

Report to the  
Faculty, Administration, Trustees, Students

of

**Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania**  
**Lock Haven, Pennsylvania 17745**

by

An Evaluation Team representing the  
Middle States Commission on Higher Education

Prepared after study of the institution's self-study report  
and a visit to the campus on February 21-24, 2010

The Members of the Team:

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**At The Time Of The Visit**

**President/CEO:**

Dr. Keith T. Miller, President  
Office of the President  
Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania  
North Fairview Street  
Lock Haven, PA 17745

**Chief Academic Officer:**

Dr. Debra Erickson, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs  
201 Sullivan Hall  
Lock Haven, PA 17745

**Chair of the Board of Trustees:**

Guy A. Graham

## **I. Context and Nature of the Visit**

### **Institutional Overview.**

Initial Accreditation: 1949

Last Reaffirmed: November 16, 2005

Control: Public

Affiliation: Unit of PA System of Higher Education

Institution Type: Master's, smaller programs

### **Scope of Institution at Time of Visit.**

Degrees Offered: Certificate, Associate's, Bachelor's, and Master's degrees.

Branch Campuses: \*Clearfield Branch Campus

Additional Locations: Coudersport and Harrisburg

### **Self-Study Design.**

Comprehensive self-study.

## **II. Affirmation and Continued Compliance with Eligibility Requirements**

Based upon a review of the self-study and interviews, the certification supplied by the institution and other institutional documents, the team affirms that Lock Haven University continues to meet eligibility requirements in the *Characteristics of Excellence*.

## **III. Compliance with Federal Regulations**

Based on review of the self-study, certification by Lock Haven University, and interviews the team affirms that the institution's Title IV cohort default rate is within federal limits. Additionally, the team is unaware of any problematic issues relative to state regulatory requirements.

## **IV. Evaluation Overview**

The Evaluation Team conducted a comprehensive review of Lock Haven University from Feb. 21-24, 2010. While the Team focused upon a review of the Standards of Excellence, we were particularly concerned with Lock Haven's expressed reports in their Self-Study about fiscal issues related to projected declines in high school graduation rates, declines in state support related to the national and state fiscal crisis, and a lack of a meaningful connection between planning and their budgeting process. In addition, we identified a somewhat universal issue where alignment of staff and administrative reporting structures had further eroded meaningful enrollment planning and integration of services to students. Issues relative to the Athletic Program and its structure in Division I and II and the associated costs have further destabilized Lock Haven's fiscal security and created a public relations and Town/Gown issue with the local community and alumni. Finally, it was identified that continued progress with institutional assessment, assessment of student learning and the development of their general education program requires continued attention. Lock Haven University is also experiencing administrative change as their President leaves for the Presidency of Virginia State University and they will have an Interim President appointed for a one year term while they conduct a national search.

## **V. Compliance with Accreditation Standards**

### **Standard 1: Mission and Goals**

**Lock Haven University meets this standard.**

#### **Summary of Evidence and Findings:**

Lock Haven University's mission statement was developed during the 2002-2003 academic year. The mission statement clearly defined its purpose at that time. There is institutional recognition that the mission statement needs to be revised and the institution is currently looking at the mission statement within the context of the strategic planning process. While the mission statement loosely identifies whom the institution serves--vision and goals are quite broad. It is not clear that the mission drives major decisions and certainly has not been used to guide faculty, administration, and staff in making decisions related to planning and resource allocation. The mission statement has not been revisited since 2002-2003. The Provost has developed a strategic planning process that is designed to focus the institution on a new set of goals for the next several years. The Strategic Planning committee has been appointed. There is recognition that the mission statement needs to be revisited and there is evidence that this work has begun including minutes of meetings, notes from a day long brainstorming retreat, and a draft survey going out to the campus in early March.

#### **Recommendation:**

- The Team concurs with the self-study recommendation that the institution develop a revised statement of the institution's mission, vision and goals that will better focus institutional energies, provide clarity to the institution and guide the allocation of resources.

### **Standard 2: Planning, Resource Allocation and Institutional Renewal**

**Lock Haven University does not meet this standard.**

#### **Summary of Evidence and Findings:**

Recently, Lock Haven University, under the leadership of the Provost, convened a Strategic Planning Committee. There is evidence that this Committee had been meeting and had recently developed a survey to be sent to all faculty and staff soon after the Middle States site visit. There is recognition of the importance of developing a strategic plan with measurable goals and objectives, key performance indicators for how these will be measured and on-going assessment of the effectiveness of the plan. There was also evidence that Lock Haven University will tie the strategic plan to the budgeting process in the development of their new strategic plan.

While Lock Haven University has shown some evidence that there have been a series of interim plans guiding the institution, the observation has been made that major resource decisions have been made without an intentional relationship to the previous strategic plan. Further, after nearly eight years with

the former strategic plan, the institution deferred initiation of a formal strategic planning process and authorized the creation of interim strategic plans to guide the university through 2010-2011.

While there have been evidence of a series of the above mentioned interim planning documents, the institution's goals and objectives do not reflect conclusions drawn from assessment results. In addition, it is unclear whether the allocation of resources to meet these interim strategic goals was done as a result of planning. There is little evidence that there is any connection between institutional planning and the allocation of resources. In addition, there is no evidence of periodic assessment of the effectiveness of planning, resource allocation and institutional renewal. The Team does not want to suggest there is no evidence of planning—the Team wants to be clear that there appears to be a systemic disconnection between planning, decision-making, assessment and the allocation of resources.

A facilities master plan is in existence and was updated last year. This plan includes a full replacement of university housing funded through the Foundation and operated by the University. LHU has foregone their allocation of capital funds for several years to construct a new 31-million dollar Science Building on the East Campus with an additional 3 million dollars in furniture and equipment. The planning cycle also includes upgrading the campus fiber optic network and the renovation of Ulmer Hall (the current science building).

#### **Requirements:**

- The Team concurs with the self-study recommendation that budget allocations be reviewed to ensure that expenditures correspond to the university strategic priorities once established.
- The Team concurs with the self-study recommendation that LHU develop a long-term strategy to address challenges posed by declining state support, changing student demographics and rising costs.
- Lock Haven University must prepare and document the Strategic Planning process and the strategic plan. The implementation of the Strategic Plan and the link between the strategic plan and the allocation of resources must also be clearly documented and become part of the institutional culture.
- Lock Haven University must prepare key performance indicators that assess the effectiveness of the strategic plan goals and objectives.
- Lock Haven University must develop and implement a communications plan to inform the entire university community about the Strategic Planning process and evolving plan.

### **Standard 3: Institutional Resources**

**Lock Haven University meets this standard.**

#### **Summary of Evidence and Findings:**

Based on a review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

The financial position of the University is relatively stable despite the current economic condition, and the attendant state budget cutbacks and limitations and restrictions imposed. Evidence suggests that revenues exceed the budget for the 2009 fiscal year and in addition, the University achieved significant reductions in expenditures due to efforts to target areas where increases in efficiencies could be produced. The University experienced an increase in net assets for the 2008 – 2009 fiscal year from \$42.4 million to \$43.2 million, an increase of \$800, 000. In addition, Lock Haven University has been able to place excess funds at the end of the year in their Plant Fund.

The Financial Statements of the University are audited by the firm of Parente Beard, LLC annually. The auditors reported that they encountered no significant difficulties in dealing with management in performing and completing the audit. The VP of Finance, Administration and Technology attributes the positive fiscal results for the year to increases in enrollment in addition to above mentioned reductions in expenditures. The VP for Finance provided two examples of planning to the current budget situation, namely the Physician Assistant Graduate Program and the growing demand for graduates of the program, ultimately due to a careful needs assessment process. He also believes that there can be other initiatives to improve financial results by way of collaborative efforts between other Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE) institutions. While Federal stimulus funds have been made available from the state during the current academic year, there are future funding gaps on the horizon, meaning that the University is going to have to continue to be resourceful in the future to aggressively cut expenditures, and seek other sources of revenue.

There is currently in effect a private fund raising plan (a capital campaign) to raise funds of \$3 to \$5 million which, if successful, will provide a significant source of new funds for the college for scholarships and other discretionary programs. The Vice President for University Advancement stated that because of significant restrictions by the state on capital projects such as new construction, private fund raising has become a vital part of the future source of funding for the University. The Vice President for University Advancement was retiring from Lock Haven University within days of our site visit and the University will have to engage in a search for a new Vice President for Advancement.

The annual budgeting process appears to engage the entire community so that there is an opportunity for input to the process. The linkage between planning and the University's "closing the loop" in its budgeting process still remains to be completely implemented.

### **Recommendations:**

- The Team concurs with the self-study recommendation that budget allocations be reviewed to ensure that expenditures correspond to the university priorities once established.
- The Team supports the self-study recommendation to continue to promote transparency by sharing planning and budget information with the university community.
- The Team recommends that there be a strong link between strategic planning and resource allocation and that this be continually assessed for effectiveness.

## **Standard 4: Leadership and Governance**

**Lock Haven University meets this standard.**

### **Summary of Evidence and Findings:**

Lock Haven University has no university or faculty senate. Faculty and staff participate in governance through their bargaining units. Students participate through the Student Cooperative Council. Participation in governance is through a committee structure. The faculty role in governance is conducted within the parameters set by the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) between PASSHE and APSCUF. Separate agreements cover faculty (including librarians and counselors) and coaches. The CBA requires the university president or other administrators to “meet and discuss” matters related to the CBA with a committee selected by the campus chapter of APSCUF. In addition to the Meet and Discuss process to address contractual issues and the conditions of work, the CBA is explicit in allowing for Meet and Discuss to address issues of educational policy. The collective faculty shares in governance largely through the role of APSCUF in the Meet and Discuss process. University staff shares in governance through the Meet and Discuss provisions of their respective bargaining units. Staff also shares in governance through representation on non-academic committees. Staff members have contributed regularly to continuous improvement process reviews and ad hoc committees to address campus issues. Despite the above stated structure, a lack of institutional communication and information sharing appears to significantly and negatively impact the entire institution.

The issue of whether to have a university or faculty senate is very sensitive at LHU. Several of the faculty members spoken with mentioned with a sense of pride the fact that there was no Senate. They felt the union and CBA was sufficient. Many of the administrators mentioned a strong need for either a university or faculty senate as a way to discuss university-wide issues and concerns that do not relate to the CBA. Other PASSHE campuses have Senates but LHU has resisted this structure. Beyond the mere presence of a Faculty or University Senate, the issue of ineffective and insufficient campus-wide communication is evident.

### **Commendation:**

- The new Provost has recently initiated a series of campus-wide forums specifically to discuss issues of importance. She presents these forums via the web as well so that people do not have to attend and can still observe. These forums allow individuals and campus committees to report out and to each other.

### **Recommendations:**

- The Team supports the self-study recommendation that the University conduct a thorough assessment of existing structures of shared governance in light of the university’s evolving mission and changing environment.
- The Team supports the self-study recommendation that the University clearly documents the roles and responsibilities of various constituencies in governance, and makes this information readily available to all members of the university community.

- The Team supports the self-study recommendation that the University ensure that all committees have a clear charge that specifies responsibilities, authority, reporting relationship(s), membership, and how the chair is to be selected.
- The Team supports the self-study recommendation that the University ensure that all governance units promptly make available minutes of meetings, policy recommendations under consideration, and decisions.
- The Team supports the self-study recommendation that the University establish a central public repository for approved policies.
- The Team supports the self-study recommendation that the University conduct a program of periodic and comprehensive review of administrative structures (i.e., grouping of functions and lines of authority) and processes to evaluate their effectiveness in light of the university's substantial growth, evolving mission, and changing environment.
- The Team supports the self-study recommendation that the University ensure that information for institutional decision-making is readily available to members of the university community.

### **Standard 5: Administration**

**Lock Haven University meets this standard.**

#### **Summary of Evidence and Findings:**

The University President is appointed by and reports to the Board of Governors through the Chancellor. The President is evaluated annually by the Lock Haven University Council of Trustees. The President will leave Lock Haven University in the summer of 2010 to assume the Presidency of Virginia State University. The Chancellor has announced that an interim president will be appointed and a national search for a new president will begin in the fall of 2010. The Chair of the LHU Foundation Board will Chair the Search process with the names of finalists being forwarded to the Chancellor at the conclusion of the campus search process. The Council of Trustees conducts annual evaluations of the President as well as recommends the appointment, retention or dismissal of the President to the Chancellor.

While the credentials of all administrative leaders of the institution are appropriate in their degrees and training for their positions, the reporting structures and the reason for them are not always clear. There are instances where this has been counterproductive for the institution and significantly impede administrative decision-making and institutional planning. For example, the Office of Admissions reports to the Vice President for Advancement and is not integrated with other offices that specifically relate to enrollment management.

#### **Recommendations:**

- The Team supports the self-study recommendation that the University conduct a program of periodic and comprehensive review of administrative structures (i.e., grouping of functions and lines of authority) and processes to evaluate their effectiveness in light of the university's substantial growth, evolving mission, and changing environment.

## **Standard 6: Integrity**

**Lock Haven University meets this standard.**

### **Summary of Evidence and Findings:**

The University demonstrates adherence to ethical principles, its own policies, and represents itself fairly and accurately to students and the public. The University seeks to communicate its policies and practices through the website and e-mail. The majority of integrity issues are resolved without requiring formal action, and relatively few grievances are filed. A number of faculty and staff that had worked for many years at LHU suggest satisfaction with the work environment.

Academic freedom and intellectual property is protected by the CBA, and there have been no grievances filed by faculty in past years.

The University provides policies and procedures for student evaluation, discipline, and grievances, which can be found in the Student Handbook. The number of student complaints is small, and the specifics have been addressed. Furthermore, during the past few years there has been fewer grade appeals, cheating, or classroom behavioral problems.

The University values matters of academic integrity, and it has recently subscribed to Turnitin.com, an on-line search engine to detect plagiarism and motivate students to maintain standards of honesty and professionalism. AFSCUF and the new Provost have been in discussions about a code of conduct for students in the classroom.

The University published its catalog online, but does not archive electronic copies of past catalogs. The University seeks to ensure that a sufficient number of required and elective courses are offered for students to complete their course of study. In the recent past, due to increased enrollment, it has struggled to offer sufficient courses to meet the general education requirements, especially in speech and written communication. The mandate by the Pennsylvania state legislature on an accepted transfer system between universities (TAOC) based on learning outcomes to create seamless transition for community college students to 4-year PASSHE school may aid with the reformulation of the General Education program and ease the bottle neck of some required courses.

As a public institution and a member of the PASSHE system, all Lock Haven employees are subject to the same code of ethics as all public employees in the state of PA. Information for faculty and staff is also provided in the Human Resources website, but the University lacks a comprehensive repository of university policies.

### **Commendations:**

- The University has recently subscribed to Turnitin.com

## **Suggestions:**

- The team supports the recommendation to implement a system for archiving and maintaining access to past academic catalogs.
- The team encourages the University to plan for sufficient course offerings in the general education requirements.
- The team suggests the implementation of the comprehensive repository of university policies prepared in 2008

## **Standard 7: Institutional Assessment**

### **Lock Haven University meets this standard.**

#### **Summary of Evidence and Findings:**

The earlier assessment plan was implemented in 2004-2005 but momentum was lost because there was no Director of Assessment the following year. The momentum was not later regained.

The university is currently undergoing much change in administrative leadership, in the amount of state funding, in re-enrollment patterns and in setting priorities through strategic planning. All of these changes reinforce the necessity of clarifying and re-focusing the current mission statement and goals. Meaningful long-term institutional assessment can then be done in a coordinated and comprehensive fashion.

While plans have been developed and proposed that address various aspects of institutional effectiveness, (e.g., enrollment management, defining and supporting at-risk students, etc.) and there is evidence that some recommendations are being implemented there doesn't appear to be an institutional planning and assessment process that is being widely adopted, shared and followed.

*Evidence-based decision-making is not a substantial element of the university culture.*

Three goals form the distinctive characteristics of the university: technology including the laptop initiative, diversity/global experiences and engagement. While these three goals are the hallmarks by which Lock Haven is known and while they all are supported by anecdotal evidence, in the past there has been little systematic evidence collected and shared on the impact on student learning and success. The Interim Strategic plan 2009-2010 includes these three goals as comprising the President's vision for the university along with some objectives and benchmarks for each goal. The next step is to further define performance indicators or measures of the objectives as evidence of student learning and success. At the heart of institutional effectiveness are student learning and support for student learning. There are pockets of success in implementing assessment of general education but there is work to be done to establish a comprehensive system of assessment that includes evidence of "closing the loop". Committees have worked diligently on assessment outcomes, concepts and rubrics and have made much progress but are somewhat frustrated by the fact that they have no "teeth" to ensure implementation. If programs and/or faculty refuse to conduct assessment then it just doesn't happen. So, while they can point to successes, primarily in areas that

are accredited by professional disciplinary organizations, there remain several programs as well as areas of general education that have yet to define learning outcomes.

It is thought that programmatic assessment will be furthered by the Pennsylvania T.A.O.C. (Transfer and Articulation Oversight Committee) initiative. This initiative is intended to result in common learning outcomes across disciplines at the PASSHE schools and Community Colleges. Implementation of this initiative is scheduled for summer, 2010.

While data has been made available from Assessment, Planning and Institutional research it has often not been widely distributed to the campus as a whole as part of the decision making process. The campus culture does not seem to be one that embraces evidence based decision-making. Secure methods of data distribution to the campus community are not currently in place but should be implemented. Greater transparency of data will allow everyone on the campus to better understand, and make better, decisions going forward. The (new) Provost is committed to changing the culture to one of evidence based decision-making and has begun implementing this process in her office.

### **Recommendations:**

- The team supports the recommendation in the self-study to develop a comprehensive program of institutional assessment, including mission, Council of Trustees, governance, administrative structures, policies and other non-academic offices.
- The team supports the recommendation in the self-study that the campus document use of assessment data (on student learning and other institutional outcomes) in decisions, including resource allocations.

### **Standard 8: Student Admissions and Retention**

**Lock Haven University meets this standard.**

### **Summary of Evidence and Findings:**

Lock Haven University has established admissions policies based on the institution's mission statement. Recent efforts to improve enrollment management issues are underway. Overall enrollment numbers are aligned with the 2002 Strategic Plan and subsequent yearly updates. A review of the data indicates that a projected decline in the size of the entering class is imminent, dropping from slightly over 1600 in fall 2008 to approximately 1400 in fall 2015. This projected decline in future enrolling classes presents significant challenges as a successful enrollment management model at both undergraduate and graduate levels continues to evolve. Immediate efforts to mitigate against these projections are essential for the future success of the University.

Since the Periodic Review Report in 2005, Lock Haven has maintained relatively flat or minor growth enrollment patterns despite economic and market downtrends. The addition of the Clearfield campus has helped sustain enrollment numbers, with evidence of increases since 2006. Efforts to market the University's "brand" beyond the immediate geographic area are ongoing, but there is additional work that needs to be done. Program partnerships with high schools and other educational

agencies continue to be a priority for enrollment management. Also, efforts to improve the funding and coordination of overall enrollment support systems need to be a top priority for the institution.

While the University clearly has significant challenges in establishing and meeting enrollment targets, staff members are confident in accepting these challenges. New recruitment strategies and personnel can only be effective if academic programs reflect high quality and value. Moreover, these programs need to have the opportunity and resources to grow. The entire process from pre-enrollment through registration must be seamless, with accurate and “up to date” course requirements and registration information being conveyed to prospective students, enrolled students, advisers, and faculty.

Given that student persistence and graduation rates are not at desired levels, the University continues to examine reasons for student attrition through appropriate committees. Efforts to improve the scheduling, registration and advising processes will assist in strengthening student satisfaction and retention.

The University continues to have limited success in enrolling a diverse class of students, with 2007-08 data showing just above 12% of the enrollment being non-Caucasian. Slightly less than 9% of students enrolled are classified as Black/Hispanic. There is a demonstrated commitment of working at all levels to increase enrollment from representative constituencies. While some of these efforts have been productive, additional initiatives need to be considered to achieve goals to increase student representation from contiguous and nearby counties and to increase the number of faculty and staff members of color. Additionally, efforts to further nurture a campus climate that welcomes and promotes success and achievement for minority students, faculty, and staff, are essential.

Factors influencing retention and graduation rates are a concern. The academic profile of entering students shows a 35-point drop (973 to 938) in SAT Scores (Verbal and Math) between Fall 2003 and Fall 2008. While the University has a higher graduation rate (6 year) than its peer school average, it falls behind when compared to most PASSHE schools. Also, the first-time, full-time retention rate (1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> semester) is 69% for the most recent cohort. The fact that this retention rate trails both PASSHE and peer schools is significant. Efforts are underway with the Enrollment Management Committee responding to a list of 25 recommendations from a “Foundations of Excellence” project that addresses possible contributing factors to this issue and proposed remedies, primarily through an early warning system being put in place.

### **Significant Accomplishments:**

A recently completed “Foundations of Excellence” report highlights recommendations to effectively improve the retention and graduation rates of students. This effort is critical for the success of an overall enrollment management plan and the future of the University.

## **Suggestions:**

- Continue to expand and refine intrusive “at risk” tutoring and counseling programs that address issues impacting student attrition.
- Prioritize efforts and allocate resources to address patterns of student enrollment and attrition, particularly for minority students.
- Identify existing and new “premier” academic growth programs that will impact enrollment of full-time students.
- Examine the nexus between need-based financial aid and student persistence and identify additional strategies to reduce student reliance on loans.

## **Recommendations:**

- Develop a more effective organizational model of offices and services that directly supports enrollment and retention (Admissions, Financial Aid, Bursar and Registrar)
- Develop a comprehensive enrollment management strategic plan at undergraduate and graduate levels that considers both internal and external issues that will help achieve clearly defined goals and targets. As part of this plan academic program reviews should conduct a “cost-benefit” analysis to best align academic programs with the overall strategic goals of the enrollment management plan.
- Establish an early warning system to identify students with potential for academic distress and provide necessary resources to mediate learning deficiencies that are identified.
- Build upon the recommendations of the “Foundations of Excellence” report to establish clearly defined objectives, programs, support services, and evaluative criteria to improve overall retention and graduation rates for all categories of students.

### **Standard 9: Student Support Services**

**Lock Haven University meets this standard.**

## **Summary of Evidence and Findings:**

A comprehensive and supportive community life and co-curricular program buttresses the vigorous academic regimen of classes and scholarly activities. The University has established community life and personal development as hallmarks of the total educational experience for Lock Haven and Clearfield students.

There was a palpable sense of pride and honor exhibited by those with whom team members met in the various meetings and interviews conducted. The longevity of faculty and staff employed by the university suggests their work at the university goes beyond merely being a job. Members with whom we met approached their respective roles as a vocation. It is clear that those who live and work at the university both welcome and respect this distinctive and unique learning environment even given the challenges they face.

A walk-through of the facilities of both campuses reveals a certain pride and spirit among students and community members. In particular, the campus is well maintained and students spoke positively about the custodial and maintenance personnel. The student union and student activities program provide opportunities for student community building and personal development. Discussions with student leaders, random students, student support staff and others were informative and validated written materials shared with team members.

Efforts to meet the remedial needs of students through tutoring and remedial programs, as well as general student counseling, are well established and utilized. Growth in these programs has stressed existing resources. The identification of new and expansion of existing tutoring and counseling resources will contribute toward overall student retention and graduation.

There are strong indicators that an engaging co-curricular program promotes community building and development of personal connections in a structured, organized, safe, and responsive fashion. In particular, the scope and popularity of intramural recreation programs were noted by students, as well as the extensive community service initiatives (MountainServe). Support Services are evaluated and changes are made to respond to changing needs of the student body. The addition of Saturday and evening hours to the Health Services operation is one example of this review process. Also, efforts to insure that the campus remains safe and secure through new and innovative methods of communication, etc. are apparent.

Efforts to improve the “mix” of representative constituency groups from regionally geographic areas are evident. Evidence suggests the university values diverse perspectives as reflected in its marketing materials, support services, and the appointment of presidential commissions. We encourage the University to continue making diversity and inclusion a high priority in the future.

The work of the Student Cooperative Council (SCC) has guided the operations of over 135 student clubs/organizations, intramural sports, and athletic programs (with nearly a \$1.4 Million budget) ensuring that students have various co-curricular and athletic activities that buttress the academic rigors of the University. Efforts to improve organizational accountability and effectiveness are underway.

The athletic and recreational program affords students the opportunity to have a total educational experience at the university. Efforts to examine the role of intercollegiate athletics at the University are underway and should be part of the current Strategic Planning cycle.

### **Commendations:**

- The Honors Program assists some of the best and brightest students achieve their goals. The retention rate for students in this program (above 95%) is commendable.
- The scope and quality of financial aid programs has a direct link to student success and retention. Additional efforts to support the growth of financial support programs for students will accelerate student persistence toward degree completion. The ability of students to continue uninterrupted in their education is critical for improving retention and graduation rates. Creation of the “last dollar” scholarship program is commendable and just one example of how the University is responding to the difficult economic times facing students.

- The Counseling Centers recent accreditation by the International Association of Counseling Centers is commendable and testimony to the quality services provided to students. Efforts to maintain this accreditation in future years should be a priority.

**Suggestions:**

- There are a number of student support services available to provide ample opportunities for Lock Haven students to succeed in their educational goals. From a strong academic peer tutoring program to the Haven Achievers Program (HAP), a successful program for at-risk students, services are in place to support students in their academic pursuits. Efforts to expand these and similar services for larger numbers of students will be critical to improve overall retention and graduation rates.
- A vibrant and engaging residential life program augments total student development in a substantial way. The satisfaction rate (85%) in the “Quality of Life” survey for residential students is commendable. Plans to expand the style and variety of housing options for students are underway and we encourage the University to further integrate the “living-learning” environment for students. Likewise, systematic surveying of off-campus and commuter students (similar to residential students) might assist in more effectively matching resources with student needs.
- A review of strategic planning documents within the student affairs area finds that specific learning outcomes for co-curricular areas need to be identified. Targeted outcomes for each functional area should be developed, assessed regularly with the results shared with appropriate university decision makers responsible for resource allocation.

**Recommendations:**

- The University should expedite efforts to develop a comprehensive academic support delivery system to support all students.
- A review of the supervisory reporting structure and contracts for professional staff who work with the Student Cooperative Council and its operations may strengthen the long-term operational and fiduciary effectiveness of the organization.

**Standard 10: Faculty**

**Lock Haven University meets this standard.**

**Summary of Evidence and Findings:**

The Lock Haven University faculty has remained relatively constant in the recent years, but the percentage of tenured faculty has increased. Nevertheless, due to the substantial growth of the University in later years, staffing has not kept up with enrollment. The percentage of temporary faculty falls within the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) limits, but permanent faculty doing overload is high. There have been efforts in the last two years to reduce the amount of overload.

The University has a solid recruitment program, and in the recent years the majority of tenure-track searches have been successful, although funding for national searches is limited. The University

supports new faculty with an extensive orientation program, a mentoring program, and professional development offered by the Teaching and Learning Center (TLC). The TLC provides opportunities for faculty development in pedagogical research and practice with a wide array of teaching and learning resources. Also the LHU Foundation and the Provost's Office sponsor faculty professional development, travel and research grants, but there is concern that the amount of funding is not sufficient to promote faculty research opportunities. Sabbatical leaves are granted based on the CBA, but in recent years there has been a decline of sabbatical awards.

Tenure and Promotion are clearly specified in the CBA. Non-tenured faculty is assessed in regular basis, and LHU criteria seem to be working well based on the considerable success in retaining faculty. The tenure and promotion process is fair and equitable.

Faculty is the major driving force behind curriculum development, both at department level and at the university level through participation in the University Curriculum Committee (UCC). The Outcomes Assessment Committee (OAC) is developing a comprehensive outcomes assessment plan to be incorporated into the University's strategic plan. Most academic departments participate in identifying goals, plans how to achieve them, and collect data to assess effectiveness. Departments submit annual assessment reports that get incorporated in the 5-year Program Review.

Temporary (adjunct) faculty qualifications are the same as those for permanent faculty, and recently some temporary faculty had been hired in full-time tenure track positions. The teaching effectiveness evaluation of temporary faculty follows the same procedures in place for tenure-track faculty. Temporary faculty are provided similar opportunities that tenure faculty on faculty development programs offered at Lock Haven University.

Training and preparation for department chairs and chair development is fully support by the state system. Chairs have fair knowledge and control of departmental budgetary decisions. Chairs are fully involved in hiring, tenure, promotion, and post-tenure decisions.

### **Commendations:**

- Faculty participation in the PASSHE Summer Academy for the Advancement of College Teaching
- Increased sections and faculty participation in Professional Development Workshops
- International program to send new hires for a week-long field experience at a partner campus in a foreign country

### **Suggestions**

- Increase funding for recruitment to attract high-qualified faculty candidates, in particular recruitment of minority faculty.
- Ensure sufficient funding to support faculty scholarship and national conference participation.

## **Standard 11: Educational Offerings**

**Lock Haven University meets this standard.**

### **Summary of Evidence and Findings:**

Coherently with its mission statement, the university's educational offerings convey an integrated educational experience that combines content, skills and reflective learning based on practical experiences. Professional degree programs –whether at the undergraduate or graduate level—provide coherent paths of knowledge which are carefully watched (and approved) by their respective accreditation agencies. In addition, the academic rigor of all the university programs is surveyed through evaluations every five years, with external evaluations every 10 years.

The learning process fosters synthesis through the incorporation of liberal arts seminars in the humanities, social sciences and natural sciences as part of the general education requirements for the B.A. degree. In addition to the students enrolled in professional degrees that require experiential field placements, many liberal arts students participate in internships and study abroad opportunities.

Instructional technology resources are state-of-the-art and the library adequately supports the educational activities at the university. The current recession has put a temporary freeze on book and printed periodical acquisitions. However, the faculty considers subscription to online journal databases a sound substitute for their teaching and research needs. The existing instructional technology fosters students' access and use of information resources. Information literacy skills are specifically imparted through the general education requirements. Such skills are also coordinated through close collaboration between faculty and librarians.

Academic rigor is also closely monitored through the establishment of articulation agreements between LHUP and feeder community colleges. Credit transfer policies are articulated and carefully undertaken on the basis of course content and skill equivalencies. Furthermore, all instruction entrusted to faculty from partner institutions (such as study abroad, or universities with which LHUP has signed collaborative agreements for their respective students to take courses at either university) is approved on the basis of partnership agreements that are arrived at after a careful evaluative process undertaken prior to the arrival of the first student at the partner's campus. The results of these practices are transparently communicated to the university community.

Curriculum development at LHUP takes into consideration learning objectives. Program revisions reflect analysis of learning outcomes assessment on the part of the faculty. These curricular activities are initiated by faculty and recommended by the university-wide undergraduate curriculum committee or the graduate council. The former is constituted by all the Department Chairs of the university.

### **Commendations:**

- The team commends the university for its extension of the Physician Assistant program, whose existence fills a growing need in the State.
- The team commends the University for three programs that provide excellence and

contributes to student retention at the university –especially the retention of extremely motivated and eager-to-learn students: the teacher education program, the international education program, and the honors program. These three programs are run by very capable, dynamic, and resourceful directors. The students they serve are among the best and the brightest. Many of these students have expressed to the team that they have chosen LHUP precisely because of one or more of these commendable programs. Furthermore, all three programs closely collaborate with each other and the result of their common enterprise results in a valuable synergy.

- The team commends the University for the focus on encouraging research opportunities between faculty and students, such as the demonstrated efforts through the Celebration of Scholarship that promotes academic engagement.

### **Standard 12: General Education**

#### **Lock Haven University meets this standard.**

#### **Summary of Evidence and Findings:**

The General Education requirements are built on the basis of three core requirements (wellness; skills: writing, mathematics and speech; and “content”: humanities, social/behavioral sciences, and natural sciences). Additional requirements –referred to as “overlays”: a “writing emphasis” that goes beyond first year composition; “multicultural,” which exposes students to the “other” and/or to world cultures; “information literacy”; and “external experience,” an experiential learning unit that can be taken for credit or not-for-credit. Students pursuing a B.A. degree must demonstrate fourth semester competence in a foreign language other than English, and three liberal arts seminars intended for learning synthesis. Ten credits’ worth of general education electives complete the menu.

The team is not clear as to the process whereby all these areas and overlays came to be part of the general education requirements. Some of them are coherent with the university’s mission statement. The skills area is not only expected as part of the rigorous college curriculum anywhere in the country, but is also mandatory within the Pennsylvania system. The General Education subcommittee of the University Curriculum Committee is charged with approving proposals to add specific courses into the areas and overlay categories. This process is done with attention to qualifying criteria that are made explicit to the faculty proposing courses to be included in the general education “menu.” Aside of the core areas, the “menu” of courses satisfying “overlays” is extremely long and appears to reflect the allocation of resources to departments on the basis of their generated FTE’s. Although the self study indicates that “overlays” are designated general education courses that students should take in their major discipline so as to integrate general education skills with discipline-specific content, the team gathered that students can fulfill their overlays with any of the courses (within or outside their major) approved for such overlays. The team concludes that what constitutes the fulfillment of general education requirements may at times be confusing. Strong advisement by faculty is required (and provided) to secure the fulfillment of general education requirements, as students would be amiss if they tried to navigate the requirements by themselves.

## **Suggestions:**

- The team suggests that students are given a more clear set of criteria as to how to satisfy the general education requirements, not necessarily to obviate the role of their faculty advisors, but to allow proactive students to be clear as to where they are standing in their fulfillment.
- The team suggests that competencies provided by the “multicultural overlay” (MC), which currently conflates global competencies with the awareness of multiculturalism in the United States be differentiated. An important part of global competencies refers to cross-cultural interactions. However, the current instabilities and challenges brought about by globalization, or the legacies of colonialism, involve much more than multicultural contacts.

## **Recommendations:**

- The team recognizes that the university has made substantial process in developing outcomes assessment of some –but not all—the areas and overlays. Still, the university should complete the process of development and implementation of a general education outcomes assessment plan. For this matter, it should provide adequate resources to the academic departments charged with the responsibility of developing and implementing assessment measures, and analyzing their results.

### **Standard 13: Related Educational Activities**

**Lock Haven University meets this standard.**

## **Summary of Evidence and Findings:**

The university’s programs and activities that are characterized by particular content or sponsorship meet appropriate standards.

**Basic Skills** – Lock Haven University systematically reviews students who are under-prepared and provides referral to relevant courses and support services. There are three entry points, with students working through several strong specialized programs. Periodically, patterns for persistence and success in future courses have been assessed, and positive results have been found. There has been a strong investment in specialized summer programs and tutoring services beyond the basic needs areas, and to promote success for students from diverse backgrounds. An investment has also been made in smart-thinking to support the face-to-face tutoring beyond basic skills. Academic advising for undecided students has been enhanced. Support service staff and faculty are dedicated to help students succeed.

**Prior Experiential Learning** – Lock Haven University does very little prior learning assessment from previous experiential learning. In the allied health associate program and in the nursing program there is the possibility for students to document prior learning through an application to the allied health or nursing faculty, with approval by the department chair and documented by the registrar. The documentation is primarily through formal certificate programs such as Respiratory Therapy, Medical Technology or advanced EMT. These awards are generally for no more than 30

credits. There are standard practices for approving and documenting the credits that are not currently published.

**Study Abroad, International Exchange and Community-Based Experiential Learning** -- Lock Haven University has placed high value on having students participate in study abroad, with approximately 140 students per year studying abroad. In addition, the University promotes having international students come to Lock Haven. The program is highly visible, supported through a good physical facility and integrated with both the curricular and co-curricular programs. The university also has highly integrated internships, community service and other experiential learning programs, linked academically or as part of the student development program.

**Branch Campuses, Additional Locations** – For twenty years the Lock Haven University has had a location in Clearfield, one hour away from Lock Haven. The Clearfield Campus is housed on 100 acres with two new highly functional academic buildings and a small apartment complex. The campus is highly integrated within the local community and serves approximately 400 students. The second physical space was supported by the local community and built for anticipated growth, with only the first floor of three currently fully operational and utilized. The two academic buildings showcase state-of-the art technology with ITV classrooms, nursing and physician assistant simulation and classroom labs, tiered classroom space and multi-purpose areas. Science labs are also planned for the new building. The strong physician assistant and nursing programs (AS and now RN to BSN) are delivered through this facility utilizing ITV and online course delivery. The campus also attracts local students, either those interested in the degrees offered fully at this location or those who are interested in transfer to Lock Haven. There is a mix of traditional and non-traditional students.

There are distinct faculty who serve the Clearfield Campus. In addition to main campus faculty teaching Clearfield students by traveling to the campus or using ITV, main campus faculty also teach Clearfield (and other) students via web-based courses. The faculty and staff have good relationships with counterparts at Lock Haven and are engaged in governance. While concerns were raised in the self-study related to academic support services for students at Clearfield, from all reports there do seem to be appropriate services now available. The campus community is vibrant and faculty and administration are enthusiastic about the campus and the leadership of the Clearfield Campus. The delivery of offerings and the management of faculty is done through the department chairs and deans at Lock Haven. The faculty, administration and staff are also strongly networked with the local community. Students highly value the academic quality of the programs and faculty available and are enthusiastic about the environment. Clearfield Campus students are generally included in Lock Haven assessments and surveys, but sometimes the questions are not judged to be applicable. There have also been Clearfield-specific periodic online surveys or focus groups with students and the results are informally integrated into program planning.

For the physician assistant program only, there will be two additional locations added to the University in 2010 at Harrisburg and Coudersport. Appropriate attention is given to the faculty and facility planning.

**Distance Learning** -- The institution currently offers several degree programs entirely at a distance, mostly in the graduate program. In the health area, there is a physician assistance program delivered through ITV in a blended format. As of 2010, faculty will be distributed through four locations and

will teach students in these four locations through ITV, expanding the capacity of the program to 60 students. Graduate programs in education and liberal studies utilize online and blended formats, and these programs are also anticipating growth. There was some expressed concern about the planning for faculty offices for graduate faculty and some additional concern about the distinctive and collective voice of the graduate faculty in academic planning.

There is a nursing AS program at the Clearfield Campus and now also delivering an RN/BSN completion program delivered at a distance utilizing online studies.

At the undergraduate level, the institution primarily uses online courses for distance learning, currently using E-College and transitioning to Desire 2 Learn. Outside of the nursing and graduate programs, the number of courses delivered has been built primarily based on faculty interest, and only recently have several undergraduate programs come more closely to being delivered entirely at a distance. Approximately 40 courses per term are offered, with significant increases each year. There are plans to increase the amount of distance learning offerings. The institution is also currently the lead College in the system related to the use of supplemental online course shells to support classroom-based learning.

The academic planning and delivery of the distance learning is lead by the academic deans, department chairs and faculty. Faculty control the course development and are supported by highly praised academic development staff. The academic deans are responsible for any follow-up related to instructional delivery. The academic technology staff distributes surveys on behalf of deans/departments, and works with faculty when requested for course specific research. The integration of new designs or technology are facilitated by available coaching in the form of faculty development and orientation. There are documents in place system-wide which discuss issues such as ownership of course materials.

The Executive Director of Academic Technology submits annual program planning and evaluation documents, but there is not a formal comprehensive distance learning evaluation that links assessment and outcomes. Individual deans are responsible for the academic outcomes related to distance learning programs, and these processes are comparable to those that have site-based programs, or others, in the institution. The Executive Director of Academic Technology works closely in planning since he reports through the Provost and works closely with Deans, the graduate council and the university curriculum committee, when appropriate.

All student services, support, library and academic services are delivered in comparable fashion for distance learning students as for campus-based students. Librarians work significantly with distance learning faculty and students and standard resources are available through the library and partner programs.

Technical services are delivered capably, both those provided on-campus and those that are out-sourced to E-College. The University is moving to a new course development platform over the next year. The institution has appropriate measures for assuring the identity of students who study online through secure log-ins.

**Non-Credit and/or Certificate Programs** -- The institution previously offered non-credit study through the Clearfield Center but does not do so currently. There are currently no certificate programs.

**Partnership Programs** -- The institution has partnership programs with hospitals for the delivery of physician assistant program and nursing programs with appropriate guidelines and agreements in place. There are also agreements for partnerships and collaborative delivery with other accredited higher education institutions such as SUNY Cortland and Penn State University.

**Commendations:**

- The team commends the university for its extension of the Physician Assistant program, whose existence fills a growing need in the State.
- The team commends the University for three programs that provide excellence and contributes to student retention at the university –especially the retention of extremely motivated and eager-to-learn students: the teacher education program, the international education program, and the honors program. These three programs are run by very capable, dynamic, and resourceful directors. The students they serve are among the best and the brightest. Many of these students have expressed to the team that they have chosen Lock Haven University precisely because of one or more of these commendable programs. Furthermore, all three programs closely collaborate with each other and the result of their common enterprise results in a valuable synergy.
- The team commends the University for the focus on encouraging research opportunities between faculty and students, such as the demonstrated efforts through the Celebration of Scholarship that promotes academic engagement.

**Suggestions:**

- The team supports the recommendations in the self-study and in the Foundations of Excellence study that additional supports be provided for first-year students to promote persistence and success. A greater number of students admitted to the University are now perceived to be under-prepared, taxing existing resources for developmental study. The University does not have or use established criteria for evaluating students' preparation, and as a result, cannot identify any as underprepared. In addition, while student feedback is provided to advisors or faculty individually, there is little systematic programmatic feedback for continuous improvement of services. Services should be better integrated.
- There is a need for greater registrar and academic department planning to ensure that all offerings are available in a planned sequence for the programs that are advertised to be deliverable through both the Clearfield Center and at a distance and these should be advertised appropriately. While academic advising appears to be competently delivered at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, and attention informally given individually to students, a draft schedule of offerings beyond the immediate term is not available to prospective and new students. There are improvements in making sure that enough general education and foundational sections are available, and there are plans for more thorough projecting and advertising of courses that should be supported.

- While the Clearfield Campus supports a vibrant academic community, it needs to get the support to acquire external funding to support the completed access to the second building. The academic deans and the Clearfield dean need to work together for analyzing offerings, additional faculty and adjuncts, or shared faculty to promote enrollment that justifies the size of the campus and the resources devoted. While there is confidence in the leadership of the Clearfield Campus, there also needs to be greater transparency and engagement from the Lock Haven campus related to planning for Clearfield.

### **Standard 14: Assessment of Student Learning**

#### **Lock Haven University meets this standard.**

The team recognizes and acknowledges that Lock Haven University has begun the very important process of assessment of student learning outcomes (SLO) and has reasonable momentum and drive for assessment using both direct and indirect methods. Particular strengths occur in programs with program-specific accreditations. There is awareness from both the administration and the faculty regarding the need for conducting regular and systematic assessment. In that regards, the University has made steady progress since the last PRR towards assessment of student learning outcomes, but work remains to be done. Reports on SLO have been required since 2001, but it has been inconsistent throughout the years. In 2007-08 a review of annual reports of 48 programs was undertaken. Although a significant number of departments (42%) had well defined learning outcomes, only 18% of departments had clear use of multiple assessment tools and “closing the loop.” Professional programs, serving 2/3 of the student body, evaluate student learning outcomes through field placement, student teaching, alumni surveys, employment records, etc., as part of their own accrediting bodies rubrics.

Since 2003, all new syllabi must follow the format guidelines approved by UCC, which requires including a section of objectives followed by a list of learning outcomes. The self-study analyzed 280 curriculum changes between 2006-08, of which approximately 40% were due to data supported by assessment. Faculty members in most of the non-accredited programs knew little about assessment of student learning outcomes; therefore, the campus engaged in a series of workshops to educate the faculty. It appears that a campus-wide culture of assessment is emerging with the support of the new Provost.

The team is concerned that the institutional and program-level goals are not clearly articulated on a consistent basis and the relationship between the assessment plans and departmental or course-level student learning objectives is not consistently clear. A formal support structure is needed to assure continued assessment of student learning outcomes and ensuring that consistent review of assessment results will be used to improve instruction or support programs in the long term.

The University has made progress on developing a plan to assess student-learning outcomes in General Education, but the plan needs implementation. There seems to be a strong commitment by the Provost to move forward with reassessing General Education based on learning outcomes, and including Gen Ed assessment as a priority in the soon-to-be-developed Strategic Plan. A new electronic system has been put in place for the collection and analysis of data, but the process should be faculty-driven and transparent with a central depository for all information, and resources to

support sustainability of the process. The mandate by the Pennsylvania state legislature on an accepted transfer system between universities (TAOC) based on learning outcomes to create seamless transition for community college students to 4-year PASSHE school may aid with the reformulation of the General Education program.

The University does not have a plan in place to use assessment data and 5-year Program Reviews in informing decisions about planning and resource allocations.

### **Commendations:**

- Provost initiative in 2006 to submit annual reports using the five-year review format.
- The development of a plan to assess General Education.

### **Suggestions**

- Improve submission and rubrics of departmental report on student learning outcomes assessment

### **Recommendations**

- The University needs to provide sufficient evidence that students are learning by continuing to support academic programs in assessing student learning outcomes, requiring assessment data to support all course proposal and curriculum changes, and insure that information is shared with the appropriate constituencies.
- The University needs to complete and implement the General Education Assessment Plan, providing sufficient administrative and financial support and create a centralized data reporting system. The University should consider appropriate leadership for implementing general education initiatives and use assessment data and 5-year Program Reviews in decisions about planning, resource allocations, and institutional assessment.