PROGRESS REPORT

Prepared for the

MIDDLE STATES COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION

April 1, 2013

Chief Executive Officer:
Donald P. Christian, President

Commission Action which preceded this report:
Reaffirmation of Accreditation, June 23, 2011

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INTRODUCTION

SUNY New Paltz (New Paltz) is a comprehensive, master's level college, one of the 64 campuses of the State University of New York System. The College is located in scenic New Paltz, halfway between Albany and New York City and nestled in the shadows of the Shawangunk Mountains. In the proud tradition of SUNY, New Paltz's mission reflects a commitment to providing high quality, affordable education to students from all social and economic backgrounds. We are a faculty and campus community dedicated to the construction of a vibrant intellectual/creative public forum, which reflects and celebrates the diversity of our society and encourages and supports active participation in scholarly and artistic activity. New Paltz is an active contributor to the schools, community institutions, and economic and cultural life of our region. We are selective in admitting students who show promise of thriving in a learning environment that is challenging, student-centered, and personalized.

New Paltz is comprised of six academic divisions: The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, School of Education, School of Fine and Performing Arts, School of Business, School of Science and Engineering, and the multidisciplinary Graduate School. Founded in 1828 as a classics school, New Paltz became a state normal school in 1885, and teacher preparation remains an important hallmark of our NCATE-accredited School of Education. The sixteen departments and programs in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences support an extensive, rigorous general education program, and offer instruction in the humanities and social sciences.

The School of Fine and Performing Arts is among the best in the nation and is comprised of accredited programs in Art Education, Art History, Art Studio, Music, and Theatre Arts. The school is committed to high level academic programs as is evidenced by the *U.S. News and World Report's* recognition, in 2008, of our Metal program as the number one in the nation. The School of Science and Engineering offers students opportunities for collaborative research with distinguished faculty in a range of physical sciences and engineering, as well as providing general education offerings in the natural sciences. Programs in Environmental Studies and Environmental Geochemical Science are enhanced by a rich and diverse natural environment. The School of Business, which was recently accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), has grown in reputation because of the strength of its academic programs and its extensive involvement in the business community. Finally, the Graduate School meets regional educational needs through its over 50 degree programs and post-master's certificates of advanced study for school administrators.

Since the 2001 decennial self-study, New Paltz has witnessed several changes in key leadership positions. President Roger Bowen resigned in September 2001 and Steven G. Poskanzer, initially serving as interim president, was named to the presidency in May of 2003. National searches resulted in the appointment of a new Vice President for Administration and Finance in 2008 (Jacqueline DiStefano) and a new Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs in 2009 (Donald Christian). The College was extraordinarily well served by its outgoing provost, David Lavallee, whom we credit with leading many of the initiatives that were addressed throughout our 2011 self-study. In spring 2010 President Steven Poskanzer, after almost 10 years of service to the College, accepted the presidency at Carleton College and Provost Christian was named by the SUNY Board of Trustees as interim president of New Paltz. In conjunction with his

appointment Laurel M. Garrick Duhaney, previously Associate Provost and Dean of the Graduate School, assumed the position of Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. In fall 2011 Donald Christian became president of New Paltz and Cheryl Torsney became Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. Following a national search, Philip Mauceri was appointed Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs in fall 2012. We are searching for a new Vice President for Administration and Finance to replace Jacqueline DiStefano who resigned from the College in fall 2012. We also created a new vice presidential position and are currently searching for a Vice President for Development. Excluding these searches, all top level administrative positions have either been filled or are continuing.

Although New Paltz has experienced considerable changes in leadership, incumbents have maintained the College's growth, quality, and reputation and have managed the budgetary challenges—especially those of the past four years—with transparency and proficiency. Determined to preserve and solidify New Paltz's reputation as an academically strong public four-year institution, in September 2012, soon after assuming the presidency, Donald Christian commenced strategic planning for the College, focused on improving its current and future success. Likewise, Philip Mauceri, our new Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, has among his many priorities the revitalization of the Graduate School and expanding online teaching and learning efforts that are consonant with the College's mission. Among the other college-wide initiatives that have garnered considerable attention and resources from chief administrators are the revision of the general education (GE) program and fostering evidence-based practices and decision making—in short, sustaining an ethos of assessment at New Paltz.

Our spring 2011 self-study documented New Paltz's progress in implementing assessment across the institution since our last decennial review. In it we acknowledged that although New Paltz has achieved significant success in the systematic implementation of assessment systems campus-wide, we were engaged in the ongoing work of using assessment information in all aspects of the life and work of the College. Recognizing the central role of assessment in evidence-based decision making and in improving programs and services at New Paltz, the Middle States evaluation team commended us for (a) the culture of assessment that we had cultivated to date (Standard 7); (b) the role of assessment data in the College's higher than national average retention and graduation rates, especially among students in the Educational Opportunity Program (Standard 8); and (c) the use of assessment data by Student Affairs to enhance student success (Standard 9). Although three of the five commendations that New Paltz received related to assessment, Middle States:

> *Request[ed] a progress report … documenting (1) further implementation of a comprehensive, organized and sustained process for the assessment of institutional effectiveness, including evidence that assessment has been implemented in all administrative units (Standard 7) and (2) further implementation of a comprehensive, organized and sustained process for the assessment of student learning outcomes, including evidence that all course syllabi include identified student learning outcomes, that assessment has been implemented in all academic units, and that assessment results are used to improve teaching and learning (Standards 11 and 14)*
> (p. 2 of June 24, 2011 Commission letter to President Christian)

PROGRESS TO DATE AND CURRENT STATUS

This progress report describes our advancement, two years after our 2011 Middle States Decennial Review, in responding to the Middle States Commission's underlying concerns and expectations regarding institutional effectiveness and assessment of student learning. We are sustaining our efforts toward creating an inclusive assessment system that aligns with the College's mission, purpose, and organizational structure. Academic and administrative assessment practices are becoming more extensive and GE assessments continue as does foundational work for revising the program. Assessment in the majors is strengthening in quality and results are being used for improvements in teaching and learning and for program enhancements. We continue to work toward integrating assessment campus-wide, with special attention given to areas that have not been fully engaged.

This report also conveys New Paltz's progress in developing a strategic plan. Our Vision Plan has served us extraordinarily well over the last seven years. Although this plan drew broadly from conversations with departments, governance groups, students, and from plans and initiatives of previous presidents, some of our constituents believe that the strategic planning process could have been more consultative. Moreover, the vision plan is not a true strategic plan; there were no benchmarks and no specific objectives. Because of this, in our 2011 self-study report, we recommended that the new president lead the development of a strategic plan and the Middle States Evaluation Team endorsed this recommendation. The progress report also describes our revised assessment organizational structure and the current status of the GE program revisions.

ASSESSMENT OF INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

This section describes our efforts and progress in implementing and sustaining assessment at the institutional level. Specifically, we describe how we are using assessment information to achieve institutional goals and to make decisions in the following administrative and academic support areas: Divisions of Student Affairs, Enrollment Management, Administration and Finance, Communication and Marketing, Academic Affairs, and in the President's area. We also examine our progress in developing a strategic plan for the College, discuss our updated assessment structure, and provide examples of the College's ongoing support for assessment.

SUPPORT FOR ASSESSMENT

Since the 2011 self-study, we have offered several professional development activities for assessment. In January, 2013, executive level administrators, members of the Survey Coordinating Council and the staff of the Office of Institutional Research and Planning (OIRP) spent two days examining our practices in assessing institutional effectiveness with the guidance of Michael Middaugh, formerly with the University of Delaware and a Commissioner with the Middle States Commission on Higher Education and now a consultant. Dr. Middaugh, in consultation with the Administrative Assessment Committee, delivered straight talk about assessing not only 'if they're learning what we're teaching,' but whether New Paltz is an effective institution overall. Several of his suggestions have been put into practice already. For example, given his strong recommendation about the positive impact of sharing the results of survey data, OIRP staff is now attending Academic Deans' Council meetings to share results

from broad-based student surveys. In addition, the campus will begin administering the Admitted Student Questionnaire as an avenue of learning more about why students choose to apply to SUNY New Paltz and why some, after being admitted, choose to attend other institutions. These findings will be fed back to the Admissions Office as well as to academic divisions.

Moreover, there are many other examples of the College's support for assessment. The associate provost has presented sessions on assessment, sponsored faculty and staff travel to off-campus assessment workshops and curricular retreats, and offered small honoraria to part-time faculty for their participation in assessment. She also supported the recognition of faculty for exemplary work in the area of assessment and co-hosted and sponsored a GE Forum on assessment for faculty and staff. Members of the Administrative Assessment Council and Academic Assessment Council have helped individual and small groups of faculty and staff with assessment activities. And the Teaching and Learning Center has offered several workshops to help faculty assess their courses and programs.

STRATEGIC PLAN DEVELOPMENT

In its May 2011 summary report, the Middle States Evaluation Team concurred with the recommendation of the self-study "that the next campus planning initiative include a strategic plan that builds on, translates, and extends the Vision Plan and Vision Points that have served the institution so well." The Team also agreed "with the self-study that the next five-year strategic planning initiative should involve the wider College community to ensure shared ownership and to facilitate implementation."

The following outlines the process by which that recommendation is being realized and the context for this work. During 2011-12, a campus task force developed an alignment of campus goals and priorities with those of *The Power of SUNY* system plan. This report, available at http://www.newpaltz.edu/president/powerofsuny-newpaltz.pdf, was finalized and announced to the campus community in September 2011, and has informed subsequent planning by establishing a SUNY system context for the campus strategic plan.

As previously stated, Donald Christian was appointed President in June 2011, and established the development of *an approach to strategic planning* as a priority initiative for the 2011-12 academic year. In his "State of the College" address at the start of the year, President Christian stated:

> *The College needs to develop a more thorough and expansive strategic plan to guide and frame our work. I do not intend to undertake and complete a strategic planning effort in the first year of my presidency, while I am learning the College in a new way. But I will begin planning and consulting about how to go about this…*

Also during 2011-12, President Christian initiated a "strategic audit," seeking input from about 200 students, academic faculty, professional faculty, classified staff, management confidential administrators, College Council and Foundation Board Directors, alumni, and members of the broader community who interact with the College. In seeking that input, he wrote:

> *I write to ask you to respond to a "campus audit" survey that will provide me as a new president with a qualitative analysis of the hopes, concerns, challenges, and aspirations of*

the College and its members and supporters… **It will be followed by a campuswide strategic planning process that will commence next year** *[emphasis added here].*

As the 2011-12 academic year progressed, President Christian kept the following year's strategic planning in people's minds through comments in his April 2012 Inaugural Address:

*Next year, we will engage in a strategic planning process to guide our future. This process will be consultative, drawing on the creativity and experience of our talented and diverse community. We will **not** begin with a blank slate, but instead our focus will be to refine and operationalize the vision points that have served us so well, and to prioritize our work to achieve the goals I have shared today.*

Throughout 2011-12, the President had been reviewing and considering approaches to strategic planning and consulting with presidential colleagues elsewhere, including some of the "faculty" in the AASCU New Presidents' Academy from the previous summer. In early May, he began working with Dr. William Weary of Fieldstone Consulting, who has consulted and guided the strategic planning processes of numerous other institutions and who had been highly recommended by several other presidents. The President retained Dr. Weary to guide and advise the strategic planning process during 2012-13.

In his August 2012 "State of the College" address, President Christian announced the planning process as follows:

The strategic planning process we will undertake this year will identify 6 to 8 institutional-level projects or initiatives that will receive special focus during the next 3 to 5 years. I will write to you soon to provide more detail. We will consider a wide range of our opportunities and needs, building on our longstanding vision points, on recommendations and issues identified in our recent Middle States re-accreditation, and on themes that I've talked about today. The plan that will come to me for approval in the spring will result from a process guided by a 13-15 member steering committee and an outside consultant. There will be abundant opportunity for consultation, input, and participation.

Following formation of a steering committee and other efforts, President Christian announced the planning process on September 14, 2012. The announcement included the following key elements:

- A focus of the plan on action and improvement during the next 3-5 years
- Previous planning as a foundation
- Emphasis on institutional-level goals for improvement, and 6-8 tasks or projects
- Clarification that additional attention and resources will be focused on those projects
- A specific timeline of the 2012-13 academic year
- Roles of the consultant
- Steering committee composition and role
- Communication and consultation as key values in the process

The planning process included interviews by Dr. Weary with about 100 members of the community during October, a day-long planning retreat in November with about 65 participants,

development by the steering committee of several iterations of a draft strategic plan, review of drafts by the President and Cabinet, further revision by the steering committee, solicitation of input and discussion of the plan by the campus community during March and April, intended final revision by the steering committee in late April, and review and final approval by the President before the end of the academic year.

The broad priorities identified in the current draft are: Nurture innovation and the learning environment, establish an engaged living and learning community, strengthen philanthropic commitments and success, engage alumni in the life of the College, market New Paltz internally and externally, improve internal processes and address institutional capacity, build online education, and strengthen the regional and community engagement. The objectives and priorities will be developed with more specificity after the plan is approved, including establishing metrics and developing dashboards for assessing progress.

REVISED ASSESSEMENT ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Recognizing the insufficiency of our Campus-Wide Assessment Advisory Council (CWAAC) as the primary oversight structure for assessment, the Middle States evaluation team recommended the establishment of a different assessment organizational structure. With presidential and cabinet approval, in spring 2012 we implemented a revised organizational structure for assessment that places the highest responsibility for leadership, policy development and enforcement of assessment on the President and his Cabinet. The President's Cabinet is made up of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Vice President for Enrollment Management, Vice President for Student Affairs, Vice President for Administration and Finance, and Associate Vice President for Communication and Marketing/Chief of Staff. In this revised assessment organizational structure leadership and accountability for assessment are among the Academic Deans' responsibilities while the Associate Provost, General Education (GE) Board chair, Academic and Administrative Assessment Committee chairs, Associate Deans and Associate Vice President for Institutional Research and Planning also lead assessment efforts and have responsibility for implementing assessment policies. The Office of Institutional Research & Planning created the Survey Coordinating Council, which advises on the use of survey research data for assessment purposes, especially for broad institutional-effectiveness purposes. The Survey Coordinating Council, made up of representatives from academic and administrative units from across the college, supports the College's assessment goals. The Administrative and Academic Assessment Committees are advisory to the Associate Provost who coordinates assessment campus-wide.

Our revised assessment organizational structure adopts a campus-wide approach that conveys real support for assessment from the top down and from the bottom up. This structure promotes the engagement of all units in assessment and places accountability for the collection and use of assessment information where it is most likely to advance student engagement and learning and evidence-based decision making. The separation of CWAAC into the Administrative Assessment Committee and the Academic Assessment Committee has helped us to focus more attention and resources on the administrative areas. Since dividing CWAAC into two groups, the Administrative Assessment Committee has developed an assessment handbook to guide staff though the assessment process and to provide information and resources for administrative units.

Finally, the inclusion of assessment activities into the performance programs of members of these two groups sends a strong message that assessment plays an important role on our campus.
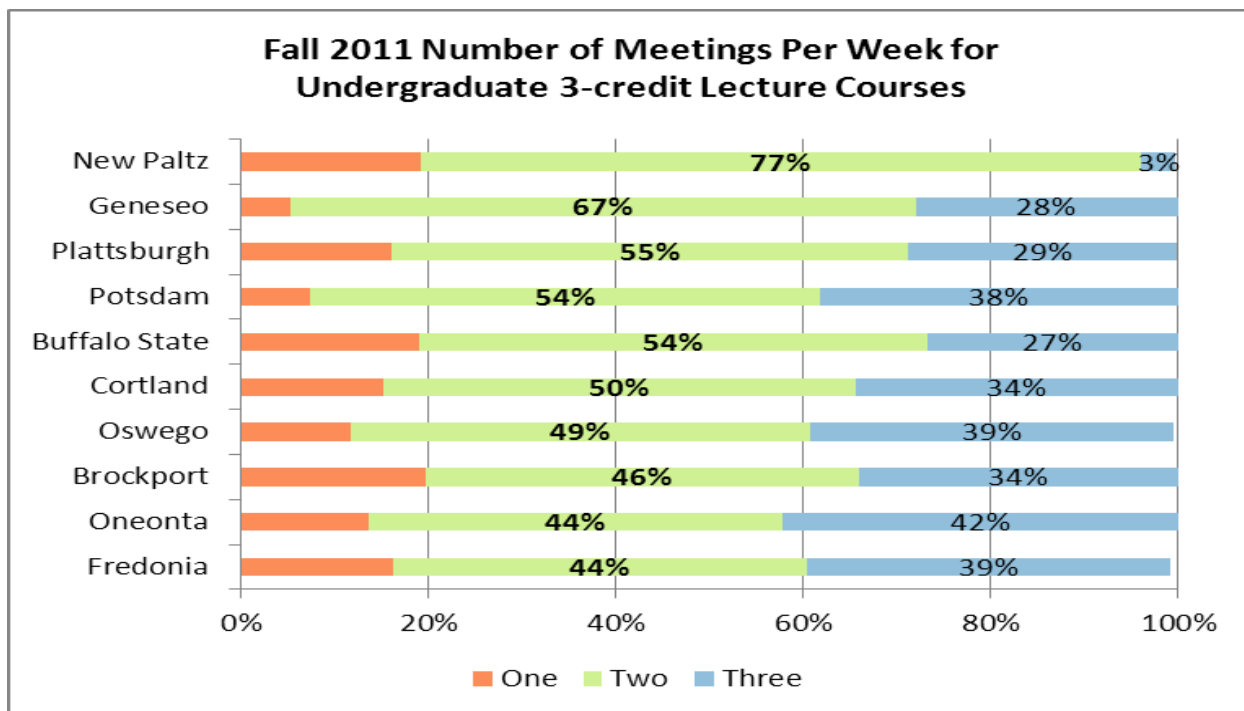

USE OF DATA AND EVIDENCE IN MAJOR INSTITUTIONAL DECISIONS

We share here two examples of ways that the College and its administration have used evidence to inform major institutional decisions. We prefer to think of making "data-informed" rather than "data-driven" decisions. The latter terminology implies a cold calculus to making decisions about complex, multi-faceted issues. The former conveys the important role of judgment and consideration of multiple forms of evidence, and captures the notion that it is only through judgment and assessment that "data" become "information." And, we include both quantitative and qualitative data in our considerations.

Class Scheduling: We are revamping our course scheduling after growing indication that inadequate course availability is impeding student academic progress. Requests to approve registration for courses with time conflicts had been increasing, as had the frequency of the use of Independent Study "workarounds" to course scheduling conflicts. Our system will not let students register for two courses with overlapping times. Faculty were requesting waivers of that requirement, and registering students in independent study rather than the numbered course, thus allowing students into classes with overlapping schedules. At the same time, we had been seeing frequent (as many as 800 per semester) "workflow" requests for course substitutions to modify requirements within the major, allowing students to substitute an elective course for a required one. Such requests are consistent with unacceptable levels of course scheduling conflicts.

Such evidence led us to scrutinize our course scheduling patterns more carefully. Administrators had noted a gradual shift to a schedule of courses meeting once or twice a week. We gathered data on the number of courses meeting once, twice, and three times each week among SUNY comprehensive colleges. As shown in the following chart, New Paltz is a strong outlier in having 97% of its undergraduate courses meet once or twice each week, compared with 73% for the next-highest campus and an average of 66% for the other campuses. Only 5% of New Paltz lower division courses were offered three days per week, compared with a range of 25%-50% for our sister campuses. No (zero) New Paltz lower-division mathematics courses were offered three days per week, while the average was 53% and the range 28-70% for other SUNY campuses.

Aside from pedagogical and student-learning issues, such a schedule clearly includes a higher frequency of 75-minute and 3-hour time slots. This in turn inevitably reduces options for students to assemble a class schedule that avoids conflicts. Such considerations prompted us to enlist the services of a consultant from the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) to evaluate our course scheduling structure and process during March 2012.

Fall 2011 Number of Meetings Per Week for Undergraduate 3-credit Lecture Courses

Campus	One	Two	Three
New Paltz		77%	3%
Geneseo		67%	28%
Plattsburgh		55%	29%
Potsdam		54%	38%
Buffalo State		54%	27%
Cortland		50%	34%
Oswego		49%	39%
Brockport		46%	34%
Oneonta		44%	42%
Fredonia		44%	39%

Legend: ■ One ■ Two ■ Three

That consultation, along with review of course scheduling "best practices" at other colleges and universities, affirmed the need for us to revamp not only our course schedule but also underlying scheduling processes that had contributed to the spread of poor practices. Virtually all of the "best practices" are clearly violated by our approaches.

During the spring semester 2012, we alerted faculty to the fact of this review and that it likely would lead to changes in course scheduling patterns. President Christian's "State of the College" address in August 2012 presented the basic logic and background for changing our approaches to course scheduling. In his September 2012 "monthly report" to the faculty, President Christian shared results of the 2012 SUNY Student Opinion Survey conducted every three years, which allow us to compare the ranking of our students' views with those of students on other campuses. New Paltz students' rating of "availability of courses in your major" ranked us #11 of 12 comprehensive college peers, and #24 of 27 SUNY 4-year institutions. Our students rating of "availability of general education courses" ranked us #11 of 12 comprehensive campuses and #25 of 27 4-year campuses. In our May 2012 Graduating Senior Survey, 39% of graduates who did not complete their degree in four years indicated that availability of courses to fulfill major requirements extended their time to graduation. Sharing data such as these with faculty illustrates our growing practice of using data not only to inform decisions but also to communicate their rationale and need for change.

L. David Eaton, Vice President for Enrollment Management, wrote to the campus community in November 2012 outlining expectations for the development of the fall semester 2013 course schedule, partial realization of the above practices. The College's course scheduling during 2013-14 will be evaluated to inform more-complete implementation of those best practices during 2014 and following.

Investment in fund-raising and philanthropy. SUNY New Paltz lags behind a number of other SUNY comprehensive campuses—and certainly behind peer institutions in other states—in its fund-raising success, and is nowhere nears its philanthropic goals. As noted above, enhancing our capacity in this broad area is an explicit goal of our emerging strategic plan. It was also identified as a top priority by President Christian in his inaugural address. These shortcomings have been long-appreciated, and are reflected in relatively modest dollar amounts raised, little consistent increase over time in fund-raising success, low rates of alumni giving, and the fact that the College has never undertaken a major fund-raising campaign. To add clarity and specificity to the College's previous understanding of these shortfalls and steps already underway during 2011-12 to correct them, a fund-raising feasibility study and institutional advancement assessment was undertaken in 2012. The findings and recommendations of that study both reinforced the rationale for steps already being considered (e.g., investing more resources in communication and marketing), and reinforced the need for continued investment in these and other areas.

This feasibility study was undertaken by the President, the SUNY New Paltz Foundation, and the Development Office, and conducted by an outside consultant. The purposes of the study included:

- Determining perceived strengths, weaknesses, and overall image of SUNY New Paltz
- Determining capacity of Foundation development staff
- Determining philanthropic potential of the college community
- Defining an approach to structuring and communicating a capital campaign
- Identifying prospective volunteer leadership
- Determining strategic issues that will influence the success of a capital campaign

The study included interviews, focus groups, and analysis of survey responses from alumni, friends, donors, and business and philanthropic leaders in the region, some of the latter with little relationship with the college. The consultant reviewed previous analyses of the College's and Foundation's campaign readiness and other documents, and analyzed the functioning of the development office and perceptions of its effectiveness.

The study found that only a modest percentage of interviewees are "very familiar" with the College, the first indication of the need for more communication and cultivation of prospective donors. Areas ranked most highly by study participants were the administration and academics, which received 66-68% ratings of "outstanding" or "very good." The Alumni Association received no "Outstanding" ratings and the highest frequency of "poor" ratings of any item. The frequency of "Don't Know" ratings was atypical in the consultant's experience, reflecting insufficient attention to communication and outreach. That Foundation and Foundation Staff fell into this category, reflecting a lack of familiarity and contact with that important function of the institution. Areas most frequently identified as needing improvement included the physical appearance of the campus, marketing and outreach ("New Paltz is a 'best kept secret.'"), and administration of the Foundation/Development Office.

Responses among both interview and focus group participants to the question "Does the College communicate effectively with you?" indicate that there is clear room for improvement in communications from the College. There was significant feedback that the magazine sent to

alumni and other donors was of inconsistent quality. The most frequent "important future issues" raised included funding/philanthropy; leveraging improved standing through PR/Communications; playing a bigger role in New Paltz and the region; staying affordable while improving academics; and investing in math and science. We learned that "scholarships" were among the highest giving priorities ranked by study participants.

When asked to reflect on the College's prospects of undertaking a major campaign, feedback was given about the lack of tradition of alumni giving, lack of cultivation of major donors, and the limited capability of the internal team making it questionable that a major goal could be reached. Other assessments included a sense that some direct-line fundraisers are unprepared to "make the ask," and both needing and welcoming more training and guidance. Development Office staff raised concerns about intra-unit communication and plan implementation, and about lack of clear direction and expectations.

The importance of several decisions made and actions underway at the time of the study were reinforced by the study findings. A decision had been made to hire a director of alumni relations, although for various reasons the search for that position was terminated in summer 2012, reactivated in the fall, and a new Director in place in December 2012. Responsibility for producing the New Paltz magazine sent to alumni and donors was removed from the Development Office and assigned to the Office of Communication and Marketing where more appropriate expertise resides. A full-time prospect researcher had been hired in the Development Office during 2012 to inform and enhance our ability to identify potential donors.

As part of the College's regular budget allocation process, we made several significant investments in communication and marketing, to support an array of such needs including those identified in the feasibility study – reaching out to prospective students and parents, the regional community, policy makers, and of course alumni and prospective donors. These investments included new positions in media relations management and social media management, and $200,000 for campus-wide marketing initiatives.

The findings of the feasibility study informed a number of other decisions. The former Director of Development resigned during summer 2012. Recognizing the need identified in the feasibility study to elevate the profile of our development operations, the President is seeking new leadership at the vice presidential level. An experienced interim leader has been working closely with the fund-raising counsel retained by the President and the Foundation to improve staff training, strengthen Development Office operations, and create more opportunities for the President to engage with prospective donors. The President and counsel recently completed formation of a fund-raising "steering committee" that will advise and guide the President and the Development Office during the next year in establishing stronger connections with prospective donors and in "telling the New Paltz story" more effectively.

With a new Director of Alumni Relations in place, the President has formed and charged a task force to develop a mission statement and strategic plan for an outstanding alumni operation, based on best practices at other institutions. That will include defining and re-defining relationships with alumni groups that conform to best practices and to SUNY system guidelines. The Chair of the task force (Vice President L. David Eaton) and the Director (who serves as Vice Chair of the task force) are seeking guidance from another SUNY campus that is a "model" within the SUNY system for strong alumni engagement.

The current year's budget process of reviewing and prioritizing requests for investment of new resources is underway. A number of priority requests moving through this process were informed in part by the feasibility study and are responsive to it. These include:

- Assistant Director of Development Services (full-time position)
- Funding for alumni relations travel and receptions
- Marketing Writer/Editor (full-time-position)
- Marketing Initiative (an additional $200,000 for advertising and marketing)
- Designer, to contribute to branding/capital campaign (full-time position)
- Development and Alumni Communications ($25,000 supplies and expenses)
- Major Gifts Officer

In addition, the in-development strategic plan described elsewhere in this report includes the priority areas of "Strengthen Philanthropic Commitments and Success," "Engaging Alumni in the Life of the College," "Market New Paltz Internally and Externally," and "Strengthen the Regional and Community Engagement." These areas rose to prominence through a community-guided process, and it is almost certain that earlier conversations about the key findings of the fund-raising feasibility study contributed to understanding of the importance of these needs.

ADMINISTRATIVE & ACADEMIC SUPPORT ASSESSMENTS & OUTCOMES

As we have indicated, systematic implement of assessment in administrative and academic support areas has continued since our decennial review. Departmental assessment plans and summary reports indicate that staff are performing assessments and are using the results in their work.

There are 33 administrative offices in five areas on the New Paltz campus: Administration and Finance, Enrollment Management, Communication and Marketing, the President's Office, and Student Affairs. Assessment efforts in these areas many years ago and have picked up considerably after the 2011 self-study. Before the 2011 self-study, 68% of the 33 offices had assessment plans and 52% had assessment summaries. Since the 2011 self-study, 100% of the offices have assessment plans and 94% have assessment summaries. Assessment is being conducted and decisions are being made as a result of these assessments. Following are examples of how assessment data are being used on the campus by administrative offices.

Administrative units within the Division of Enrollment Management have been actively engaged in assessments. For example, Financial Aid implemented a plan to address students' lack of financial literacy. After tracking student attendance at financial literacy workshops presented by Higher Education Services Corporation (HESC), Financial Aid concluded that although the presentations were valuable, they weren't reaching the desired number of students. Consequently, they added a web-based, self-paced financial literacy module that, according to data from the website, hundreds of students are now using. Assessment within Undergraduate Admissions, also a unit within Enrollment Management, revealed that notifying students of missing application items had become too cumbersome, time consuming, and costly. So, with help from Computer Services, Undergraduate Admissions installed an automated notification system that has drastically reduced the length of time to inform students of application deficiencies. They also

realized cost savings of approximately $5,500 and staff and work study student have time to focus on other office-related activities. Student Accounts installed an online billing and delinquent system and a majority of students now settle their accounts online. This change eliminated their need to print invoices and supporting documents and mailing costs, thereby saving the office approximately $23,000.00 over a four semester period.

Communication and Marketing has been very busy and has conducted several assessments within its administrative units. Last semester the office presented a series of informational "Road Shows" to the campus about its reconfigured and expanded role and its identity and branding standards. Following the roadshows, the Office of Institutional Research & Planning (OIRP) surveyed the campus to find out whether the campus had better knowledge of and were satisfied with its services. Although consumers were generally satisfied with the office's services, the survey results were not especially revealing. It was determined that future surveys should target those who actually use the services and include more open ended questions to assess knowledge and satisfaction among those constituents.

The Office of Compliance and Campus Climate, which reports directly to the President, and which came into being in the summer of 2012, is itself a product of assessment. Following a series of minor racial incidents on the campus, and open forums to determine the best course of action, Compliance and Campus Climate was created to deal centrally and at a high level with affirmative action, Title IX, harassment and discrimination processes and recruiting a diverse faculty and staff through the search process. The efficacy of the Office will be assessed rigorously as to its charge, which is to improve communication with the broader campus community, encourage efficiencies in processes, and enhance collaboration and training; elements essential to fostering an inclusive and productive living, learning, and working environment.

The Office of Institutional Research &Planning conducts a rigorous assessment process annually and adapts its practices accordingly. It has, over time, surveyed its customers to ascertain ways to improve. A major change that occurred since the 2011 self-study is the move to an online administration for Student Evaluation of Instruction (SEI). The decision was approved by the faculty and professional staff and implemented in the fall of 2011. Since then, through a variety of methods, OIRP has sought feedback on better ways to administer the every-section-every-semester evaluation to assure that the data are of the highest reliability and validity. The fall 2011 response rate was 71%. In spring of 2012, the response rate was 69% and in fall of 2012, the response rate was 73%. The Office surveyed students and faculty immediately after the fall, 2012, administration closed and will make recommended changes in the spring, 2013 administration. Survey research is a major activity of the Office and surveys are always tested before deployment with audiences that are like those of the respondent pool. The office strives to provide reliable and valid data to its customers.

Instructional Media Services (IMS), a unit within the Division of Administration and Finance, designs and constructs technology-enhanced spaces such as lecture spaces, presentation facilities, student collaboration spaces, and college classrooms that help support and encourage active participation in scholarly and artistic activities. Consistent with this work, last year IMS installed fifteen new electronically enhanced classrooms in the newly-renovated Old Main Building. After seeking input from faculty and students, IMS researched various classroom designs and, failing to identify one that met predetermined requirements, created one that an outside firm custom

built. The firm obtained permission to include the classroom design in their new catalog because they think it is impressive. Formal and informal feedback from faculty and students on the new classroom design has been extremely positive.

Within Academic Advising, students who experience academic difficulties and who become eligible for probation or dismissal from New Paltz are reviewed through the Academic Standing Committee, which the Dean of Academic Advising chairs. Students placed on probation are given a self-assessment instrument to help identify factors that contributed to their weak academic performance and must write a letter indicating what impacted their academic problems and present a plan for improvement. Some of the findings from the self-assessment instrument revealed that:

- First semester students, both freshman and transfers, are disproportionately represented on the probation and dismissal lists.
- Students' probation and dismissal appeal letters indicate that, for freshmen, time management and study skills contribute heavily to their weak academic performance.
- Transfer student appeal letters indicate that they find the transition to New Paltz, particularly those coming from a community college, to be very difficult on a number of levels both academic and personal.
- Freshmen who receive intervention through the Freshman Success Program (FSP) of increased advising have an increased chance of retention, but the FSP program did not offer structured training in time management and study skills.

Actions taken in response to assessment findings are as follows:

- The Academic Advising Center, in cooperation with the Student Support Services (formerly the Center for Academic Development) offered a series of time management, study skills and goal-setting/motivation workshops. All students in the Freshmen Success Program were required to attend at least three sessions. Their response to the programs was positive. Assessment will continue this semester to monitor the effectiveness of this program on overall academic performance and retention.
- The position of Assistant Dean of Academic Advising for Transfer Student Success was created and the incumbent works with new transfer students on issues of transfer course articulation, schedule and course access problems, and on other academic issues that arise. She collaborates with colleagues in Student Affairs who are creating more transfer programs and opportunities focusing primarily on student life issues. She also works with academic departments and guided changes in transfer orientations that would allow students more time to learn about major requirements and policies.

Student Affairs continues to realize important gains in assessment. Within this division, 100% of the departments have assessment plans compared to 70% at the time of the Middle States visit. In addition, 70% of the departments have assessment summary reports for the past 1 to 3 years, compared to 60% two years ago. One of the issues raised in conversations during the MS visit was the need for Student Affairs departments to begin to utilize student learning outcomes in their assessment plans; which was not occurring at the time of the visit. Currently, 50% of the departments within the division have developed SLOs which are posted on their websites and utilized in their assessment plans.

In Student Activities and Union Services, a comprehensive community survey was conducted and the results revealed students' desire for a renovated and conspicuous meeting space just for commuter students, and conveniently-scheduled programming. Consequently, departmental finances were invested in improving the commuter lounge, relocating signage and directories to more prominent locations, and moving programming efforts to earlier evening hours. We have already documented an increase in students' use of the lounge and in their attendance in programming activities. In the Career Resource Center, one of the 2011-12 assessment goals was to improve students' perform in a job interview. A pilot study was conducted utilizing a Mock Interview Critique Form that has a rubric for systematically analyzing students' strengths and weaknesses on their verbal and non-verbal performance. An analysis of the critique forms showed that students learned more about how they performed and where they needed to focus their attention for improvement from feedback utilizing the critique rubric. As a result, in the 2012-13 academic year the critique rubric will be used in all Mock Interview Coaching sessions and pre and post surveys will be conducted to assess its impact. In Residence Life, 2011-12 assessment data collected from student surveys and focus groups demonstrated a lack of effectiveness and satisfaction with residence hall programming. As a result, a new programming model was created and implemented for the 2012-13 academic year and its impact is being assessed as part of Residence Life's 2012-13 Assessment Plan.

ASSESSMENT OF THE LIBRARY'S EDUCATIONAL OFFERINGS

The Sojourner Truth Library (STL) teams met annually to assess progress toward the attainment of goals and to develop new ones. Many of these goals are discussed by the STL Library Management Team (LMT), which is composed of team leaders and the dean. Members of the LMT set library-wide priorities based on these team discussions. Progress on these goals is published in an annual library report, available on the STL website.

The STL used data from summer surveys, its suggestion box, student comments, and an ongoing library census to support the extension of library hours. Eight librarians, working in teams of two, observed each other's library instruction workshops and shared feedback on performance. This formative assessment exercise required a commitment to a total of four library sessions (two as observer, two as teacher), pre-session meetings, and post session meetings for each class in order to implement suggested changes. Teaching librarians served as readers of Freshman Composition II essays, using a rubric designed by the Composition program to assess basic levels of Information Management concepts. Librarians met with the English Department to review the *GE Assessment Report* and implemented changes in the STL library instruction program. These are only a few of the examples of the Library's assessment activities.

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING

Academic departments appreciate the complexities of student learning and continue to grow in their understanding and use of assessments to improve student learning. They have shown improvements in course planning and assessment-related activities including student learning outcomes (SLO) development, mapping assignments to SLOs, and rubrics construction and use. Faculty continue to grapple with how best to measure complex student learning outcomes that often prove challenging to assess (e.g., development of ethical reasoning and action; sensitivity to diversity, poverty, and injustice). In some cases departments have gathered additional information to acquire a better understanding of students' performance as a result of assessments. They continue to make changes to curricula, requirements, and programmatic structures as well as to other aspects of students' course of study. The progress achieved by departments in assessing and using assessment data is summarized below. We also have included an update on our progress in revising and assessing GE and on the inclusion of student learning outcomes in course syllabi.

REVISION OF THE GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

Work towards improving our GE program has continued with emphasis placed in two areas: Revising our current GE program and improving the assessment and delivery of the courses within the current framework. In fall 2010 faculty governance approved the formation of a Liberal Education Ad Hoc Committee whose work resulted in a set of resolutions for revising GE that were endorsed by the faculty in spring 2012. In agreement with these faculty-approved resolutions, the newly-formed Liberal Education Ad Hoc Committee is addressing, among other priorities, (a) how the SUNY Board of Trustees' GE requirements will be met within the college's proposed Liberal Education framework, (b) how GE competencies should be integrated throughout students' four years of study and how these competencies will be tracked, (c) how to avoid credit and requirement "creep" and curricular "bloat", and (d) how full- and part-time faculty will be supported and mentored to teach and assess their GE courses. The *ad hoc* committee expects faculty ratification of its proposed GE revisions by December 2013.

ASSESSMENT OF THE GENERAL EDCUATION PROGRAM

We have made substantial process in streamlining the assessment process for the current GE. All categories and competencies have been through at least two rounds of assessment and faculty have become more comfortable with the process. The GE Board, a subcommittee of the Curriculum Committee, is charged with soliciting and reviewing GE course assessment plans and now conducts this work via sub-committees that are responsible for directly working with instructors in each of the categories and competencies. This has led to more direct and effective communication and has resulted in more time being available to the GE Board to consider the results of assessment and reflect upon what has been done as we endeavor to make recommendations to the Liberal Education Ad Hoc Committee for the revision of the GE program.

Analyses of the GE data indicate that, in most cases, approximately 75-80% of students meet or exceed expectations for the individual learning objectives. The areas of Critical Thinking, Mathematics, and Basic Communication - Written have consistently attained a lower rate, and the GE Board is exploring the reasons for this and options to support enhancing student learning in these areas. While these data are a useful starting point, it is clear that they do not provide us with the ability to develop a full picture of what our students are learning, or what their experiences lack. As the new GE is being developed, we are thinking about how to incorporate meaningful and useful assessment strategies that will prove beneficial over time.

We also are exploring other avenues of assessing student learning in GE. For example, administration of a published and validated Test of Scientific Literacy (Gormally, et al., 2012) this semester indicated that the average score of students at New Paltz was much higher than for students at a similar sized comprehensive college in Tennessee, and comparable to non-science majors at an R1 institution in Georgia. In addition, students enrolled in GE Natural Science (NSCI) courses scored significantly higher on this test if they had previously taken a GE NSCI course at New Paltz. Results such as these confirm that our GE offerings are generally successful, but they can also point out areas that might be important as we seek to improve student learning. For example, a direct correlation was observed between students' reported interest in science and their score on the Test of Scientific Literacy. Developing a better understanding of this relationship may help us to make progress in enhancing learning for particular groups of students.

ASSESSING & APPLYING ASSESSMENT INFORMATION IN UNDERGRADUATE & GRADUATE MAJORS

Our campus remains committed to teaching and assessing the rigor and effectiveness of our educational offerings. Accordingly, programs are employing multiple direct and indirect measures to assess our courses and programs. Assessments in the departments generally build on what faculty are already doing, are sustainable, and enhance students' learning. As a college requirement, programs undergo five year self-studies, involving internal and external reviews of program assessment plans, student performance, and curricular offerings. Below is a snapshot of assessment progress in each school.

SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

The School of Business (SoB) has maintained a robust assessment program before and since the Middle States visit in 2011. During this period, the SoB completed its candidacy for AACSB accreditation, had its final visit in November, 2012, and received initial accreditation in January 2013. The visiting team was pleased that they met their standards for student learning outcomes assessment, which we take to be a strong endorsement of the School's processes. AACSB has a rigorous review process and demanding goals for student learning outcomes assessment.

The School of Business conducts student learning outcomes assessment in both the undergraduate and MBA programs. Because the Business school is not departmentalized, it has organized its assessment efforts under the aegis of two committees: The Undergraduate

Assessment committee and the MBA assessment committee. Their assessment program is based on six major learning objectives in the undergraduate program: Critical Thinking, Oral Communication, Written Communication, Ethics, Teamwork, and Content Knowledge. The MBA program has five learning objectives: Analytical Thinking, Global, Leadership, Ethics, and Communication.

Assessment plans are developed each semester by the two assessment committees. These committees plan the objectives that are to be assessed in specific courses. Prior to the school's accreditation visit, faculty generally assessed all objectives every semester. Acting on the advice of the AACSB accreditors, the school currently assesses objectives in a rotating schedule to reduce the administrative overload. Assessment plans are maintained by the committee chairs and posted on the school's Blackboard site. When assessments have been completed by faculty, data are submitted to a centralized collection portal where they are consolidated and released back to the assessment committees. After initial analyses, assessment committees present the data to the full faculty for discussion and decisions regarding curricular changes. Information on these program and course level changes is filed with the Associate Dean and Assistant Dean for Assessment and placed on the School's Blackboard site in a report format.

Faculty in the SoB have made program-wide and course-level changes as a result of the assessment findings. Below we describe several faculty initiated assessment-related changes pertaining to teamwork, communication skills, and courses.

Teamwork: The faculty have assessed teamwork from the students' point-of-view because of results that showed that students were non-analytical in assessing their classmates' teamwork. Students' glowing assessments of each other left the faculty with little guidance about how to help students to improve. Consequently, faculty took the following action:

- Conducted focus group meetings with students to gather their impressions of the teamwork rubric.
- Used the data to conduct factor analysis to determine the key factors emerging from student ratings. This was very useful in revealing three predominant factors, each with five corresponding measures.
- Redesigned the rubric on the basis of factor analysis and student input.
- Piloted the new rubric.
- Analyzed data.
- Developed plans for establishment of a teamwork resources webpage for the SOB website for implementation next semester to assist student in improving their ability to work with others in group settings.

Communication Skills: At the MBA level, the School's communication skills rubric included both oral and written communication. However, the rubric produced little constructive data as students tended to score excessively well on both sections. Faculty deconstructed and rewrote the rubric to allow for greater rigor in assessing both oral and written communication.

Course-level: At the course level, faculty have embraced assessment as a means of improving outcomes. For example, in Intermediate Accounting, faculty utilize an incoming student learning assessment to assess student learning in feeder courses. Findings have been fed back to both the Financial Accounting and Managerial Accounting courses regarding topics that require greater

emphasis. This has improved the ability of Intermediate Accounting students to manage course expectations. Further, faculty have utilized in class assessments of critical thinking to modify their courses. For example, faculty in the quantitative disciplines have begun to use group and social learning techniques in their classes for students to help each other learn difficult concepts. Data support faculty conclusion that students are improving in key aspects of critical thinking.

Inclusion of SLOs in syllabi from fall 2011 – spring 2013: All syllabi in the School of Business included SLOs.

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

The Coordinating Council on Assessment (CCA), the assessment group for the Professional Education Unit (PEU), composed of the School of Education and the certification programs in Art Education, Communication Disorders, and School Counseling, spent 2011 mapping the Student Teaching/Internship Final Assessment (STIFA) with the Professional Standards set out by each program's respective Specialty Professional Association (SPA) (i.e., NCTM, NCTE, CEC). Additionally, during 2012, the CCA focused its efforts on an audit and examination of SLOs on course syllabi. In spring, the CCA included among its recommendations better reporting and greater accessibility of unit-wide assessment data, as well as the sharing of capstone experience information to inform colleagues in other departments within the School of Education. In response to these recommendations, access to the unit-wide assessment results has been given to chairs and coordinators through the campus report writer reporting system. Subsequently, Educational Studies faculty have been participating in the review of portfolios in the Department of Secondary Education.

Summary STIFA data from fall 2012 were given to chairs in January 2013 when it was noted that cooperating teachers consistently rated student teachers lower on their performance than our college supervisors, except in one area, Early Childhood. Additionally, data from the Content Specialty Test (CST) are also being summarized and will be given to the departments in the PEU and those housing the majors, where the majority of content is taught. A full summary of all unit-wide data for the past several years is currently being completed and will be presented to departments for review and action. The associate dean will follow up by attending department and school-wide meetings to discuss these data and ways to modify and strengthen program components.

Currently, the PEU is preparing for the newest iteration of the New York State Teacher Certification Exams (NYSTCE) that will be required for those graduating as of May 2014. These changes will significantly impact students and faculty, as the unit works to meet the challenges and requirements that the New York State Education Department (NYSED) Regent's Reform Agenda presents. As part of this initiative, the three current written tests are being reconfigured and will be more rigorous. A performance assessment (edTPA) component is also being included. A Teacher Performance Assessment Coordinator was named in fall 2012 and training of our faculty in edTPA's implementation is underway. An extensive set of resources has been added to the CCA Blackboard site and five faculty attended a workshop on the content, rubrics, and scoring of this performance-based assessment in February, 2013.

Simultaneously, the PEU is preparing for the next round of its seven-year cycle of continuing accreditation through NCATE with the next site visit in spring 2015. This involves the writing of program reviews for all undergraduate and many graduate certification programs. Reports will be written during spring and summer with submission September 2013. The institutional report will be completed during the 2013-14 academic year with submission in September 2014.

Recently returning from the annual meeting of the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education (AACTE) in Feb 2013, our newly named TPA coordinator has suggested the adoption of a commercially developed data management system, *Live Text*. This system is already set up for the edTPA, with a portal to Pearson that makes it easy to upload required instructional plans, performance videotapes conducted in classrooms, and assessments with reflective analyses of student work. *Live Text* provides a variety of pre-designed summary reports that can inform the PEU of its assessment results so it can determine how to continuously improve its programs. This platform allows faculty to use locally designed rubrics, which can be revised as necessary, providing flexibility as assignments are refined. It also provides an interface for all unit-wide assessments currently in use with the ability to tailor these to specific programs, which are mapped to the Special Professional Associations (SPAs) standards. The PEU is investigating the use of *Live Text* and will probably move forward in its implementation shortly.

To ensure that PEU candidates are prepared for all components of the edTPA, departments are in the process of identifying Embedded Signature Assessments (ESAs), which become resources for candidates' electronic portfolios and synthesis into the final edTPA submissions. This new performance assessment along with the revised written tests will be available in fall 2013. Our TPA Coordinator is pilot testing the edTPA with three candidates at a single elementary school. This experience will inform future instruction for faculty and candidates alike.

To meet these increased expectations for our students and the children with whom they work, SUNY has been awarded $3.5 million from NYSED, as part of the *Race to the Top* federal grant funding, for the development of a SUNY Teacher Education Network (S-TEN). This initiative brings the Regent's Reform Agenda of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), Clinically-rich teacher and leader preparation programs, teacher performance assessment (TPA), and data-informed instruction (DII) into all facets of teacher education with all constituent groups working together. This is to be achieved through collaboration by School of Education faculty with colleagues across campus, K-12 educators, and community partners. As part of S-TEN, each of 17 campuses with teacher education programs has a campus-based team (C-TEN) which will be responsible for developing an action and assessment plan for this work. The C-TENs are meeting in spring 2013 for four full-day seminars in regional (R-TEN) teams to propel the developments of these networks, locally, regionally and statewide.

Following are individual assessment reports from the four departments within the School of Education: Educational Administration, Educational Studies, Elementary Education and Secondary Education.

Educational Administration
The Department of Educational Administration has been under significant reorganization, since the retirement of its tenured faculty and the installation of a new chair to lead, while a search for

full-time tenure, track faculty is conducted. During fall 2012, the new department head updated the internship handbook and application materials as well as the Educational Administration STIFA. The new Administrative STIFA better reflects the assessment of educational leaders in their internships connecting both to the PEU's Conceptual Framework and the Educational Leadership Constituents Council (ELCC) standards.

Currently, a new streamlined, cohort model program is being developed to address the need for greater program cohesion. Prospective students are being surveyed to determine interest in a 15-month accelerated program or a more traditional two-year schedule. As part of this program, analysis of the internship experience is underway, with a review of the expectations for the culminating project. Attention also is being focused on the expansion of these programs as more clinically-rich. In an attempt to respond to students' needs, prospective students were surveyed to find out their preferred time for taking a summer course. The course will be scheduled in the time zone that most students prefer.

Educational Studies
The department of Educational Studies conducts a variety of assessments as part of its NCATE accreditation, GE assessments, grant activity, and internal operations. These assessments are undertaken continuously and inform the department's functioning and evaluation of efficacy of instructor performance and student learning. Since the kinds and timings of assessments vary for each unit within Educational Studies, the report consists of three main sections, one for each unit in the department: Humanistic/Multicultural Education Program, Special Education, and Educational Foundations.

Humanistic/Multicultural Education: The Humanistic/Multicultural Education Program (HMEP), which is a graduate level program, underwent a program review in 2012 that included among its recommendations the following: (1) Review, rename and update course syllabi and program descriptions to center humanistic social justice and equity work in a critical and multicultural framework, making more explicit each of the three theoretical frameworks which inform the program, and identifying the range of identities (based on race, gender, sexuality, class, national origins and others) that will represent more accurately the current strengths of the HMEP; and (2) Bring a diverse group of undergraduates into early contact with the HMEP through new course development and to potentially recruit a more diverse student body into the School of Education.

Program faculty have begun to act on these recommendations and have made changes in course titles, syllabi and language. For example, the course formerly titled *Girls, Women and Education* has been changed to *Exploration of Gender in Education* and *Helping Skills in a Social Context* has been changed to *Multicultural Approaches to Helping.* Faculty also are reviewing their syllabi and are making more explicit their courses the humanistic, multicultural, and critical frameworks that undergird the program. This work is in ongoing and programmatic discussions and course revisions will continue throughout the year.

In an effort to reach out to undergraduate students through new course development, program faculty have developed two modular courses for undergraduates that may serve as a pipeline for future graduate work in the HMEP or in the School of Education. This spring, HMEP faculty are

teaching *The Mindful Student: Self Meets the World* and *Exploring Racism in Education and our Lives.* Potential undergraduate student interest in graduate work in the School of Education, resulting from these courses, is being assessed.

In addition to conducting annual assessment of its four key SLOs, HMEP faculty designate one additional Targeted Student Learning Outcome to assess each year. This past year program faculty focused on the competency "Participatory Approaches to Instruction and Individual/Group Development." The SLO reads, "Students will employ participatory approaches in their instruction and individual/group development." An assessment rubric which includes four criteria: Design of learning experiences, integration of content, understanding of the experiential learning cycle, and selecting appropriate forms of reflection, and four standards: limited (1 point), developing (2), effective (3), and exemplary (4 points) was developed. The rubric was used to assess the targeted SLO in the course *Humanistic/Multicultural Approaches to Education and Human Services (Approaches)*. Results of the assessment revealed that the course explicitly addresses all four of the criteria outlined above and that the final course project is designed to demonstrate the degree to which students understand and can apply concepts and skills related to designing and facilitating activities that incorporate a participatory pedagogy.

Assessment scores from the spring and fall 2012 sections of *Approaches* indicate a high degree of student competency in applying participatory concepts and skills. The average group score on this four standards, 16 point maximum score rubric was a 14.1 with a low group score of 13.2 and a high group score of 15.6. These scores seem to support the competency development approach used in this course. The four criteria identified in the rubric are all explicitly introduced and practiced prior to the students' collaborative work in the course's cumulative Theory to Practice Project.

Special Education: The Special Education Program is a graduate level program that assesses many SLOs in the areas of intellectual and practical skills and integrative applied learning. During the 2010-2011 academic year the faculty researched and selected SLOs that the field has identified as evidence-based practices (EBP) in the following areas: Inclusive practices, instructional strategies, literacy, math, behavior, and assessment. Faculty then created Innovation Configurations (IC) for each EBP and used them to map the curriculum (Here is an example of an Instructional Practices Innovation Configuration. There is an IC available for each of the EBPs. The orange course numbers reflect the initial evaluation of the syllabi based upon the coding key at the top. After extensive discussion of the SLOs for each course, faculty revised the syllabi to deepen the level of application of EBPs by creating a more spiraled curriculum. The blue numbers reflect these revisions, which have been implemented over the last year and a half.

Next, faculty will assess the degree to which candidates are appropriately using the EBPs in their practice. Faculty have decided to focus on progress monitoring of student learning as it relates to practice-based evidence and the Ed TPA. Consequently, they are in the process of identifying which assessment points in the Unit Assessments (i.e., P-12 Learning and the Student/Teaching/ Internship Final Assessment) are most appropriate for evaluating effectiveness of practice-based evidence. Once faculty have identified these assessment points, they will review the data at the end of spring 2013 semester and discuss candidate acquisition and application of EBPs.

Educational Foundations: The education foundations unit is a service unit that offers several GE courses in the areas of Social Science, American History and Diversity (the last category course is offered out of special education). The assessments also test student competencies in written and oral expression and ethical reflection. Assessments of these knowledge and skills and competencies reveal that students are demonstrating a high level of achievement across the various categories. It took instructors a couple of years to understand the goals of the GE assessment process and the specific changes that are needed to be successful at optimizing student learning.

With regard to assessments of other courses within educational foundations, instructors have made enormous changes based on assessment results in an attempt to increase student achievement. Some of these modifications include:

- Inclusion of SLOs in all courses
- Posting of instructional material online. Almost all courses across the department conduct some of the learning activities on Blackboard. Some have moved their lectures online while others have added links and readings to assist student comprehension.
- Availability of some instructors for online mentoring of students
- Use of technology in the classroom to enhance learning. Students today are extremely technology savvy and using technology has enhanced learning in the classroom. YouTube videos, visual case studies, animated films that explain concepts, online documentaries and modules with classroom activity form excellent supports for students.
- Reviewing and updating of course reading materials for accuracy and student relevance
- Addition and refinement of rubrics that are linked to SLOs and course assignments, reexamination of the directness and language of instructions

The chair of the Educational Foundations program continues to facilitate discussions with instructors about appropriate instructional practices that would enhance student learning and facilitate student achievement.

Elementary Education
During 2010-2012, the Department of Elementary Education focused its assessment efforts on the dimension of *Written Expression*. Analysis of the New York State Teacher Certification Exam (NYSTCE) scores on the Liberal Arts and Sciences Test (LAST) and the Content Specialty Test (CST) of Multi-subjects for B-6 revealed consistently lower scores on the constructed response sections of both tests. This and faculty dissatisfaction with students general writing skill prompted the faculty to develop a plan to address this concern. The plan focused on revisions to courses and entry requirements to the combined Early Childhood Birth – Grade 2 and Childhood Education Grades 1 – 6 programs. Two courses were modified to include writing-intensive components, a B or better in Composition 1 and 2 is now required, and applicants must now complete an in-person writing assessment.

Faculty examined the results of the 2012 CST Multi-subject test to determine whether their Elementary Education candidates' scores had improved. Initial results showed an increase in candidates' mean scores on the constructed section of the test; however, more time is needed to ascertain the efficacy of the program revisions on candidates' ability to write. With regard to the

on-site writing sample, the faculty pilot tested some samples and have agreed that more time should be set aside to read and evaluate applicants' writing samples.

Secondary Education

Secondary Education assesses teaching and learning and uses the results to modify courses and instruction. The department also uses the instruments (e.g., STIFA, Planning, Dispositions, P-12 Learning Assessment) created by the Professional Education Unit (PEU) to assess student learning both within the university classroom and while students are student teaching. Secondary Education teacher candidates all complete a programmatic portfolio in which they collect evidence of their achievement in accordance with our *Conceptual Framework's* dimensions: Inquiry, Intellectual Growth, Professionalism, Appreciation of Human Diversity, Advocacy for Students, and Democratic Citizenship. Work on the portfolio begins in the discipline specific foundations seminar and continues up to the capstone courses. At each stage the instructor works with the students on the *Conceptual Framework's* dimensions and artifacts to be included in the portfolio. For each artifact included in the portfolio, candidates are required to provide a rationale and reflection – addressing the evidence in terms of the *Conceptual Framework*. At the end of each semester, faculty in the departments of Secondary Education and Educational Studies meet to review samples of portfolios from each program housed within Secondary Education. These reviews provide information that faculty use to make changes (e.g., in the number and type of artifacts that students include in the portfolios, to assignments and rubrics).

Additionally, MSED English, mathematics, and science teacher candidates are required to complete a short portfolio which is connected to the Inquiry1 and II courses, other education courses and those in the content area. MSED and MAT Social Studies students complete a portfolio for their content area in history which is reviewed by both history and education faculty. Candidates in the MAT English, Chemistry, and Earth Science programs complete a comprehensive examination. MAT science candidates must also complete a comprehensive essay related to content and pedagogy. These capstone projects are analyzed and changes are made to the curriculum and to the assignments.

The capstone for undergraduates and MAT candidates is the Student Teaching with the Student Teaching Seminar as a co-requisite. A significant aspect of both the Student Teaching and the Student Teaching Seminar is the work on the portfolio and the P-12 Learning Assessment mentioned earlier. During the student teaching experience teacher candidates are placed in two classroom settings (middle and high school) for eight weeks in each placement. During this activity the teacher candidate works with a mentor/cooperating teacher at the host school and a clinical faculty (supervisor) from the university. In addition to the final assessment of teacher candidates' student teaching placements, formative assessments are conducted in weeks three and six by both the mentor/cooperating teacher and clinical faculty (supervisors). Data from these assessments are used to improve teaching and learning.

Inclusion of SLOs in syllabi from fall 2011 – spring 2013: Although all syllabi in the School of Education contained SLOs, several concerns were noted by the Coordinating Council on Assessment:

- Many syllabi missing clearly identified SLOs
- Many SLOs ineffectively written & many not tied to SoEd's Conceptual Framework
- SLOs for the same courses were defined differently, according to individual professors

To address these concerns, administrators posted a document on the CCA Blackboard site outlining how to write effective SLOs and providing online resources. Additionally, some departments are developing common SLOs across multiple sections of the same course while others are providing one-on-one support to faculty. This spring chairs reviewed SLOs in course syllabi and found improvement in their creation, although work is still necessary in this area.

SCHOOL OF FINE & PERFORMING ARTS

All departments within the School of Fine and Performing Arts (i.e., Art, Art History, Music, Theatre, and Art Education) are preparing for re-accreditation by these School-affiliated accrediting bodies: National Association for Schools of Art and Design (NASAD), National Association of Schools of Music (NASM), National Association for Schools of Theatre (NAST), and National Council for the Accreditation of teacher Education (NCATE). The data-gathering and subsequent writing of self-studies has been the primary assessment activities in the past academic year. The self-studies, site visits, and accreditors' reports will be used for refinements in assessment plans, processes, and practices and to inform the development of the School's strategic plan.

Fine & Performing Arts has used assessment data for a variety of purposes including supporting requests for programmatic resources, program development and revision, and course revisions. For example, the Art and Art Education departments revised their BA/BS Visual Arts and MSED Visual Arts Education programs, respectively, on the basis of assessment data. The Art History department used data in support of a proposal for a joint position with Women's Studies. Likewise, the Music faculty undertook a major revision of their undergraduate program and are currently revising their music therapy graduate program. These revisions were informed by the needs of the market and also by curricula review. Two years ago Theatre Arts completed a major curriculum revision in response to its self-study. Changes included the addition of a minor requirement for all majors and the creation of a new concentration in Theatre Studies. Overall, Fine & Performing Arts continues to make concerted efforts to improve teaching and learning and to address deficiencies and areas of concern in programs and courses. With the advent of reaccreditation, these efforts have re-doubled.

Inclusion of SLOs in syllabi from fall 2011 – spring 2013: All syllabi in the School of Fine & Performing Arts included SLOs.

COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS & SCIENCES

The College of Liberal Arts & Sciences (LA&S) is comprised of sixteen departments and all have been engaged in assessment. Each department develops an annual assessment plan in which faculty describe the assessments they will conduct the following year. After the assessments are conducted, department chairs submit assessment reports to the dean and associate provost in which they describe actions resulting from the assessments. All assessment plans and reports are available through Blackboard on the Liberal Arts & Sciences Assessment site. As the assessment process becomes more routine, the focus has begun to shift towards "closing the loop;" with ongoing conversations about what the data actually mean, strategies to improve student learning, and how to follow up to see if those strategies have been effective.

Since LA&S is heavily involved in the GE program, many departments regularly participate in direct measures of student learning in GE. Departments also assess their majors using various approaches. Examples of departmental assessments are described below:

- Several programs, including the Asian Studies program, use a rubric to assess portfolios of all graduating majors. Others, including History, English and Economics, use a major paper in a seminar or capstone course as the assessment vehicle. A hallmark of assessment in these majors is faculty collaboration in the development of assessment rubrics, and careful approaches to training faculty and norming the assessments.

- Some programs assess students at multiple stages. For example, Black Studies assesses SLOs in several survey courses and via a 30-page research papers in their seminar course to determine whether students are acquiring the skills they will need for their capstone course. Communication Disorders assesses students in both introductory and more advanced courses using a combination of approaches, and also conducts a transcript review to assess whether graduating seniors are academically prepared for graduate study.

- In some programs, faculty assess targeted skills. For example, in History, students' skills in formulating arguments are assessed in the seminar course. Students in Sociology are assessed on their ability to contrast two sociological theories. Languages, Literatures, and Cultures assessed language proficiency in selected 300-level courses.

- Some programs assess student reactions in addition to using more objective assessments. Anthropology conducts an exit survey of graduating seniors each year and Geography conducts an internship survey. Sociology also assesses internship participation as well as extracurricular departmental programming.

- Some programs used tests or specific items on tests for assessment. Geography used a pre- and post-test to assess geographic literacy in two courses. Communication Disorders assessed several SLOs using various tools including vocabulary and terminology quizzes and fill-in questions on examinations. Anthropology used a "holistic" approach this past year in their assessment of a team-taught course.

Although LA&S uses assessment data to improve teaching and learning, each department continues to look for ways to improve assessment processes and tools. In support of this goal, we have provided professional development opportunities and others are planned, including department visitations by the dean and associate dean and using departments and faculty as "best practice" examples. Below are examples of changes that resulted from assessments and the outcomes of those changes.

- Some programs revised courses and rubrics based on assessment results. Because students did not attain the level of achievement expected in GE courses, Anthropology faculty revised course assignments. Asian Studies is revising the exit essay to make it a measure of reflection. They also are revising the accompanying rubric. Communication and Media found that student learning improved in the GE competency Effective Expression-Written after the professor increased the number of short writing assignments required and emphasized persuasive writing throughout the semester. Philosophy saw some improvement in Effective Expression – Written after making a thesis statement and argument part of the rubric. History converted the Seminar course from 3 to four credits to allow more writing and to create a historiography course. After adding readings and a prerequisite course in the *Race, Culture, Nation* cluster of electives, the *Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies* program examined the Seminar course and saw improvement in students' research projects relating to intersectionality.

- Effective fall 2013 Political Science & International Relations will add an integrative, cross-field seminar because successful internship programs combine internship and classroom experiences.

- Black Studies has seen continuous improvement in students' written work in the Seminar but are examining what changes should be made in prerequisite courses to improve students' critical thinking, research, and communication skills—areas where student need to show improvement.

- Communication Disorders is providing more clinical opportunities at the undergraduate level to enhance students' ability to connect theory to clinic/practice. They assessed different courses and course formats using the same procedures and rubrics and the results showed students were achieving learning outcomes across contexts.

- English decided, among other things, to increase reviews of student presentations by both instructors and students and, at their annual calibration session, to focus more attention on helping students to connect writing skills and speaking skills as mutually reinforcing activities.

Inclusion of SLOs in syllabi from fall 2011 – spring 2013: Virtually all syllabi in the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences included SLOs. Because some SLOs used verbs that are difficult to measure (e.g., understand, be familiar with), chairs are working with the course instructors to improve the wording, with support (i.e., resources on writing and assessing SLOs posted to the College's website) from the dean's office.

SCHOOL OF SCIENCE & ENGINEERING

The School of Science & Engineering (SS&E) made several changes in its assessment processes based on the self-study evaluation teams' suggestions and recommendations. The faculty agreed to a standard assessment format for the entire school and are in the process of implementing this in each program. The first step in the process was the creation of program maps that can be used to assess where program learning objectives are taught, and whether the objectives are taught in the correct order and without unnecessary duplication. These program maps are the basis for developing guidelines for determining the programs and courses that need special attention in the subsequent year's assessment plan. More importantly, these maps lay out dependencies within programs and help departments discover weaknesses in their programs. For example, in Biology, discussion during the annual retreat revealed that an understanding of modern genetics is an expectation of instructors of most upper level classes in the major. As a result, the department implemented two big curricular changes: (a) Offer Genetics only in the fall, with the expected sequence for all Biology majors: General Biology 1, General Biology 2 and then Genetics; (b) require Genetics as a pre-requisite for most (not all) upper level courses (several courses do not need an understanding of genetics beyond that covered in General Biology). This appears to have had a positive impact on student success, but it is too early to tell how big an effect.

The second part of the school's common plan is to include assessments of capstone courses or capstone experiences. For example, Geology will be assessing Field Geology, Physics is assessing Senior Projects, Chemistry is assessing the P-Chem lab, Engineering, Student Design Projects, and Math, Intermediate Analysis and Introduction to Abstract Algebra. Departments without a current capstone course are in the process of identifying several courses that represent capstone experiences. As part of the coming year's assessment plan, Biology's Assessment sub-committee will be reviewing and revising their program-maps and incorporating capstone SLOs. Since all BS degree students in Biology take either Evolutionary Theory or Animal Behavior, Biology thought they might assess one or both of those as a "capstone" experience. However, they have since decided that their capstone experience would be one or more of the advanced labs that are required in a major track. Their goal for next year is to select the best experiences to assess.

The third component of the school's common assessment plan is the development of departmental alumni assessment surveys to poll recent graduates regarding their experience in the program and to find out what additional tools they wished they had when they graduated. In particular, Geology and Physics have provided models that may be adopted by other departments.

Over the years, departments in SS&E have been able to make significant program improvements by assessing the overall curriculum. Each academic year, the Dean requests that departments discuss issues of assessment, review assessment results and develop an assessment plan for the next year. Minutes of these meetings are provided to the Dean for review. The school is continuing this tradition but is employing the program-maps and alumni surveys to better assess the success of its programs. Recent changes that are the result of assessment information include: (a) Requiring Genetics as a pre-requisite for most upper level biology courses; and (b) recognizing that many students enter college (even SS&E) with poor math skills, in particular,

algebra. Plans are underway to deal with the large number of students who may place into Pre-calculus, but who nevertheless have poor algebra skills. An Algebra Competency test has been created and may be employed this summer to determine the extent of the problem. If it is as the school suspects, (based on students' quantitative performance in Pre-Calculus, Calculus, General Biology 1 and General Chemistry 1) potential solutions will be developed, implemented, and assessed.

Over the past two years, faculty in Physics, Biology and Chemistry have been adding group activities for problem solving (*Process Oriented Guided Inquiry Learning,* aka POGIL) to their larger lecture courses. After several unsatisfactory semesters teaching General Physics in a traditional lecture format, one faculty in Physics will be employing a Hybrid Course format for General Physics this fall. Animal Behavior in Biology now uses a hybrid format with many of the typical lectures available online as "podcasts" and the bulk of the class time spent in group problem solving and faculty-led discussions and short quizzes. Assessments comparing student performance in hybrid format courses show increased performance in SLO, which had been declining for years in the old lecture format.

Likewise, during Genetics, a new problem-solving approach was taken—based on assessment of SLOs—and the instructors surveyed students about that approach, using clickers to test their knowledge. As a consequence of formative assessment throughout the semester, the instructors decided to offer more problem-solving, discussion sessions outside of formal lecture-class time (e.g., in the labs and in special sessions after class). POGIL style problem solving activities in General Biology seem to be working but are still being adjusted. It is too soon to tell how much they will change student learning outcomes.

Some larger departments (e.g., Biology, Engineering) have designated a sub-committee for assessment to manage plans and collect results. Engineering has a robust assessment program and must show ongoing use of assessment results, in order to maintain accreditation by ABET. Biology has started holding regular "retreats" at the end of summer, before fall classes begin, to review the past year's activities and to review reports from the assessment sub-committee and the curriculum sub-committee. It is at those retreats that plans for future staffing and program changes are discussed and planning for the coming semesters occurs. The dean is encouraging such work retreats in other departments to foster a culture of assessment.

As part of the School's effort to meet the needs of transfer students, the School has an annual meeting with science curriculum representatives from seven local community colleges (the Community College Science Advisory Board). Reports on changes to SS&E programs and on transfer student success (largely culled from the assessment process) are reported at that meeting. Faculty from the community colleges also meet with their faculty counterparts from SS&E for informal discussions of issues of transfer student success at New Paltz. This is a way to allow community colleges to better prepare their students for success at NP.

Inclusion of SLOs in syllabi from fall 2011 – spring 2013: As of this spring all SS&E course syllabi include assessable SLOs. All syllabi are submitted to the department chair at the start of each semester and chairs contact instructors whose SLOs are not assessable or are missing.

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

The Graduate Office continues to assess its functions and processes. For example, the School automated its application review process through have become more habitual within workflow to improve efficiency in processing graduate applications and to provide more timely decisions to applicants. As of this spring, all graduate applications are reviewed online, via workflow. We are tracking how long it takes to review applications in workflow and will share that information with relevant personnel so we can maximize efficiencies.

We also are developing a strategic plan to strengthen and revitalize the Graduate School. The Graduate School Strategic Plan Steering Committee, chaired by Graduate Dean Laurel M. Garrick Duhaney, has been working creatively and productively to develop a plan that defines an extensive and bold agenda that directs and prioritizes energies and resources in these five critical areas: Program Development and Refinement, Marketing and Recruitment, Admissions and Enrollment Management, Student Engagement and Support, and Organizational Factors. The plan will include a series of recommendations to guide, among other factors, the *selective* (a) addition of new graduate programs and initiatives, (b) revisions to existing graduate programs, (c) elimination of graduate programs that are no longer consistent with the College's mission, and (d) deployment and—in some cases— redistribution of resources.

The strategic planning process began in spring 2012 and is scheduled to end in May 2013. Because of the imperative that the strategic plan reflects the perspectives and values of the campus, the steering committee has sought broad input via several campus-wide, small group, and individual meetings, surveys, and email. Additionally, we launched a website where we posted information about the plan, work, and progress. We are optimistic that, with faculty engagement and ideas, we will be able to generate a comprehensive and forward-looking set of recommendations to advance the goals of our Graduate School.

HONORS PROGRAM

In consultation with The Honors Advisory Council and faculty who teach in Honors, the newly appointed Honors program director is developing an assessment plan for Honors that will assess the program and its courses. Learning outcomes for the program and the courses were identified in the curricular proposal that the faculty approved last year. These learning outcomes will provide a foundation for development of an assessment plan for Honors. The Honors GE courses have been assessed and students are meeting and exceeding these learning outcomes.

APPENDICES OF SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

We have linked the following appendices within the report:

CONCLUSION

This report documents New Paltz's continued progress in implementing "a comprehensive, organized and sustained process for the assessment of institutional effectiveness and student learning" since our 2011 self-study. It conveys our progress in developing strategic plans for the College and the Graduate School, in revising our GE program, and in revising our assessment organizational structure. It includes ample evidence of the College's significant progress during the last two years in ensuring that all syllabi include SLOs, that all administrative and academic units are sustaining their assessment efforts, and that all units are using assessment results in determining achievement of goals and objectives.

We believe that we have achieved significant progress in creating an inclusive assessment system that is not only structured but sustainable. Assessment procedures and practices within our administrative and academic divisions have become more habitual; the President and his Cabinet are using assessment information in institutional decisions; and assessment results are being used to improve student learning, programs and services, and to strengthen GE and academic majors. We have achieved substantial progress in developing strategic plans for the College and in laying the foundation for revising our GE program, and will continue to work on remaining objectives and priorities to bring these processes to conclusion. Our revised assessment organizational structure is achieving the desired effect of *conveying* support for assessment from the top down and from the bottom up and of *communicating* that every campus constituent is engaged in the assessment process. We are pleased that virtually all course syllabi contain student learning outcomes and that Student Affairs has begun to develop and assess SLOs.

Reference

Gormally, C., Brickman, P., & Lutz, M. (2012). Developing a test of scientific literacy skills (TOSLS): Measuring undergraduates' evaluation of scientific information and arguments. *CBE-Life Sciences Education, 11*, 364-377.