December 23, 2008

John H. Miller
President
Central Connecticut State University
1615 Stanley Street
New Britain, CT 06050-4010

Dear President Miller:

Thank you for the promptness of your suggested factual corrections to my draft of the NEASC report. As you know, you will also have a chance to reply to the substance of my final report. Would you please have the report duplicated on three-hole paper for Commission use and mail it as follows:

1. One copy to each member of the visiting team with the envelope marked CONFIDENTIAL.

2. Thirty-five copies of the report to:

   Barbara Brittingham, President/Director
   Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
   New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc.
   209 Burlington Road
   Bedford, MA 01730-1433

My understanding is that upon receiving the report, the Commission will ask you to make a formal reply.

Thank you again for your hospitality during our visit.

Regards,

Patricia Maguire Meservey
President

Cc: Barbara Brittingham, President/Director, CIHE, NEASC
    Patricia O'Brien, Deputy Director, CIHE, NEASC
    Paulette Lemma, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, CCSU
Report to the
Faculty, Administration, Trustees, Students
of
CENTRAL CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY
New Britain, Connecticut
by
An Evaluation Team representing the
Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
of the
New England Association of Schools and Colleges
Prepared after study of the institution’s
self-evaluation report and a visit to
the campus October 19 – 22, 2008

The members of the team:

Chairperson: Dr. Patricia Maguire Meservey, President, Salem State College, Salem, MA
Dr. Gene Díaz, Interim Associate Provost and Associate Professor, Lesley University, Cambridge, MA
Mr. Thomas R. Dougan, Vice President for Student Affairs, University of Rhode Island, Kingston, RI
Dr. Suzanne E. Estler, Associate Professor Higher Educational Leadership, University of Maine, Orono, ME
Dr. Robert E. Golden, Professor of English, SUNY Plattsburgh Branch Campus, Queensbury, NY
Mr. Andrew J. Golub, Dean of Library Services, University of New England, Biddeford, ME
Dr. Frank Gorga, Professor of Chemistry, Bridgewater State College, Bridgewater, MA
Dr. Winston Langley, Interim Provost & Vice Chancellor Academic Affairs, University of Massachusetts, Boston, MA
Ms. Leigh Anne Melanson, Associate Provost for Academic Administration, University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH

Observers: Dr. Jonas Zdanys, Associate Commissioner and Chief Academic Officer, Connecticut Department of Higher Education, Hartford, CT

Mr. Michael P. Meotti, Commissioner, Connecticut Department of Higher Education, Hartford, CT

This report represents the views of the evaluation committee as interpreted by the chairperson. Its content is based on the committee’s evaluation of the institution with respect to the Commission’s criteria for accreditation. It is a confidential document in which all comments are made in good faith. The report is prepared both as an educational service to the institution and to assist the Commission in making a decision about the institution’s accreditation status.
COMMISSION ON INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION
New England Association of Schools and College
Preface Page
Date form completed: 10-21-08

Name of Institution: Central Connecticut State University

1. History Year chartered or authorized 1849 as State Normal School Year first degrees awarded 1851

2. Type of control: [X] State [ ] City [ ] Other; specify:
[ ] Private, not-for-profit [ ] Religious Group; specify: ________________
[ ] Proprietary [ ] Other; specify

3. Degree level:
[ ] Associate [X] Baccalaureate [X] Masters [ ] Professional [X] Doctorate

4. Enrollment in Degree Programs (Use figures from fall semester of most recent year): 2007-2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Full-time</th>
<th>Part-time</th>
<th>FTE</th>
<th>Retentiona</th>
<th>Graduationb</th>
<th># Degreesc</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Associate</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baccalaureate</td>
<td>7,785</td>
<td>2,121</td>
<td>8,320.20</td>
<td>79% (First time full time data from 2007-2008)</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>1,641</td>
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<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>506</td>
<td>1,821</td>
<td>1,108.71</td>
<td>71% (First time full time degree seeking data from 2007-2008)</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>553</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(a) full-time 1st to 2nd year (b) 3 or 6 year graduation rate (c) no. of degrees awarded most recent year

5. Number of current faculty: Full time 419 Part-time 462 FTE: 588
(Unofficial until November 2008)

6. Current fund data for most recently completed fiscal year: (Specify year: FY2008)
(Double click in any cell to enter spreadsheet. Enter dollars in millions; e.g., $1,456,200 = $1.456)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revenues</th>
<th>$</th>
<th>Expenditures</th>
<th>$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuition</td>
<td>62.258</td>
<td>Instruction</td>
<td>57.178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gov't Appropriations</td>
<td>79.205</td>
<td>Research</td>
<td>1.215</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gifts/Grants/Endowment</td>
<td>39.066</td>
<td>General</td>
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<tr>
<td>Auxiliary Enterprises</td>
<td>22.307</td>
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<td>8.919</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>202.836</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>198.879</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. Number of off-campus locations:
   In-state ___ Other U.S. ___ International ___ Total ___

8. Number of degrees and certificates offered electronically:
   Programs offered entirely on-line ___ Programs offered 50-99% on-line ___

9. Is instruction offered through a contractual relationship?
   [X] No  [□] Yes; specify program(s): ________________________________

10. Accreditation history:
    Candidacy: None  Initial accreditation: 1947  Last comprehensive evaluation: Fall 1998
    Last Commission action: Substantive change report approved  Date: February 29, 2008

11. Other characteristics
Introduction

The Central Connecticut State University NEASC site visit took place between October 19 and October 22, 2008, and included the evaluation team members listed on the cover sheet and two observers from the Connecticut Board of Higher Education, also listed on the cover sheet. The Central Connecticut State University community (hereafter referred to as ‘Central’ or ‘the university’) was open and forthcoming and offered the team full cooperation in the gathering of information. At each meeting, participants were informed of the purpose of the team’s visit. Participants were knowledgeable about both the self-study and the accreditation process. Meetings were held with individuals and groups, and included faculty, students (both undergraduate and graduate), administration, alumni, community and trustee representation. A full schedule is attached to this report. In addition, the team held an open community meeting. A majority of the attendees were faculty, but approximately 15 other members of the campus community attended as well.

In addition to the site visit to the New Britain campus, two members of the team visited the Montego Bay location at Sam Sharpe Teacher’s College. A comprehensive schedule of meetings occurred including discussions with faculty, students, administrators, and alumni.

The evaluation team found the self-study report both comprehensive and clear. In its electronic version, it included many of the documents in the resource room as well as other document and website resources. The resource room housed a range of materials that were helpful for this review and Central provided additional documents at our request.

The evaluative judgments contained in the eleven sections of this report address the Standards for Accreditation of the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges and are based on the above-referenced materials, past communications between Central and NEASC, meetings held during the visit, and additional materials secured through the university’s website.

This evaluation of Central Connecticut State University is a comprehensive one; it follows the fifth-year report (2003), the progress report on the doctoral program in educational leadership (2005), the report establishing an online master of science degree program in data mining and an 18-credit graduate certificate in data mining (2007), and the substantive change report for the instructional location of programming in Jamaica (2008).

In the introduction to the self study, Central outlines the institution’s leadership history up to—and including—the time of the last NEASC visit in 1998. At that time, the president was in the third year of his administration, the senior administration was relatively new, the university had just adopted a new strategic plan, and the Connecticut State University System had just appointed a new chancellor. The situation is much the same today, with President Miller entering the third year of his presidency, senior administrators relatively new to their positions, a new strategic plan in the process of adoption, and a new chancellor in the CSU System (hereafter referred to as ‘CSUS’ or ‘the system’).

During the past 10 years Central has had three presidents, resulting in shifting leadership. As President Miller entered his position, two major campus controversies occurred, (tenure and
promotion denials and controversial content in the student newspaper, see page 25 for further information) which proved distracting and prevented the university from advancing some of its work. By the time of our visit, however, the campus climate had changed significantly. The community is working in concert to advance the institution through a new strategic plan and is paying attention to the importance of assessing the quality of academic offerings and student outcomes. Additionally, it is establishing a culture of evidence-based decision making across the institution.

1. **Mission and Purposes**

Central Connecticut State University’s mission and purpose have evolved since the institution’s founding and continue to do so today. Central was founded as New Britain Normal School in 1849, the first public institution of higher education in Connecticut. Its mission then was to prepare teachers to staff Connecticut schools. In 1933, its name was changed to Teachers College of Connecticut, and it began awarding baccalaureate degrees. In 1959, the institution underwent yet another name change—to Central Connecticut State College—when the state broadened its mission beyond that of a teachers college. In 1965, legislation created the Board of Trustees of the Connecticut State Colleges. In 1983, recognizing their roles as comprehensive, regional institutions, the Connecticut Board of Higher Education designated Connecticut’s state colleges as state universities and Central Connecticut State College became what is now Central Connecticut State University.

Central is one of four campuses of the Connecticut State University System (CSUS), whose governing mission emphasizes affordable, accessible and transformative educational opportunities at the baccalaureate, graduate and professional degree level for students of all ages, backgrounds, races, and ethnicities. A CSUS education “is consistent with [the four state universities’] historical missions of teacher education and career advancement (http://www.ctstateu.edu/mission.htm).”

Central’s current mission statement, approved in 2000, is posted on the website as follows:

> Central Connecticut State University is a community of learners dedicated to teaching and to scholarship. We encourage the development and application of knowledge and ideas through research and outreach activities. We prepare students to be thoughtful, responsible and successful citizens.

It quite accurately reflects the mission of the CSUS and, indeed, its own history; one that emphasizes teaching and scholarship in the context of a community of learners; research and outreach; and the preparation of students to be thoughtful, responsible and successful citizens. Central, like its three sister institutions, primarily educates Connecticut residents, many of whom are first-generation college students who tend to remain in Connecticut upon graduation.

While Central continues to educate more Connecticut teachers than any other institution in the state, it has also grown to include full liberal arts and professional programs at the bachelor’s and master’s degree levels. With the recent authorization of the Ed.D. degree in educational leadership, it now offers a doctoral degree as well.
The mission does appear in different forms in various documents and in most forms the mission statement is long and complex with a level of detail that detracts from its clarity. As enacted and reviewed across several sources, the mission is clear. However, if relying solely on written statements of the mission, it is not as concise as it might be. In 2008, the CSUS directed each of its member institutions to craft a distinctive mission statement for itself. Under the oversight of the University Planning and Budget Committee (UPBC), Central sought input from all campus constituencies, whereupon the UPBC recommended four areas of identity distinctive to Central within the CSUS: (1) international education, (2) workforce- and state economic development, (3) community engagement, and (4) interdisciplinary studies and cross-curricular initiatives.

A revised mission statement, approved in spring 2008 by the faculty senate, clearly builds on existing strengths and supports a greater synergy between existing and new initiatives by formally integrating them into the campus mission. The revised mission statement, which now serves as the foundation of Central’s 2008 strategic plan, does not promulgate a new identity, but rather recognizes one that has evolved through practice. The revisions represent a refinement rather than a shift of mission. The revised mission is still subject to final approval by the CSUS Board of Trustees.

The proposed mission is appropriate to the institution and the system and provides a basis for assessment and enhancement of Central’s effectiveness. For example, the primacy of teaching and learning as Central’s core mission is affirmed through tenure and promotion guidelines, a collective bargaining contract, and by department chairs and administrators, including the president and trustees.

When several faculty tenure appointments and promotions were denied, faculty response to what was perceived as a departure from the administration’s commitment to the teaching mission led to much discussion. As a result, processes to clarify expectations and an agreement to develop tenure and promotion guidelines appropriate to the mission and the specific disciplines were implemented within each department. Although the initial deadline for their submission has passed, many departmental guidelines are still being drafted. Faculty indicated that this should not be interpreted as a lack of enthusiasm for the concept, but rather reflects competing demands on their time.

Central is to be commended for the clarity of its mission. Its increased emphasis on scholarship and creativity in the context of high teaching loads, however, may call for vigilance, as it runs the risk of “mission creep” and such unintended consequences as the possibility of a decreased focus on teaching and community engagement. As noted previously, Central has been through a collegial process to address ambiguities about the primacy of teaching when evaluating faculty; this exemplifies both vigilance and a refinement of the manner in which the mission is enacted. The discussion also produced a renewed commitment to scholarship in a variety of mission-appropriate forms as a necessary foundation for effective teaching at the university level.

**Institutional Effectiveness:** Central’s mission has been revisited in the course of successive strategic planning processes—most recently in 2001, 2004 and 2008. Our discussions with faculty, administrators and other constituents indicate that the institution’s strategic planning
process is taken seriously and has included wide participation from a broad constituent base. Preparation of each strategic plan prompted renewed discussion of Central’s mission along with a consideration of sub-goals and the institution’s progress in achieving them.

The most recent plan—undated, but completed in 2008—references the relationship of each objective to previous strategic plans, a person responsible for each objective, means of assessment, baselines as appropriate, the goal progress, and enabling activities. The enactment of the mission and an assessment of it will be addressed through the discussion of subsequent standards. A variety of constituencies—from students to the external community—have demonstrated great enthusiasm for, and commitment to, the mission.

2. Planning and Evaluation

Planning: There is substantial evidence that Central’s planning efforts are—in NEASC’s language—“systematic, comprehensive, broad-based, integrated, and appropriate to the institution.” They include the preparation of two university-wide strategic plans since 2001 (2004 and 2008). Central also engages in both long- and short-term planning, and most of the campus’s key sub-units engage in their own planning efforts as well. Progress, and necessary modifications, is monitored regularly through “reality checks” that include the annual Accountability Report. The Accountability Report, departmental annual reports, reports of vital statistics and program metrics for departments and other written materials are published on the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment website.

While it is not completely clear that resource allocation has supported planning priorities efficiently and effectively in the past, there is no doubt that Central is a successful institution; one which has adapted to a changing external environment and which has implemented key institutional priorities in areas such as academic programs, facilities and athletics. Moreover, faculty leaders and others praise the current administration for its support of new, campus-approved initiatives.

Evaluation: Central has recently revised its mission statement to meet CSUS Board of Trustees requirement to incorporate areas of distinctiveness. The faculty senate approved adding the four elements of distinctiveness to the mission statement in May 2008. Plans call for submitting the revised mission and vision statements to the faculty senate for approval in February 2009, after which they will be submitted to CSUS for board approval. The institution collects significant data on students’ perceptions of their educational engagement and achievements, and on faculty and staff satisfaction with campus processes as they relate to key decision making. Additionally, it collects data on faculty/staff perceptions of how successful the university is in communicating institutional priorities and in evaluating its success in achieving them.

In terms of data collection relative to student achievement of educational outcomes, the record is mixed. While many departments with external accreditation bodies at Central undergo regular program reviews that include external reviewers, the same is not true for other programs, particularly those in its School of Arts & Sciences; the latter have no requirement for regular program review aside from annual reports and annual assessment reporting.
Central has recently reviewed its student affairs operations. The documentation shows no evidence that other areas of the college (facilities, finance, institutional advancement) have such review processes in place although senior administrators in those areas are accountable for meeting measurable objectives in the new strategic plan.

Central is committed to transparency in its planning and assessment efforts, from its reports to trustees and the state legislature, to the campus community and prospective students and their parents, through its participation in the Voluntary System of Accountability. The new strategic plan is attractively and concisely presented and seems to have significant campus support. Its major initiatives are based on the established strengths of the campus. The plan has measurable benchmarks and designates people accountable for seeing that specific objectives are achieved. The recently established Office of Institutional Research and Assessment has a very useful website and has already established itself as an important part of Central’s assessment efforts.

**Institutional Effectiveness:** Central monitors the effectiveness of its planning and evaluation activities through an annual accountability report to the Department of Higher Education, through the measurable benchmarks it has established and the designation of accountabilities set forth in the new strategic plan, and through reviews of planning and evaluation activities conducted by the University Planning and Budget Committee (UPBC). This is a relatively new role for the UPBC, however, and one that is not yet fully defined.

3. **Organization and Governance**

Available evidence on organization and governance supports the position that both are appropriate to Central. Furthermore, they are sufficiently flexible to lend themselves to the full range of activities which Central has been pursuing to realize its purpose and mission.

Central’s organizational chart clearly outlines a hierarchy of authority and responsibilities and the relationships between each. This same clarity is reflected and reinforced in its collective bargaining agreement (CBA), the draft faculty handbook and the catalogs for graduate and undergraduate students. Specifically, the organizational chart shows the relationship between and among the board of trustees, the CSUS office and Central’s administration. Central’s governance, in turn, is grounded in a number of faculty, staff, and student organizations.

By law, all higher education constituent units in the state of Connecticut are governed by a central policy-making authority, the Board of Governors of Higher Education. The Connecticut State University System, of which Central is a part, is by statute overseen by a board of trustees. Chaired by an appointee of the governor, the board of trustees is comprised of eighteen members, four of whom are students (one from each of the four constituent state universities). Its members embody areas of competence necessary to give proper effect to their mission and—in particular—represent the public’s interest. In accordance with statutory requirements, the Connecticut State University System Board of Trustees oversees the four universities and submits its recommendations to the State’s Board of Governors of Higher Education.
The chancellor of the CSUS, currently Dr. David Carter, supports the efforts of the board of trustees and is responsible to it. Additional duties of the chancellor include: recommending policies to the board of trustees for approval, implementing all board of trustee decisions and policies and keeping it informed about all aspects of the CSUS. The chancellor, in turn, is authorized to act for the board of trustees and to represent the CSUS and its respective universities to all other units of the Connecticut government and non-state entities.

In the absence of board of trustees’ policy on an issue, the chancellor is authorized to issue administrative directives, requests and reports, transfer funds, and create policies. System-wide councils, comprised of representatives of all four universities, advise the chancellor and CSUS office staff on matters affecting each university and the system as a whole. These councils include: the Council on Student Affairs, the Council on Information Technology and the Institutional Research Council. Complementing their work are the efforts of the board of trustees’ standing committees representing academic affairs, development, executive, finance and administration, and student life.

Each of the four campuses is led by a president to whom the board of trustees delegates broad authority to meet and address his or her university’s stated mission, oversee its executive management, and promote its development and effectiveness within the approved scope of board policy. The president is also responsible for the safety, health and welfare of all students and employees.

Each president delegates university administration to members of his or her executive committee, comprised of vice presidents and chief officers who report directly to him or her. Each president also convenes biweekly meetings with all members of the executive committee; ad hoc meetings are convened with individual administrators as needed. The provost/vice president for academic affairs is the chief academic officer. He or she meets biweekly with the Provost’s Council, comprised of the academic deans, associate vice presidents, library director, director of institutional research and assessment, director of the Center for International Education, director of continuing education and the director of The Learning Center. The latter two have been made part of the Provost’s Council in order to ensure that policies in those areas are properly integrated into the rest of the academic enterprise. In this way, they can serve students in Central’s five schools most effectively.

Central’s faculty governance is coordinated exclusively through the faculty senate, which has authority in such areas as curriculum, degree requirements, academic standards, academic freedom, admission policies, and student conduct. The faculty senate exercises basic control over all curricular matters, including courses offered for credit through the Office of Continuing Education. Consistent with the principle of shared governance, however, new degree programs are also approved by the university’s president, its board of trustees and the Board of Governors for Higher Education. Also reflective of shared governance is the fact that curricular changes made by the faculty senate through resolutions require presidential approval. This is to ensure that all such changes and the programs or policies they affect operate in a manner in keeping with Central’s mission and strategic plan.

The faculty senate, likewise, serves in an advisory capacity in the appointment of administrative officers, budget and planning issues, university organizational structure,
promotion and tenure policy, and matters affecting the educational quality and mission of the university. The academic programming responsibilities of the senate, guided by the university’s collective bargaining agreement (CBA) and principles espoused by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) are clearly defined. Faculty personnel matters are governed by the AAUP and the CBA.

Central’s Student Government Association (SGA) is an organization of undergraduate students regulated by an elected SGA senate. The SGA constitution spells out the authority and roles for student participation in university governance. These include student membership on the CSUS Board of Trustees, the CSUS Board of Trustees’ Student Advisory Board, the Student Union Board of Governors, the CSUS Foundation, Inc. Board of Directors, and the CSUS Foundation Board of Directors (previously known as the Henry Barnard Foundation). SGA roles also include service—in an advisory capacity—to academic departments, to the university administration on issues relative to student fees and charges and as voting members on a wide range of important campus-wide committees including those on academic standards, planning and budget, curriculum, excellence in teaching, and safety and health.

By statute, the university administration retains ultimate responsibility for revenue expenditure, but as student leaders have had a good working relationship with the administration, they have been allowed wide discretion. Graduate students are represented through the Graduate Student Association (GSA); its elected executive council advances the interests of graduate students to the administration and other constituencies on- and off campus.

Central’s board of trustees has a clear understanding of the university’s mission and purpose. With appropriate consultation and collaboration, it has worked effectively in ensuring the fulfillment of both. The board also appears to maintain effective and very productive channels of communication with the university. It delegates authority to the chancellor of the system appropriately, as well as to Central’s president, and periodically reviews the chancellor’s effectiveness. The board’s commitment is clearly evident, nowhere more so than in its work in improving the university’s endowment. It ensures its own effectiveness by reviewing its activities and has, in concert with the chancellor, developed a new instrument for the presidential reviews.

The chancellor and the CSUS office have worked well with the campus, which, while undergoing a transition, is succeeding—through broad administration-faculty-student collaboration—in forward progress including a comprehensive bonding package for physical campus improvements and a system-wide faculty/course evaluation process. The ability to work on and through these efforts says many things about good will, commitment despite differences, and a willingness to risk the new. The chancellor manages and allocates resources in a manner which gives strong emphasis to Central’s mission and purpose.

Central’s president and his staff are directly responsible to the chancellor, and the president—along with his team of campus leaders—has succeeded in protecting and advancing the quality and range of academic programs, fostering engagement with the community and strengthening oversight of the campus.
The faculty has a substantive voice in all academic, personnel and curricular areas of the campus and they use it to advance the integrity of academic life and help shape policy and substance. The scope of student contributions in advancing the interest of the student body is impressive, in part because policies allow ample scope for such contributions.

**Institutional Effectiveness:** The effectiveness of the university's and CSUS' organizational and governance structures—and the processes through which those structures operate—are impressive. That effectiveness is augmented through periodic reviews including formal and informal interaction between CSUS and the campus. There is a commitment to shared governance at Central and the improving communication and collaboration among administrators, faculty, staff, and students is yielding a mood of optimism.

4. **Academic Programs**

**Introduction, Undergraduate Education and Major or Concentration:** Central's academic programs meet the needs of the citizens of Connecticut as they prepare for careers and lives as active participants in society. Approved and overseen by faculty and administrators, programs are designed to provide coherent and sequential educational opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students.

The missions of Central's five schools (arts & sciences, business, engineering and technology, education and professional studies, and graduate studies) reiterate the institution's overall principle to prepare students as thoughtful people and involved citizens. The various missions foster excellence in and dedication to teaching along with quality faculty scholarship. Faculty members are also guided by the university's philosophy of preparing leaders for lives of service. Academic opportunities at Central reflect the institution's heightened commitment to four unique areas of distinction which are descriptive of the institution as well as prescriptive for new strategic initiatives.

Central offers over 60 undergraduate degree programs and over 30 minor options for students. The programs reflect the schools' orientations and include a broad range of arts & sciences such as biology, foreign languages, history, sociology and theater; business specialties of accounting, finance, management and marketing; engineering and engineering technology, education, nursing and social work (this is not intended to be a comprehensive list).

**International Education:** Central's Center for International Education (CIE) is Connecticut's "center for excellence" in international education and one of several centers of excellence at Central. Central's CIE has enrolled in one of the American Council on Education's prestigious "internationalization laboratories," under whose guidance it will develop a strategic plan to include, in the language of the CIE Annual Report 07-08: "a college-wide approach to study abroad; improving the number and quality of faculty and staff international professional development opportunities; suggestions for specific international grant initiatives; ways to engage the university's multicultural student population in international education; and an organizational model to manage university-wide international affairs."

Central's proposal for a bachelor's degree in journalism calls for establishing a "field-school model" of journalism in foreign countries in collaboration with the CIE.
Work Force- and State Economic Development: The establishment of the following is an example of recent needs that have been met:

- a new bachelor of science degree in nursing to address the shortage of nurses in Connecticut
- a 6th year certificate degree program in mathematics education leadership to address the needs of schools around the state
- a bachelor of science degree in civil engineering (still in the approval process) to meet the workforce needs of engineers.

Cooperative education is a unique academic program that integrates classroom study with career-related work experiences. Co-op work experiences are paid, full-time, six-month positions related to academic and career interests. Through them, students apply textbook learning in the context of on-the-job training. The money earned often helps students finance their educations, and the work experiences sometimes lead to future employment.

Community Engagement: The focus on community engagement in Central’s courses and programs is pervasive, with students affirming that it leads them to become more active community participants. The Bridges Program is one such example. By cultivating a collaborative relationship with school districts from which Central consistently enrolls cohorts of graduates, participants on both sides become more engaged. The aim is to increase communication between and among teachers of English and math at the schools and the university; such collaboration helps school teachers and students clarify college expectations and define the academic experiences necessary for high school students to graduate with college-level proficiencies.

The Center for Public Policy and Social Research (CPPSR), another center of excellence, also emphasizes this commitment. The CPPSR is dedicated to enriching the quality of public policy, public service, university outreach, and applied research by developing, facilitating and supporting faculty and student projects that advance their scholarship, applied research and real-life experiences.

Interdisciplinary Studies and Cross-curricular Programs: Faculty provide many examples of cross-disciplinary initiatives, including the Learning in Communities (LinC) Project whose goal is to engage students more fully in general education. It does this by letting them experience connections between or among disciplines by combining 100-level courses around a common theme or assignment. The new journalism major is the direct result of an interdisciplinary collaboration between the English and communication departments.

General Education: Undergraduate degree programs introduce students to a wide spectrum of knowledge and to theories of inquiry and include a total of 44-46 credits in general education (in four study- and four skill areas). Study areas include arts and humanities, social sciences, behavioral sciences, and natural sciences. The four skill areas include communication skills, mathematics, foreign languages, and personal wellness and fitness. Beyond formal study and skill areas, each student’s undergraduate program must carry at
least six credits with an international (I) designator. Faculty have suggested including a broader socio-cultural perspective as part of the undergraduate experience as a way to heighten emphasis on diversity and inclusiveness. Through the Office of Academic Articulations and Partnerships, a newly developed “transfer compact” enables students from the region’s six community colleges to enroll simultaneously at Central, making a college education a reality for many first-generation students.

Graduate Degree Programs: Central’s graduate programs are largely designed to prepare students for careers in counseling, education, mathematics, sciences, social sciences and technology. Faculty commitment and expertise is also shaping the development of new programs in areas such as global sustainability. In addition to more traditional professional development programs, faculty from across the institution—in areas as diverse as music and modern languages—come together for entrepreneurial credit programs, meeting students’ ongoing education needs.

The cohort model of delivery employed in the doctoral program in educational leadership has resulted in over 75 graduates since its beginnings in 2001. The online master’s degree and certificate programs in data mining, also begun in 2001, are developing similarly into successful regional and national offerings.

Central does not specifically distinguish graduate faculty from undergraduate faculty. Faculty members who administer graduate programs, however, are full-time and must engage in scholarly activity to attain promotion and tenure. Part-time faculty who teach graduate courses must, in addition, possess a terminal degree in their field of study or obtain special approval from their department chair, the dean of their academic area and the dean of the School of Graduate Studies.

Graduate programs and courses, more specialized and complex than undergraduate programs and courses, require reading, writing and analytical tasks beyond those required at the undergraduate level. Additionally, graduate students are expected to demonstrate competence in the use of technology and regularly engage in supervised professional activities and independent research projects. Students in the doctoral program in education must complete the requirements of the dissemination seminar, which includes a plan for sharing the results of their dissertation research. They must also produce two products: one focused on sharing the research with the scholarly community and another sharing it within the field of practice.

Jamaica: Central’s professional development programs in Jamaica meet some unique needs for students at Sam Sharpe and Mico Teachers Colleges and resemble the on-campus programs at Central with very limited modification. One example of such a modification is the professional development assignment. At Central, the presentation is made to the student’s class, whereas in Jamaica it is presented to the student’s K-12 school colleagues. The Jamaican approach has the additional advantage of disseminating knowledge gained from the class to a broader audience of practitioners.

The programs in Jamaica are consistent with Central’s mission in multiple ways, not the least of which is a dedication to public service. The programs lead to mastery of educational
leadership in one case, and in teaching reading and literacy in the other. Students in the educational leadership program master leadership skills in the areas of curriculum design, recognizing and teaching diversity in classrooms, ordering elements of organizational management, and using action research in education. Students also master the teaching of reading and literacy through an understanding of language and literacy concepts and how they are developed in their students. They do this by creatively designing instructional strategies and activities and through the use of research practices and publications.

In support of the community service mission, reading and language arts students are required to provide professional development workshops for their colleagues based on the knowledge they have gained from their summer projects.

During the summer program in Connecticut, Jamaican students visit schools in the area to observe teachers and students. Next summer, they will be involved in a reading program that requires them to develop a plan for assisting students who require support in improving their reading abilities.

A research course in the reading and language arts program pairs students from the Jamaican program and students from the New Britain campus through an online Internet café, giving them an opportunity to connect before the Jamaican students arrive on Central’s campus.

Students in the Jamaica program commented that their programs were intense and time consuming, but that the practical application has an immediate impact. They add that it is very satisfying, can be shared with other staff members and is addressing a real need for educational advancement. Said one participant, “We have created waves of change throughout the west (of Jamaica) and Jamaica.” Students were particularly excited about the first courses in both programs, saying that they instilled a sense of motivation and passion for learning as well as immediate applications.

Current student expectations in Jamaica are high and broad. Some envisioned themselves in the country’s ministry, creating educational policy, while others expected to provide consultation to programs. Several indicated they planned to pursue doctorates in education and several, in fact, are already enrolled. Others want to add to their knowledge and become more effective leaders. Still others will remain in the classroom. The latter was expressed particularly well by one student: “I have a passion. I want to help get Jamaican children reading.”

**Integrity in the Award of Academic Credit:** Policies regarding the award of academic credit must be approved by the University Curriculum Committee, the faculty senate, the academic deans, and the president. Programs requiring internships or service learning for graduation have undergone the appropriate curricular review process at the department and/or university level. The University Curriculum Committee also oversees all curriculum matters involving undergraduate and graduate programs.

Although most courses are offered in traditional 16-week semesters, some are also offered in abbreviated time periods during summer- and winter sessions as well as in hybrid and online format. All courses adhere to the same quality standards. A concern among students,
however, is the availability of courses necessary for them to complete their programs on time.

With the exception of the online program in data mining, online courses could only be offered during winter- and summer sessions through the 2007-08 year. In fall 2007, however, the faculty senate approved the development of pilot online courses to be offered in AY 2008-09.

The carefully planned discontinuation of the MBA and business education programs, due to an inability to remain competitive and a lack of students, did not require revision of student programs of study. The discontinuation of the bachelor's degree program in early childhood education, however, required program revisions for the 170 students enrolled. Faculty and advisors assisted with the revisions, minimizing any disruption of student progress.

Assessment of Student Learning: In the early part of this decade, administrative responsibility for assessment was housed with the associate provost for academic affairs. In 2007-08, Central created the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA), with a director who reports to the provost. The administration has committed to increasing support for assessment initiatives and has developed a strong assessment policy that outlines a central role for a faculty-based academic assessment committee in helping shape assessment practices. Program improvement is increasingly driven by assessment data generated in coordination with the OIRA. Additionally, each academic department submits an annual report to its dean which includes curricular changes, program assessment, faculty and student accomplishments, awards and achievements, information on academic advising and special initiatives, and outreach and community service activities.

Since 1999, departments have submitted learning outcome data for the Accountability Report on Legislative Goals. Beginning in fall 2008, all departments are required to submit annual reports to OIRA that include a list of the learning outcomes for graduates of their program; findings from their evaluation of student learning in their academic programs and in general education courses offered by their department; an analysis of these results; and a description of how these results have been used to improve programs. Only 70 percent of Central’s academic departments, however, have submitted these reports. Furthermore, those that have been submitted demonstrate a wide range of data quality and reliability. Although they do contribute to a shift toward a culture of evidence, the processes for generating data on student learning outcomes lack clarity and consistency and—as stated above—reporting by departments to date is incomplete (only 36 of 54 undergraduate programs and 28 of 37 graduate programs have reported).

Faculty members readily agree that outcomes assessment looks different across the institution. Professional programs accredited by professional organizations or regulators (i.e. teacher education or psychology) or those seeking first-time accreditation, such as the School of Business, have developed their own specific assessments as required by these organizations.
A thorough revision of what has been known as a “student opinion survey,” completed by students at the end of each course, demonstrates an additional effort in improving strategic and systematic programming.

**Institutional Effectiveness:** As an institution whose primary focus is on teaching, Central dedicates resources and passion to creating quality academic programs that meet the needs of its primary audiences, the citizens of Connecticut and Jamaican educators. Program offerings are consistent with the university’s mission and the areas of distinction. Program oversight is provided by faculty and administration. There is a welcoming tone for students transferring to the campus that is provided through the Transfer Compact. A strong commitment to academic program improvement has led to a rigorous plan for comprehensive assessment of student learning. This, in turn, allows faculty to make data-driven changes to turn good programs into excellent ones. However, although the institution tries to foster a culture of assessment integrated into pedagogical practice, assessment practices focused on student learning outcomes are neither consistent nor widespread.

While much data has been collected on student achievement—and much more will continue to be amassed—its reliability varies. This is especially true with respect to general education assessment and academic departments’ annual reports of student achievement relative to key learning outcomes. Furthermore, as was the case in 2007-08 assessment reports, some departments submitted no report while others submitted reports outlining plans for future assessments, rather than actual, completed assessments. It appears that few departments initiated significant changes in academic programs based on assessment data, in part because—as several departments noted in their reports—the data they have is so new they have not yet had time to review it carefully.

Central’s self study also frankly admits there has been dissatisfaction with campus communication relative to planning and evaluation efforts. Processes are now in place to strengthen campus communication in these areas; efforts that seem to have succeeded. Processes and policies, including a new faculty senate standing committee charged with assisting departments with a.) student learning outcomes assessment; and b.) monitoring compliance with university requirements, for instance, are now in place to ensure that student learning outcomes assessment becomes a reality for all of the academic programs at Central, not just for some. These processes and policies, however, are new and have not yet been fully implemented.

5. **Faculty**

Central’s faculty is comprised of nearly equal numbers of full-time and part-time faculty (432 and 453, respectively; fall semester 2007). The definition of these categories, as well as many other aspects of faculty life, is governed by a collective bargaining agreement (CBA). The agreement limits part-time faculty to a maximum twenty-percent of total faculty workload, although the actual percentage has been running somewhat less. Central does not employ graduate teaching assistants. The number of full-time faculty has increased significantly recently, growing from 409 to 432 in the last three years.
Full-time faculty appear well qualified to carry out the university’s mission. Approximately three-quarters of the faculty possess an appropriate terminal degree; another twenty percent, plus or minus, have a master’s degree. Teaching loads (12 load credits per year) are typical for an institution with Central’s mission and history, as is the mix of other duties (e.g. advising, “creative activity,” service, etc.). Opportunities for faculty to reduce teaching loads in order to concentrate on other endeavors (e.g. scholarly research or curriculum development) are available, and the institution often exceeds the contractual minimums for these opportunities.

Because the university has incomplete data on part-time faculty members’ terminal degrees, the qualifications of Central’s part-time faculty are unclear. Data is available for only one-third of this faculty group. One academic unit, the School of Business, was able to report essentially complete data, and the qualifications of part-time faculty there are appropriate for the school’s mission.

Policies governing promotions and tenure are a mixture of contractual expectations and additional clarifying documents, specifically the Promotion and Tenure Policy for Tenure-track Teaching Faculty. This document directs each academic department to develop additional discipline-specific criteria for promotion and tenure. The genesis of this policy, which grew out of a controversy when the new president overturned a number of promotion and tenure decisions, is illustrative of Central’s faculty health. After the faculty expressed its angst, faculty and administration were able to come together, reflect upon the situation and arrive at a consensus which led to the new policy. When fully implemented, it should provide a more transparent and clearer process.

Teaching and Advising: The faculty is clearly empowered to oversee and execute the academic mission of the university. There are well-established systems for hiring faculty and for governance of the institution, and faculty members actively participate in them. Hiring new colleagues is clearly in the hands of the academic departments with appropriate involvement by administrators. Academic life is governed by the faculty senate and other committees whose majority is comprised of faculty members. These bodies meet on a regular basis and maintain appropriate public records of their deliberations.

Central’s faculty also clearly accepts responsibility for ensuring the quality of academic programs and teaching in general. A number of programs are accredited by outside agencies and faculty members are closely involved in the assessments necessary to maintain these accreditations. Program assessments that do not have outside accreditation seem less well formed. The university, however, is in the process of developing assessments for these programs, and the faculty is intimately involved in these efforts. Systematic assessment of individual faculty members is limited to those who are employed full-time and consists, in the main, of student satisfaction surveys. This assessment instrument is currently under revision; the committee charged with revising the instrument has recommended that the revised instrument be used to evaluate all course sections regardless of faculty status. Although some departments use additional types of evaluation, this is not consistent across the institution.
Graduate education is generally well supported. Support of those who supervise theses preparation is reflected in appropriate load reassignment. The number and size of graduate assistantships are limited, however.

Both undergraduate and graduate students comment on faculty effectiveness in all aspects of their education, especially the close interactions between students and teachers and the caring and nurturing nature of most faculty members.

Faculty are provided with appropriate professional development opportunities through the Center for Teaching Excellence, which offers seminars and workshops, and via a system of internal grants for both faculty development (including, but not limited to, travel funds) and curriculum development. Both full-time and part-time faculty members are eligible.

The university has written policies covering both academic freedom and academic misconduct/ethics. There is also an academic integrity committee (comprised mainly of faculty) that works with administrators and the faculty senate to refine these policies.

Scholarship, Research and Creative Activity: Although the Central community (at all levels, and including the faculty) recognizes the primacy of teaching in its mission, it also undertakes a considerable amount of “creative activity.” The Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) supplemented by the university’s newly revised policy on promotion and tenure defines how faculty will be assessed in this area.

Creative activity by faculty is appropriately supported by load reassignment, sabbatical leave and internal grant programs. A number of these grant programs encourage collaboration between faculty and students at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Faculty members wishing to seek external funding for their creative activities are supported by the Office of Sponsored Programs.

Institutional Effectiveness: The university has a well-developed vehicle in place to assess support for faculty endeavors (teaching, scholarship, etc.). Less clearly developed are its efforts to assess the effectiveness of these endeavors in supporting the institution’s mission then subsequently using these assessments for improvement. Central recognizes this deficiency, however, and is working to remedy it.

6. Students

Admissions: Central Connecticut State University clearly defines the students it seeks to serve. It also takes seriously its mission to provide higher education access to all citizens of Connecticut who might benefit. The university has special access programs in place to ensure the enrollment of students with identified need and academic promise, but not meeting regular admission requirements. Support programs for students with identified needs are in place. The university measures the academic progress and success of these students and their support programs regularly and uses this data to improve both programs and services. Improved coordination of these support programs may reduce a duplication of efforts and improve communication among staff.
Admission standards and policies for both undergraduate and graduate students are clear and readily available electronically and in print. The university has successfully increased the number of under-represented students on campus and has demonstrated impressive growth in both their numbers and retention. Development of a long-range enrollment management plan would help address issues of enrollment stability/growth, need-based aid versus merit-based aid and the challenges associated with increasing the diversity of its student body.

The university uses first-year students' SAT scores for math and writing placement and Accuplacer for the placement of transfer students. Concerns were expressed by faculty about the number of students requiring remedial courses. The university is aggressively addressing this by piloting an intensive math course sequence and piloting the Bridges Program with area high schools. Discussions about establishing a magnet school at Central in collaboration with five key high schools are in progress.

**Retention and Graduation:** Central's first year retention rates have averaged 77 percent, with a low of 74 percent in 2001 to a high of 80 percent in 2005. Six-year graduation rates reached a high of 44 percent in 2007, up from 40 percent in 2005 and 2006.

The university offers numerous comprehensive and special student support programs to ensure their academic success. Student satisfaction surveys have indicated low student satisfaction in the area of academic advising and an underutilization of career services. The latter was cited as underfunded in the 1999 accreditation report, and the university is encouraged to reexamine current funding. The report further stated that academic affairs and student affairs have worked in isolation. Moving the academic advising center and career services from the student affairs area to the academic affairs area can be successful, but this success will not be fully realized unless there is a joint effort from the two divisions.

The Retention and Graduation Council, chaired jointly by an academic affairs administrator and a student affairs administrator, is a positive step in addressing this important support program. The early intervention program for first-semester students is a perfect example of a successful collaborative effort between student affairs and academic affairs professionals. Increasing collaboration between these two divisions of the university may prove to provide additional benefits.

Academic advising has been inconsistent among four academic schools. Efforts being made to enhance this important program include professional development for advisers, rewarding faculty who participate and identifying best practices. Central's efforts to improve academic advising by rewarding faculty participation are not well known and should be more widely communicated. Retention and graduation rates are readily available and include data on recruited student populations. Retention rates for special student populations are similar to those of other students, and for students in the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP), in fact, they are better; although EOP graduation rates lag behind majority students. Graduation rates have improved for all students since 2004, including those with identifiable needs. Student athletes receive support through the Academic Center for Athletes, and while two teams were identified as not making sufficient academic progress as defined by the NCAA, a plan is in place to address this issue. The athletic department regularly monitors compliance with Title IX and equity issues.
The Retention and Graduation Council has made helpful recommendations to improve the retention and graduation rates of defined student populations. As they are implemented, they will need to be measured for success. A new grant program administered by academic affairs and student affairs will fund the council’s subcommittee projects.

**Student Services:** The Office of Student Affairs’ mission statement is consistent with the university’s mission; it is circulated widely and reviewed periodically. The university offers an impressive array of student services and regularly administers the Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) to identify areas of strength along with those in need of improvement. Evidence shows continuous improvement in the Office of Student Affairs at Central Connecticut State University, which regularly identifies areas in need of improvement, and develops programs, policies and procedures to ameliorate them. To address diversity issues, a chief diversity officer was appointed, and the Blue Ribbon Commission on Diversity was convened.

New course scheduling software was purchased to address class scheduling issues. An impressive campus safety program is in place, and the university police department is both well trained and well staffed. An excellent relationship exists between Central’s police department and student affairs professionals, allowing both departments to work cooperatively for the benefit of the university community.

The university offers a full array of student services, including co-curricular student organizations, leadership programs, health services, counseling and wellness programs, orientation programs, intercollegiate athletics, and recreational and intramural sports opportunities. Student satisfaction inventories indicate that Central students express high satisfaction with these programs and services. Improvements in student recreational programs and facilities have resulted in a significant increase in student participation. Graduate students expressed support for either a formal orientation program or a program that addresses the issue of transitioning back to a university.

Financial aid is administered consistent with the guidelines published by the CSUS. As the timeliness of awards, the availability of financial aid counseling, and assistance in identifying other resources have improved, student satisfaction with financial aid delivery systems has increased. Students consider financial aid very important and will continue to seek improvement in this area.

The amount of financial aid has more than doubled since the last NEASC visit—increasing from $26 million in 1999 to $60 million in 2008.

The professional student affairs staff is highly trained and dedicated to providing outstanding service and programs to Central’s students. Professional development opportunities are available for staff, and areas for professional staff development have been identified. Staff expressed the need for additional funding for programs and services and that facility improvements have been identified and prioritized. Seven units have been moved from student affairs to other administrative areas since the last NEASC reaccreditation in 1998. Current student affairs staff expressed concern that those who rated “concern for student” the highest in the human resources employee satisfaction survey were no longer in the
student affairs area. The search for a vice president for student affairs is in progress, and the staff anticipates consistent and permanent leadership for this division.

Ethical standards are stated and widely publicized, as are policies on student rights and responsibilities and grievance procedures. The university has an ethics officer who is involved and engaged in the university community.

The student affairs area uses Council for the Advancement of Higher Education standards to assess the success of its services and programs. It should focus on learning outcomes for each of its programs and services and measure the success of meeting these learning outcomes regularly.

**Institutional Effectiveness:** Central measures the success of its students and evaluates their needs and satisfaction levels through regular and systematic assessment. Central has an array of student support services and programs that address student needs. Continuous improvement is part of the Central culture, and the results are revised and improved services and program aimed at improving student success.

**7. Library and Other Information Resources**

Library and instructional and information technology services are provided to Central through the Elihu Burritt Library and the information technology area (IT). Both have a vision of the scope and breadth of their services to Central, even though the IT plan is newer and has not been completely adopted by the academic community. The library’s mission and goals statement outlines the need for “quality information services and collections” to support Central’s educational goals.

IT developed a strategic technology plan in 2002, outlining the major goals and sub-goals of IT resource use at Central. The chief information officer developed a new strategic plan for IT in June 2008 in the hopes of bringing a clearer vision to the area and achieving university consensus. The plan has been approved by the president’s executive committee and university auditors and has the support of the provost and academic community. IT’s proposed new mission statement identifies specific ways in which the information technology department “supports instruction, research, administration, and public service.”

Budgets for library services and collections have shown steady growth over the years, particularly in the past two years. The 2007 budget was $2.4 million with an additional allocation of $100,000 to cover the costs of online serials. Annual budget allocations to support technology—including major capital expenditures—have remained consistent and are judged by the visitors to be adequate to support the institutional mission.

Technology expenditures are tied to the institutional mission and receive consistent input from several advisory committees representative of technology users throughout the community. Evaluation of the effectiveness of these expenditures has not been fully realized yet and needs academic and pedagogic evaluation, particularly in the use of technology in the classroom.
Library and IT (including help desk) staff are appropriately qualified and trained and, for the most part, their numbers appear to be adequate for Central’s growth. There are 17 MLS library faculty members, two administrators, and 14 support staff. Both departments have a mix of new employees and longer-serving staff. This melds the combination of fresh ideas and current technology knowledge with institutional departmental memory and service traditions, both of which are to the benefit of the campus community.

There is concern among library staff about low staffing levels in certain areas, and this is an area that should be examined. Community members generally seem very pleased with library- and information resources and services. The leadership of these two academic service departments is provided by a relatively new CIO and an interim library director. The search for a new library director is in process with an expected fill date of spring 2009.

Training and instruction in the effective use of the library, its resources and information resources are available for faculty, students and staff. Library skills are supported within the curriculum of Central’s general education requirements through a library elective course, LSC 150. The IT department offers help desk hours as well as walk-in support and scheduled technology workshops. These training opportunities appear to be meeting the needs of Central’s community.

Librarians contributed to the recently adopted university copyright policy and there are appropriate policies in place to ensure adherence to fair-use guidelines regarding reserve and interlibrary loan materials. IT has technologies and policies in place to help protect the network infrastructure from wrongful use by the university community and has established appropriate computer and network use policies and procedures. Security and the appropriate use of data, however, are determined and monitored by the departments that generate and utilize them.

The Elihu Burritt Library makes its collections available to the Central community in support of the institutional mission. The hard copy collection has grown, and access to various electronic media is both substantial and appropriate.

Access to the library’s electronic resources is available 24/7/365 to all members of the Central community in the Burritt Library, elsewhere on campus and from off-campus locations. The library’s hours of operation are generous, and professional reference support is available whenever the library is open. The normal hours are 8 AM – 10:45 PM (M-TH); 8 AM – 4:45 PM (F); 9 AM – 3:45 PM (Sa) and 2 PM – 9:45 PM (Su). Extended hours are provided during final exam periods.

Library and IT services for Central’s Jamaican instructional sites are arranged on-site with guidance from the university. IT services for Jamaica are available to both on- and off-campus users. Online courses utilize Blackboard Vista software. Computer labs and classroom media equipment are available and are on an appropriate replacement cycle. There is a plan for all classrooms to be upgraded to smart status and equipped with the same level of instructional technology throughout.
Minor renovations have been made at Burritt Library to make it more conducive to study and research. Further plans for upgrades to the facility are in place, but have been delayed. A café, to allow for Borders- or Starbucks-style study and socializing, has been added to the library. There are other, non-library, offices and functions within the library building in what otherwise might be student library, research and study space (for example, the Caribbean and Latin American Center, the Italian Resource Center, the Center for Student Athletes, and the Farmington Valley Archeological Project).

Daily administrative IT functions at Central utilize the SCT Banner system as well as other specialized software to meet specific departmental requirements. IT supports these various systems. The primary campus computer lab is staffed for support and assistance.

**Institutional Effectiveness:** In 2006, the library utilized the national LibQUAL+™ survey to determine faculty and student satisfaction, and there is evidence that data from that survey is used in decision making. Survey results indicated that several areas of library service are rated as less than desirable by the Central community. The major area that needs to be addressed, according to the survey, is the physical library space; respondents rated it inadequate for both the current and future size of the collection and the user community.

Students are in need of more group study space and the library building, furnishings and furniture are old and in need of upgrades. Other areas of concern such as materials budget and collection size have begun to be addressed. Evaluation of library services also point to concerns that include the number of computer terminals in the library and the size of the library staff. The most critical problem identified presently, however, is space.

The IT department regularly reviews the effectiveness of its services and technologies. In addition to direct input from the advisory committees and from auditing agencies, it receives some student input from the National Survey of Student Engagement. It utilizes Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL) to provide best practices and to assess services. True assessment of campus technology, however, is not occurring fully at Central.

8. **Physical and Technological Resources**

At Central, physical facilities and the overall campus environment contribute to the university’s educational mission. There has been a significant amount of planning and construction in recent years, and Central will receive capital funds from the state for a new classroom building, comprehensive renovations of two classroom/office buildings and the expansion of the Library, to cite a few examples. The total allocated to the CSUS, through the program CSUS 2020, is $950 million, and Central will receive $248 million for its campus.

Central’s physical plant is well managed and maintained. Ongoing attention is given to the maintenance and repair of buildings. Facilities management and residence life representatives meet biweekly to discuss residence hall maintenance and building issues. Plant and maintenance employees receive regular training and evaluation in their job areas to keep up with client service and health and safety issues. The newly established Department of Environmental Health and Planning is offering health and safety programs for employees.
Central’s police department has installed a mass notification broadcast system and an electronic mass notification system for use in the event of a crisis.

One of the goals of Central’s master plan is to identify building projects that support both current and projected needs for academic and campus life activities. The chief administrative officer meets periodically with the provost and deans to determine the academic areas’ physical resource needs. The physical appearance of the campus is important when new construction projects are identified.

Laboratory and classroom renovations are part of the master plan, and include space improvements for technology and media support. Approximately 55 percent of Central’s academic classrooms are smart classrooms. The campus is wired with high-speed and wireless internet, and there is wireless network access in all of the residence halls. In addition, all residence hall rooms are equipped with high-speed internet access. Faculty and staff computer equipment is replaced on a three- to four-year cycle.

The facilities management area is responsible for creating a safe and pleasant campus. The Facilities Planning Committee, led by the university’s chief administrative officer, ensures that environmental concerns, security issues and space allocation requests are met. All new and renovated facilities meet current building codes and are ADA compliant. All residence halls have undergone building code improvements to bring them in compliance with current building codes.

Central has made environmental sustainability a key priority. The Energy Center has cogeneration capability, and all new buildings are tied into the center for heat and chilled water. As older buildings are renovated, every effort is made to tie them to the center as well. In addition, Central is committed to being a greener campus over the next 10 years. Expanding recycling programs, launching water and energy conservation programs, and reducing the carbon footprint of campus operations are being instituted as part of the plan. Central initiated a master planning process in 1997. Its goal was to develop a strategy in support of the university’s mission and goals. The master plan provides a framework and establishes priorities for making facility improvements. The planning process that underpins the current level of facility renewal and that forms the basis for future plans is impressive. The development of facility programs, the establishment of priorities, and the incorporation of both into the overall university financial plan are effective.

Central is committed to the reliability of its information systems, the integrity and security of data, and the privacy of individuals. Data networks are secured by IT. Compliance with FERPA, GLBA and CSUS audit requirements is the responsibility of each office that maintains information that requires such auditing.

**Institutional Effectiveness:** Overall, Central’s physical facilities are a major strength of the campus. The administration and facilities management should be commended for their professional oversight of this valuable resource. The institution regularly assesses its effectiveness vis à vis sustainability, the master plan, risk management, and public safety.
Central engaged consultants to review these areas and there is evidence that the results of these assessments are used to make decisions and plans.

9. Financial Resources

Financial resources support the academic mission of the institution and Central's overall financial condition is strong, the result of prudent financial planning. Central's balance sheet, in fact, shows a strengthening financial position. Central's total operating revenues, including federal and private grants, was $198 million in FY 2008. Operating expenses for FY 2008 were $197 million. Revenue is comprised of tuition and fees (44.87 percent), state appropriations (41.20 percent), housing and food services (9.66 percent), and other income sources (4.27 percent). Budget planning is integrated with the strategic planning process and based on institutional strategic priorities and the university's mission. The university appears to be well managed, and there is obviously a great deal of collaborative and cooperative interaction among its senior officers. Sound management of its assets has contributed to the university's ability to fund its highest priorities.

Central's unrestricted fund balance and cash balance grew in FY08. The most significant financial factors affecting it at the moment are state budget cuts and the weakening economy. To meet these challenges, the CSUS recently implemented a hiring freeze. Faculty positions have not been impacted by the hiring freeze, but savings from the hiring freeze will help offset the impact of these pressures.

The budget office develops a multi-year financial plan outlining anticipated revenues and expenses necessary to provide a constant level of service. Annually, Central prepares a spending plan that allocates resources; primarily it addresses priorities outlined in the strategic plan and the annual Letter of Priority. The spending plan is submitted to the CSUS, and the board of trustees, accompanied by information on accomplishments made over the year.

Financial resources allocated to instruction and student- and academic services have grown over the last three years.

Central's commitment to accessible and affordable educational opportunities is evident in the increased level of financial aid provided to its students. Student access is a top priority of the board of trustees. Support for aid, waivers and student employment was $10 million in FY 2008.

The finance office is responsible for a budget process that develops revenue projections based on anticipated enrollments and funding from the state. Deans and directors submit to their respective vice presidents and chief officers a general operating budget as well as a list of prioritized new initiatives. Each vice president then meets with the president and the chief financial officer to review budget priorities. University budget priorities are reviewed by the University Planning and Budget Committee (UPBC) and a senate standing committee made up of faculty, staff and administrators. Once the UPBC approves the plan, the president forwards it to the board of trustees for final approval. As part of this process, funds are reallocated to achieve institutional goals and priorities.
Institutional and board leadership ensure ethical oversight of the institution’s financial resources and practices.

PricewaterhouseCoopers conducted FY2007 financial statement audits and these received unqualified opinions. The A-133 audit is conducted at the state level and there have been no findings or material weaknesses for Central. Connecticut State auditors performed an NCAA-required audit of athletics.

The endowment has grown over the past five years from $15 million to over $26 million. Annual endowment payout to purpose is approximately 5 percent; the remainder is reinvested to grow the endowment. The addition of a vice president for institutional advancement as well as five new development officers reflects a commitment to this activity. Development officers are assigned to specific schools so as to communicate strategic goals and priorities to donors more effectively. Integration of development activities into all parts of the institution should be a priority.

Central’s internship program supports the work force development initiative at the university. In order to strengthen the internship program, career services and institutional advancement should develop their collaborative efforts further. In addition, there needs to be some collaboration between the advancement area and parents.

All fiscal policies are clearly stated in writing and implemented consistently in compliance with ethical and sound financial practices.

**Institutional Effectiveness:** Central has appropriate checks and balances built into its financial controls. There are a number of mechanisms, both internal and external, to evaluate both its fiscal condition and its financial management. Senior staff members are dedicated to an inclusive planning and budget process that reallocates funds to meet institutional goals and priorities. The integration of development officers into Central’s schools provides a better communication of strategic goals and priorities to donors.

10. Public Disclosure

The Central Connecticut State University website, www.ccsu.edu, is appropriate and sufficient to guide prospective students and the general public to informed decision making regarding the institution. One can locate expected information on the Central site; such information is current and informative. Although navigation may not be as intuitive as it is on other higher education sites, the information is certainly available. The website is due for an upgrade in early 2009 and will include a new content management system to improve functionality, design and usability. Responsibility for the accuracy and timeliness of site information is distributed and shared between the marketing and communications staff and leadership and with the specific academic departments and administrative units involved.

The website is the public’s primary source for information about the university, and news releases, current events, faculty and student profiles, programs, catalogs, and institutional data are all readily available. Contact information is easy to obtain and vehicles to request further information are part of the site.
Central posts both current and archival undergraduate and graduate catalogs on the site, which are also available in hard copy. These thorough documents have details on Central’s mission, policies and procedures, academic programs, student life, educational opportunities, rules of student conduct, and much more.

Publications, both print and electronic, portray the opportunities available at Central accurately and prospective students can easily obtain appropriate information regarding the institutional mission, educational objectives, admission requirements, financial information, conduct, courses, and other areas of student interest.

Central maintains and makes readily available a list of current and emeriti faculty, administrators and librarians, indicating departmental affiliations, degrees earned and the institutions from which they were awarded.

Information on international opportunities is available through the Center for International Education and on the website. An orientation program for prospective students in the Jamaica program is held annually on site, and information is disseminated at the orientation and through local media. A second orientation occurs when the matriculated Jamaican students attend Central for their last summer session.

Courses are listed in the online catalog and indicate which semester and year a course is available. Personnel not available during a given year are not listed on the roster.

The Office of Institutional Research and Assessment maintains and publishes data on the size and characteristics of the student body as well as graduation and retention rates. Central’s student handbook is a comprehensive document detailing the life of a Central student.

The financial aid office publishes information about the total cost of education and the availability of financial assistance.

Central’s regional accreditation status, as well as its various other professional accreditations, is stated accurately and prominently in the catalogs.

Recent campus controversies generated substantial public interest and concern. These appear to have been dealt with openly, honestly and tactfully, and have been used as positive experiences for the institution.

**Institutional Effectiveness:** Central undergoes periodic reviews of its print and electronic publications for consistency, accuracy and timeliness. Most recently, first-year-, transfer-, continuing education-, and graduate students—as well as parents of incoming students and university employees—were asked to assess various publications. There is indication that the results of these assessment activities are utilized for improvement, and there is a plan to continue surveying the community annually for feedback.

**11. Integrity**

Central Connecticut State University has a strong statement on institutional ethics and integrity and has demonstrated and subscribed to high ethical standards in its dealings with
students, faculty, staff, alumni, and the public. Its commitment is stated in the university’s
mission statement, in Central’s Ethics Statement and in its affirmative action policies.
Academic dishonesty guidelines are well established, and the process to adjudicate is clear
and readily available. Academic freedom is evident, and exists under the purview of the
faculty senate and the provisions of the CBA and AAUP. The university does not shy away
from controversial issues, speakers or programs.

The Central Connecticut State University Board of Trustees clearly recognizes its legal
responsibility. As the university’s governing body, it makes this clear in its mission statement
and in publications. The student handbook, faculty manual and hiring search manual contain
policies which reflect the university’s commitment to fairness, equity and integrity.

The university continues to address diversity and multiculturalism and supports students,
faculty and staff from diverse backgrounds. The appointment of a chief diversity officer, the
creation of the Blue Ribbon Commission on Diversity (which made several
recommendations) and the Strategic Plan for Diversity, which includes 104 diversity
initiatives, indicate the university’s commitment to diversity and inclusion.

The Office of Diversity and Equity coordinates training, investigates complaints and works
to develop a culturally diverse community. The process for formal complaints is well
documented. The university ombudsman serves as a valuable resource for students and
offers them support during the complaint process. The ombudsman works in a proactive way
to facilitate the resolution of complaints.

Issues of gender bias were raised two years ago when several female faculty were denied
promotions. The university has responded positively since those issues were raised, and has
worked effectively with the faculty senate to rewrite Central’s tenure and promotion
processes. Several faculty members noted that this work has resulted in major improvements
in both the tenure and promotion process. There are, however, lingering effects from the
promotion denials, and the university must continue to monitor the campus climate for
women. In addition, some faculty during our visit expressed concern about the lack of
women in senior administrative positions at CCSU.

Incidents of student insensitivity to race, ethnicity and gender occurred at Central in 2007.
The university responded positively to these incidents and has implemented many of the Blue
Ribbon Commission on Diversity’s recommendations, developed a bias response protocol,
regularly assesses the campus climate now, and has increased resources for diversity
programs and initiatives. The university’s new long-range plan not only continues, but
expands upon, these initiatives. Students developed and implemented an ethics and integrity
policy for all student organizations.

The university has not reached its affirmative action hiring goals and the retention of faculty
and staff of color has been identified as a concern by faculty and administration. A study to
ascertain why faculty and staff of color leave Central is ongoing and hiring policies and
procedures will be reviewed. Overall gender goals in the hiring plan have been met, but
women are overrepresented in some areas and underrepresented in others. Specific hiring
goals to address this concern will be established by area and by department.
Institutional Effectiveness: Central regularly assesses its policies and conditions that impact institutional integrity. Central has pursued institutional integrity in all areas of the university and uses assessment as a basis for continuous improvement.

Institutional Effectiveness Summary

Central Connecticut State University is establishing a culture of evidence-based decision making that is evident in the newly adopted strategic plan, which has been accepted by the CSUS chancellor and distributed to the board of trustees. The university community approached both the preparation of the self study and this site visit as opportunities to review its overall effectiveness and to identify areas in need of improvement. The self study and the many interviews during the visit were transparent and showed a university in transition, with increasing clarity of direction and desired outcomes. A number of important efforts remain either in the planning stages (enrollment strategic plan and information technology strategic plan) or are just now being implemented (student learning assessment plan). There is significant evidence, however, that the university has made a strong commitment to complete the process of systematic and periodic review for purposes of continued improvement.

Summary

It is the view of the evaluation team that Central Connecticut State University is achieving its mission and offering academic programs and services consistent with that mission. The university is supported by an enthusiastic, engaged board of trustees at the Connecticut State University System level and by its chancellor. President Miller is providing strong leadership and has moved through a few major challenges; challenges that many agree are well in the past, with all issues closed. The climate of the campus is collaborative, open, optimistic, and eager to move forward with the new strategic plan. The well-qualified faculty, administration and staff are focused on meeting students' needs and continuing to improve the educational and extracurricular experiences for students.

The university is defining itself through its four areas of distinction: international education, workforce and state economic development, community engagement, and interdisciplinary studies and cross-curricular programming. These areas are being woven into the academic programming in such a way as to maintain the institution's primary focus on teaching.

The institution is financially healthy and has appropriate mechanisms to evaluate its fiscal condition and its financial management. The physical plant is an asset for the university and planned investments in renovations and new construction will further improve facilities for the educational mission.

With the recently established Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, efforts are underway to institutionalize the assessment of the effectiveness of all aspects of the university, most importantly student learning. The mechanisms are largely in place, however, the collection of information and the analysis and use of this information have yet to be fully implemented. As evidenced in the new strategic plan, Central understands the
importance of continuing to implement its plan for comprehensive review of institutional effectiveness.

The evaluation team offers the following summary of the most important strengths, concerns, and suggestions.

**Strengths**

- Central’s mission is embraced by all stakeholders, including the trustees, the chancellor, the president, administrators, faculty, staff, students, alumni, and the greater community. The faculty are committed to teaching and there is evidence of enduring relationships with students that extend well beyond the classroom and graduation.

- The areas of distinction that have been identified evolved from institutional strengths, and these areas are now more prominent. They are involving greater portions of the university and receiving a greater investment from the university as well.

- A comprehensive strategic plan has been developed and accepted by the Central community, and is currently being implemented. The 47 objectives cover the full array of major campus initiatives and have measureable benchmarks, assessment tools, goals, and enabling activities.

- The campus has a positive climate with evidence of strong collaboration among various groups, including faculty, students, staff, and administration.

- Central is financially secure—and with sufficient reserves—and has an effective budgeting process. It is well prepared to address anticipated resource shortfalls over the next few years.

- Students are highly motivated, engaged and positive about their experiences. This includes undergraduate, graduate, and international students. The Office of Student Affairs provides an excellent array of support services, student activities and other services.

- Central’s sustainability efforts are to be commended, and it has an ambitious agenda to increase the ‘green’ nature of the campus over the next 10 years in addition to extensive programming already underway.

- The university is committed to partnership programs responsive to the needs of the community. These include community engagement, work force development, economic development, and student enrichment (both pre-K to 12 and at the university level).
• Central is well positioned in the area of development through the establishment of a comprehensive staff and an increase in endowment from $15 million to $26 million over the past five years. This is an area of work that is fully supported by the board of trustees.

• The teacher education program in Jamaica is a specific example of Central's responsiveness to student needs and it contributes to the internationalization of the university. This program is having a significant impact on the quality of education in Jamaica.

• The physical facilities and overall campus environment contribute to the educational mission of the university. The physical campus is well managed and maintained. Additional resources Central will receive through CSUS 2020 (system-wide plan for facilities improvements) will provide opportunities for both continued expansion and improvements.

Concerns

• Central Connecticut State University does not yet have a fully-implemented, systematic and broad-based program of student learning assessment that informs both it and the public about how students are learning. It also does not provide information to improve learning experiences for students. The Office of Institutional Research and Assessment has recently been established, and its efforts have produced a strong institutional policy on assessment. There is an increasing understanding of the need for assessment in the academic community. Mechanisms are in place to collect the necessary information; current data, however, is uneven and incomplete.

• A systematic and periodic review of all academic programs, including input from external reviews, is not fully implemented, particularly in programs that do not have an additional external accreditation.

• The preparation and qualification of part-time faculty and their teaching effectiveness are not well documented. Including all courses in the course evaluation process is recommended, as is regular review of part-time faculty qualifications.

• The quality of academic advising is inconsistent and resources have been reduced over the past 10 years in this area. A comprehensive strategy to insure that an effective system of academic advising that meets students' needs for information and advice is recommended.

Suggestion

• While the university receives excellent service from information technology and the availability of technology is at a very high level, communication between IT and academic affairs is limited. A stronger collaboration between these two areas is likely to yield improved educational experiences for students and a more effective use of resources.