ASSURANCE SECTION

REPORT OF A COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION VISIT

TO

CENTRAL MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
Mount Pleasant, Michigan

October 31 to November 2, 2005

FOR

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

EVALUATION TEAM

Dr. Marlene I. Strathe, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma 74078 (Chair)

Dr. Rachel Applegate, Assistant Professor, School of Library & Information Science, Indiana University- Purdue University, Indianapolis, Indiana 46202-5195

Dr. Sue Day-Perroots, Dean of Extended Learning, West Virginia University, Morgantown, West Virginia 26506-6800

Dr. Carolyn A. Haynes, Professor of Interdisciplinary Studies, Director of Honors & Scholars Program, Miami University, Oxford, Ohio 45056

Dr. Randy E. Hyman, Interim Vice President for Student Affairs, Ball State University, Muncie, Indiana 47306
Dr. Harold A. Kafer, Professor, Music and Dean, College of Visual and Performing Arts, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Indiana 60115

Dr. Katy E. Marre, Professor of English/Former Associate Vice President, Graduate Studies & Research, Dayton, Ohio 45469-1520

Dr. Douglas M. Priest, Associate Professor of Educational Leadership & Policy Studies, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana 47405

Dr. Kenneth G. Ruit, Assistant Provost & Associate Professor of Anatomy & Cell Biology, University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, North Dakota 58202

Dr. Brenda Russell, Executive Associate Vice Chancellor for Research, University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, Illinois 60612-7727

Dr. Thomas G. Sonnleitner, Vice Chancellor for Administrative Services, University of Wisconsin - Oshkosh, Oshkosh, Wisconsin 54901

Dr. George E. Stevens, Dean, College of Business Administration & Graduate School, Kent State University, Kent, Ohio 44242

Dr. Vicki Wilson, Professor of Nursing, University of Northern Colorado, Greeley, Colorado 80639
Table of Contents

I. Context and Nature of the Visit .................................................. 4
II. Commitment to Peer Review .................................................... 6
III. Compliance with Federal Regulations ....................................... 7
IV. Fulfillment of the Criteria ..................................................... 8
   A. Criterion One ................................................................. 8
   B. Criterion Two .............................................................. 9
   C. Criterion Three ............................................................ 10
   D. Criterion Four ............................................................. 11
   E. Criterion Five .............................................................. 12
V. Affiliation Status .................................................................. 14
VI. Additional Comments or Explanations ..................................... 14
ASSURANCE SECTION

I. CONTEXT AND NATURE OF VISIT

A. Purpose of Visit:

To conduct the decennial reaccreditation site visit by the Higher Learning Commission and to provide a consultative report on the special emphasis topic "Making the transition to an institution with increased scholarship and national prominence."

B. Organizational Context:

Located in Mt. Pleasant, Michigan, Central Michigan University (CMU), a university serving 28,000 students, is the fifth largest university in Michigan and is classified as a doctoral/research-intensive institution. Established in 1892 as Central Michigan Normal School and Business Institute, the institution transformed from private to state-supported in 1895. Name and degree granting authority changes occurred several times between 1918 and 1959 when the university was permanently identified as Central Michigan University. First accredited by the North Central Association in 1915, CMU has been continuously accredited each year since, with the exception of 1922-23. Since 1991 CMU's Statement of Affiliation Status has allowed the university to offer extended degree programs in the U.S. and Canada with specific locational review.

C. Unique Aspects of Visit:

There were no distinctive aspects of the visit, beyond the special emphasis focus, to a standard comprehensive visit.

D. Sites or Branch Campuses Visited:

Central Michigan University offers courses and programs at more than 50 sites in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico. Four undergraduate, seven Master's, and two doctoral programs are available through Prof Ed, the off-campus administrative unit. No off-site locations were visited during the comprehensive site visit to the CMU campus in Mt. Pleasant.

E. Distance Education Reviewed:

CMU has offered off-campus study since 1971, making it one of the first institutions to significantly engage in distance programming. Since 1991 CMU's SAS has allowed the university to offer extended undergraduate and masters degree programs without specific review of each location or program.

F. Interactions with Institutional Constituencies:

- President
- Vice Presidents
- College Deans, Associate/Assistant Deans and Department Chairs
• General Manager, Public Broadcasting
• Director, Federal Programs
• HLC Accreditation Self-Study Steering Committee
• University Library Personnel
• Student Life Administrators: Dean of Students, Associate Vice President of Institutional Diversity, Director of Student Life, Associate Director of Residence Life
• Controller and Director of Budget and Planning
• Dean of Graduate Studies/Vice Provost of Research, Associate Dean
• Members, Board of Trustees
• Academic Senate Officers/Members
• Student Government Officers
• Athletic Director, Associate Directors
• General Education Council and Steering Committee Members
• Open Meeting with Faculty
• Open Meeting with Students
• Information Technology: Chief Technology Officer, IT Director, Network Director, Assistant Director of Administrative Services
• Human Resources Associate Vice President
• Prof Ed Directors of MA and Undergraduate Programs
• Directors of Admissions and Financial Aid
• University Compliance Officer & University Ombudsperson
• International Education Director
• Assessment Council Members
• Honors Program Director and Chair of Honors Advisory Council
• Special Emphasis Committee Members
• Community Members
• Interim Institutional Research Director
• University and Alumni Relations Officers
• Open Meeting with Unclassified/Classified Staff

G. Principal Documents, Materials, and Web Pages Reviewed:

• Institutional Self-Study Report for Central Michigan University
• www.emich.edu/hlc-accreditation/... numerous links
• CMU Institutional Snapshot
• 2002-2005 Agreement: CMU and CMUFA Faculty Association
• CMU 2010: The Vision Plan
• CMU Bulletins: Undergraduate, Graduate, Off-Campus Students
• The CMU Promise
• CMU Financial Reports
• Unit Mission Statements
• CMU – Saginaw Chippewa Tribal History
• Mission Review Process 2000-05
• CMU Curricular Process
• CMU Assessment Reports and Plans
• CMU Outreach Programs
• Academic Senate Minutes, Policies, Procedures, Committees/Councils
• Diversity Council Reports and Planning Documents
II. COMMITMENT TO PEER REVIEW

A. Comprehensiveness of the Self-Study Process:

Central Michigan University initiated the self-study process two years prior to the site visit. A small self-study steering committee provided leadership to more than fifty faculty and staff who served on criterion subgroups and prepared the self-study document as well as the special emphasis report. The committee was very open and candid in assessing the institutional strengths and opportunities for improvement toward meeting the institution's mission and goals. Numerous opportunities were made available for broad participation across the university. Both the process and the self-study report itself were found to be very comprehensive and well organized.

B. Integrity of the Self-Study Report:

The information contained in the Self-Study report was validated by review of numerous documents provided to the team both before and during the visit as well as the individual and group meetings held on the campus. The comprehensive nature of the report coupled with its organization made it very helpful to the team in identifying appropriate evidence to address each criterion.

C. Adequacy of Progress in Addressing Previously Identified Challenges:

In 1996 the North Central Association (NCA) evaluation team identified seven 'areas of concern’. The first concern expressed regarded linkages between the extensive off-campus offerings and on-campus degree programs has been reviewed and subsequently the university restructured the then independent college to Professional Education Services (Prof-Ed), a service unit through which the academic college deliver programs off site. A development of a new mission statement, the identification of institutional core values, and institutional priorities has enabled the university community to position itself proactively for the future.
Shared governance continues to be a concern on the CMU campus, largely reflective of differing perspectives on the nature and purpose of the shared governance matrix. It is generally acknowledged that the administration is more open and active in seeking campus input on important issues.

The development office and fund raising initiatives have been reconfigured with development officers assigned to individual colleges. A capital campaign has been undertaken and has proven to be highly successful in meeting the targeted campaign goal considerably ahead of the anticipated completion date.

The institution has made a commitment to assigning administrative responsibilities for assessment to central administration personnel and resources have been identified to support assessment efforts on the campus. Assessment initiatives, however, continue to be perceived as uneven across the campus and the linkages of assessment information with institutional decision-making are less clear than would be desirable.

The 2001 Strategic Plan for Achieving Diversity at CMU identified proactive goals and clear responsibilities for CMU to promote campus diversity. CMU 2010 has reaffirmed diversity as an institutional priority. While limited progress has been made in achieving greater diversity within the faculty and the CMU main campus community, CMU serves a substantially diverse population throughout the numerous off-campus sites.

The 2005 self-study process began two years prior to the site visit and leadership for the study was broad based and with many participatory opportunities available to all campus constituents. This self-study process reflected a remarkably different process than that undertaken in 1996.

Given the number of administrative leadership changes which have occurred since the 1996 visit, the team considers the response of the organization to previously identified challenges to be adequate.

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

Requirements were fulfilled. Third party comments were solicited via ads in and press releases to local and state-wide papers, and campus and website notifications. The comments received by the team were overwhelmingly positive, particularly regarding the educational experiences of non-traditional students in off-campus sites.

III. COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS

The team reviewed the required Title IV compliance areas and the student complaint information. CMU was found to be in compliance.

IV. FULFILLMENT OF THE CRITERIA

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

**Salient Evidence Related to the Criterion**

1. **Evidence that demonstrates core components are met.**
   
   - Mission and vision documents recently have been revised based on extensive input. The approved statements have been widely disseminated and the campus community is knowledgeable of them.
   - Communication of this mission and the vision appears in a wide array of communication media including university publications, websites, and presidential reports.
   - Board, faculty, administration, staff, and students are knowledgeable of the mission and the increase in academic standards, and they perceive equitable treatment exists for all students.
   - Community members reflect cognizance of the importance of diversity to the university community.
   - The University reflects strong integrity across the campus and documentation of university policies and procedures are extensive and clear.

2. **Evidence that demonstrates one or more specified core components needs organizational attention.**
   
   - While institutional communication has been enhanced, issues of trust, the transparency of decision-making, and clear budgetary processes remain areas of concern for the CMU community.
   - While the institutional mission reflects a community, student centered/focused mission, the organizational structure appears to be disconnected from the institutional orientation and its priorities.

3. **Evidence that demonstrates one or more specified core components requires Commission follow-up.** None noted.

4. **Evidence that demonstrates one or more specified core components is not met and requires Commission follow-up.** (Sanction or adverse action may be warranted.) None noted.

**Recommendation of the Team**

Criterion is met; no commission follow-up recommended.

**B. 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.

**Salient Evidence Related to the Criterion**

1. **Evidence that demonstrates core components are met.**

   - The development of the new mission statement, vision, and goals has advanced a new awareness of future directions for CMU.
   - The employment of a governmental liaison has been very effective in enhancing federal and state relationships with research agencies, legislators, and policy level decision-makers.
   - The institution has been very effective in raising the profile of CMU with significant CMU alumni and political leaders as well as governmental entities capable of supporting research and creative initiatives of CMU.
   - The institution's commitment to off-campus instructional delivery reflects flexibility in responding to differing audiences, building upon CMU's historical strengths in providing access to a wide array of learners.
   - The institution has focused extensively on diversifying the institution's revenue sources including increased private funding, as state support has declined.
   - The institution's staff reflects the historical strength of 'serving students' and are to be commended for their commitment and loyalty to CMU.

2. **Evidence that demonstrates one or more specified core components needs organizational attention.**

   - While planning efforts exist at a variety of levels, few coordinated planning efforts appear to be in place at the university level and connections between academic, facility, and financial planning which focus on institutional priorities are fragmented and/or very limited.
   - The lack of a university enrollment management plan for both on and off campus programs, tied to an institutional strategic plan, leads to a disconnect between institutional revenues, expenditures, and institutional direction and control.
   - The institution's reliance on auxiliary and Prof Ed enterprise revenue to balance the institutional revenues and expenditures is of concern.
   - The institution's lack of a centralized data warehouse poses a significant difficulty in the collection of information, the dissemination of information collected, and the use of information in informing decision-makers.

3. **Evidence that demonstrates one or more specified core components requires Commission follow-up.** None noted.
4. Evidence that demonstrates one or more specified core components is not met and requires Commission follow-up. (Sanction or adverse action may be warranted.) None noted.

**Recommendation of the Team**
Criterion is met; no commission follow-up is recommended.

C. **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.

**Salient Evidence of Fulfillment of Criterion and Core Components**

1. **Evidence that demonstrates core components are met.**
   - FaC-IT is seen by university constituencies as a very positive force for the enhancement of effective teaching and learning on the CMU campus.
   - Faculty are involved in the academic program review process and in program assessment in varying degrees.
   - Students were effusive in their praise of individual faculty attention to their educational pursuits.
   - Campus accessibility and the campus physical facilities were widely praised by the CMU students.
   - The library and the College of Health Professions buildings were identified as not only ‘state of the art,’ but outstanding learning environments for both graduate and undergraduate students.
   - Strong faculty-student research involvement in several disciplines, demonstrate a model for the expansion of undergraduate research efforts across the disciplines represented in the university.
   - Residential colleges provide impressive teaching and learning environments which enjoy strong student support.
   - Budget reductions and reallocations have protected instructional quality as an institutional priority.
   - The policy on Student Learning Outcomes Assessment clearly articulates the requirements of academic program assessment plans. These plans are approved and monitored by the CMU Assessment Council and the General Education and Professional Education Assessment Councils.
   - Assessment consultation and professional development opportunities are provided by the Assessment Council and the Director for Curriculum and Assessment.

2. **Evidence that demonstrates one or more specified core components needs organizational attention.**
   - Although significant progress has been made in the area of academic program assessment, unevenness continues to exist in the perception of the importance of assessment, the array of assessment methodologies
available and applied, and the impact of assessment results on academic program decision-making and in institutional budgeting and planning.

- Graduate education program assessment efforts and feedback loops to improve programs were very limited.
- The staffing of the library and information technology to provide institution-wide support is noticeably inadequate for the size of the student body and the array of academic programs offered by the institution.
- The lack of university coordinated attention to general education, including the lack of a director, little faculty development for general education delivery, and a diffuse curriculum lead to a lack of coherence in the program.

3. **Evidence that demonstrates one or more specified core components requires Commission follow-up.** None noted.

4. **Evidence that demonstrates one or more specified core components is not met and requires Commission follow-up.** (Sanction or adverse action may be warranted.) None noted.

**Recommendation of the Team**
Criterion is met; no commission follow-up recommended.

**D. 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, social responsibility in ways consistent with its mission.

**Salient Evidence of Fulfillment of Criterion and Core Components**

1. **Evidence that demonstrates core components are met.**

   - The increase in undergraduate involvement in research/creative activities is very consistent with the institution’s vision to achieve national prominence.
   - Resources for both external and internal support for research/creative activities continue to be emphasized even in times of budget reductions.
   - The university community widely verbalizes the importance of research/creative activity to CMU.
   - A strong commitment exists for outreach and access for undergraduate and graduate students to degree program and research and inquiry opportunities.
   - The Honors program serves as a model for the integration of research and creative activity at the undergraduate level.

2. **Evidence that demonstrates one or more specified core components needs institutional attention.**
• Differing expectations for research/scholarly activity in the promotion and tenure process, including the limited use of external reviewers, makes it difficult to strengthen the credentials of faculty across the institution.
• Multiple constituencies express the difficulty of assessing learning outcomes of the general education program.
• The lack of a timely curricular approval process is perceived by faculty members as an impediment to curricular innovation.
• Infrastructure, including staff to support research and creative activity of the campus community, which is essential and consistent with the revised mission of the institution, is not keeping pace with the level of research activity.

3. Evidence that demonstrates one or more specified core components requires Commission follow-up. None noted.

4. Evidence that demonstrates one or more specified core components is not met and requires Commission follow-up. (Sanction or adverse action may be warranted.) None noted.

Recommendation of the Team
Criterion is met; no commission follow-up recommended.

E. CRITERION FIVE: ENGAGEMENT AND SERVICE

As called for by its mission, the organization identifies its constituencies and serves them in ways both value.

Salient Evidence of Fulfillment of Criterion and Core Components

1. Evidence that demonstrates core components are met.

• The extensive involvement of CMU faculty and staff in clinical settings and human service agencies contributes not only to the strength of the CMU academic degree programs, but to the larger community of Mt. Pleasant and the region.
• The long term historical relationship of CMU and military education facilities is widely recognized nationally and is to be commended.
• A significant number of internships, practica, and volunteer experiences were found to be valued and integral to students in a variety of disciplines.
• Improving town-gown relationships and communication has been a priority of the current administration and is noted as significantly enhanced by many during the tenure of this administration.
• The CMU faculty and staff are committed to and well integrated into the Mt. Pleasant community.
• ProEd has provided extensive linkages to a wide array of communities, providing educational access for many degree programs offered by CMU.
2. Evidence that demonstrates one or more specified core components needs organizational attention.

- A lack of connection was noted between institutional planning and outreach initiatives, including a lack of data collection which would validate the effectiveness of these engagement opportunities.
- Strengthening relationships with the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe continues to need to be an area of focus of the institution, including developing educational, cultural, and economic development partnerships.
- The lack of purposeful integration of international students, persons of color and varying personal persuasion is found to be inconsistent with the purported value of diversity in the institutional goals.

3. Evidence that demonstrates one or more specified core components requires Commission follow-up. None noted.

4. Evidence that demonstrates one or more specified core components is not met and requires Commission follow-up. (Sanction or adverse action may be warranted.) None noted.

Recommendation of the Team

Criterion is met; no commission follow-up recommended.
V. AFFILIATION STATUS

A. SUMMARY OF COMMISSION REVIEW

Next Comprehensive Visit: 2015-2016

Rationale for accreditation decision:

Based on evidence provided in the self-study, resource documents available to the consultant-evaluator team, and numerous interviews conducted with faculty, staff, students, community members, and administrators, the HLC team finds patterns of evidence which support that Central Michigan University has met the five identified criteria and their respective core components. Areas related to institutional planning, organizational communication, general education, and the assessment of student learning outcomes and the linkage of outcomes to future institutional initiatives, were identified as appropriate for further institutional attention. Central Michigan University will need to continue to give attention to these areas and it is anticipated continued improvement will occur.

We recommend Central Michigan University be granted full reaccreditation for a ten year period of time.

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

3. Approval of Distance Education Degree: No change

4. Reports Required: None

5. Other Visits Scheduled: None

6. Other: None

D. COMMISSION SANCTION OR ADVERSE ACTION: None

VI. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS OR EXPLANATIONS