plan
- Equipment Plan

External Factors
- Demographic Trends
- Enrollment Projections
- Economic Factors
- Student & Societal Needs

Reviews of Budget Requests and Base Budgets
In marathon meetings, established criteria were applied to academic programs and administrative offices. At the end of the first week of intense sessions, the Task Force and the administrative team compared their separate tentative plans for the reductions and found 80 percent congruence. The remaining weeks were spent marshalling additional evidence and resolving the incongruities. Eventually, this process resulted in the termination of four doctoral, four master's, and seven bachelor's programs in addition to the elimination of three administrative offices and the reorganization and reduction of numerous others.

The resources thus gained were in part used to meet the state's budget reductions, but more importantly they were reallocated to those departments and schools which were given a high priority on the basis of their quality, their enrollment demand, or their ability to contribute significantly to the analysis of major public policy issues.

This summary glosses over the stress that making such decisions caused the president, the members of the Select Committee and Task Force, and everyone affiliated with the terminated programs. But only by discontinuing entire programs, could the University gain the resources to advance the quality and vitality of the remaining programs. For every department which was shattered or hurt by the decisions, four or five departments were able to advance.

**Redefinition 1977–1980**

And advance they did. In the four years following the Task Force Report, the University attracted over 250 scholars to the faculty, about 70 of whom were appointed at the senior level, including 7 new deans from other universities. A large cadre of nationally and internationally prominent scholars have joined the faculty, substantially enhancing the core of strong scholars who earlier came to the campus.

During the presidency of Emmett Fields, the University moved quite consciously into a planning model which shaped and guided its unfolding mission. Through Fields's initiatives the programmatic decisions were placed within a long-range planning context described in the July 1977 "Mission, Programs, and Priorities for Action," a document the entire campus community helped formulate. The wisdom of this course is most dramatically symbolized by the fact that the decisions survived Emmett Fields's departure for the presidency of Vanderbilt University in 1977. It is also remarkable that the man who chaired the Select Committee and who played a key role on the Task Force, Vincent O'Leary, should be selected by the campus to succeed Fields as president.

President O'Leary has made special efforts to integrate program planning and resource allocation through a systematic and participatory planning/budgeting process. (The main elements of this process are illustrated in Figure 2.) Individual academic and administrative three-year plans report progress toward achieving unit and institutional goals and chart specific action steps to achieve revised objectives during the next three years. In addition, resource needs are related to these plans and proposed action steps. The plans are thoroughly reviewed by the University's Long-Range Planning Committee and by deans, administrative officers, and the president. These reviews assess each plan on the basis of consistency with the University's mission, major policy implications of proposed objectives, and the resource implications of future strategies of development. Revised three-year plans and priorities for action are developed for each of the nearly 100 units within the 4 University divisions. These plans are published in a separate document "Abstracts of Three-Year Plans," updated yearly.

Departmental plans also provide the policy framework for budgetary review. The current budgets and projected resource needs of every unit on campus are reviewed in a series of budget hearings in which over 50 individuals consisting of representatives of the faculty, departmental chairpersons, deans, administrative staff, and students participate. For example, in spring 1979, over 40 separate hearings were held and were repeated in a modified form in 1980. In these hearings the budgets of every unit on campus were reviewed for program need and priority and the equity of current resource distribution. The findings and suggestions of these panels are used as one reference point in the internal allocation of the campus budgets and form the basis for the budget plan presented to SUNY Central Administration and the state Division of the Budget each year.

The University's planning/budgeting process is an experimental one. Current methods are far from perfect, but we have learned a great deal from recent experience. The budget hearings broaden participation in the budget planning process and provide useful information for decision making.

Experience has shown that further attention is needed in the areas of evaluating the results of program plans and the effectiveness of resource utilization. Planning, budgeting, and evaluation are three necessary and interdependent facts of a rational process of institutional decision making. Planning informs the deployment of resources to achieve objectives in an efficient and effective manner. Evaluation allows an institution to intelligently adapt its priorities and deploy resources more effectively.

Having developed a good deal of the planning and budgeting process illustrated in Figure 2, the campus is now turning its attention to the evaluation and feedback parts of the process. Like most institutions of higher education, Albany has developed precious few measures of educational effectiveness. Much more attention in higher education has been paid to "input" measures (such as faculty quality and student test scores) than to the actual outcomes of the educational process (such as changes in knowledge and skills acquired). For the Middle States review, we have attempted to inventory all the existing evaluation activities at the University and to begin the process of designing a multi-pronged evaluation program which will help to assess the effectiveness of both academic and administrative activity at the University.
Division of Finance and Business
Vice-President John Hartigan came to the campus in 1969 and assumed his current responsibilities in 1978.

The Division of Finance and Business is responsible for providing financial and other support services for the University's primary functions of teaching, research, and community service. A wide range of services focus on campus support in matters of finance, administrative support, and working and housing support. In addition, the division serves as the permeable buffer through which federal, state, and local authorities exert their control on this public institution.

The division's major functions intertwin at many junctures but are basically three: (1) to provide direction, leadership, and staff support in the University's fiscal affairs; (2) to perform those centralized administrative functions commonly required by an academic institution; and (3) to provide for the working and living environment for nearly 20,000 faculty, staff, and students.

The division comprises the following major offices: Budget, Controller (Accounting, Student Accounts/Bursar, Payroll, Purchasing, Administrative Services, and Sponsored Funds), Physical Plant, Personnel, Public Safety, Affirmative Action, Internal Audit, and Equipment Management. In addition, the division provides administrative liaison with the activities of the University Auxiliary Services, a nonprofit corporation which operates the bookstore, provides food service, and offers other services to faculty and students. While servicing the University, the division interacts with 11 state agencies that oversee, to some degree, what the University does and how it performs as a state agency.

Division of University Affairs
The Vice-President for University Affairs Lewis Welch has been a faculty member at Albany since 1961 and assumed his current responsibilities in 1971.

University Affairs has three major components: the Division of Student Affairs, the Division of University Relations, and the Division of Physical Education, Athletics, and Recreation.

The Division of Student Affairs is responsible for programs and services provided for students, including counseling, health service, financial aids, residence halls, career planning and placement; programs for special student populations, such as foreign students and disabled students; and, in general, a full range of student activities designed to enhance personal growth and development. The division oversees administration of the Campus Center, provides support for a broad range of student activities, and oversees the student judicial system.

The Division of University Relations is responsible for a number of functions of University concern which directly support the University's obligation to and communication with the broader community. Some of these functions include maintaining and fostering constructive relations between the campus and the community, providing administrative liaison with the University Council and other external constituencies, promoting and facilitating the University's public service program, coordinating the numerous public events and conferences on campus, providing a campus communications program, and directing programs for resource development and alumni relations.

The Division of Physical Education, Athletics, and Recreation includes the undergraduate instructional programs in physical education. Division III athletic programs consisting of 12 women's sports and 16 men's sports, and an extensive intramural and recreational program.

The Nature of This Self-Study
The Middle States reaccreditation presented an opportunity for the University to engage in a rigorous self-study by further refining its planning-budgeting process through a renewed emphasis on program evaluation and educational assessment.

The focus of the year of self-study was directed toward the planning model presented in Figure 2. Specifically, attention was directed to the evaluation and feedback element of the model. We tried to assess more completely (1) what we need to know, (2) what we already know, and (3) what procedures we need to add or modify.

To help us answer the question of what we need to know, we looked at our own stated goals as they appear in our 1977 campus Mission Statement. That document includes the principal values to which we aspire, the characteristics that distinguish our University, and our goals for student and for societal development. Clearly, any evaluation plan should be related to these elements.

Relevant Literature
Another step in helping us decide what we need to know and how we might find out, was a review of what others have said about evaluations in higher education.

In the decade of the 1970s, scholars produced burgeoning literature on the evaluation of higher education. In recent years the golden age of expansion drew to a close, and a combination of inflation, recession, and student militancy has produced pressures for accountability. What is the value of a college education? If a particular position requires skills that are learned on the job, rather than taught in college, why is a college degree necessary? Many liberal arts majors are now performing jobs that do not require college preparation. Of what value was their liberal arts education? Watergate participants were all college graduates. What did the university experience contribute to their moral rectitude? The costs of higher education are increasing. What do we get for our money?

These are not questions that are answered by such indicators as the number of books in the library, the standardized test scores of in-coming students, or whether faculty have private offices. (Each of these indicators was mentioned by Dressel and his associates (1961). Increasingly, researchers in higher education are making the distinction articulated by Bowen (1979) between means and ends. One approach to evaluation commonly used by accrediting agencies is to hold the institution responsible...
TABLE 10
EVALUATIVE MECHANISMS REPORTED BY
THE DIVISION OF FINANCE AND BUSINESS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Questionnaires and Surveys</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X X X X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X X X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three-year plan and updates</td>
<td>X X X X</td>
<td>X X X X X X</td>
<td>X X X X X X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X X X X X X X X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External audits from regulatory agencies</td>
<td>X X X X</td>
<td>X X X X X X</td>
<td>X X X X X X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X X X X X X X X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reports prepared for external agencies</td>
<td>X X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X X X X X X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X X X X X X X X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rate of acceptance/rejection of transactions processed through external offices</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External assessments from professional agencies</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal audits</td>
<td>X X</td>
<td>X X X X X X</td>
<td>X X X X X X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal self-studies and analyses</td>
<td>X X X X</td>
<td>X X X X X X</td>
<td>X X X X X X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Periodic internal reports/reconciliations</td>
<td>X X X X</td>
<td>X X X X X X</td>
<td>X X X X X X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date edits to verify data in computer storage</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback from clients (client-initiated)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of lines at student service windows</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timeliness of completing transactions</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development and review of performance plans for professional staff</td>
<td>X X X X</td>
<td>X X X X X X</td>
<td>X X X X X X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contract-mandated evaluations of civil service employees</td>
<td>X X X X</td>
<td>X X X X X X</td>
<td>X X X X X X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of accounts receivable</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the planning staff supplied comparisons of SUNY and CUNY units on variables such as enrollment cost per student, faculty salaries, and student/faculty ratios.

Another example is Hartmark's (1979) critique of a study of revenues, expenditures, and public support to postsecondary education in New York State.

While these kinds of studies occur periodically, there are also a number of financial analyses and planning activities which are designed to translate the external developments into internal reality. We offer one example: energy consumption and expenditures.

In 1979, the budget office and the plant department supplied data which showed that energy consumption on the campus had been reduced by 25 percent since 1973, but that huge price increases had caused the campus to pay 45 percent more for 25 percent less energy. In 1973, we spent only 4 percent of our operating budget on energy and this had risen to 7 percent by 1979.

Using the best available forecasts of costs for the various forms of energy and assuming a per year growth of only 1 percent in consumption, it was demonstrated that by 1990 we could spend 20 percent of our operating budget for energy as shown in Figure 9. Since this has obvious implications for reallocation of resources, for educational excellence, and for the quality of campus life, the President formed a Commission on Energy Conservation and has renewed campus efforts to conserve.

A wide array of other studies are available and could be featured under the general heading of "Planning/Budgeting Studies." Perhaps the best example of a comprehensive attempt to forecast the technological, demographic, and cultural trends and to draw implications for higher education is a paper developed by O'Leary and Hartmark (1979), "An Outlook for Higher Education in the 1990s." Much of the paper is reflected in Programs and Priorities, 1980.

Other Special Purpose/Studies

This last category of evaluation encompasses a wide array of diverse activity. Assessments of user satisfaction, and employee performance, are major examples.

User Surveys

Almost every administrative area on campus has a way of assessing user satisfaction. For example, the Placement Office runs seminars for interested students. As a routine, students are asked to evaluate the worth of the seminars. Students are often asked to assess the food service, and many changes in procedure and menu can be ascribed to their suggestions. Each year a questionnaire is sent to students and faculty who take part in summer school. Users are asked to rate the bookstore, the library, the registration procedures, housing, meals, and many other campus aspects. Students who take part in our study-abroad programs are asked to rate various elements of this experience. The residence halls staff periodically conducts telephone surveys of a 5 percent random sample of students on selected topics. In 1978-1979, surveys were conducted in the areas of campus vandalism and student awareness of campus resources.

Generally, these surveys are conducted by those directly involved in the program. Usually they are developed on a pragmatic basis so that responses can rather quickly affect subsequent practice. Sometimes the responses to such surveys clearly suggest alterations of specific practices. Sometimes results are not so clear, as when a majority indicate satisfaction with an existing practice but a vocal minority call for a change. We have collected several examples of what we have classified as user surveys, but one must read to get a more complete picture of the myriad of such evaluations.

Two surveys of residence hall and student life are given here to provide a flavor for what is available.

Each year the Residence Hall program conducts a random sample survey to determine student plans for the following year and to obtain student reaction to building conditions, furnishings, regulations, and programs offered. Results of the surveys have been similar in the past years. The 1978-1979 survey indicated a rate of return to residence halls in excess of 66 percent, which is very high compared to other campuses. The level of satisfaction with bathroom cleaning (83 percent satisfied) is good. From time to time, the survey identifies the need to replace mattresses and furniture and to engage in painting and repair. A majority of students report that their room is quiet enough to study, and two-thirds of the residents are satisfied with the existing courtesy hours policy. Other results indicate that students do participate in personal development programs offered on the quadrangles. Over 600 students attended career planning programs offered on the quadrangles last year.

Among the special studies conducted by Professor Nan Lin in 1977-1978 was a student life survey to assess graduate and undergraduate student perception of the quality of life on our campus. Two graduate students prepared a summary of the results of the study (Bailey and Woods, 1979). One set of questions asked for impressions of the University at the time the student applied for admission. In another series of questions, respondents were asked to indicate their degree of satisfaction with various elements of the campus environment, teaching, advisement, student services, housing, social life, etc. For example, respondents were generally satisfied with their housing in spring 1978 (62 percent gave a rating of 7 or above on a scale with a maximum of 10). With respect to their academic life, respondents reported overall satisfaction with the quality of teaching (56 percent), with their major departments (54 percent), and with study facilities (69 percent). Commuting students reported more satisfaction than other groups.

Students generally expressed dissatisfaction with academic advisement (61 percent), and its improvement has been the object of much administrative attention in the past two years as a result.

In general, students are highly satisfied with campus social life and recreation. While 46 percent of the commuters expressed no opinion about these aspects of campus life, the percent of the other groups who reported either "satisfied" or "very satisfied" ranged from 70 percent to 90 percent.
Figure 10
Planning and Budgeting Cycle
SUNY-Albany
1979-1980

Vice President
Plan Review

Long Range
Planning
Senate Committee

1979 Programs
and Priorities
and Budget
Context

Unit
Plans
and
Budget
Requests

President
Review

Vice President
Budget Review

Budget
Panels

1980 Programs
and Priorities
and Planning Teams

Long Range
Planning
Senate Committee

University
Council

SUNY

1980-81
Budget
Allocations

1981-82
Budget Plan

Resource
Allocation
Senate Committee

President
Approval

1980 Programs
and Priorities
and Budget
Context

August '79
Sept/Nov '79
Dec '79/Jan '80
Mar/Apr '80
May/June '80
July '80
Part III Future Evaluation

In the first section of this report we outlined the University’s development, giving particular attention to the mission statement and program realignment of the mid-1970s and the subsequent development of the planning/budgeting process. In Part II we made some general observations about the University's current status and presented an inventory of the various types of evaluative studies and data collection conducted during the past few years in both academic and nonacademic areas. In this final section we approach, in a preliminary way, a number of issues pertaining to the future scope and function of evaluation activities at this University. The current evaluation system is assessed, and a number of strategic and procedural issues are discussed. Finally, a heuristic evaluation model is outlined as a tentative guide to future evaluation activity.

This entire document, but especially Part III, will be used during the coming years as a basis for dialogue on the campus. We will share these ideas with various campus constituencies and gradually develop our plans for future evaluation activities and processes.

This document, then, represents not the coda but the prelude. The musical score remains to be written. It is expected that the Middle States team will play a role in helping us lay out the issues and arrive at viable plans.

An Assessment of Current Evaluation Activities

As Part II of this document makes clear, we currently conduct a wide variety of studies and collect a considerable amount of information which can be considered evaluative in nature. However, much of this activity is presently disjointed and ad hoc.

Perhaps the most systematic evaluation process currently in place is a natural byproduct of the three-year planning process in which each academic and nonacademic unit on campus is reviewed annually in terms of progress toward the attainment of their respective departmental objectives. The planning/budgeting process is a developmental one, and any future system of evaluation will need to be articulated with the campus-wide planning process.

The following generalizations can be made regarding the current status of our evaluation capabilities.

We routinely collect a great deal of information about students. We know a great deal about where we get our students, their previous academic history, their aspirations, their assessments of our campus, and their performance on standardized tests. We know how many students drop out, how many transfer, and how many complete degree programs. We know how many seek help with special problems from our Counseling Center, and we know what they report their problems to be. We are now developing much of this information on a longitudinal basis.

We modify what we do based on the information we have. For instance, based on reported student dissatisfaction with academic advisement, we have made a number of improvements in CUE and experimented with peer advising, faculty adjuncts, and several other innovations. (See Abstracts of Three-Year Plans for more information.) In response to a study of trends in energy consumption and costs, we have established an energy commission and renewed our conservation efforts. There are many other examples.

We are increasing our base of information on our graduates, although much of the information is decentralized. Since departments maintain contact with students who have completed advanced degrees, we tend to have more complete data on the experience of our graduate students after graduation. We still have some way to go in expanding our base of information on baccalaureate graduates. We know even less about what happens to students who leave before completing programs, other than what we learn in exit interviews.

Even departments that have up-to-date records on the career status of program graduates are likely to lack information on those who drop out. As we expand our efforts to learn more about alumni, we need to keep in mind those students who spent considerable time at Albany but did not complete a degree program.

We can document our progress in developing as a graduate university. Each year we record an increase in faculty effort (and success) in obtaining external funding. Increasingly, departments in the University are being ranked high in productivity studies. Based on GAC and SED reviews, several of our graduate programs are nationally or internationally recognized, and a growing number of graduate programs are exceptionally strong.

We have a variety of indicators which show that our University contributes constructively to the life of the community. These various activities and functions in public service, community outreach, public policy assistance to state government, continuing education, and cultural programming in the community are too numerous to describe in this context but are reflected at some length in Programs and Priorities 1980. Each of these programs, services, and activities, ranging from concerts to consultancies to student internships, are indicators of this public commitment.

We do not have a systematic method of collecting and documenting all these activities in the public service area, but, as will be discussed later, full information may not always be necessary or cost effective for every aspect of the University’s activity.

We have in place a system of comprehensive program reviews. Our processes for reviewing graduate programs under the Graduate Academic Council have served us well. Extension of such a process to the undergraduate level is well underway. We will need to be selective and judicious in the number and frequency of comprehensive program reviews, in terms of their cost and demands upon the departments being reviewed.

We have in place a rigorous system of faculty review for decisions on promotion and tenure. The relative weights to be given to teaching, research, and service may be a point of contention in some cases. While the system is a complex
We are generally effective in conducting the evaluations made necessary by external mandates, such as those imposed in the 504, Title IX, and affirmative action legislation. We feel that our efforts conform to the spirit, as well as to the letter, of such mandates.

We have an unusually comprehensive set of indicators for assessing our effectiveness in providing support services to our campus. Many of these indicators have been developed locally. Other indicators, such as audit standards, are externally imposed but at least have the benefit of being based on generally accepted audit principles. Much of the data available tends to focus on workload levels and, to some extent, on efficiency.

As in the case of academic evaluation, further development is needed in the assessment of effectiveness and program results and in the identification of performance standards common to any given administrative activity (e.g., payroll, personnel administration, contract management, etc.).

We have an active Office of Institutional Research which provides for us considerable background information, technical assistance, and research results.

The Office of Institutional Research serves as a clearinghouse for evaluation activities on campus, but it is not always informed about the numerous studies being conducted. The large number of academic and administrative studies has at times created situations in which similar information is being gathered from similar populations without the researchers’ awareness. In addition, so much information is being collected and put to such diverse uses that it is probably not being utilized to its best advantage. Some decision makers who might benefit from the results of a study are unaware of its existence.

We found that students appear to share an interest in campus evaluation efforts, in spite of the frequency with which they may be confronted with questionnaires. Most students on the campus want to record their opinion concerning aspects of the University. For example, students have taken the lead in trying to develop systematic evaluations of teaching.

In another context, in followup telephone calls for a senior survey, only 1 of 40 students who were reached voiced an objection to providing the information requested. Some students even added a note of thanks for the chance to express an opinion.

We are improving the technical quality of our evaluation efforts and we hope to continue to improve. We have examined the psychometric quality of our instruments, experimented with ways to improve response rates, and we are trying to develop effective sampling techniques. There are a number of faculty on campus with expertise in evaluation who have been willing to assist in these efforts, and they will be called upon in the future.

We need to agree on a common definition of evaluation and to develop valid criteria.

In short, we have learned a great deal through the self study. A general assessment of where we are now with respect to evaluation can be made in the following terms.

We currently gather a great deal of information which needs to be related more systematically, disseminated more broadly, and linked more clearly to the decision-making process.

Further work is needed in developing feasible methods for assessing educational outcomes.

Any evaluation system needs to be consonant with the organic structure of the University; i.e., it needs to reflect the real purposes and objectives of university activities and it needs to be sensitive or responsive to academic values and culture.

Additional measures and criteria need to be developed for the monitoring and evaluation of administrative activities.

We need to encourage and facilitate evaluations on the departmental level on the one hand. We also need to attempt to coordinate and streamline data collection and analysis at the campus-wide level.

Issues Relating to Evaluation

Based on the evidence presented in this report, the case can be made that this institution has advanced relatively far in the development and use of various forms of evaluation.

This institution is committed to developing a more systematic evaluative process over the next several years. In the following section a number of basic concerns or “strategic issues” are suggested in this context. Any institution runs a significant risk in proceeding headlong into evaluation processes or any other contemporary (or often trendy) management system. Nonetheless, it is critical that we, as an institution, recognize some of the complexities and risks involved in embarking on a ambitious evaluation plan. It is only by taking these constraints into consideration that we will move forward with a workable process for evaluation.

There are also a number of procedural or tactical considerations which will enter into the actual design of any future evaluation system.

What Do We Mean by Evaluation?

Evaluation is ultimately a judgmental activity by which any program or function is assessed in terms of the extent to which it successfully fulfills the purposes and objectives for which it is conducted. Ideally, this judgmental process is supported by objective information organized in such a way as to illuminate a number of criteria which are generally agreed to measure or reflect the quality, effectiveness, or efficiency of a program. While the quality of an evaluation is directly related to the quality and reliability of information, information alone is not sufficient for evaluation. The information and the process and design of the evaluation should be structured so that the information is relevant to the evaluation questions at hand and the results of the evaluation are useful for decision making.

Much of the material described in this document may or may not qualify as evaluation, depending upon the way in
which the studies or data collection efforts are designed and the uses to which the information is put. In the future we will need to be more clear about the types of evaluations needed and how we can use information to its best advantage.

We will be developing a long-range plan for an evaluation system or systems. Such a plan will need to address the following basic questions.

1. **What needs to be evaluated, when, and how?**

We need to be very conscious and deliberate about choices of what to evaluate. To a large extent our planning process has enabled us to be quite explicit about the purposes and objectives of University programs and activities. We need to be equally clear about the purposes of evaluating those programs. Obviously we cannot, and should not, evaluate everything all the time. Our evaluation plan will need to set a balanced approach in evaluating student outcomes, faculty effectiveness, academic programs, public service, support services, administrative operations, and other broader elements of the quality of campus life.

Depending upon the nature of the area being evaluated, we will need to pursue a mix of strategies including comprehensive evaluations, special studies, planning/budgeting reviews, surveys, and on-going data collection and monitoring. We will also need to consider questions of timing and frequency of evaluations and data collection. More specific issues of research design and resources depend upon these basic questions.

2. **Evaluation for what and for whom?**

Evaluation in some form is essential at all levels of the University and, as our self-study indicates, is used in a broad variety of contexts. Some of our most important evaluations are those that each of us engage in as individuals. We may never report these evaluations. For example, when professors read final examinations, they make some judgment of what they have taught well and what they have taught badly. When they read student critiques of teaching, they may concur that some criticisms are warranted and resolve to change a teaching approach. When they are asked to serve on a University committee, they make some evaluative judgment about how to best spend their time.

Other very important evaluative decisions are made on the department level among a relatively small group of people. To a large degree, we leave to a mathematics department decisions regarding the mathematics to be taught and the courses to be required of a mathematics major. Within general University regulations, the faculty of an English department determine the content of English courses. We may not have a process of requesting justification of the decisions made, but we have a great deal of consensus concerning the locus of responsibility for such judgments.

The design of an evaluation, its degree of rigor, and the manner in which its results are used will vary greatly from one context to another (e.g., ranging from evaluation of an individual’s performance to a comprehensive evaluation of an academic program or an institution or unit within the institution). In some cases, periodic review of a few key performance indicators may be sufficient. In others, a more systematic and on-going evaluation procedure may be needed. In any case, we need to keep the needs of the audience or end user clearly in mind and to tailor our evaluations in such a way as to optimize their effective utilization. A basic factor in this utilization is whether the evaluation is viewed as summative or formative.

**Summative versus Formative Evaluations**

Most of the evaluative activities on the campus have been used in a formative way; that is, to develop or to strengthen current programs or to identify means by which a set of objectives can be pursued more effectively. Programs at the University also have been the object of summative evaluation, that is, evaluation for the purpose of making decisions about program continuance or certification, as we noted in Part II. The problem arises when information collected in a developmental context is used to support a more conclusionary decision. When this occurs it can engender a good deal of distrust of evaluation by those being evaluated, and it will also tend to restrict the flow of information so necessary, not only for evaluation but for the effective functioning of the university organization.

In the mid 1970s, we did indeed face a budget crisis which demanded a rapid response, and we did indeed use all of the information we had available. We cannot guarantee that we can avert similar crises in the future, yet part of the rationale for our current planning process is to avoid the painful response to crises we made in the past. If we have been successful, then we should be able to redirect our efforts over a longer period of time without the necessity of large-scale dismissal. We recognize that some decisions which affect the University are made off the campus and that we can do little to control some of these decisions. At the same time, if we are to be effective in campus evaluation, then we must reduce to the minimum the threat of evaluative activity.

For these reasons, it is advisable to keep formative and summative evaluations quite distinct. There are several ways in which this separation can be maintained.

**Criteria**

Although both summative and formative evaluations may rely on the same bases of information, the questions asked and the uses of the data are quite distinct under each approach. With respect to questions of program continuance, for example, evaluative questions and data are only one element. Criteria used on this campus in the past have included quality, need, and cost. Conceivably, a program which ranks high on need or centrality but low in quality or effectiveness may nonetheless be so essential to a university that it is continued, even without strengthening it or correcting its deficiencies.

**Levels of Analysis**

Second, summative decisions on program termination tend to be made on a broader level of analysis than that required for more targeted efforts to strengthen or enhance programs. In cases of financial exigency, for example, summative decisions may need to be made with or without the benefit of good information. In such a case, the
benefits of generating some level of information outweigh the risks, since the risks of data-free decisions are even greater.

Uses and Abuses of Data
While it is difficult in practice to restrict the use of information only to formative evaluation purposes, it is nonetheless important to disclose at the point of data collection how evaluative information is intended to be used.

To the extent possible, the academic or administrative unit being evaluated should be informed of how the information collected will be used. This should lend credibility to the evaluative process and maintain more open lines of communication. On the one hand, we may need to consider a dual system in which information for summative evaluations is collected under separate process. Short of that, whenever information collected in one context is used in another, it should be clearly identified and should not be used as a sole or primary source of information. As an illustration, data collected for the purpose of improving the quality of teaching should not be used to criticize an instructional program. Information collected for the sole purpose of improving an administrative service should not be used to make a decision about promoting an individual employee. Any such decisions should rest on a number of additional criteria and supporting information.

Multiple Sources of Data
A related point is that no major recommendations or decisions should rely, exclusively or even predominantly, on one set of data or on a single evaluation criterion. Ideally, there should be a direct correlation between the magnitude or scope of the evaluation issue and the sources of evidence and multiplicity of approaches used in the evaluation. We do not need simple answers based on limited evidence for complex issues.

Objectivity and Openness
Under any circumstances, evaluation data should be objective and verifiable. Further, any conclusions and recommendations made on the basis of the data should be open to review and criticism by the affected group or organizational unit.

Nonthreatening Modes of Evaluation
Any activity which is oriented toward change is inherently threatening. We may need to confront that issue at the front end of evaluation design. Some remedies have already been suggested, such as openness, objectivity, clarity on use of the data, etc. In addition, the manner in which information is collected, the instruments used, and the methods of interpreting the data need to be as nonthreatening as possible. These may include a sensitive balance of qualitative data as well as quantitative data, defining criteria in terms that are generally recognized by the evaluatee (i.e., the significance of research and publication, not just the quantity), and where possible, using peer review or external assessments within the relevant profession or discipline.

Agreement on Criteria and Rules of the Game
In order for evaluation to be accepted, there needs to be some consensus on such issues as the following:
1. Whether the evaluation is assessing the important aspects of the program or activity, rather than documenting the trivial or that which is readily measurable.
2. That the process and methodology are open and objective.
3. That the questions asked are the relevant questions.
4. That the results are used sensitively and fairly.

Linking Evaluation to Decision Making
This concern relates back to the question raised earlier, “Evaluation for What?” We cannot afford to evaluate programs for their intrinsic interest. Evaluations must be a natural outgrowth of the on-going process of governing and managing the University. Similarly, the results of evaluation must be actionable; they should distinguish between those problems over which the University has little or no control and those areas where effective action can influence the results. One example is the conceptual problem of “value added” in student outcomes research. To what extent did the University experience contribute to the observed change in student attitudes or behavior and, further, in what respects can a university directly influence those student outcomes. For example, it helps us little to learn about changes in students' political beliefs unless those beliefs can somehow be linked to the impact of the educational experience. To cite another hypothetical example in the administrative area, an evaluation study may indicate inefficiency or duplication of effort in a finance function. However, if most of those functions and procedures are externally mandated and beyond the control of the campus, this suggests a kind of evaluation problem different from one in which the ameliorative action were entirely within the capability of the campus.

At the same time, we must guard against avoiding the significant issues in favor of problems which are easier to evaluate. While we should be concerned with quantification and methodological rigor, we should not allow this to limit our focus to trivial issues which are often readily quantified. Similarly, we should not assume at the outset that all complex problems are beyond the control of the campus. A careful, thorough evaluation should identify those aspects of the problem which are amenable to campus efforts and also identify those areas where the campus should attempt to influence forces external to the campus.

Evaluation and Resource Allocation
A special application of evaluation is in resource allocation. Any budgeting activity involves at least intuitive assessments of the relative quality or effectiveness of the activities being supported. Clearly, resources can be used more effectively when allocations are informed by data. Data alone are not sufficient for budgeting decisions. Evaluative judgments will need to be made concerning the setting of priorities among competing objectives and the maintenance of a core level of support for all University
should not expect too much from evaluation, particularly
in terms of saving money. As noted earlier, summative
evaluations will not automatically lead to program
reduction. Formative evaluations, on the other hand, are
more likely to identify critical resource needs for
strengthening programs; and this has largely been our
experience in response to GAC reviews.

Further, evaluations need to be defined concretely
enough (i.e., actionable) so that the resource implications
can be identified. For example, what are the possible
effective responses to a global finding that students
majoring in program x feel they have attained their
educational goals to a greater extent than students in
program y? Does this finding suggest any resource
implications? This question can only be answered by
further efforts to study a very complex question. We need
to ask whether the students’ perception of greater goal
attainment is confirmed as accurate by any other data. If
the perception seems to be accurate, then we need to try to
determine why the differences occurred. Does this finding
suggest any resource implication? If we attribute the
difference to variations such as staffing levels, then
resources may be involved. However, we know that many
elements which affect the quality of the educational
experience of a student are not correlated with cost. When
a primary concern is economic, the answer to the question
is ambiguous.

Evaluation Appropriate to a University Environment
A university is a unique organization that cannot be run
like a business or government agency. The evaluation
approaches and systems developed here must reflect this
uniqueness and be compatible with a university
environment. This compatibility requires meaningful
participation in evaluation by governance and by faculty
generally. The measures or indicators used must reflect the
real activity of the university and be intelligible to faculty.
We may need to rely heavily on qualitative indicators and
evidence to a significant extent. We may need to read more
written narrative and fewer computer printouts.

The evaluation system must be nonthreatening and must
encourage constructive, positive behavior by those
involved in all phases of evaluation. Evaluations see as
punitive will discourage initiative or risk-taking so
necessary for innovation or improvement. If the
evaluation criteria become too overbearing, behavior is
often reoriented toward the evaluation measure rather
than the real activity. For example, enrollment formulas
may encourage all sorts of dysfunctional behavior in order
to maintain high levels of enrollment.

It is also important to keep a clear vision of what the
university is all about. In this age of accountability, cost-
effectiveness, and systems approaches to management, one
can easily evaluate the superficial and ignore what we
really seek to accomplish. Mission statements, including
ours, can easily be dismissed as standard academic
rhetoric. However, these vague generalities may be a better
reminder of our purpose than the more precise indicators
we develop.

What is required is a sense of ownership or commitment
by the faculty and staff to the evaluation system being
developed. This suggests a very special form of
participation, not unlike that of the planning process which
we now employ. Faculty, staff, and students of the
university need to feel that their contributions to the
university, in whatever form, are valued. Evaluation is a
much more total and effective enterprise when each person
feels that her/his image is accepted and valued. This is not
so much a matter of a system of special awards, as it is the
developing of an elusive sense of shared respect. The
contributions of those who teach large sections of
undergraduates so that internationally renowned scholars
can teach small research seminars must be recognized. The
teacher of undergraduates needs to recognize the
contribution of the senior scholar. Both groups need to
know that their different contributions are valued by
department colleagues and throughout the University. If
this sense of shared respect is developed, then the basis is
formed for evaluation that may make a difference.

In the ideal milieu for university evaluation, we would
all share a set of goals and values, and we would commit
our energies to a common purpose. We would be open to
information that would convince us that changes in our
individual and collective behavior would improve our
attainment of purposes.

The Planning Process
The campus planning process is the most comprehensive
system of communication and information sharing within
the University. It involves consultation at the
departmental, college or school, divisional, and
presidential levels. The annual cycle provides a degree of
predictability and consistency. The planning process is one
of the best devices for further developing and extending
evaluation systems on campus.

The planning process can contribute to evaluation in the
following ways. The three-year plans collectively represent
a hierarchy of means-ends statements (University goals,
priorities, action steps, divisional priorities and action
steps, departmental priorities and action steps) which
provide meaningful reference points or standards for
evaluation. Since these goals are reviewed and updated
annually, they tend to be valid and timely reflections of
program purposes and objectives. The plan review process
is itself evaluative in character. Departmental progress
reports are reviewed up the administrative line in terms of
progress toward departmental and University objectives
and the appropriateness and relative priority of
departmental objectives. These informal reviews can (and
have) been used to identify issues for more intensive study.
Finally, evaluations will also support planning by
providing feedback on the extent to which planned
programs are meeting their objectives, and in some cases,
whether the University is pursuing the most appropriate
objectives.

Cost-Effectiveness of Evaluation
Clearly, we cannot afford to evaluate everything. Many of
the considerations discussed above (clarity, actionability,
acceptability to the University environment, etc.) will influence how successful any given evaluation may be. We will need to start incrementally and experiment with evaluations. Our planning process may be of some assistance in identifying those areas in which evaluations are most needed. We will need to be judicious in committing human and financial resources to evaluation, however, particularly during the first few years.

We may find that fairly low-level, specific management or efficiency studies may yield the greatest return in terms of improved methods, incremental savings, and efficiencies.

This self-study has shown us how extensively we are already committed to evaluation. What is needed in the future is not necessarily an extension of this commitment, but a consolidation and systemization of much of what we are already doing and an identification of those gaps where further evaluation is warranted.

Procedural Concerns

A Multifaceted Approach

Part II of this report portrayed the diversity of types of data and analysis currently available for evaluation. There is always a tendency to conduct a special survey or impose yet another reporting requirement in response to idiosyncratic information needs. Our future evaluation strategy will need to consider the best means of acquiring information in a systematic fashion while eliminating redundancy.

Annual Reports

We have discontinued the requirement for annual reports and have incorporated much of this function in the three-year plan update. A consistent and efficient method of collecting data on faculty activity (teaching, research, public service, etc.) on an annual basis will need to be developed.

Centralized Data Collection

We will attempt to utilize centrally collected data wherever possible to relieve the reporting burden on departments.

Monitoring

In many cases special reporting or evaluation study is not required, but a periodic monitoring of key indicators is sufficient. An annual review of enrollment data, test scores, trends, and other routinely reported data may provide an early warning that more extensive diagnostic evaluation of students is needed.

Special Studies

Periodically a special study focused on a particular issue is needed. Such a study may be less elaborate than a formal evaluation study and less frequent than annual reviews or annual data collection. Again using student recruitment as an illustration, at some point in the future, based on our annual monitoring of admissions activity, we may find it advisable to evaluate our ability to attract high-quality freshmen students.

Such an assessment requires a review of our student recruitment procedures, of our means of making admissions decisions, of demographics, and of trends in such indicators as SAT scores and high school grades. We might also decide that we need to conduct attitudinal studies among high school students in places from which we attract few students.

With such information in hand, we would then make a judgment about the degree to which our priority of drawing high-quality full-time freshmen was being realized. If we were satisfied that our mechanisms and results for attracting students were satisfactory, then the evaluative effort would be complete.

If not, the next phase of our evaluative procedure would be diagnostic. We would attempt to specify why we felt we were not attaining our goal and what we could do about it. Depending upon our analysis of the problem, a number of different directions might emerge. We might discover that we were failing to attract sufficiently high-quality freshmen due to curricular concerns, failure to project an appropriate public image, administrative delays, noncompetitive financial aid, or whatever. Based on these findings, appropriate action steps would be devised, which would then be re-reviewed at a future time.

Comprehensive Evaluations

Such evaluations as the GAC reviews of academic programs or external reviews of support programs provide a useful base of information for followup study, and as more reviews are conducted, we will have a rich base of data for programs across the campus. Consideration should be given to selectively updating some of this data periodically during the interim between reviews. We are currently developing a procedure for conducting parallel reviews of the graduate and undergraduate programs within each academic department. This should be more efficient and less burdensome on the departments.

Departmental Initiatives

When we describe the evaluation activity on a campus such as this one, we almost inevitably stress the formal activities that result in self-studies, task force reports, or three-year plans. Yet we know that a great deal of evaluation takes place routinely at the department level. Many of the evaluative decisions made on the individual or department level are implemented without any special review necessary. Other decisions are already provided for in existing procedures. For example, we have mechanisms by which new courses are proposed and approved. In other cases some coordination will be needed to avoid redundancy with centralized efforts, and to set priorities in those cases where departmental evaluations require additional resources to conduct.

As an illustration, a department may wish to survey graduates of a graduate program and other students who left prior to degree completion to obtain data on career status in order and an assessment of their educational program. In such an instance, the study could be proposed in the department's three-year plan update, together with any resource requirements. This would then be reviewed as any other priority claimant for resources in the budgetary process. In addition, staff from Institutional Research could be made available to consult with the department in
instrument design and to help standardize some of the data definitions to improve comparability with data collected by other departments.

**Evaluative Information**

There are a number of ways in which we can better utilize existing information and existing collection procedures for evaluation.

**Reporting**

We prepare annually a great many standard reports for external agencies. Many of these reports require data collection on a recurring basis. We should try to exploit these data more fully by secondary analyses. Where the data are not defined in a form useful for internal purposes, we should attempt to "piggy back" our data collection with the data collection for these reports.

**Techniques of Data Collection and Analysis**

We need to review and improve our techniques of data collection and analysis. We might get better information more economically by utilizing smaller samples and/or matrix sampling notions. We might find better ways of entering data and more appropriate statistical treatment.

**Management Information Systems**

This campus has been moving ahead, although somewhat slowly, in the development of integrated computerized information systems. Many of these systems provide data useful for ongoing monitoring (e.g., monthly reports on the status of graduate student applicants, admissions, and enrollees), and the system also provides a data base for evaluation studies. We need to expedite the development of additional systems and adapt our current systems to provide management-oriented, summary, and analytical data.

**Student Surveys**

We need to develop a procedure for coordinating the various surveys of students on our campus to assure that researchers are aware of the activities of colleagues and that students are not inundated with survey forms.

We plan to continue to focus on developmental efforts in outcomes research, including a continued testing and refinement of our instrumentation and a broader dissemination of results, particularly with respect to influencing educational policy.

**Technical Assistance**

We need a census of campus talent who could provide advice on specific kinds of evaluative efforts. We can note many examples in which a faculty member has drawn on professional expertise to help with a campus problem. A more organized effort to know the talents we have available might be helpful.

**Feedback Mechanisms**

There are a number of ways that individual faculty and departments receive feedback: reviews for merit, program reviews by graduate and undergraduate councils, and data routinely provided on enrollments, workload, and degrees awarded.

We continue to search for ways to provide adequate feedback in the three-year planning process. This year, deans will be asked to review department three-year plans and to indicate school-wide priorities. By this procedure, department faculties may be informed about how their plans are viewed compared with others in the school. This information may be helpful in interpreting any feedback later provided.

Appropriate methods will also be devised to advise faculty and departments on the results of any evaluations which might pertain to their activities or interests in the University.

**Toward an Evaluation System**

**A Heuristic Evaluation Model**

We have found through our self-study that we need to systematize our current evaluation activities to establish a firm foundation for their refinement, elaboration, and extension. In the preceding section, a number of general issues and procedural devices relating to such a system were discussed. Three conclusions emerged from that discussion:

1. Many of our evaluation efforts are a regular part of our campus life. These evaluations are carried on by individual faculty and by departments in a continuing effort to be effective in research, teaching, and service. Usually these evaluations activities have no special resource requirements, and they may not be reflected directly in a planning/budgeting process.

2. While we encourage informal evaluation, we also need to make systematic efforts to make evaluation an organic part of the University's planning/budgeting process.

3. We currently collect a great deal of information. In order for such information to be most useful for evaluation (and also integrated into our decision-making systems), we need greater clarity on the conceptual level regarding goals, evaluation criteria and indicators, and evaluation methods.

A heuristic model which attempts to place future evaluation activity in the context of the goals of the University's mission statement is suggested. While the model is at a fairly primitive stage of development, it does nonetheless reflect our current thinking and should be useful in guiding evaluation activity in the future. This model is then related to our planning/budgeting process to illustrate how the planning process may derive evaluation decisions in the future.

This University is unusual in the degree to which its formal mission statement and fundamental goals are reflected in the annual planning/budgeting process. The planning process produces a hierarchy of goal statements at various levels of abstraction which can be viewed as a "means-end chain" from global University goals to discrete action steps which often become the responsibility of single individuals or small groups. Briefly, the architecture of goals and objectives on campus generally conforms to the following pattern portrayed in Figure 11.

Ultimately, the task of evaluation is to relate discrete activities and information to some broader purpose or
### Figure 11
The Architecture of Planning:
The Relationship Among the Various Levels of Planning &
Priority Setting at State University of New York at Albany

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organizational Level</th>
<th>Scope</th>
<th>Means/Ends Chain</th>
<th>Publication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>University Center</strong></td>
<td>General Purpose</td>
<td>Mission Statement Goals</td>
<td>Mission Statement Programs &amp; Priorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mid-Range Institutional Goals</td>
<td>Priorities for Action</td>
<td>Programs &amp; Priorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Short Range Implementation</td>
<td>Action Steps</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>College/School/Division</strong></td>
<td>General Purpose</td>
<td>Goals</td>
<td>Abstracts of Three Year Plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mid-Range Goals</td>
<td>Priorities for Action*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Implementation</td>
<td>Action Steps</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Department/Unit</strong></td>
<td>Purposes</td>
<td>Goals</td>
<td>Abstracts of Three Year Plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mid-Range Goals</td>
<td>Priorities for Action*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Implementation</td>
<td>Action Steps</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Related to University-wide Priorities and Action Steps.*
objective. To assess a function or activity we need reference to some standard, and such standards may be imposed either externally (as in the case in many business or administrative areas) or set internally in relation to some goal. Our model starts with the primary goals of the mission statement and relates these to evaluation. Three intervening constructs are used: requisites; locus of responsibility; and indicators.

Goals
The University's Mission Statement articulates a number of fundamental purposes and basic values generic to universities (i.e., "The Concept of a University") and specific to The University at Albany ("The University Setting").

1. A commitment to the discovery and advancement of knowledge.
2. A commitment to the teaching of students.
3. A commitment to public service.
4. A commitment to freedom of thought and inquiry.
5. A commitment to the highest standards of academic quality.
6. A particular emphasis on matters of public policy reflected in the University's programs of instruction, research, and public service.

Within that context a number of goals are specified. These can be grouped into four major categories:

1. Goals of Intellectual Development
   a. Develop skills of critical thinking and reasoning
   b. Develop and foster the process of intellectual discovery and exploration of the unknown
   c. Develop an awareness of, and interest in, the breadth of human intellectual achievement and cultural experience.

2. Goals of Personal Development
   a. To facilitate emotional development and clarification of personal values.
   b. To facilitate social development and effectiveness in interpersonal relationships.
   c. To facilitate physical development, health, and well being.
   d. Maintain a campus environment which will foster a sense of community.
   e. Maintain a campus environment which will foster a sense of social responsibility.

3. Research Goals
   a. Contribute to the general advancement of knowledge.
   b. To contribute to the solution of societal problems.

4. Public Service
   a. Offer opportunities for life-long learning as an integral part of instructional activities.
   b. Contribute to the development of the local area through the provision of technical services.
   c. Contribute to the development of the local area through the provision of cultural and clinical services which reinforce the educational mission.

Requisites
Any statement of goals for a university implies a set of necessary conditions. For example, goals of intellectual development imply students with certain characteristics. For example, we stipulate our intention to enroll students with high academic potential, and our ability to fulfill this intention is critically linked to our goals. As part of the system that links goals and evaluations we have developed a list of requisites: the elements that we feel are logical preconditions to carry out these activities that have the potential to achieve goals.

Locus of Major Responsibility
In the largest sense, each of us on the campus is responsible for every aspect of campus life. For purposes of evaluation, however, we need to think of responsibility in a narrower sense. For example, we have an Admissions Office charged with recruiting students. Its ability to be effective is influenced by many conditions beyond its control, but the office is one logical group to keep us informed of the status of our recruitment activity and to alert us if necessary. It is critical to any effective evaluation design that the locus of primary responsibility is clearly identified, both for program planning and for subsequent evaluation of performance. In a complex organization such as a university, responsibility is often shared. For the most part, however, responsibilities are identified and coordinated through the planning process, by virtue of each unit's plans stating their responsibilities for each respective aspect of a broader university goal.

Indicators
Information alone does not constitute evaluation. Information needs to be structured in terms of some indicators or measures of performance. Performance standards, such as those used in industry, are largely lacking in higher education and often are not appropriate. Indeed in some areas of intellectual activity, specific quantitative standards may only do violence to what is intended to be accomplished. We are attempting to find indicators which relate to the goals and requisites of the model. Thus, for example, using our admissions illustration, such indicators as grade-point average and standardized test scores are pertinent either for periodic monitoring of performance, or for more intensive evaluation study.

Figure 12 illustrates the logical structure of the model. Requisites, loci of responsibility, and indicators are suggested for the cluster of goals dealing with intellectual development drawn from the Mission Statement (i.e., Goals I, a-c listed above). A similar formulation has been done for the three other goals areas, but is not reprinted here.

Although this model still requires a great deal of refinement, it is expected that it will serve at least three purposes. First, it portrays the logic of the evaluation process and relates each potential evaluation item to an overarching goal. Second, it illustrates the types of indicators available or needed and can thereby serve as a guide to evaluation design and data collection. Third, it forces us to think of evaluation concerns in the context of planning and serves a heuristic function by reminding us that our goal statements should be sufficiently clear in
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requisites</th>
<th>Locus of Major Responsibility</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FOR GOALS OF UNDERGRADUATE INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1. High-quality in-coming students                                        | 1.a. Admissions Office  
  b. Undergraduate Academic Council                          | 1.a. Grade-point average, rank in class, and standardized text scores for entering students.  
  b. Size and diversity of applicant pool  
  c. Enrollment draw and admission yield |
| 2. Excellent teaching                                                     | 2.a. Academic departments and schools  
  b. Undergraduate Academic Council                          | 2.a. Student judgment concerning the adequacy of instruction  
  b. Peer ratings based on classroom observation and on reviews of instructional materials. |
| 3. A curriculum of strength and diversity                                 | 3.a. Academic departments and schools  
  b. Undergraduate Academic Council                          | 3.a. Performance of Albany students on standardized tests taken near the end of the academic programs.  
  b. Ability of students who complete the program to gain admission to more advanced programs.  
  c. Patterns of courses actually taken by students which reflect cultural and interdisciplinary diversity.  
  d. Record of employment and life experiences after completing the program.  
  e. Opinions of students & alumni concerning the progress they have made in attaining goals. |
| 4. Programs which encourage experience in a variety of environments.      | 4.a. Academic departments and schools, especially those sponsoring exchange programs.  
  b. Office of International Programs.  
  c. Community Programs.                                | 4.a. Percent of students who study abroad & who work in environments off the campus as part of their academic program.  
  b. Judgements of students about the value of their work/study experiences. |
| 5. An effective advisement system.                                        | 5.a. Center for Undergraduate Education  
  b. Perceptions of advisement staff.                        |


terms of locus of responsibility, intended results, and the
evaluation criteria. In this sense, the model can be used for
evaluating the utility of our planning process as a guide to
evaluation.

**Linkage to the Planning Process**

Evaluation can be integrated into our planning process in
at least two important ways: (1) Planning goals and
priorities can be used as criteria statements for evaluations
through a process based on the evaluation model; and (2)
the priority setting of the planning process can itself
identify areas germane for evaluation, guide the process of
selecting which evaluation studies to conduct, and provide
the mechanism for feedback and utilization of the results
of any evaluation studies.

**Evaluation Statements**

The annual review and updating of University-wide
Priorities for Action may well serve as the mechanism to
drive the evaluation process. *Programs and Priorities 1980*
lists approximately 30 priorities for action. Each of these
can be related to one or more goals of the University's
mission statement, and they also relate to the requisites in
the evaluation model. In addition, the locus of responsibility
is either stated, or can be inferred, by each statement.

In several instances, priority statements are complex,
consisting of several elements, each of which involves a
separate locus of responsibility and related evaluation
criteria and indicators. At first glance this may present a
problem. While a more comprehensive priority statement
has the benefit of involving a broader segment of the
University in its achievement, it also obscures specific lines
of responsibility.

In one sense, this is a necessary artifact of university
organizations, which are comparatively flat rather than
heirarchical in their structure and system of shared
authority. In another respect, we have attempted to
alleviate this problem by differentiating each priority
statement into a number of "action steps" which are more
specific and operational. For example, the first priority
listed in *Programs and Priorities 1980* is "to strengthen the
quality of the undergraduate experience through the
enhancement of student learning skills, teaching,
advise, and on-going curricular review." This is
followed by a series of seven action steps which elaborate
on each element of the compound priority statement and
make it more specific and operational.

Any of these priorities or action steps can be related to
the model at the level of requisite criteria. Using the above
example, it can be seen that the four elements of the
priority (student learning, skills, quality of teaching,
quality of advise, and adequacy of the curriculum)
each relate to one or more of the evaluation requisites.
Similar relationships can be found for other goals listed in
*Programs and Priorities 1980* ("Responsive Admission
Procedures," "Educational Opportunity," "Liberal
Education," etc.)

In some cases, where the priority statements go beyond
the original mission statement and the "a priori" requisites
of the model, new requisites may be suggested in light of
the planning process.

The point of this exercise is not the degree of closure on
the model. Indeed, the model needs to remain open and
adaptable, just as the planning priorities are. Rather, the
model can be used as a formal method for analyzing
priority statements in terms of goals and requisites of the
model and, more importantly, to link them to the
respective evaluation indicators.

**Priorities for the Evaluation Process**

Aside from their uses in the evaluation model, the
University-wide priority statements can be used as a device
for identifying those areas of campus activity most in need
of evaluation. Since we cannot (and need not) evaluate
everything all the time, the task of setting priorities for
evaluation is very much like the task of setting substantive
priorities for the University.

We will give serious consideration as to how that may
best be accomplished within the same process. Two
illustrations of how this might work were suggested earlier:
the on-going monitoring and periodic evaluation of
student recruitment, and the example of an academic
department proposing an evaluation study in the course of
preparing their annual update to the departmental three­
year plan. In addition, the priority statements themselves,
as reviewed by the University community and approved by
the president, may call for evaluation studies to be
conducted over the course of one to two years. One of the
action steps for graduate education in the 1980 priorities
document calls for a study of the optimal size and mix of
the University's graduate enrollment, balance between
graduate and undergraduate enrollment, and a strategy for
maintaining quality in the future. Such a study is both
evaluative and prospective; evaluating our present position
and suggesting further evaluation needs for the future.

The advantages of setting evaluation priorities in the
context of the planning process are several:

1. It capitalizes on an annual, synoptic review across all
   major University activities.
2. It is a goal-drive activity.
3. It is merged with resource allocation, thereby linking
   budgeting with evaluation.
4. Evaluation (both on-going monitoring as well as
   selective in-depth reviews) provides feedback for
   planning and resource allocation.
5. It more clearly integrates evaluation with existing
decision-making structures and processes.

The potential constraints are the complexity of the
process, the methodological and organizational
complexities of evaluation, and constraints of time and
resources. It is this latter concern of procedures which will
occupy the focus of attention on this campus during the
next several months. In addition to the advice and
suggestions on methodology we hope to obtain from the
Middle States visitation team, questions of process and
procedures are areas in which suggestions are particularly
welcome from all members of the campus community.
Next Steps

This evaluation process cannot be the responsibility of the campus administration alone, nor can it be limited to only a segment of the University community. In order for it to be successful, it must enjoy the support of all elements of the University community, and in various ways draw upon and reflect their activities in teaching, research, service, and administrative support. In recognition of that need, we are initiating the following process to further develop and review systems of evaluation on campus.

The Council on Educational Policy (EPC) of the University Senate has established a Committee on Evaluation Policy. This committee has equal standing with the other two EPC subcommittees on planning (the Long-Range Planning Committee) and resources (the Resource Allocation Committee). Their common structure through EPC should facilitate, at the governance level, an articulation between planning, budgeting, and evaluation.

During the past year, the Middle States Steering Committee has been coordinating the self-study process and the preparation of this report. In the course of its activity, it has acquired considerable familiarity and expertise regarding evaluation at this University. Members of the Steering Committee will be working in cooperation with the EPC Committee on Evaluation Policy. Together they will be asked to review several of the policy issues raised in this report, develop proposals for evaluation studies and for improved evaluation procedures and methods, and consult with their colleagues by formal or informal means to develop a multiyear plan for the further development of evaluation at this University.

These proposals will be reviewed by the Council on Educational Policy, other governance councils as appropriate (e.g., Undergraduate Academic Council, Graduate Academic Council, etc.), and by the president and vice-presidents. Following this review, the Evaluation Committee will issue a final report to the president.

Parallel to this process, the president, vice-presidents, and staff will further review the various data collection and reporting processes in use, assess their potential uses for evaluative purposes, seek to eliminate redundancy in reporting and data collection, and identify further information needs.

The president and the administration will also work closely with the Committee on Evaluation to advise it on the feasibility of various alternatives and begin to develop methods of data collection and reporting to support their recommended evaluation procedures. Following a campus-wide dissemination of the Evaluation Committee report, individual units of the University will be encouraged to incorporate appropriate elements of the proposed evaluation system in their three-year planning process.

Concluding Remarks

This self-study focused on an assessment of the University's current and prospective evaluative activities. The wide range of academic and administrative evaluation was reviewed. In presenting this assessment, special attention was paid to the role of evaluation in our planning/budgeting processes on campus. The development of an evaluation system at this institution has been an evolutionary process, and we expect that evolutionary development to continue for several years. We have learned a great deal during the past year through this self-study exercise, and this undoubtedly will assist us in rationalizing and further extending our evaluation processes. A number of delicate issues surround the development and implementation of evaluative activity at any university and these were summarized in Part III.

In many respects The University at Albany can be characterized as a self-reflective institution, an institution with clearly stated purposes and objectives, and with developing mechanisms for assessing its relative standing in relation to those goals and objectives. This is the dynamic element of the institution's development which is perhaps best exemplified by the University's planning/budgeting process.

We are grateful to the Middle States Association for the opportunity it has afforded us to look systematically at this and to make meaningful progress.