

Formal Response
of
Slippery Rock University
to the
Middle States Association Evaluation Team Final Report

Please accept this as our formal response to the *Report to the Faculty, Administration, Trustees, and Students of Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania* by the Evaluation Team that was chaired by Dr. Donald J. Farish.

We are very pleased with the *Report's* positive nature and constructive tone. We also appreciate the opportunity to respond to the *Report*.

- The Continuous Improvement Coordinating Council maintains responsibility for major initiatives in the strategic planning process (*Report*, p.6), and decentralized teams pursue *ad hoc* planning issues and concerns.
- Efforts to provide leadership in the IT area continue (*Report*, p.12); to some extent, the consistent and continuous expenditure of funds on technology obviates the need for a formal plan in this rapidly changing area.
- All faculty, including Library faculty, (*Report*, p.13) have access to the processes by which curricular and other changes are introduced, deliberated, approved, and implemented. Change may require persistent involvement.
- The Teaching and Learning Technology Roundtable with its broad, representative membership *is* the campus advisory group for information technology (*Report*, p.13) and well-established administrative reporting lines exist for it and all other campus units.
- Relationships between senior administrators and student government (*Report*, p.15) will continue to evolve. Anecdotal information about the availability of persons or their dispositions regarding issues or groups often contradicts empirical information.
- The operating budget of the Community Service Learning Institute (*Report*, p.17) has consistently equaled or exceeded that of many academic departments.

The university agrees that enrollment management, support for the effective use of instructional technology, and diversity are major challenges (*Report*, p.17). In the highly competitive market in which it finds itself, the university realizes that it must continue to improve its marketing, recruitment, and retention efforts, and has developed an aggressive strategic plan that was available to the Evaluation Team. The university

implemented in 1999 actions to reverse the enrollment decline; which have produced three consecutive semesters of growth.

The university recognizes the need to update or replace not only its technological infrastructure, but also its personnel, financial, and student information systems. The project to completely re-cable the campus is underway and should be completed by fall 2001. Annual expenditures to replace and/or upgrade computer hardware and software for faculty, staff, and students have exceeded one million dollars for each of the past three years and will continue to be significant. Recently, the State System of Higher Education entered into a contract with Unisys Corp./SAP that will address the long-term information system needs of the university. These actions address many of the short- and long-term needs of the university in this vital area.

The university will continue to confront forthrightly the issue of diversity among its students, staff, and faculty. The university recognizes its responsibilities in this broad area and will conscientiously strive to improve its record.

We appreciate the thoughtful and insightful report of the Evaluation Team. We hope that our comments are helpful, and look forward to learning of the Commission's action.

(Sent April 24, 2001, to Ms. Jean Avent Morse, Executive Secretary, Commission on Higher Education, Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, Philadelphia, PA)