ASSURANCE SECTION

REPORT OF A COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION VISIT

TO

University of Northern Iowa
Cedar Falls, Iowa

11/8/10 – 11/10/10

FOR

The Higher Learning Commission
A Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools

EVALUATION TEAM

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I. CONTEXT AND NATURE OF VISIT

A. Purpose of Visit.

The purpose of this visit was to conduct a comprehensive evaluation, site-visit review for continued accreditation.

B. Organizational Context.

The University of Northern Iowa (UNI) traces it origins to the Iowa State Normal School, founded in 1876 as a teacher-training institution. In 1904, the Normal School was authorized to offer a four-year college curriculum culminating in the Bachelor of Arts in Education degree. The Iowa General Assembly acknowledged this shift in purpose in 1909, voting to rename the school the Iowa State Teachers College. It remained so until 1961, when it became the State College of Iowa and began offering the Bachelor of Arts degree to students without teacher certification. In 1967, the College adopted its current title, the University of Northern Iowa. With this new designation came a charge to "offer undergraduate and graduate courses . . . conduct research and provide extension and other public services . . . to facilitate the social, cultural and economic development of Iowa." The University retained the "primary responsibility" of preparing teachers and other educational personnel for schools, colleges, and universities.

The University of Northern Iowa is accredited through the doctoral degree by the Higher Learning Commission, North Central Association. UNI was first accredited as a teacher training institution in 1913 and has been continuously accredited as a four-year institution since 1930. It was first granted approval to offer undergraduate liberal arts non-teaching degrees in 1961. It was granted approval to offer programs at the Master's level in 1951 and the Doctoral level in 1978. The last NCA-comprehensive review was in 2000-2001, at which time the next comprehensive review was set for 2010-2011, with a progress report on UNI's general education program and assessment due in October 2004. That report was accepted by Commission staff.

C. Unique Aspects of Visit.

Special Emphasis on the Foundations of Excellence®.

D. Sites or Branch Campuses Visited.

Northern Iowa Center for Urban Education in Waterloo.

E. Distance Education Reviewed.

Continuing Education and Distance Learning have a long history of offering programs across the state, especially in support to the education programs that are so central to the mission of UNI. The Educational Technology Office provides an excellent suite of services for faculty on campus, including training and course development support. The teaching classrooms are an excellent resource for faculty.

Based on the high quality of its current continuing education and distance learning offerings, UNI has the opportunity to move aggressively into web-based distance education throughout the state and beyond its borders. The careful and strategic

development of fully on-line/web-based programs can be very cost effective and serve the important needs of place-bound undergraduate and graduate students. This is not to say that the current cohort-based programs should be abandoned because they provide an important, although somewhat expensive, method of providing distance programs. However, a stronger emphasis on web-based educational programs and select individual course offerings consistent with the overall mission of UNI appears to be an area of potential growth for the university.

F. Interactions with Constituencies.

Academic Affairs Council (12)
Academic Assessment Office, Director
Academic Grievance Policy Committee (8)
Academic Program Review Committee (11)
Academic Learning Center, Director
Admissions, Director
Admissions, Associate Director
Alumni Relations, Assistant Director
Athletics Administration, Director
Athletics Director
Assistant Provost for Sponsored Programs
Assistant to the President for Compliance and Equity Management
Assistant to the President for Government Relations
Assistant VP and Executive Director, Gallagher Bluedorn Performing Arts Center
Assistant Vice President for Outreach and Special Programs
Associate Provost for Academic Affairs and Graduate Dean
Assistant Provost for Information Technology
Associate Vice President for Facilities Planning
Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs
Budget System Development and Reporting, Director
Business and Community Services, Executive Director
Career Services, Director
Chief Information Officer
Community Relations Manager – University Relations
Controller
Cooperative/Internships/Research, Students (7)
Council of Academic Department Heads (37)
Dean of the College of Business Administration
Dean of Continuing Education and Special Programs (Interim)
Dean of the College of Natural Sciences and Humanities and Fine Arts
Dean of College of Education
Dean of Library Services
Dean of Students
Director of Campaigns
Economics, Department Head
Enrollment Council (15)
Executive Assistant to the President
Executive Vice President and Provost
Faculty Senate (18)

Financial Aid, Director
First Year Council (15)
Foundations of Excellence® Steering Committee (18)
Graduate College Curriculum Committee (13)
Graduate College, Interim Dean
Graduate College, Program Coordinators (10-12)
Graduate College Staff (2)
Graduate Council, Chairperson
Graduate Faculty, Chairperson
Graduate Student Life, Coordinator
Honors Program, Director
Information Technology Services, Director
Information Technology Services, Director of Education Technology
International Program Study Abroad Center, Director
Iowa Department of Education, Teacher Preparation
Iowa/Mathematics Science Education Partnership, Director
Liberal Arts Core, Former Director and Current Committee Chairperson
Liberal Arts Core Committee and Department Heads with LAC Involvement (10)
Liberal Arts Core – Review Steering Committee (11)
Library Access Services, Coordinator
Library Administrative Services, Coordinator
Library Collections Management and Special Services, Head
Library Information Technologies, Head
Library Reference and Informational Services, Head
Library Technical Services, Head
Malcom Price Lab School, Interim Director
Mathematics, Department Head
Mathematics Laboratory, Director
Modern Languages, Department Head
Physics, Department Head
President
President's Cabinet (8)
Public Safety, Director
Open Forums Faculty (106)
Open Forum, Staff (65)
Open Forum, Students (49)
Registrar
Self-Study Co-Chairpersons (2)
Self-Study Steering Committee (19)
State Relations Officer
Student Outcomes Assessment Committee (15)
Special Assistant to the President, Government Relations
Special Assistant to the President, UNI Foundation
Strategic Planning Committee (34)
Systems Administrator
Teacher Education, Director
Teaching/Service Training Grants (9)
Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (13)
University Relations, Director of Electronic Communication

University Relations, Director of Media Relations
University Counsel
UNI Board of Regents, President
UNI Center for Urban Education, Director
UNI Center for Urban Education, Assistant Director
UNI Foundation, Vice President
UNI Foundation, Trustee
Vice President for Administration and Financial Services
Vice President for Development-Foundation
Vice President for Financial Services-Foundation
Vice President for Student Affairs

G. Principal Documents, Materials, and Web Pages Reviewed

Academic Advisory Council Current Membership
Academic Learning Center web site
Academic Program Assessment Report
Academic Program Assessment Task Force I
Academic Program Reviews 2009 – 2010

   Anthropology B.A.
   Chemistry/Biochemistry B.S./M.S.
   Communication Science/Disorders B.A./M.A.
   Criminology
   Education Doctorate
   ELC Counseling
   ELC Post-secondary
   ELC Principalship
   Humanities
   Marketing
   Sociology B.A./M.A.
Admissions web site
Advisory Councils List
Agreement for the Special Emphasis Self-Study, May 2008
An Exploration of Possible Resources for Assessing First-Year Learning Outcomes,
   April 2010
Annual Assessment Activities Reports (from the Office of Assessment)
   Accounting B.A., 2008 – 2009
   Communications Disorders, 2008 – 2009
   MAcc (Masters of Accountancy), 2008 – 2009
   Management, 2008 – 2009
   Music (Graduate), 2008 – 2009
   Speech Language Pathology, 2008 – 2009
   Early Childhood Education, 2009 – 2010
   Education of Gifted 2009 – 2010
   Elementary Education, 2009 – 2010
   Literacy Education (M.A.E.), 2009 – 2010
   MBA, 2009 -2010
   Modern Languages, 2009 – 2010

Psychology M.A., 2009 – 2010
Women and Gender Studies, 2009 – 2010
English M.A., 2009 – 2010
Annual Assessment Activities Report Template for 200x – 200y
Annual Economic Development and Technology Transfer Report: FY2010. Cedar Falls:
University of Northern Iowa, n.d.
Assessment and Management of the General Education Program, Progress Report
2006
Assessment Cycle: Activities and Timelines
Assessment Plan: Academic Advising, 2009
Board of Regents Academic Policies and Procedures, Chapter 6
Board of Regents Agenda Item on Facilities Governance Report, 2/3/2009
Board of Regents Agenda Item on Five-Year Capital Plans, including FY2010 Capital
Request, 9/17-18/2008
Board of Regents Memo on Five-Year Capital Improvement Plans, FY2006 – FY2010,
9/1/2004
Board of Regents Policy: Academic Program Review, Chapter 6.07
Board of Regents, State of Iowa, Strategic Plan, 2004 – 2009
Board of Regents, State of Iowa, Strategic Plan, 2010 – 2016
Business and Community Services. Advancing Business, Community and
Entrepreneurial Development
Campus Conversation web site
Campus Master Plan
Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education
Center for Energy and Environmental Education web site
Center for Multicultural Education Mission Statement
Chemistry and Biochemistry Majors Facility
Classic Upward Bound (CUB) Program web site
College of Business: MBA Academic Program Review
College of Education Goals
College of Education Strategic Plan
College of Humanities and Fine Arts Strategic Goals
College of Natural Sciences Strategic Plan through 2010
College of Social and Behavioral Sciences, Letter from the Dean, 10/23/2009
Committees, with Formal Reporting Lines
Common Data Set 2008 – 2009
Compliance-Related web sites Reviewed (in Compliance Section Order)
www.uni.edu/catalog/ugdegreq.shtml#curricula
www.uni.edu/tuition/
www.uni.edu/collegeportraits.org/IA/UNI/costs
www.uni.edu/registrar/students/
www.uni.edu/continuinged/tuition/index.shtml
www.uni.edu/tuititon/2010-2011-undergraduate-tuition-fees
www.uni.edu/equity/
www.uni.edu/president/policies/301.shtml
www.uni.edu/president/policies/302.shtml
www.uni.edu/president/policies/1202.shtml
www.uni.edu/president/policies/1201.shtml
www.uni.edu/studentaffairs/deanofstudents/handbook/

www.vpaf.uni.edu/iaac/mission.shtml
www.uni.edu/admissions/transfer/
www.transferinIowa.org
http://auditor.iowa.gov.specials/09SingleAudit..pdf
http://Auditor.iowa.gove/index.html
www.ir.uni.edu/dbWeb/govrel/search.cfm?s=topic
www.2.ed/offices/OSFAP/defaultmanagement/cdr.html
www.vpaf.uni.edu/pubsaf/police_division/index.shtml
www.vpaf.uni/pubsaf/crimr_stats/clery.shtml
www.uni.edu/catalog/acadreg.shtml#awps
www.uni.edu/finaid/yellow/academicprogrtessstandards.pdf
www.uni.edu/catalog/gen-info.shtml%member
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www.uni.edu/accreditation/
www.iowa.gov/educate/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1667&Itemid=2474
www.uni.edu/dtgfs/family/index.html
Curriculum Review Process
Dean of Students Office – Student Handbook
Department Merit Guidelines (All Departments), 2010 – 2011
Department of Political Science's Statement on Plagiarism
Department of Residence, Hall Comparison Chart
Detailed Procedures for Academic Program review and Students Outcomes Assessment
    2010 – 2011, Twentieth Edition, April 2010
Development of Long Range Academic Plans, Policy 2.01
Diversity Matters: Diversity Definition, Vision, and Mission
Diversity Matters web site
Division of Student Affairs Assessment Plan 2008 – 2013
Division of Student Affairs: Key Performance Indicators, 6/9/2009
Division of Student Affairs: Key Performance Indicators Used for Measuring Progress
Educational Opportunity Center web site
Educational Talent Search: About ETS
eLearning @ UNI News
eLearning @ UNI: Turnitin – Originality Checking
eLearning @ UNI Usage Information
eLearning @ UNI web site
Energy Conversation and Sustainability Initiatives at the University of Northern Iowa:
Past, Present, and Future, Spring 2008
Enrollment Council Membership
EthicsPoint web site
Eunice A. Dell Award "Making a Difference," 2009
Facilities Planning Advisory Committee
Fact Book, 2009-2010, Office of Institutional Research
Faculty Employment Policies: Ethics and Academic Responsibility, Chapter 6.10,
    9/25/2000
Faculty Survey of Student Engagement Results (FSSE), 2007
"Federal Compliance," in University of Northern Iowa, 2010 Annual Institutional Update
    for the Higher Learning Commission
Financial Accounting and Reporting Services Mission
First-Year Council Progress Report, April 2010

FY2010 Summary by Category of ARRA Projects
Fundraising Data & Comparisons: UNI vs. Peers, Cedar Falls: UNI Foundation, 2010.
Foundations of Excellence®
Foundations of Excellence Faculty/Staff Survey for Four-Year Institutions
Foundations of Excellence New Student Survey for Four-Year Institutions
Foundations of Excellence in the First College Year: Foundational Dimensions (for Four-Year Institutions) -- Preamble
Foundations of Excellence in the First College Year: Overview of Key Elements, 2007 – 2008
Gallagher Bluedorn Performing Arts Center (GBPAC): Outreach Programs
General Policy: Freedom of Expression, Chapter 13.10, 9/9/1990
Graduate College Degrees
Graduate College web site
Graduate Education Goals
Graduate Education Strategic Plan 2006 – 2011, 11/20/2007
Graduate Program (All) Student Outcome Assessments & Student Learning Outcomes
Greater Cedar Valley Alliance web site
Grievance Procedures Policy: Undergraduate Student Academic Grievance, Chapter 12.02, 12/13/1993
Grievance Procedures Policy: Graduate Student Academic Grievance, Chapter 12.01, 1/27/2004
Higher Learning Commission Accreditation Review
Higher Learning Commission Evaluation Team Report, 2/19-21/2001
Highlights of Energy/Environmental History at UNI
Honors Program web site
Index UNI ROD Library Special Collections Article: Volunteer Fair to be Held at UNI, 8/29/2006
Information Technology Services Administration, Student Computer Fee Allocation Guidelines 2007 – 2009, 3/8/2005
Information Technology Services – Educational Technology Advisory Council
Information Technology Services Educational Technology home page
Information Technology Services Student Computer Centers (computer lab) Survey Results
Information Technology Services: Labs, Classrooms, and Instructional Resources
Information Technology Services – Technology 'n' Training
Information Technology Services web site
Information Technology Task Force Report, 7/2/2009
Interactive Current Organizational Chart
Intercollegiate Athletics Advisory Council Mission Statement, May 1999
International Programs Global Opportunities
International Programs Mission and Vision
International Programs web site
International Student Graduate and Undergraduate informational brochure, p.4
Iowa High Schools-to-Regent Universities: Mathematics Transitions Guide. Cedar Falls: Iowa Mathematics and Science Education, n.d..
Jump Start Orientation Program
Legal Affairs Policy: Inventions, Patents, Copyrights, Trademarks and Other Intellectual Properties, Chapter 10.03, 6/9/1990
Letter from Barbara Pollard Taylor to President Koob Accepting the Report on General

Education, 1/28/2005
Letter from Robert Appleson to Benjamin Allen, 5/28/2008
Letter from UNI President Benjamin Allen to Steven Crow, Executive Director, Higher
Learning Commission, April 2008
Liberal Arts Core Category Current Documents
Liberal Arts Core Category Review, 3/11/2005
Liberal Arts Core Category Reviews, Assessments and Responses
Liberal Arts Core: Committee Membership 2010 – 2011
Liberal Arts Core: Course Description by Category
Liberal Arts Core: New Capstone Experience, 4/12/2004
Liberal Arts Core: Purposes and Goals, 10/12/2009
Liberal Arts Core Review Steering Committee (LAC-RSC)
Liberal Arts Core: What is the LAC?
Liberal Arts Core web site
LUX Service Award
Master Agreement between the Board of Regents, State of Iowa and the UNI-United
Faculty, 2007 – 2009
Master Agreement between the Board of Regents, State of Iowa and the UNI-United
Faculty, 2009 – 2010
Mathematics and Science in Iowa
Mathematics Center web site
McNair Scholars Program at UNI web site
McNair Scholars Program: Students
MAPP Survey Data
Mission Statement 2008 – 2010
National Survey of Student Engagement 2008: American Democracy Project
Responses
National Survey of Student Engagement 2008 & 2009 Survey Responses
NCA Self-Study Report, 2010
Office of Academic Advising: Academic Advising – First-Year Freshman
Office of Academic Assessment: Assessment Policies and Procedures
Office of Academic Assessment: Measure of Academic Proficiency & Progress web site
Office of Academic Assessment: National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)
Office of Academic Assessment: National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) web
site
Office of Academic Assessment: Student Learning Outcomes and Student Outcomes
Assessment Plans web site
Office of Academic Assessment: Student Outcomes Assessment Committee
Office of Academic Assessment web site
Office of Institutional Research Surveys
Office of Institutional Research: Community Service Projects Inventory
Office of Institutional Research web site
Office of Sponsored Programs – IRB
Office of Sponsored Programs: Intellectual Property at UNI
Office of Sponsored Programs: Research Compliance
Office of Sponsored Programs: Research Misconduct
Office of Sponsored Programs: Technology Transfer and Commercialization Process
Office of Sponsored Programs: Trademarks at UNI
Office of Sponsored Programs web site

Office of the President: FY2010 Summary of ARRA Projects
Office of the President Messages web site
Office of the President: President Benjamin Allen web site
Office of the Registrar: Fall 2009 Semester: Schedule of Classes: Miscellaneous
       Information – Student Records
Oral Communication 48C: 001 Course Packet
Pass Rate for CPA Examination
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Performance Indicator Progress, Third Annual Report for UNI's Strategic Plan 2001 –
       2003, 10/14/2003
President Allen's Priorities for the University of Northern Iowa
Program Assessment Committee Procedure
Promotion and Tenure Standards by College for all Colleges
Public Safety – Police Division web site
Purposes and Goals of the Liberal Arts Core
Reading and Learning Center web sit
Report of a Focused Evaluation for Approval to Offer UNI's MBA Program in Hong Kong,
       10/29-30/2001
Report of a Visit to the University of Northern Iowa for Decennial Reaccreditation,
       2/19-21/2001
Report of the Information Technology Task Force 7/2/2009
Rod Library Special Collections: Jacobson Human Performance Complex, March 2003
Rod Library web site
Statewide Research and Development School
Strategic Plan 2004 – 2009 Progress Report
Student Climate Survey on Harassment
Student Computer Fee Allocation Guidelines, 2007 – 2009
Student Learning Outcomes Assessment, Biosciences, 2008 – 2009/1009 – 2010
Student Disability Services web site
Student Outcomes Assessments/Academic Program Reviews: College of Social and
       Behavioral Sciences, 2009 – 2010
Student Outcomes Assessments/Academic Program Reviews: College of Humanities
       and Fine Arts, 2009 – 2010
Student Outcomes Assessment Committee web site
Student Plagiarism Survey Questions, Spring 2009
Student Policies: Academic/Ethics/Discipline, Chapter 3.01, 2/14/1983
Student Policies: Student Conduct Code, Chapter 3.02, 8/31/2009
Student Satisfaction Survey, July 2008
Student Support Services web site
Study Abroad Participation, 2004 – 2010
Undergraduate Advising Council to the Provost Recommendations for 2009 – 2010:
       Actions for Improving Undergraduate Advising
United Faculty web site
University of Northern Iowa Academic Learning Center (UNIALC) web site
University of Northern Iowa Admissions Partnership Program (AAP) web site
University of Northern Iowa Admissions Partnership Program (AAP) with area
       Community Colleges
University of Northern Iowa Alumni and Friends web site
University of Northern Iowa American Democracy Project Mission and Goals

University of Northern Iowa American Democracy Project: What is it?

University of Northern Iowa, *Building on Excellence: A Self-Study Report for NCA Reaccreditation* (2001)

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University of Northern Iowa Business and Community web site

University of Northern Iowa Business Mission and Vision

University of Northern Iowa Camps

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University of Northern Iowa Campus web site

University of Northern Iowa Catalog of Courses, 2008-2010

University of Northern Iowa Center for Urban Education TRIO Programs

University of Northern Iowa College Portrait web site

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University of Northern Iowa DRAFT Strategic Plan 2010 – 2015, 5/5/2010

University of Northern Iowa Foundation web site

University of Northern Iowa Foundations of Excellence: Documents and Reports

University of Northern Iowa Mathematics and Science Academy (IMSA) web site

University of Northern Iowa Museums: For Educators Programs

"University of Northern Iowa Named to Princeton Review's 2010 'Best in the Midwest' Roster of Colleges," UNI Update, 7/30/2009

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University of Northern Iowa Policies and Procedures, Selections

"University of Northern Iowa Recognized by Carnegie Foundation for Community Outreach and Engagement," UNI News Release, 12/27/2006

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University of Northern Iowa Strategic Plan 2001 - 2006

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University of Northern Iowa Strategic Planning Review Committee Minutes, 2/10/2003 Meeting

University of Northern Iowa Student Satisfaction Survey, July 2008

University of Northern Iowa Suzuki School Outreach Program, email from Scott Hall, 4/25/2009

University of Northern Iowa Technology Transfer and Commercialization Process

University of Northern Iowa Transfer Student FAQs web site

Veridan Credit Union Community Engagement Award

Voluntary System of Accountability Task Force and Work Group Members, 8/28/2007

Women and Minorities in STEM Programs at Iowa's Public Universities. Cedar Falls: Iowa Mathematics and Science Education, 2009.

II. COMMITMENT TO PEER REVIEW

A. Comprehensiveness of the Self-Study Process

The University of Northern Iowa conducted a special-emphasis self-study by

participating in the Foundations of Excellence® program as delineated in the joint project between the Higher Learning Commission and the Policy Center on the First Year of College. To be eligible, UNI applied and was approved by the Policy Center to participate in the FoE program and by the Commission to conduct the customized self-study. The University received final approval from the HLC in May 2008.

In fall 2007 and early spring 2008, senior administrators identified key campus leaders to chair and to serve on the HLC steering committee and to chair the FoE steering committee. President Allen and his administrative team highlighted the importance of the reaccreditation effort in a campus-wide Town Hall meeting in March 2008. To ensure an inclusive and open self-study process, steering committee leaders made public calls for faculty, staff, and student volunteers to serve on the subcommittees in May and September 2008. These efforts resulted in more than 200 faculty, staff, and students serving on the HLC and/or FoE steering committees and subcommittees. Participation in a special-emphasis self-study required the University to conduct simultaneously two separate, yet integrated, self-studies. In view of the overlap among chapters, the HLC and FoE steering committees coordinated their work so that the final self-study reflects an integrated process.

B. Integrity of the Self-Study Report

The University of Northern Iowa organized the self-study into two sections, the first focusing on the reaccreditation effort and the second on the work completed during the development of the aspirational strategic plan during the initial year of the Foundations of Excellence® project. The self-study is detailed, descriptive, and comprehensive. Links to additional data, publications, and other resources, in addition to the self-study document itself, contributed to the teams' pre-visit confidence that the report was inclusive and the process open. Team members validated and confirmed these impressions through individual and group meetings with internal and external members of the UNI community, as well as through careful examination of resource room exhibits. The University's choice to conclude its treatment of each core component with an analysis of progress made and work yet required assisted team members in identifying key areas for advice in the advancement section and in determining institutional effectiveness necessary for ongoing accreditation.

While team members were unable to examine student learning assessment data prior to arrival on campus, UNI promptly provided these data when requested to do so during the visit. Moreover, the *"First-Year Council Progress Report,"* April 2010, was also given to team members during the visit, which will make the teams' suggestions and recommendations more relevant than anticipated prior to the actual visit.

C. Adequacy of Progress in Addressing Previously Identified Challenges

The team considers the response of the organization to three of the five challenges identified by the 2000-2001 site-visit team to be adequate or better.

Challenge 1: *To energize diversity recruitment to enhance the quality of the overall educational experience.* UNI effectively responded to this concern. Moreover, UNI demonstrates through Goal 4 of the recently approved Strategic Plan that to continue to increase the enrollment of racial/ethnic minority students and the hiring of racial/ethnic minority faculty members, these efforts must be understood to be high priorities.

Challenge 4: *To ensure that all UNI facilities are updated and maintained.* The team commends UNI's response to this concern. It is notable that UNI's share of the three Regents Institutions reported deferred maintenance total of $495 million amounts to $72.4 million.

Challenge 5: *To ensure that sufficient resources are allocated for equipment acquisition, maintenance, and repair.* Even in times of significant budget reductions, UNI's funding for equipment and repair increased significantly.

Finally, with regard to the remaining two concerns identified 10 years ago (Challenges 2 and 3: *To better integrate assessment into the General Education curriculum and to improve management and oversight of the General Education program to improve its coherence),* it is the judgment of the team that these challenges were not adequately addressed. By October 1, 2004, UNI submitted a progress report to the Higher Learning Commission, which was accepted by HLC staff. While the team agrees efforts were made to address these concerns, considerable work remains before it can be concluded that these concerns were met. Progress will be addressed in Criterion 3.

D. Notification of Evaluation Visit and Solicitation of Third-Party Comment

Public notification of the Comprehensive Evaluation Visit included the local newspaper, the campus newspaper, the UNI alumni publication, and notice on the campus website with a link to the Higher Learning Commission's page for third part comment. No third party comments were forthcoming.

III. COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS

1. **Credits, Program Length, and Tuition:** *The institution has documented that it has credit hour assignments and degree program lengths within the range of good practice in higher education and that tuition is consistent across degree programs (or that there is a rational basis for any program-specific tuition).*

   The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance.
   Comments: UNI courses are based on semester credits. Semesters are 16 weeks long, including one week of final examinations. Each credit hour is equivalent to 150 minutes of class. Program lengths vary from 120 hours for the Bachelor of Arts degree to 126 hours for the Bachelor of Science degree, and 130 hours for the Bachelor of Fine Arts and Bachelor of Music degrees. Undergraduate resident tuition for the three Iowa Regents institutions is set by the Board and is the same on each of the campuses. Only

the UNI College of Business Administration charges supplemental tuition for juniors, seniors, and graduate students. The primary justification is the higher faculty salaries required to attract business faculty; UNI is an AACSB-accredited school.

2. **Student Complaints:** *The institution has documented a process in place for addressing student complaints and appears to be systematically processing such complaints as evidence by the data on student complaints for the three years prior to the visit.*

    The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance.
    Comments: Student -complaint files and logs are appropriately maintained. Student complaints are responded to promptly and professionally, evidencing due process.

3. **Transfer Policies:** *The institution has demonstrated it is appropriately disclosing its transfer policies to students and to the public. Policies contain information about the criteria the institution uses to make transfer decisions.*

    The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance.
    Comments: Transfer policies and readily available, clear, and explicit. The "Transfer FAQs" web page is a model of its type.

4. **Verification of Student Identity:** *The institution has demonstrated that it verifies the identity of students who participate in courses or programs provided to the student through distance or correspondence education.*

    The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance.
    Comments: The University of Northern Iowa verifies student identity in a number of ways. These include student ID/user ID password or passphrase for on-line coursework; physical proctoring for examinations, by using test centers in various off-campus locations; in-person presentations or other interactions including voice recognition, and the use of writing-style software to detect plagiarism.

5. **Title IV Program and Related Responsibilities:** *The institution has presented evidence on the required components of the Title IV Program: General Program; Financial Responsibility; Default Rates, Campus Crime Information and Related Disclosure of Consumer Information, Satisfactory Academic Progress and Attendance Policies; and Contractual Relationships.*

    The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance.
    Comments: The institution presented evidence of all components of the Title IV Program. The University has no contractual relationships that fall under this policy; all other components are in compliance with expectations.

6. **Institutional Disclosures and Advertising and Recruitment Materials:** *The institution has documented that it provides accurate, timely, and appropriately detailed information to current and prospective students and the public about its accreditation status with the Commission and other agencies, as well as about its programs, locations,*

and policies.

The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance.
Comments: Relevant information appears in the UNI course catalog, on the University's web site, and is listed in the International Student Graduate and Undergraduate informational brochure.

7. **Relationship with Other Accrediting Agencies and with State Regulatory Boards:**
The institution has documented that it discloses its relationship with any other specialized, professional or institutional accreditor and with all governing or coordinating bodies in states in which the institution may have a presence.

The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance.
Comments: Requisite information is appropriately disclosed and accessible, UNI Programs and Courses, 2008 – 2010, p.4.

IV. FULFILLMENT OF THE CRITERIA

CRITERION ONE: MISSION AND INTEGRITY. The organization operates with integrity to ensure the fulfillment of its mission through structures and processes that involve the board, administration, faculty, staff, and students.

1. **Evidence that Core Components are met.**

   The University's mission, as framed by the Iowa Board of Regents, clearly and publicly documents the identity and range of activity for the institution. The foundation offered by the Regents' mission statement in Policy 6.04 informed the campus's mission statement for its 2004-2009 strategic plan and is evident in the mission and values statements for the 2010-2015 planning cycle. Even with the evolution in phrasing for campus mission statements, the fundamental elements of the Regents' mission (a comprehensive university, high quality undergraduate and select graduate instruction, liberal arts curriculum, dedication to teacher education, and service to the state of Iowa) remain constant.

   Mission statements across academic programs and other divisions on UNI's campus are relatively consistent with the institutional and Regents' mission statement. Most reference the classic "teaching, research and service" guidance of the Regents' mission documents, and many laud either their contribution to the liberal arts foundation or service to Iowans.

   Commitment to UNI and understanding of its mission were clearly expressed by the Chairman of the Board of Regents, Mr. David Miles. In a conversation with HLC team members, the Chairman described the elements of UNI's mission and expressed strong support for the distinctiveness of that mission in the Iowa public higher education system. As expressed by the Board Chair, Regents believe that UNI

successfully fulfills its mission and has been responsible and responsive during the current period of fiscal stress.

The mission statement for the 2004-2009 strategic planning cycle included the first clear statement of institutional commitment to "an intellectually and culturally diverse community." Following the mission directive, diversity has been an organizational priority in recent years with the creation of a Diversity Council and a "Diversity Matters" website. In addition, in 2008 the Office of Admissions created two new positions to address minority recruitment. Success in recruiting a more diverse student body is evident in the 25.3 percent increase in Latino students and 29.1 percent increase in international students in the last five years. On the other hand, the 11.3 percent decline in African-American students calls for closer scrutiny by the enrollment management team.

Since 2001 and through two iterations of mission statements, the service component has embraced a commitment to communities throughout Iowa, the nation, and the world. The Self Study notes that there are more than 70 advisory councils and boards across campus calling on the service of more than 900 individuals throughout the community and state. UNI's commitment to service is linked to its focus on diversity through outreach to Waterloo schools, particularly the $530,000 grant to provide those communities with help in organization and educational efforts.

The administrative cadre expresses strong support for consultative processes and notes the creation of a task force on revenue enhancement and another task force to address cost containment as evidence of the intent to be collaborative even during difficult times. Those task forces included representatives across campus constituencies, including faculty. In addition, the President used electronic and in-person forms of communication to update the campus about budget developments. The President also consults with a Campus Advisory Group, which includes representatives of all constituencies on campus. This group is scheduled to meet once each semester, though the website did not include any minutes of meetings.

There is strong evidence that UNI operates to protect the integrity of the institution. University and system policies are readily available online in the Policies and Procedures Manual. Also available online are thorough guidelines for appropriate procedures and checklists for the hiring of new faculty and staff. There is an Office of Compliance and Equity Management that includes student employees and provides assistance in compliance with policies, including affirmative action. President Allen's 2009 Reaffirmation of Affirmative Action Statement sends an effective message of administrative support for fairness in procedures.

Fiscal integrity is evident in an array of online reports available from Financial Accounting and Reporting Services, as well as thorough Annual Financial Reports. UNI, along with the other Regents institutions, entered into a contract in 2005 with EthicsPoint to facilitate anonymous reporting of financial misconduct and internal audit reports make evident that the University responds quickly when inappropriate conduct or incorrect process is discovered. Two recent examples of internal audit reports focused on the Camp Adventure program, and the Malcolm Price Laboratory School. In both instances the President requested the reviews and responded

quickly to auditor recommendations.

An Academic Ethics and Discipline Policy and a Student Code of Conduct guide institutional responses to issues involving students. A survey of students in 2009 tapped student understanding of plagiarism and is posted on the Registrar's website. There is a broad array of programming through Student Affairs to reinforce ethical conduct among students and to encourage understanding of the contributions of diversity to the life of learning. A calendar posted on the Multicultural Center's website included programming for every month of the fall 2010 semester. Considering recent incidents of harassment of Latino students, there is evidence of responsiveness by UNI to reinforce the values of fair treatment.

Faculty members are guided by a Code of Ethics and Academic Responsibility. Research conduct and compliance with laws regulating research on humans and animals are monitored by the Office of Sponsored Programs. The website for the OSP is effective in providing information about those guidelines as well as helpful links to answer questions faculty and staff may have about the research process.

2.   **Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention.**

The University has been consistent in developing a campus mission statement in each of its strategic planning cycles. The institution has been less consistent in how it makes public its mission statements and this shortcoming was acknowledged in the 2010 Self Study. At the time of the HLC visit there was no evidence of a mission statement on the UNI webpage. Nor does the mission statement appear in any consistent fashion in campus publications. Instead there appears to be a mix of messages, from the President's three priorities to five "overarching goals," along with other tag lines to characterize UNI's identity. UNI's new mission statement is simple and should be used repeatedly to frame public statements about the purpose of the University. It includes the priorities and goals mentioned above, but every communication about those should reference the mission of the University. (1a)

Campus discussions to clarify what is meant by "transformative learning experiences" (a phrase in the new mission statement), could help to clarify the importance of the liberal arts foundation as well as the role that service and engagement play in the educational process. These discussions would bring the mission to life, make it a more public statement, and through repetition, anchor its importance in the consciousness of the campus community. (1a)

The commitment to the value of diversity is clear in UNI mission documents, but gathering evidence about actual progress in achieving greater diversity is a challenge on UNI's website. The Diversity Council has been in place for more than a year and is supposed to meet on a regular basis, yet there are no meeting minutes or reports posted on the website for the Council. The University Fact Book includes data about patterns of student recruitment and patterns that should suggest a need for further action include an 11 percent drop in African American enrollment in the past five years along with a 25 percent increase in Latino enrollment. The same Fact Book does not format faculty data to mirror the student data presentation and one

would have to reference previous editions of the publication to understand changes in the faculty population. (1b)

With the evolution of mission statements, there has been consistency in the values articulated in each version. For that reason, there is understanding of at least some mix of those values among faculty and staff. In meetings held by members of the HLC visit team with faculty and staff there were components of the mission statement that echoed in conversations. Faculty know that the liberal arts are central to UNI's mission and staff quickly mentioned the importance of students and service to the community. At no time during the visit, however, was there evidence of a broad understanding of UNI's mission by any group other than the top administrative cadre. (1c)

Faculty participation in shared governance is channeled through a Faculty Senate with United Faculty, the faculty union, as a bargaining unit for employment conditions. This bifurcation of faculty representation can present challenges in building collaboration. United Faculty includes approximately 30 percent of full-time faculty and its leadership tends to voice more concern about recent developments in response to budget cuts than is evident in Faculty Senate meeting minutes. Just over 100 faculty attended two faculty forums while the HLC team was on campus with at least a few faculty members attending both sessions. With that caveat, there were clear expressions of concern among faculty that there had not been adequate consultation before fundamental decisions were made in response to budget cuts, particularly the merger of two colleges. At the same time, other faculty opined that the merger "made sense" but expressed regret at the perceived absence of consultation about so significant a decision. (1d)

It is not unusual for there to be concerns about consultation and communication on a campus the size of UNI. Those concerns are likely to increase when there are difficult decisions regarding budget cuts. How those decisions are arrived at should be made evident to the campus community. On the other hand, representatives on task forces and committees bear responsibility to report back to their colleagues about their service and the work of the group. (1d)

3. **Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require Commission follow-up.**

   None noted.

4. **Evidence that one or more specified Core Components are not met and require Commission follow-up. (Sanction or adverse action may be warranted.)**

   None noted.

   Recommendation of the Team.

   Criterion One is met.

CRITERION TWO: PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE. The organization's allocation of resources and its processes for evaluation and planning demonstrate its capacity to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its education, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

1. **Evidence that Core Components are met.**

   The planning process that led to the adoption of the 2010-2015 Strategic Plan included effective environmental scanning and a thorough analysis of the University's strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities. In fact, the first several months of the planning process were devoted exclusively to the process of identifying both internal and external factors with a high probability of impacting the future of the University—including key demographic, political, fiscal, economic, and societal trends. The final plan clearly demonstrates an effort to prepare for and respond to these trends in a strategic manner. In particular, the University's strategic plan demonstrates that attention is being paid to emerging factors such as technology, demographic shifts, environmental issues, and globalization.

   While the Strategic Plan is forward thinking and clearly focused on preparing for the future, it is also consistent with the University's history and heritage. In particular, the plan honors the University's heritage as an undergraduate institution focused on the preparation of teachers. It does so in a way that preserves the essential elements of the University's mission while boldly asserting aspirations to lead the nation in the quality and relevance of its programs. In addition, the plan acknowledges the changing context within which its mission is enacted, including an increasingly diverse society and increasingly challenging economic and social milieus.

   In an obvious effort to prepare for the projected decline in high school graduates, the University has embarked on a marketing campaign, undergirded by market research, designed to attract a larger share of the undergraduate market. The "I am UNI" campaign is part of a larger enrollment management effort that also includes increased attention to undergraduate retention (including the Foundations of Excellence® initiative), as well as increased graduate, online, and off-campus enrollment. This effort, which is led by a campus wide Enrollment Council that includes the President, is one tangible example of University planning processes that are realistic, future-focused, and cognizant of demographic trends.

   Like other campus planning processes, the facilities planning process is inclusive, purposeful, and mission driven. It includes a Facilities Planning Advisory Committee, which is comprised of representatives from across campus—including students—and advises the President's Cabinet on such issues as space utilization, land use, campus development, capital program requests, pedestrian access, campus beautification, and related issues. Decisions are guided by a comprehensive campus master plan that is aligned with the University's strategic goals. Through careful and thoughtful planning, the University has managed to substantially reduce its deferred maintenance even in a challenging budget environment and has recently renovated virtually all of the buildings in the academic core of the campus.

Given the recent need to respond to diminishing state appropriations, the University has demonstrated both the ability to preserve and strengthen quality in the face of budget reductions and the ability to seek and leverage new sources of funding. In both cases, the University's mission and strategic priorities have served as the road map for navigating a challenging financial situation. One example of the University's strategic approach to budgeting is the development of principles to guide budget reductions. These include explicit commitments to preserve quality, maintain institutional financial aid, and sustain the University's admirable persistence and graduation rates. In addition, cuts to the operating budget were not across the board, but instead reflected a conscious effort to protect the University's stated priorities.

In addition to making targeted budget reductions, the University effectively used voluntary attrition and retirement incentives to reduce the size of its faculty and staff. These voluntary reductions allowed the University to streamline processes and realign resources in ways that have led to greater efficiency and enhanced effectiveness. One example of this approach is in the Facilities area, in which 40 positions were eliminated through voluntary attrition and responsibilities were realigned to more closely map the University's physical plant and facilities needs and priorities.

While demonstrating the ability to reduce and realign existing resources in ways that maintain or enhance quality, UNI has also demonstrated the wherewithal to pursue additional sources of funding. One clear strategy for increasing financial resources is increasing tuition revenue by bolstering undergraduate enrollment and retention, as well as graduate, online, and off-campus enrollment. As noted elsewhere in this report, these efforts have included an aggressive marketing campaign, as well as strategic efforts to identify, develop, and market relevant graduate degree programs. In addition, the University has nearly doubled the amount of revenue generated by external grants and contracts and has clearly identified increasing sponsored research as a priority.

Accountability for contributing to institutional effectiveness is maintained through the establishment of key performance indicators for each of the University's strategic goals, annual goals for each unit (directly tied to the University's strategic goals), and annual performance evaluations. Both division heads and the Working Budget Group described a process by which resource allocation is tied to strategic priorities and performance evaluation informs both subsequent planning decisions and budget decisions.

In addition to regular performance reviews of administrators and unit heads, a regular and systematic review of academic program effectiveness is a key component of continuous improvement efforts. Coordinated by the Committee on Academic Program Review, this process consists of a self-study and external review process that includes a focus on the assessment and achievement of student learning outcomes. The Committee clearly takes its role seriously and members believe departments generally approach the program review as a genuine opportunity for program improvement rather than as a meaningless exercise or an opportunity to justify their programs' existence. The Committee described a process that is currently somewhat "uneven" across campus but is gradually leading to a

culture of assessment and continuous improvement.

While distinct planning processes exist for budgeting, facilities, enrollment management, and program development, the processes are united by the University's strong, widely shared purpose and centralized decision-making process that keeps the Strategic Plan in the forefront. Decisions about resource allocation and strategic direction are made by the President's Cabinet, in consultation with the campus community. Alignment of campus-wide planning efforts is enhanced by a process that requires each unit to develop a strategic plan that supports the University's plan.

Planning and budgeting processes are linked through the Working Budget Group, which meets with the President every two weeks. Requests for new resources to support strategic initiatives flow through division heads to the President's Cabinet and the Working Budget Group. Strategic priorities guide decisions about the allocation of new resources, as well as budget reductions when necessary. During the recent round of budget cuts, for example, reductions to the operating budget were not across the board but were targeted to preserve the University's stated priorities.

Another key element in the University's successful efforts to align all levels of planning with its mission and strategic priorities is the widespread and sustained participation in its most recent strategic planning process. The planning committee was large, diverse, and representative, and met regularly both as a whole and in working groups. In additions to working groups for each goal, working groups devoted to the University's mission and vision also met regularly and developed multiple drafts. Drafts were shared in numerous venues and the campus community had many opportunities to provide feedback. As a result, both planning group members and the larger campus community feel a sense of ownerships and a sense that this process was "different" in important ways from previous planning efforts. Most believe that the process will lead to success and true transformation. A similarly inclusive and transparent process is planned for the implementation teams that will carry out the plan.

2. **Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention.**

Efforts to make strategic decisions about academic programs have been somewhat less successful. A campus-wide Academic Program Assessment (APA) process that required all academic programs to undergo an extensive self-study process was designed to identify those programs in need of reorganization or elimination, as well as to identify programs worthy of increased financial support. To date, the process resulted primarily in the closure of programs that were effectively already defunct. The process has not yet resulted in additional resources for those programs identified as particularly meritorious. Campus officials indicated this particular part of the process is not yet complete. Nonetheless, generally agreed-upon metrics for evaluating program viability were developed and generated considerable data to inform future decision making, as well as ongoing improvement efforts. (2b)

While the program evaluation process, coordinated by the Committee on Academic Program Review, is comprehensive and systematic, the University's assessment efforts are loosely coordinated and not adequately supported. Existing assessment data—most notably the NSSE data—clearly demonstrate institutional effectiveness, but in many other areas data are not systematically collected, analyzed, or used to inform continuous improvement efforts. In part, this is due to inadequate staffing and budgetary support for institutional assessment efforts. These concerns are addressed elsewhere in this report. (2c)

3. **Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require Commission follow-up.**

   None noted.

4. **Evidence that one or more specified Core Components are not met and require Commission follow-up. (Sanction or adverse action may be warranted.)**

   None noted.

   Recommendation of the Team

   Criterion Two is met.

CRITERION THREE: STUDENT LEARNING AND EFFECTIVE TEACHING. The organization provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission.

1. **Evidence that Core Components are met.**

   In meeting with various groups and individuals, it was apparent that UNI is committed, especially, to undergraduate education. Chairs of the academic departments, for example, were unified in their belief that effective teaching was the threshold necessary for probationary faculty to earn tenure, regardless of their research productivity. Such unanimity is indicative of an institution that has a deeply embedded culture of quality teaching. Moreover, in written material, the different campus groups are frequently listed as "students, faculty, and staff." Although seemingly minor, listing students first sends an important message about the priorities of the university.

   Faculty at UNI are well-prepared in their diciplines and demonstrated genuine commitment to student success. More than 72 percent of full-time faculty hold doctoral degrees; almost one-third of the part-time faculty do as well. Students who attended the open forum spoke convincingly of faculty dedication and commitment, both within and outside the classroom. Moreover, NSSE data indicate that over 80% of first-year students surveyed rate the quality of academic advising to be either good

or excellent (FY2007, 82%; FY2008, 82%; FY2009, 81%). In the only year comparison data is available, FY2007, UNI's NSSE peers turned in survey results of 71%. The University's high student retention rate also supports the conclusion that the University is fulfilling its mission to offer "a world-class university education, providing personalized experiences and creating a lifetime of opportunities."

Rod Library provides a suite of resources available to assist students, staff, and faculty to access information quickly and efficiently. These resources include classroom visits by librarians, as well as individual consultations with students, faculty, and staff.

The University, based upon retention and graduation rates alone, appears to be doing an effective job cultivating an intellectually enriching and engaging environment. Although those rates are significantly lower for certain demographic groups, they still exceed the results of many of their peers. Much of this success can be attributed to the commitment of faculty and staff and intentional efforts in areas such as academic advising and offices related to academic support. The success in those areas, combined with impressive results in certain related areas of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), reflect an institution that supports student learning.

Based on on-campus interviews, information contained in the materials sent to the team prior to the visit, and resource room documents, UNI is increasing the number of students participating in international study programs of all types and in the Honors Program. These examples demonstrate that UNI is focusing efforts to create a broad range of high quality academic experiences for its students. At the same time, UNI maintains its historic commitment to teacher education. Although not NCATE accredited as is the case for the other two Iowa Regents universities, the teacher education requirements, as mandated by the state, appear functionally equivalent to the standards set by NCATE. The high placement rates for UNI education graduates attest to the high quality of the UNI education programs.

In the face of budget difficulties, UNI continues to demonstrate a strong commitment to student learning in a variety of ways, including:

- Improving facilities across campus and the increasing emphasis on providing technology in classrooms.

- In an innovative move, simultaneously strengthening the value of the interdisciplinary nature of the curriculum and demonstrating a clear understanding of budget realities by supporting the philosophy department's request to hire a faculty member with an expertise in the philosophy of science.

- Having course management shells available for faculty and student use with the expressed goal of having all students exposed to computer based/enhanced educational experiences. (See clarifying comment in

Paragraph 5 of the next section.)

As mentioned in the Self-Study, the University has initiated a variety of commitments, programs, and strategies related to increasing the University's diversity. The overall "Diversity Matters" initiative, including the Town Hall Meeting on Diversity, the Diversity Council, and the Diversity Advisory Committee are illustrative of UNI's commitment to student, staff, and faculty diversity. The UNI Jump Start program specifically underscores UNI's commitment to the success of students from underrepresented ethnic and racial groups and first generation college students. Participation in this program to date, however, is quite low. Although overall goals have not been met, substantial progress has been made and evidence of ongoing commitment to University diversity, broadly defined, is apparent in the newly adopted strategic plan.

2. **Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention.**

Regarding a commitment to undergraduate education, it was clear based on discussions focused on UNI's graduate education program offerings that various constituencies are concerned about the array of graduate programs currently supported by UNI and their impact on the institution's ability to support fully undergraduate education. Faculty concerns reflect the deliberate consensus the campus has developed to support undergraduate education. In both open faculty forums, the difficulty in staffing LAC courses with full-time faculty given the need to staff upper-division and/or graduate courses was described. (3b)

Overall, the University's budget appears generally to align with its priority of "students first." Although some programs appear somewhat under resourced, for example the Liberal Arts Core (LAC), newly instituted planning and budgeting process will assist in creating a budgeting system that better meets with overall priorities. In these budgetary times when state support should not be expected to increase—or even stay constant—aligning budgets to priorities will most probably result in the re-allocation of funds from the *status quo*. Department heads specifically noted that such a reallocation would likely involve moving funds for graduate programs to undergraduate programs. (3d)

While having course management shells available for student and faculty use is

laudable, the team could not find a clearly articulated set of goals or a timeline to increase the breadth and depth of the use of the course management system or other technology resources (such as ePortfolios) to improve student learning. For example, in Fall 2009, only 37 classes had implemented the ePortfolios system for a total of 237 students, which represents a very small fraction of the total UNI student body. (3d)

The UNI 2010-2015 Strategic Plan clearly articulates its commitment to serving a diversity of learners (Goals 1, 4, and 6), other constituencies (Goals 3, 5, and 6), and

the greater society (Goals 3 and 5). Moreover, UNI's stated values also reflect this commitment. As a result, accessible references to the University's commitment to these diversity values are not available. (3e)

3. **Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require Commission follow-up.**

The University has developed a process for collecting assessment plans and reports from all academic units, which includes an articulation of expected student learning outcomes for each area. Although this effort has provided the impetus to begin systematically measuring student learning outcomes, the depth of such plans and reports are inconsistent across the various disciplines. The structure appears to be in place, however, to build upon the current efforts to facilitate an even greater utilization of quality improvement assessment strategies to improve student learning across the institution. This is particularly true given UNI's commitment to the HLC Assessment Academy, which will provide ample opportunity for growth in this area. (3a)

4. **Evidence that one or more specified Core Components are not met and require Commission follow-up. (Sanction or adverse action may be warranted.)**

None noted.

Recommendation of the Team.

Criterion 3 is met.

CRITERION FOUR: ACQUISITION, DISCOVERY, AND APPLICATION OF KNOWLEDGE.
The organization promotes a life of learning for its faculty, administration, staff, and students by fostering and supporting inquiry, creativity, practice, and social responsibility in ways consistent with its mission.

1. **Evidence that Core Components are met.**

The University continues to invest scarce resources in faculty scholarship. It supports Professional Development Assignments (sabbaticals), for which faculty can compete every three years as stipulated in the UNI Master agreement, provides summer fellowships for creative activities or grant applications, and permits colleges the authority to develop and spend budget for their own scholarship and grant support. In addition, the University celebrates scholarly achievements using awards such as the James Lubker Research Award and the Distinguished Scholar Award, both of which carry cash prizes as well campus-wide recognition. Travel funding to support research and the presentation of scholarly findings totaled $352,287 in FY09, a large amount during a period of fiscal austerity, but recognized by the university community to be insufficient to meet legitimate demands. Increasingly, faculty and staff have turned to external funding to support scholarship. In FY 08, the

university received a record $36.8M, the bulk of which was devoted to public service grants (e.g., Engaging Iowa in Science and Mathematics, the Iowa Initiative Intervention, the Camp Adventure program, the Iowa Air Emission Assistance Program), consistent with the University's mission focus on K-12 teaching and the economic, cultural and social development of Iowa. Student services grants include federally funded projects on responsible drinking and the prevention of gender violence. Thus, the University community is working together to marshal its resources to support scholarly productivity.

The University is building an infrastructure to support scholarship to encourage and support faculty and staff and as an opportunity for students. The Rod Library is a hub for scholarship. In addition to its own substantial collections, developed by library bibliographers in consultation with academic departments, the library actively supports a widely used Interlibrary Loan program and collaborates actively with the other Regents universities to secure databases and other resources affordably. The library's 19 faculty librarians work closely with faculty and students, in groups and in customized research consultations, to conduct bibliographic searches and to provide instructional sessions on library resources and research techniques. Informational Technology Services (ITS) provides and maintains the campus' digital backbone and supports statistical software and office/manuscript preparation software, as well as e-mail. In addition, the university and its constituent colleges support 16 research and training centers. Faculty and staff have utilized this support to produce over 4,550 refereed publications between 2000 and 2008.

A major component of faculty development, the services provided by the Center for the Enhancement of Teaching (CET), has been denied faculty for most of the last decade, due to budget cuts. On the other hand, the University has invested in positions in the Sponsored Programs Office, which has made concerted (and successful) efforts to engage faculty in professional development activities to promote grant and contract activity, to support faculty travel and seed early stage research, and to celebrate achievements with campus symposia and conferences. Difficult decisions, such as the choice to fund SPO and not CET, can fuel the debate among some faculty over whether the university prioritizes research over teaching and can divert attention from the opportunities for research and teaching to be mutually reinforcing. The administration understands the situation.

The University recognizes and encourages student scholarship in student research conferences, such as the College of Social and Behavior Sciences Student Research Conferences and the Sigma Xi Student Research Conference (natural sciences). In addition, students in the Honors Program write honors theses or produce creative projects, and McNair Scholars work with faculty mentors on research projects or in summer research internships. The College of Business Administration hosts an Undergraduate Research Program in which participating students receive a $750 research stipend. The College of Natural Sciences gives a like amount to students in its Student Opportunities for Academic Research Program. The Department of Physics summer research fellowships for students include a $3000 stipend and $500 for supplies for a 10-week summer research program. The provost and the colleges support student travel to present research at conferences, competitions and other scholarly meetings. Graduate students participate in the College of Social and Behavior Science and the Sigma Xi programs, as well as

programs reserved for graduate students, e.g., the Graduate College Research Symposium and the College of Humanities and Fine Arts Graduate Research Symposium. Thus, students not only have the example of faculty as an aspirational goal, but also specific opportunities to model scholarly behavior, supported by the campus community.

Two programs illustrate a linkage between curricular and co-curricular efforts to ensure students have a visceral as well as intellectual understanding of domestic diversity and globalism, two aspects of the core curriculum. The Office of International Programs (OIP) encourages international study and exchange programs for UNI students and facilitates the recruitment and arrival of international students to UNI's campus. The OIP collaborations with the Graduate Program in Public Policy and with the School of Music have been noteworthy successes. Additionally, the university is a member of the National Student Exchange, which offers students from UNI the opportunity to matriculate at more than 180 American and Canadian colleges and universities, thus opening the possibility for broadening the exposure of UNI's students to heterogeneous social, economic, cultural and political environments. Students were fulsome in their praise of opportunities to experience diversity, especially through international travel. Their understanding of diversity was nuanced to include race, gender, ethnicity, socio-economic status, religion, and sexual preference.

Especially, though not exclusively, in applied disciplines, undergraduate and graduate students enroll in internships, practica and other field experiences as part of their degree programs. Public Administration, Social Work, the various Professional Science Masters programs, Biotechnology, Ecosystem Management, Applied Physics, and Applied Chemistry and Biochemistry require experiential learning. Students in the College of Education preparing for licensure are expected to complete internships or practica, as well as a semester of student teaching. Similar practica and clinicals are required of students in speech pathology or audiology in Communication Sciences and Disorders. College of Business Administration students majoring in Accounting, Marketing, and Management participate in internships; those in Finance are offered the option to participate in co-op programs too. Similar choices are offered to students in Criminology. Most degree programs require students to pass research methods courses and, where professionally appropriate, add applied experiences, such as geographical information systems, remote sensing, and spatial statistics in Geography or archaeological digs in Anthropology. Such experiences prepare students for more than a particular career path: they hone critical thinking skills by application of theory to real-world problems, and they facilitate an understanding of those problems in the socio-economic, cultural and political contexts in which they actually exist.

Departments survey alumni, often in conjunction with Academic Program Reviews, to ensure that majors are constructed in ways that are practically advantageous to student success. In addition, the College of Business and the College of Natural Sciences have external advisory boards, convened by deans. Within the College of Business Administration several programs (Accounting, Finance, Management, Marketing, and Real Estate) have advisory boards. The University is beginning to develop institutional structures that will assist its more informal interactions, arising from its extensive outreach activities, to provide regular, actionable information about

the currency and relevance of its educational programs, especially those that are more applied in their focus. The University has taken a proactive position in creating opportunities for students to engage theory and practice, thus assisting students in developing a deeper more relevant understanding that prepares them for success after graduation.

The University has invested scarce resources to ensure that students understand how to acquire, use, and express knowledge responsibly and ethically. Professional staff and graduate students provide undergraduate and graduate students expert counsel through the Academic Learning Center, the Writing Center, the Reading and Learning Center, and the Math Center. Individual tutorial and small groups receive help to improve their math skills; to improve the grammar, syntax, and organization of their writing; to understand and avoid plagiarism (a particular problem for international students); and to cite sources in manners consistent with their disciplines' preferred styles. Faculty members have been provided access to Tunitin.com, a resource to compare student work with a large database of Internet content. The Rod Library maintains a web site detailing copyright policies for students and particularly for faculty, who may wish to duplicate material or use it in new digital formats. Conversations with staff at the centers and at the library, with faculty and with students suggest that all parties use and value these services as a positive contribution to the educational experience.

The University has policies and procedures in place to ensure ethical conduct in research and instruction. Faculty members' ethical responsibilities and duties in research and teaching are detailed in section 6.10 of UNI's Policies and Procedures, which also explains appropriate relationships to colleagues, the university and the community. Section 9.03 of the same document defines conflicts of interest with different categories of external funding and outlines procedures to be followed by faculty to disclose relationships, as required by federal funding agencies. Student conduct is governed by Section 3.01 of UNI's Policies and Procedures. Should an infraction be reported, the University follows the Undergraduate Grievance Policy and the Graduate Grievance Policy, as appropriate. Faculty or student research that involves human subjects is overseen by the Office of Sponsored Programs, which administers the Institutional Review Board. The Director of Research Services has completed a review of policies supporting research integrity and produced a revised misconduct policy. Conversations with faculty and students reveal that these expectations and procedures are respected, although students are less informed about IRB rules and regulations than are faculty.

The University respects freedom of expression by faculty, students and staff, as provided in Section 13.10 UNI Policies and Procedures. The Office of Intellectual Property (a joint-venture of the Office of Sponsored Programs and the Division of Business and Community Services), operating under Section 10.03 of UNI Policies and Procedures, informs the university community about and coordinates efforts on patents, technology transfer, commercialization, copyrights, trademarks and other protections of intellectual property, in collaboration with the UNI Research Foundation. Conversations with faculty, staff and students reveal that the freedom of expression expectations are better known and understood than the newer procedures for the protection and sharing of intellectual property. The Office of

Sponsored Programs is aware of this issue and is considering steps to communicate more clearly with the university community.

2. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention.

The University has integrated the LAC into every undergraduate program. The LAC's purpose statement, approved in October 2009, articulates its intention to create an experience that will develop among students the attitudes and skills required of a life of learning in a complex, global, multicultural society. The cross-section of the student body who attended the student forum understood and professed this message with enthusiasm. The LAC is currently being reviewed for its adequacy to reflect the needs of 21st Century students and to ensure that it will closely articulate with the goals and outcomes of the Foundations of Excellence program that the university joined in AY 2009-2010. (4b)

Academic program reviews are conducted on a regular seven-year cycle. The review process includes a departmental self-study that is reviewed on campus by the Committee on Academic Program Review and the Office of Academic Assessment, before being sent off campus for external evaluation. Departments are then expected to make adjustments and improvements, taking into consideration the counsel they have received. A review of a sample of academic program reviews revealed that departments have made efforts to construct student learning outcomes and to assess them, and some have made curricular adjustments as an apparent consequence of information gleaned from assessment. Using all information at their disposal, departments take seriously their responsibility to maintain current, relevant curricula and to provide pedagogies that resonate with students. Students interviewed praised faculty for their efforts to provide individualized attention and guidance, within different majors. The connection between a more systematic construction and use of student learning outcomes and outcome assessment on the one hand and action steps to improve learning on the other will become more transparent as a result of the university's enrollment in the Assessment Academy. (4c)

3. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require Commission follow-up.

The Liberal Arts Core is currently assessed using annual cross-sectional administrations of MAPP to freshmen and seniors, annual administrations of the NSSE, and the assessment of one LAC category each year that employs data from the prior six years. Members of the LAC Committee and the LAC Review Steering Committee admitted some apprehension about the adequacy of these assessments to ensure consistency of core guidelines through time and across pedagogies and to provide departments whose courses were represented in the core and faculty teaching sections of those courses timely information about the success of the core in meeting its objectives. The University's decision to join the Assessment Academy should embed the requirements of assessment more firmly in the culture of the

campus and facilitate its consistent use through time and across pedagogies. It should also assist the integration of the Foundations of Excellence goals with the goals of the LAC. (4b)

Graduate programs have student learning outcomes and student outcome assessment measures. However, the former are not uniformly expressed in behavioral terms, and the latter are often expressed as minimum course grades and/or successful completion and defense of a thesis. In addition, little information is provided on the collection of data, its analysis, conclusions drawn, or actions taken as a consequence. Even in small graduate programs, where students and their progress are well-known to faculty, assessment can benefit from regular, documented discussions among of faculty about student success/difficulties that become the basis for curricular or pedagogical changes. The university's decision to become a member of the Assessment Academy will provide opportunities for graduate program assessment to be recast in more systematically informative ways. (4b)

4. **Evidence that one or more specified Core Components are not met and require Commission follow-up. (Sanction or adverse action may be warranted.)**

None noted.

Recommendation of the Team.

Criterion 4 is met.

CRITERION FIVE: ENGAGEMENT AND SERVICE. As called for by its mission, the organization identifies its constituencies and serves them in ways both value.

1. **Evidence that Core Components are met.**

The University tracks its graduates annually. Through an annual survey conducted by UNI's Career Services, the institution attempts to gauge their employment and continuing education status. According to 2007-2008 data, 73% of graduates were either employed or on their way to employment. Fully 12% were pursuing post-graduate education. Most (77%) were employed in Iowa. Of teacher education graduates, 82% were practicing in the state.

The University's Alumni Association tracks graduates through periodic surveys as well. In 2008, for example, it contacted alumni to gauge how the university might best serve their post-graduate needs. The results led to a partnership with Career Services and CareerBeam to create a "virtual career success center" for UNI alumni and students, who need only register to access services at no-cost to them.

To determine how best to serve community needs, the evidence gleaned from the self-study report, websites, personnel interviews, and institutional documents

suggests that UNI relies principally on advisory groups and the ongoing partnerships and long-standing connections its academic and non-academic units have established with their constituencies. No fewer than 900 members of the University community currently serve on over 70 advisory groups representing the university's external community. In addition, over 40 centers and programs have long-standing relationships with constituencies that allow the university to mobilize resources and respond quickly to emerging needs.

Engagement and service has been a top priority of recent UNI presidents. In 2006, for example, during Robert D. Koob's tenure (1995-2006), the university undertook a number of initiatives to expand the institution's outreach into the community. Perhaps the most notable among these is the Greater Cedar Valley Alliance, which did much to alter the relationship of the university to the business sector in the cedar valley region. Begun in 2003 in collaboration with business and community leaders, the Alliance fosters economic and community growth in a region of over 220,000 people spread across three counties: Black Hawk, Bremer, and Grundy. Under President Benjamin J. Allen (2006-present), the work of the Alliance, as well as that of other recent projects, has been strengthened and sustained.

From environmental scans and community connections have emerged programs and services spanning six areas: Pre-K-12 education; business and economic development; human services; health; environment; and quality of life. The number of specific projects undertaken in these categories is impressive. In 2008, for example, a survey of academic and non-academic units revealed no fewer than 192 service-oriented projects being carried out by 42 departments. The highest number of projects (84) was in Pre-K-12 education.

Two statewide initiatives based at the University exemplify well how the University's rich history and long-standing capacity in teacher education is being engaged to address statewide needs. The first, the Iowa Mathematics and Science Education Partnership (IMSEP), is a collaborative addressing three goals: (1) improvement of student performance in math and science; (2) increasing the number of high quality math and science teachers; and (3) forging statewide collaboration and cooperation among interested constituencies. With UNI playing the lead role, the IMSEP partnership is composed of the Board of Regents, the University of Iowa, and Iowa State University. No fewer than fourteen state affiliates, including the Iowa Department of Education, the Iowa Governor's Office, and the Iowa Academy of Science, also participate in the effort.

The second example, conversion of the university's Malcolm Price Laboratory School into Iowa's Research, Development, Demonstration, and Dissemination School, is also a partnership with UNI playing the leading role as the state's premier institution in Pre-K through 12 education. Other partners include the Department of Education, the University of Iowa, and Iowa State University. As the state's first R&D school, the Price Laboratory School will focus on Iowa's educational priorities with the intention of generating the research and innovative practices needed to support and improve the performance of Iowa's 472,000 K-12 students and 34,600 full-time practicing K-

12 teachers.

According to evidentiary documents, interviews, and other data sources, it is clear the university responds extremely well to community needs. Its approach is programmatically diverse, wide-ranging, and highly sensitive to regional needs. When tornadoes and flooding damaged much of eastern Iowa in 2008, the university was well-poised to respond quickly and effectively with a Red Cross shelter and a number of its facilities designated Disaster Recovery Centers by the Iowa Security and Emergency Management Division.

The University's long-standing mission to improve the lives of the underserved, minority population of the Cedar Falls-Waterloo area dates to 1968, when the university decided to establish a center for the study of minority education in Waterloo, historically the city with the highest concentration of African Americans in the state. African Americans now compose 14% of the city's population. A site visit to the university's facility in Waterloo, as well as interviews with unit staff and content analyses of program reports, served to validate the institution's continuing response to the poor and least advantaged of its constituencies.

Currently known as the University of Northern Iowa Center for Urban Education (UNI-CUE), the university's outreach operations in Waterloo is part of its Educational Opportunity Programs &Special Community Services (EOP/SCS), reports directly to the Associate Provost of Academic Affairs, and houses four categories of services in a modern, state-of-the art facility in the heart of downtown Waterloo: the Educational Opportunity Center, Educational Talent Search Programs, Classic Upward Bound Program, and the Iowa Math and Science Academy. The thrust of these programs is to advance the mission of UNI-CUE by providing educational opportunities that allow for career development and lifetime learning to area residents. In 2008-2009, center reports show its principal programs (i.e., Educational Opportunity Center, Talent Search, and Upward Bound) serving close to 3,500 clients. Over 10,000 others visited the center to take advantage of its computer lab, training workshops, seminars, retreats, and other activities and events.

The University's capacity to engage economic and community needs is exemplified well by the efforts of the institution's Business and Community Services (BCS) division. Serving as an umbrella organization for an array of decentralized, service-oriented projects operating in varying departments across the university, BCS operates catalytically to leverage the intellectual and social capital of the university to promote entrepreneurship and business and community development inside and outside Iowa. The division's services span four areas: business and entrepreneurship; community and local government; environment and sustainability; and intellectual property. No fewer than 15 centers and programs are coordinated within BCS to address these areas: the Executive Development Center; the Institute for Decision Making; the Iowa Center for Immigrant Leadership and Integration; the Iowa Waste Reduction Center; the John Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Center; the National Ag-Based Lubricants Center; Strategic Marketing Services; the Regional Business Center; the Center for Energy and Environmental Education; the Geinformatics Training Research, Education, and Extension Center; the Materials Innovation Service; Metal Casting Center; Recycle and Reuse Technology Transfer

Center; the Sustainable Tourism and Environmental Program; and the Tallgrass Prairie Center.

The extensive reach of BCS is evidently impressive. Reports show that BCS operates in all 99 Iowa counties, serving thousands of businesses and communities. In 2009 alone, more than 4,210 businesses and individuals, as well as 220 faculty and 2,105 students, were served in some direct way by the division's programs. The network has also played a role in the restoration of native vegetation, and has implemented energy and environmental programs in 72 counties, reaching thousands of teachers (4,580) and students (80,000) in K-12 schools. Finally, more than 18,000 business professionals have received training from the division's Executive Development Center.

Other recent initiatives speak to the university's lead in addressing quality of life issues in greater Cedar Falls/Waterloo. In 2005, for example, UNI established the Lifelong University program to address the continuing education needs of area citizens. Under the program, community members can access courses for relatively low fees ($15 to $40 per course). The Human Performance Center completed in 2008 offers an outreach clinic providing needed access to services in sports and general medicine.

Further evidence of UNI's exemplary response to those it serves can be found in partnerships the institution has forged with other organizations in the Cedar Valley region to ensure access to higher education and provide students with opportunities in civic engagement. Two such examples are the institution's 2+2 B.A. in Elementary Education and B.A. in Technology Programs. Both are designed for "place bound" students and allow them to complete their degree requirements at their local community college by taking two years of community college courses and the equivalent of two years of UNI faculty courses either at the community college or through distance education.

In the Admissions Partnership Program (APP), which the university launched in 2007 in collaboration with nine community colleges in the state of Iowa, transfer student entry into UNI is facilitated by guaranteeing students admission if they meet requirements and maintain timely progression through community college graduation. Students also receive advisement, scheduling, and other services from UNI staff.

Finally, the partnership initiated in 2007 with Wartburg College, Allen College of Nursing, Hawkeye Community College, and the Volunteer Center of Cedar Valley (VCCV) was designed to promote community service and service learning among students, with VCCV playing the brokering or catalytic role in service placements.

That the university has been called on to play a lead role in IMSEP, as well as in the development of the Price Laboratory School as the state's first R & D school, speaks loudly and significantly to the value constituents place on the institution's long-standing history, institutional capacity, and exemplary services. The fact that the institution has been extremely successful in fundraising when measured against peer

institutions (4th place with 12.4% alumni participation rate) is also evidence of the institution's perceived value.

Equally fitting are the numerous forms of recognition the university has received for its numerous contributions to community engagement. Nationally, in 2006, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching rewarded the university's efforts in community outreach and partnerships by conferring on the institution its new classification in community engagement. The university was recognized again three years later in 2009. The Corporation for National and Community Service bestowed on the institution its highest honor: the university was added to the President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll for its exemplary work in service to community.

In 2007, the university's recycling efforts received Iowa's Recycling Association Best School Recycling Program Award. For this and other sustainability initiatives additional recognition came in 2010, when the university was included in The Princeton Review's Guide to 286 Green Colleges.

2.   Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention.

There is much evidence provided in the assurance section of this report to suggest that the University's efforts in engagement and service are quite admirable. An excellent example is the lead role the university is playing in the Cedar Valley Alliance and other statewide efforts. Equally admirable, though, is the University's candid portrayal in the self-study report of the many challenges the institution finds in the area of engagement and service, from the assessment of needs and program impact, to the internal coordination of outreach initiatives to the provision of more service-learning opportunities to students and faculty. In light of the data provided and reviewed by the evaluation team, these challenges are unquestionably valid and reasonable ones for the institution to have raised. We thus urge that they be taken seriously and addressed in the foreseeable future. (5a)

3.   Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require Commission follow-up.

None noted.

4.   Evidence that one or more specified Core Components are not met and require Commission follow-up. (Sanction or adverse action may be warranted.)

None noted.

Recommendation of the Team.

Criterion 5 is met.

V. STATEMENT OF AFFILIATION STATUS

A. Affiliation Status.

No change.

B. Nature of Organization.

1. Legal status.

No change.

2. Degrees awarded.

No change.

C. Conditions of Affiliation

1. Stipulation on affiliation status

No change.

2. Approval of degree sites.

No change.

2. Approval of distance education degree.

No change.

3. Reports required.

Not applicable.

5. Other visits scheduled.

Not applicable.

6. Organization change request.

No change.

D. Commission Sanction or Adverse Action.

Not applicable.

E. Summary of Commission Review.

Timing for next comprehensive visit (academic year - 2020 – 2021)

Rationale for recommendation.

The University was recently accepted into the HLC Assessment Academy. Were that not the case, the team would recommend a focused visit on the development of a coherent general education program, articulation of measurable student learning outcomes for that program, and the implementation of effective assessment strategies with evidence of their use for ongoing curricular improvement. However, with UNI's commitment to complete the 4-year Assessment Academy program focusing on precisely these areas and its ongoing work on the Foundations of Excellence initiative, the University will have ample, proactive opportunities to address these challenges.

VI.   ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND EXPLANATIONS

The University of Northern Iowa worked with a difficult budget last year. The University took a very conservative approach and turned in a notably credible performance.

ADVANCEMENT SECTION

REPORT OF A COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION VISIT

TO

University of Northern Iowa
Cedar Falls, Iowa

11/8/10 – 11/10/10

FOR

The Higher Learning Commission
A Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools

EVALUATION TEAM

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Contents

I.   **OVERALL OBSERVATIONS ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION**

The University of Northern Iowa (UNI) traces it origins to the Iowa State Normal School, founded in 1876 as a teacher-training institution. In 1904, the Normal School was authorized to offer a four-year college curriculum culminating in the Bachelor of Arts in Education degree. The Iowa General Assembly acknowledged this shift in purpose in 1909, voting to rename the school the Iowa State Teachers College. It remained so until 1961, when it became the State College of Iowa and began offering the Bachelor of Arts degree to students without teacher certification. In 1967, the College adopted its current title, the University of Northern Iowa. With this new designation came a charge to "offer undergraduate and graduate courses . . . conduct research and provide extension and other public services . . . to facilitate the social, cultural and economic development of Iowa." The University retained the "primary responsibility" of preparing teachers and other educational personnel for schools, colleges, and universities.

The University of Northern Iowa is accredited through the doctoral degree by the Higher Learning Commission, North Central Association. UNI was first accredited as a teacher training institution in 1913 and has been continuously accredited as a four-year institution since 1930. It was first granted approval to offer undergraduate liberal arts non-teaching degrees in 1961. It was granted approval to offer programs at the Master's level in 1951 and the Doctoral level in 1978. The last NCA-comprehensive review was in 2000-2001, at which time the next comprehensive review was set for 2010-2011, with a progress report on UNI's general education program and assessment due in October 2004. That report was accepted by Commission staff.

II. **CONSULTATIONS OF THE TEAM**

Resulting from the Reaccreditation Work

A. Academic Review for Program Elimination, Recognition, or Enhancement

UNI administration was attentive to the inclusion of academic units in the difficult decisions to delete programs in the wake of budget cuts in 2009-2010. The Academic Program Assessment process was conducted quickly and programs with low enrollment were identified for closure. When the process began, it was also intended to recognize programs of distinction; unfortunately this stage was abandoned once action to delete programs was completed. The assumption among faculty was that there were no funds for a monetary award, but there was regret that so much effort by department and college leadership did not result in even an acknowledgement of outstanding programs across campus. Monetary awards are always appreciated, but even honorific recognition can go a long way in bolstering morale in difficult times. The opportunity for programs to learn from each other about good practices on campus was lost with the truncation of the process. This would be particularly true if some programs showed progress with regard to the actual collection of assessment data. The APA process criteria were described as being based in part on student learning outcomes, yet these data are clearly not evident across many units. Perhaps the Academic Program Review process could integrate this stage and recognize programs that show progress in collecting data on student learning outcomes and using those results to inform curricular decisions.

B. Assessment

UNI appears not to have broadly embraced a culture of assessment and the practice of using information and data to improve decision-making. The various academic units, specifically, seem to demonstrate inconsistent commitment to collecting and analyzing substantive information that might aid in evaluating the effectiveness of their programs. As budget pressures become more pronounced in the near future, it will be imperative that UNI be able to demonstrate the quality of its programs to a variety of constituencies and to target gaps in student learning that are inevitably present in all institutions.

More than this, however, the faculty must come to realize that they are the first and primary consumers of assessment data. Curricula are intentional acts. The goals that underlie faculty choices in the creation of curricula are the learning outcomes that faculty want students to achieve and to demonstrate. Assessment asks simply that those intentional outcomes be made plain and public and that faculty members think seriously about how to measure success. The culture of assessment is really a culture of reflection that begins with a true understanding of the origin of assessment in faculty action.

Problems of measurement were particularly apparent in the assessment of graduate programs. Too often, programs simply stipulated a course grade and writing and defending a thesis as the measurement of success. While graduate education offers several convenient assessment points, course grades and a successfully defended thesis do not provide sufficient granulation to identify where graduate pedagogy could be improved. The argument that programs are small enough that faculty know students well is a good one, but that fact does not represent an alternative to systematic assessment. Rather, it opens up the possibility for strategies that are not available in larger programs. The intimate knowledge of individual students to which faculty point highlights the opportunity for participant-observation strategies and other ethnographic and qualitative approaches to assessment that are just as systematic and informative as quantitative analyses.

Currently the Office of Academic Assessment (OAA) is under-resourced and lacks a strong charge. The Student Outcomes Assessment (SOA) Committee also lacks a clear mission. Providing both the OAA and the SOA Committee with a stronger role in the review and approval of assessment plans will, we believe, help further strengthen the assessment programs at UNI.

The University's decision to join the Assessment Academy is a wise one. However, the University will miss an opportunity if it views Academy participation only as a strategy to make needed changes in the assessment of the way in which the Liberal Arts Core is assessed. The Academy offers the University community the possibility of a cultural intervention, a teachable moment in the context of professional development for faculty and staff. The administration must provide the leadership necessary to take maximum advantage of this opportunity.

C. Distance Learning

Based on the high quality of its current continuing education and distance learning

offerings, UNI has the opportunity to move aggressively into web-based distance education throughout the state and beyond its borders. The careful and strategic development of fully on-line/web-based programs can be very cost effective and serve the important needs of place-bound undergraduate and graduate students. This is not to say that the current cohort-based programs should be abandoned because they provide an important—although somewhat expensive—method of providing distance programs. However, a stronger emphasis on web-based educational programs and select individual course offerings consistent with the overall mission of UNI appears to be an area of potential growth for the University.

D.   Governance

Recent budgetary challenges have strained traditional channels of communication and frayed bonds of trust between faculty and administration. The need to respond quickly has resulted in the creation of specialized task forces to focus on issues such as cost containment and opportunities for revenue generation. The consultative intent behind these special groups is evident, though how they are populated needs greater attention in the future. Administrative appointments could be informed by advice from faculty governing bodies, such as the Faculty Senate. This would avoid over-reliance upon a small cadre of faculty and bolster communication during difficult times.

Faculty governance groups could embrace greater responsibility for difficult decisions and base assertions on accurate data depicting trends and issues needing redress. At one faculty forum during this visit, HLC team members were told that enrollment has increased markedly, resulting in heavier teaching loads, and that the number of administrators had ballooned. There has been a slight increase in enrollment, but hardly what was described and the number of administrators has remained almost steady during the past five years. Hard times can harden views, but all members of the community need to use accurate data and seek to resolve issues of concern together. In both faculty forums, it was evident that recent decisions have taken a toll on faculty morale. Working together, basing actions on clear, accurate data can help the community understand why some decisions were made and offer faculty the opportunity to contribute to the process of making important decisions.

E.   Graduate Program Array

Virtually every group at UNI clearly understands the institution to be committed, first and foremost, to undergraduate education, with a portfolio of graduate programs that have a particular scope or niche that distinguishes them from the programs offered at the other two Regents institutions. However, in this time of severe financial constraints, it will likely be impossible to maintain the current large number of graduate programs while remaining involved in serious and engaging undergraduate education. Fidelity to the University's vision and mission may require a strategic rebalancing of undergraduate and graduate programs.

The opportunity presented by the implementation of the new strategic plan, the introduction of the Foundations of Excellence, and the re-evaluation of the Liberal Arts Core should be seized as the moment to encourage governance units to

become involved in the rebalancing. Such a rebalancing or reframing of the entire curriculum may result in a timely and healthy consideration by the University community of its identity in the 21st Century. Full and frank discussions can lead to a thoughtful pruning and/or combination of programs and, perhaps, the introduction of new programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels that, in sum, are economically and intellectually sustainable. Additionally, by combining these efforts into one larger effort and engaging governance institutions in the process, the administration can take proper credit for achieving two important goals: providing a necessary focus for the campus community and energizing collaborative leadership.

F.   International Students

At President Allen's request, the following recommendations for increasing the enrollment of international students are provided. First, carefully review the web pages devoted to international recruitment and admissions to ensure that they are coherent and that they are separate and distinct from pages for current students. The current organization of the web site features a "landing" page for prospective international students, but then links to sections of the web site that contain information for all undergraduate and/or graduate students or for currently enrolled international students. It is not always clear whether the more general information applies to international students and, more importantly, the prospective international student is drawn away from the pages devoted strictly to international application and admissions.

Second, translate high-level recruitment and admissions web pages into other languages so that, from the main landing page for prospective international students, it is possible to choose to view the application and admissions pages in their entirety in several other languages by selecting from a menu of available options. (The international recruitment and admissions brochure—which is very well done—could also be translated into other languages.) This allows prospective students' parents (who are often an integral part of the college choice process and may not speak or read English) to access the same information as their students. In addition, it sends a clear message that international students are welcome and that the University is committed to making the campus a friendly and inclusive environment.

Third, consider offering a tuition incentive for international students. Many universities in Minnesota, for example, offer in-state tuition rates for international students. As a compromise, in-state rates could be offered after the first or second year if students maintain certain grades or meet other criteria.   Again, this sends a clear message that UNI is serious about attracting international students. It also makes the cost of attendance more affordable, which is especially important given that international students have limited employment options to help defray the cost of attendance. On a related note, it is critical to offer on-campus employment for international students, given that they cannot work off campus.

Fourth, use international alumni as ambassadors and establish alumni organizations in countries where there is a critical mass of alumni. These alumni organizations can operate in a similar fashion as the organizations within the United States: hosting reunions and recruitment events, representing the University at college fairs, serving as contacts for prospective students (and their parents) who wish to talk to someone

from their own culture about the UNI experience.

Fifth, leverage the relationships faculty have already established with international colleagues and institutions to develop faculty and student exchange programs. Though exchange programs are short-term, the students who visit UNI and have positive experiences are likely to recommend the University to friends and acquaintances in their home countries. These informal networks are often the most effective recruitment mechanisms and, over time, lead to a critical mass of students from certain countries, which, in turn, makes the University more attractive to students from those countries.

Related to short-term exchange programs, consider instituting a one-semester "visiting scholar" status that allows international students to visit for one term without having to meet immigration requirements for longer term visits. This status, which would be nonconvertible to a longer-term status, would streamline the application and admission process for visiting international students.

Finally, consider focusing international recruitment efforts on international students who are already in Iowa attending community colleges. The expense of reaching these students is much smaller than the expense of recruiting abroad—and the students have already cleared immigration and financial hurdles. In addition, they are likely acclimated to US higher education and culture, which will improve their retention and success rates. Finally, they are an easily identifiable audience of international students who are clearly interested in a US higher education and will need to transfer to a University in order to earn their baccalaureate degree.

G. Engagement and Service Challenges and the Latino Population in Cedar Falls

The team urges UNI to examine in a more systematic way how it might address the increasing number of Latinos moving to and living in the Cedar Valley region. The University has a long, proud, and vibrant history of responding effectively to the needs of minorities in the region. Yet, the team could find no noticeably appreciable outreach to the Latino community in the region. The University could be well-served by a strong initiative targeting the educational needs of this rapidly growing population.

H. Liberal Arts Core at the University of Northern Iowa

The two options for the Liberal Arts Core (LAC) capstone appear to have very different outcomes. The traditional Environment, Technology, and Society (ETS) option seems to have three issues attached to it. First, it is unpopular with the students. Second, many of the sections are taught by adjunct faculty. And third, enrollment in the ETS sections tends to be dominated by transfer students as the more popular individualized topic option tend to fill quickly by on-campus students.

As an institution clearly committed to providing a quality undergraduate experience for its students, UNI would benefit from a more deliberate effort to ensure that full-time faculty are assigned to teach the Liberal Arts Core capstone courses. Although several chairs individually indicated that they felt comfortable with certain cadres of adjunct faculty teaching the capstone courses in their home departments, the

delegation of that responsibility in large numbers to contingent faculty will likely lead to a disconnect between UNI's mission and the experience that students have in completing their degrees. With some strategic thought in the area of course assignments, specifically to re-deploying the faculty assets involved with teaching ETS sections and the possibility of re-evaluating the prudence of maintaining a relatively wide array of low-enrollment graduate programs, UNI should be able to increase the percentage of full-time faculty teaching capstone courses, which should ultimately benefit students.

I.   Liberal Arts Education, Contemporary Meaning

The periodic reevaluation of a university's liberal arts core is always a welcome event. It offers the university community the opportunity to demonstrate for another generation of students the continuing relevance of our intellectual traditions and to display for them how those traditions continue to evolve. Too often, however, faculty members restrict the conversation—and thus the practical definition of community— to fellow faculty members. Taking a more catholic view of community may benefit the discussion by identifying a fuller catalog of issues that require critical thought and enabling students to make connections more easily between the abstractions of theory and their contemporary applications. The discussions' expansion may also place into better perspective some of the parochial concerns of "turf" that inevitably accompany curriculum changes that have SCH and FTE implications.

The University is handicapped currently in any effort to expand the conversation by the paucity of regular avenues of external consultation. There are few advisory boards across campus, and alumni are surveyed, of necessity, only occasionally. Increasing the number of program and collegiate advisory boards, composed of actively engaged alumni and friends, will serve the University in a number of ways. Not only will advisory boards provide useful information about "pain points" for curriculum review, but the active and meaningful participation of their members in the intellectual life of the University can be cultivation points on which University advancement professionals, with the help of faculty, can build. A deeper understanding of the possibility of a symbiotic relationship between faculty and University advancement would be another welcome benefit to the campus for the long-run.

J.   Rituals and Recognition

At any time, but particularly when budgets are difficult, institutional rituals and recognitions are important. Key individuals understand that monetary rewards are sometimes impractical, if not simply impossible. The team encourages UNI to develop more opportunities to appreciate and underscore the contributions of individuals and groups. Team members recounted ideas such as 1) prime employee parking for a month, 2) coupons for free breakfast from the President at a local restaurant when students complimented a faculty member on his or her excellent teaching, or 3) donating a faculty member's favorite book to the library when tenure is awarded, with a campus reception at the library where individuals tell why the book has value to them. Moreover, the team understands that at one time new faculty

members were recognized by mention on one of the University's marquees. Re-instatement of this practice for special achievements of staff and faculty members might also be of value.

A genuine, thoughtful "pat on the back" can go a very long way to improve morale.

Resulting from the Foundations of Excellence® Special Emphasis

A. OBSERVATIONS on the Foundations of Excellence® Portion of the Self-Study and the Work of the First-Year Council

Use of the Foundations of Excellence® (FoE) framework has served the University well in that it appears to have united many initiatives and facilitated meaningful inquiry. The culture of the University of Northern Iowa (UNI) seems to have been primed for using the FoE framework as an organizing principle in addressing the needs of first-year students. Evidence of the usefulness of the framework can be seen in the lucid and constructive analysis of the data as presented in the special focus portion of the self study document. The FoE team and all who contributed to its work can take pride in its work.

Attention to the Liberal Arts Core (LAC) and the experiences of first-year students promises to give the faculty an opportunity to demonstrate its stewardship of the curriculum and reinsert itself into the mainstream of institutional decision making. Work on the FoE and LAC appears to be having a revitalizing impact on some faculty members who perceive a steady shift over time away from faculty-driven decision making and toward greater centralization.

The faculty involved in the FoE process as well as those who are now part of the First-Year Council are clearly among the most positive and enthusiastic faculty on the UNI campus. The collaboration exhibited by all faculty and staff who worked on the FoE process is a testament both to them and the brilliance of the process itself. Additionally, their desire to continue this intensive work by continuing their engagement on the First-Year Council and focusing on the implementation of its recommendations is extraordinary. Equally laudatory is their recognition early in the FoE process that a second FoE-transfer process would be important to their campus.

The ongoing willingness of those involved to engage in all of this work will be worth it only if there are personnel with the energy to bring it all to fruition. The team notes the faculty representatives on the First Year Council are not the same as the faculty representatives on the FoE committee and takes this as a positive sign that the entirety of the work will not fall on only a narrow set of individuals.

Overall, the FoE team and First-Year Council have achieved something extraordinary in that they have created an institutional focus that spans divisions. They have applied themselves to addressing an issue—a lack of coherence in the experience of first-year students—that many perceived and acknowledged but did not act to correct.

B. ADVICE of the Foundations of Excellence Initiative at the University of Northern
    Iowa

The commitment and 'can-do' ethos of those working on the first year needs to be
rewarded, protected, and nurtured by focusing on the essential gains that can be
realistically made. The broad range and number of goals and recommendations
embodied in the special focus portion of the self study and the First-Year Council's
progress report suggest that momentum could be slowed and progress foundered
unless a stringent examination of goals can result in paring them down to an
essential few.

There are many student-success oriented initiatives on campus and first-year work
must be broadly based if it is to become part of the culture of UNI. The campus
rightly takes pride in being student-centered and student-success oriented.
However, the faculty members involved in this process appear to be predominately
newly tenured associate professors with great energy and talent. This is a group of
faculty at risk of becoming "the usual suspects" who give of their time, intellect, and
energy. They could be subject to burnout if are not reinforced with other, more
senior colleagues.

The department heads clearly support great teaching but may not be fully cognizant
of the work in the FoE. They did not reference the FoE initiative in expressing
support of UNI's teaching mission or the high value they place on excellence in the
classroom. The team is concerned that faculty members working on the first year
may incur a personal and/or professional cost because of their commitment. The
team counsels senior administration to deploy faculty members working on the first
year judiciously when staffing other initiatives. Heads, deans, and Faculty Senate
members should be used to broaden the base of faculty activity in this and other all-
campus initiatives.

It seems clear the Faculty Senate was not brought into the decision to choose the
FoE as a special emphasis. The Senate is generally supportive of work on the first
year but plays no active part in assigning faculty members to it. Faculty members
generally—and senior faculty members in particular—are more likely to be more
responsive to and involved in initiatives such as the FoE special emphasis, the FY
Council, the FYE course, the integration of the FYE course into the Liberal Arts Core,
and the FoE-Transfer process if they had a sense of ownership and partnership from
the beginning. Asking for a Faculty Senator to be a part of each such initiative from
the planning stage and providing reports to the Senate through the liaison could
greatly remedy this apparent disconnect.

Options for a tiered or staged LAC merit examination with the aim of reliably locating
some small number of courses in the freshman and sophomore years. A more
structured LAC could offer academic venues (courses) in which the learning
outcomes at the heart of the UNI's First-Year philosophy could be achieved.

Careful attention should be paid to the authority and position of the First-Year
coordinator or director to ensure the person is situated to work effectively with the
deans and Council of Academic Department Heads in advancing shared goals of the
LAC and the First-Year Council. A reporting structure that spans divisions serves to

facilitate collaboration and communication but could easily dilute both the focus and authority of the position.

Commitment to the LAC is fundamental to UNI's mission and strategic plan; therefore, aligning the aims of the First-Year Council with the LAC Review Steering Committee will link the FoE to the Strategic Plan. If a successful LAC taught by a committed corps of full-time faculty members can realize the essential goal of the FoE to blend academic and developmental learning in first-year courses, then the intent and philosophy of the FoE stands a better chance of being institutionalized and sustained.

Currently, the twin initiatives of improving the experiences of first-year students and the revision of the Liberal Arts Core have lines of inter-connection but are advancing on roughly parallel tracks. The point at which these initiatives mature and produce recommendations will be when combining energies, momentum, and goals could help ensure the sustainability of both. Timing the work of these initiatives such that their recommendations are considered simultaneously may be advantageous.

Close collaboration with the LAC Review Steering Committee as it defines the criteria for courses to be included in the 'Core' could result in the inclusion of key developmental learning outcomes in those criteria. The First-Year Council is clearly aware of the dynamic interplay between its goals and those of a Liberal Arts Core. In its "Recommendation for Other Task Forces and Initiatives," (page 44 of the First-Year Council Progress Report from April 2010), the following recommendation appears:

"Develop a consistent and holistic philosophy for the LAC that goes beyond a menu of compartmentalized competencies and that integrates knowledge, student identity formation, and institutional expectations." This recommendation very clearly defines the challenge of moving beyond the current distribution model for the LAC to the creation of a curricular/co-curricular experience encompassing developmental learning as well as skill and knowledge acquisition. The holistic approach to learning envisioned for the cornerstone class includes attention to student development, and the piloting of this class in and of itself will stimulate conversations about faculty member contributions to student developmental learning.

Strong administrative and faculty leadership will be needed if the dichotomy of curricular versus co-curricular content in first-year or LAC courses is to be addressed. Explicit conversations about faculty roles and responsibilities and expectations for promotion and tenure will need to occur; investments will have to be made in professional development for faculty members.

If the goal is to infuse developmental learning into key classes taken by freshmen (e.g., LAC courses or a cornerstone course), then the First-Year Council might be wise to pare the 14 separate outcomes currently envisioned for the cornerstone class down to an essential few that could be more readily incorporated into content areas other than oral communication and writing. A partial but sufficient number of key developmental outcomes would stand a better chance of being successfully assimilated into a broad range of content areas.

The collaborations and new lines of communication between academic affairs and

student affairs are clearly an outstanding benefit of FoE efforts. Securing administrative leadership and support for sustaining these collaborations could be enhanced by linking them to other institutional priorities, such as advising, mentoring, the sharing of responsibility for retention by faculty and staff alike. In short, the FoE work offers a model of collaboration between institutional divisions that could be replicated in tackling other institutional challenges, such as coordinating the four or five different sources of academic advising students can access.

The idea of allocating six credit hours of oral and written communication course work to the pilot cornerstone course is intelligent and commendable. For a cornerstone course to be sustained and institutionalized it will need to be articulated into a model that can be replicated in other discipline areas, such as the social and natural sciences as well as math and the humanities. To this end, the proposed model of clustering courses to create teaching cohorts or even team-taught courses could hold great promise for aligning with the goals of a revised Liberal Arts Core.

Developing key performance indicators by which success or failure in advancing the goals of the FoE can be measured two, four, and six years out will help tie this effort into work on implementing the strategic plan. The branding of UNI as a place where undergraduates receive personal attention and experience quality teaching creates a very distinct opportunity to align FoE goals with institutional goals, provided data can be offered to quantify the impact of FoE initiatives can be generated. In short, those working on the first year will need to find ways to quantify the impact of their efforts if they hope to link to institutional priorities. Alumni surveys, graduating student surveys, the NSSE, and other internal indicators, such as the degree to which faculty must compete to be assigned to first-year courses, should all be explored as measures.

Goal 1 of the new strategic plan creates an important opportunity to advance and sustain the aims of the First-Year Council, provided work on the first year can be closely linked with fulfillment of institutional commitments as expressed in its branding efforts. For example, brochures promote and endorse the Association of American Colleges and Universities' statements on the nature of a liberal education and allude directly to many of the outcomes envisioned for the cornerstone course. If the First-Year Council can articulate its goals in the context of institutional branding and its promise to provide all students with a true liberal arts experience, achieving those goals and getting broad buy-in is more likely.

The University of Northern Iowa and higher education entities nationwide are reexamining the meaning, role, and purpose of the liberal arts for the 21st Century, and many of these discussions are presumably occurring in connection with LAC-RSC work. The centrality of the liberal arts to UNI creates an opportunity for student and academic affairs leaders to initiate a broad and inclusive discussion about the role and meaning of the liberal arts. A topic of this import could draw all members of the campus community into current efforts surrounding the LAC revision and work on the first-year experience and help reinforce lines of communication and bolster trust between faculty and administration.

Once the 36-month process of migrating student information into the PeopleSoft platform is completed, student affairs and academic affairs may want to explore possibilities for themed housing, clustered course enrollments, or other actions to

create informal learning community experiences for students. Review team members noted strong interest in pursuing these options sooner than one or two years from now.

A careful examination and consideration of how and if teaching LAC and/or cornerstone courses is rewarded will be necessary if the first-year philosophy is to become institutionalized and sustained. Faculty expectations as expressed and codified in the Professional Assessment Committee (PAC) documentation will also need reflect the values and priorities of the LAC and First-year philosophy if the changes envisioned are to be sustained.

The value placed on the LAC and FoE work needs to be reflected in budgeting and resource allocation. If the primary locus of academic budgeting, workload, and decision making is the academic program and college, then the LAC and first-year experience need to be designed into the core functions of the academic programs.

Staffing LAC courses with adjuncts is apparently necessary in order to offer upper-division courses in some programs. Given the likelihood of steady or declining resources and faculty lines, those things currently given priority in the budget should be revisited in light of the institution's core mission and strategic goals. Overall program array, the need and rationale for graduate programs, as well as extracurricular programming will need to be reconsidered if it is important to enable full-time faculty members to commit to the LAC and the first year experience.

While teaching in the LAC is clearly counted in workload, several faculty members expressed the belief that teaching in the LAC is sharply contrary to the interests of junior faculty members. Since resources and faculty numbers are likely to remain steady at best, teaching in the LAC must be made to contribute to and support the goals and needs of the academic programs and the individual faculty members in them. Otherwise, pre-tenure faculty members cannot be expected to devote themselves to teaching excellence in the LAC and improvements to the first-year experience.

The National Survey of Student Engagement holds great promise as an assessment of first-year and/or LAC outcomes. Consideration might be given to how it could be administered in its entirety to a larger number of freshmen, perhaps through oversampling or reconsideration of the random-paired questions administration technique now used. If the LAC is transformed and if the cornerstone course concept thrives via whatever model is eventually adopted, then measures (such as the NSSE) will be critical for continuous improvement. Fuller use of the survey at the freshman year would allow for breakdown of the results by academic program, and if academic programs remain the fundamental organizing principle of the University, then providing feedback that is specific to the program would be necessary if faculty members are expected to act upon the results.

Work on the "transfer module" of the FoE responds to a clear need at UNI since transfer students comprise roughly 1,100 of a yearly population of about 3,400 incoming students. Considering the experience and success of transfer students as seriously as it considers first-time-in-college success is vital to UNI. The team strongly recommends bringing faculty members with transfer-dominant populations into this conversation quickly. Faculty members in both open forums identified as a

problem their anxiety that transfer students would be ignored by a first-year course model that dealt exclusively with the Communication and Composition courses.

Other institutions that emphasize the first year alleviate the problem of transfer students bypassing first-year experiences by creating "transfer-study only" sections of a required general education course not typically transferred in from other schools. If the LAC revision results in a tiered LAC that includes specific courses to be taken at the junior or senior level, a similar experience designed for transfer students could be built into this course or courses.

Interest in implementing an I-Portfolio or E-Portfolio into a first-year course was seen by the team as an expression of energy and enthusiasm by the faculty members involved. The team strongly cautions against rushing into any such initiative, as doing justice to a portfolio system requires strong and broad-based commitment to the process not currently apparent among the UNI faculty. While portfolios are routinely used in some disciplines, they would represent a new and time-consuming undertaking to many other disciplines, and, as such, are not recommended for the first-year work underway at this point in time.

The University is in a unique position as an American Democracy Project institution in a state that is the center of the political universe for three months every four years. First-year students at UNI will be able to vote for the first time during the 2011-2012 academic year. Campaigns welcome volunteers with energy and enthusiasm, and UNI students could greatly impact the early winnowing of candidates by registering and participating in those caucuses. The team urges UNI to explore fully opportunities to link the ADP and its work on the first year.

The Institutional Research Director and the CIO were highly responsive to the needs of the HLC team's on-site requests for detailed information. The energy, competence, and enthusiasm for data-based decision making they exhibited will be needed as UNI assesses the effectiveness of programs. The detailed DFWI data available in the "Difficult Courses" section of the IR website are useful to heads and deans in planning and need to be openly available to them. A related data issue concerns instructor-specific grade distribution reports compiled by the Registrar and available to the deans. Ensuring department head access to this data could help the heads when setting the course assignments of their best instructors.

Currently, the DFWI data appears to be under-utilized, and this may be because it is hidden behind the cat-id and not proactively "pushed out" to those who might use it. For example, the "difficult courses" list predictably shows the LAC mathematics courses (Mathematics & Decision Making, Principles of Statistics, and Calculus I) in the top 15 courses with the highest DFWI rates. Less predictably, the data shows that six courses from economics are on the list as well. The Head of the Department of Mathematics knew this while the Head of the Department of Economics was surprised by the data. The team offers this example only to make the point that alerting a department head to such phenomena is necessary if that head is to seek out support resources for students.

The Head of the Department of Mathematics and the Director of the Mathematics Lab are clearly concerned about the students they serve in the lab and in LAC courses. The Head of the Department of Mathematics has aligned the faculty talent

in his department with the goals of the FY Council and has sought out a means to place more accurately students into the proper sequence of math courses by piloting the placement and learning modules of the *Aleks* tool. His efforts were noted by the team as extraordinary.

Although by definition not part of the FoE experience, the team also urges UNI faculty members and administrators to take care not to forget sophomore-level students. Often these students are forgotten between the important needs of first-year students and those of upper-division students who have declared majors. Successful sophomore-level practices could greatly assist in improving retention rates and if successful would be a great contribution to the larger academic community.

III.   **RECOGNITION OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS, PROGRESS, AND/OR PRACTICES**

A. Academic Assessment Office, Director's Role

The team recognizes Dr. Donna Vinton for her work as Director of the Office of Academic Assessment. With minimal support, the director has developed basic structures and processes that can be built upon in the future. She has ably restored the operations of the AAO through her efforts to encourage assessment and track its progress across the University. She has served as an excellent resource for academic units, both through individual consultations and the development of a substantial assessment resource library. In addition, the initiation of the assessment grants has helped extend the reach of her office.

B. Administrative Fellowship Program in the Provost's Office

The University should be commended for employing a robust and effective fellowship program that allows faculty members the opportunity to participate in various projects through the provost's office. This appears to be an excellent mechanism for enabling more faculty members to appreciate more fully the complexity of University operations, while engaging individuals with specific talents and skills in completing initiatives.

C. Foundations of Excellence Participants

The energy, talent, and commitment of the FoE participants can not be over-emphasized. What they are in the process of achieving, bringing the best efforts of academic and student affairs together to transform elements of the University of Northern Iowa is an inspiration. Intentional recognition of their efforts, ongoing expansion of the involvement within the wider campus community, and visible support for their efforts through the formal budget process will all be key to their continued commitment and success

D. Sponsored Programs Office

The Sponsored Programs Office is a relatively new addition to the campus, but it has made a substantial impact in a short period of time. Its efforts to stimulate, support and celebrate campus funding achievements are commendable, as is the transparent connection between the SPO strategic plan and the University strategic plan, for which SPO holds itself accountable. Of particular note is the Connexus program, described as "speed dating" for research, which matches faculty, in groups of four, to funding opportunities. It is artfully constructed to educate faculty about the funding process, to illustrate what SPO can do to facilitate submissions (and resubmissions), and to encourage interdisciplinary cooperation. And it works. The number of grants and the number of competitive grants with indirect cost recovery, the amount of funding, and the number of new grantees are all climbing.

E. Strategic Planning Task Force

The team wishes to underscore the importance and effectiveness of the work, both process and product, of the Strategic Planning Task Force. With the caveat about the appointment process noted earlier in the governance section of this report, the approach used and strategies employed during the life of this task force will be effective models for the University in the future.

INSTITUTION and STATE: University of Northern Iowa, IA

TYPE OF REVIEW *(from ESS)*: Continued Accreditation

DESCRIPTION OF REVIEW *(from ESS)*: Special Emphasis on the Foundations of Excellence

DATES OF REVIEW: 11/8/10 - 11/10/10

Nature of Organization

LEGAL STATUS: Public

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: no change

DEGREES AWARDED: B, M, S, D

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: no change

Conditions of Affiliation

STIPULATIONS ON AFFILIATION STATUS: Accreditation at the Doctor's level is limited to the Doctor of Industrial Technology and the Doctor of Education.

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: no change

APPROVAL OF NEW ADDITIONAL LOCATIONS: Prior Commission approval required.

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: no change

APPROVAL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION DEGREES: New Commission policy on institutional change became effective July 1, 2010. Some aspects of the change processes affecting distance delivered courses and programs are still being finalized. This entry will be updated in early 2011 to reflect current policy. In the meantime, see the Commission's Web site for information on seeking approval of distance education courses and programs.

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: no change

REPORTS REQUIRED: None

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: None

OTHER VISITS SCHEDULED: None

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: Focused visit in 2012-2013 on assessment suspended by participation in Assessment Academy

Summary of Commission Review

YEAR OF LAST COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION: 2000 - 2001

YEAR FOR NEXT COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION: 2010 - 2011

ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE

INSTITUTION and STATE: University of Northern Iowa, IA

TYPE OF REVIEW *(from ESS)*: Continued Accreditation

___ No change to Organization Profile

Educational Programs

		Program Distribution	**Recommended Change** **(+ or -)**
Programs leading to Undergraduate			
	Associate	0	
	Bachelors	119	
Programs leading to Graduate			
	Masters	71	
	Specialist	1	
	First Professional		
	Doctoral	2	

Off-Campus Activities

In-State:		Present Activity:	**Recommended Change:** **(+ or -)**
	Campuses:	None	
	Additional Locations:	Cedar Falls (University of Northern Iowa - ICN)	
	Course Locations:	None	

Out-of-State:		Present Wording:	**Recommended Change:** **(+ or -)**
	Campuses:	None	
	Additional Locations:	None	
	Course Locations:	None	

Out-of-USA:		Present Wording:	**Recommended Change:** **(+ or -)**
	Campuses:	None	
	Additional Locations:	Wanchai, Hong Kong	
	Course Locations:	None	

Distance Education Programs:

Present Offerings:

Bachelor - 13.12 Teacher Education and Professional Development, Specific Levels and Methods (B.A. in Elementary Education) offered via Fiber optics; Bachelor - 52.99 Business, Management, Marketing, and

Related Support Services, Other (B.A. in Technology Management) offered via Fiber optics; Certificate - 13.04 Educational Administration and Supervision (Certificate in Superintendency) offered via Fiber optics; Doctor - 13.04 Educational Administration and Supervision (EdD in Educational Leadership) offered via Fiber optics; Master - 13.04 Educational Administration and Supervision (M.A. in Educational Leadership-Principalship) offered via Fiber optics; Master - 13.05 Educational/Instructional Media Design (M.A. in Instructional Technology) offered via Fiber optics; Master - 13.10 Special Education and Teaching (MAE in Special Education-Early Childhood) offered via Fiber optics; Master - 13.12 Teacher Education and Professional Development, Specific Levels and Methods (M.A. in Early Childhood Education) offered via Fiber optics; Master - 13.12 Teacher Education and Professional Development, Specific Levels and Methods (M.A. in Elementary Education) offered via Fiber optics; Master - 13.1202 Elementary Education and Teaching offered via Internet; Master - 13.1299 Teacher Education and Professional Development, Specific Levels and Methods, Other offered via Internet; Master - 13.13 Teacher Education and Professional Development, Specific Subject Areas (M.A. in Literary Education) offered via Fiber optics; Master - 13.13 Teacher Education and Professional Development, Specific Subject Areas (M.A. in Music Education) offered via Fiber optics; Master - 13.13 Teacher Education and Professional Development, Specific Subject Areas (M.A. in School Library Media Studies) offered via Fiber optics; Master - 13.13 Teacher Education and Professional Development, Specific Subject Areas (M.A. in Science Education) offered via Fiber optics; Master - 13.13 Teacher Education and Professional Development, Specific Subject Areas (M.A. in Social Science for Teachers 6-12) offered via Fiber optics; Master - 13.13 Teacher Education and Professional Development, Specific Subject Areas (MA in English: Teaching English in the Secondary Schools) offered via Fiber optics; Master - 13.14 Teaching English or French as a Second or Foreign Language (M.A. in English (ESL/TESOL)) offered via Fiber optics; Master - 52.02 Business Administration, Management and Operations (M.A. Philanthropy & Nonprofit Development) offered via Fiber optics

Recommended Change:
      (+ or -)
Correspondence Education Programs:

Present Offerings:

Bachelor - 24.01 Liberal Arts and Sciences, General Studies and Humanities (Bachelors in Liberal Studies)