April 11, 2002

Dr. Vera King Farris, President
Richard Stockton College of New Jersey
Jimmie Leeds Road
P.O. Box 195
Pomona, N.J. 08240-0195

Dear President Farris:

I am happy to enclose the MSA Team Report which reflects our assessment of the Richard Stockton College of New Jersey's institutional self-study and the progress that the institution continues to make under your leadership.

It was indeed a pleasure for me to serve as team chairman of your very fine institution. You, the board, the faculty, the staff and the students should be commended for a job well done. Stockton College has indeed "raised the bar."

Sincerely yours,

James E. Lyons
Team Chair

JEL:eo
Enclosure
Report to the
Faculty, Administration, Trustees, Students
of
THE RICHARD STOCKTON COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY
Pomona, NJ 08240
By An Evaluation Team representing the
Commission on Higher Education
of the
Middles States Association of Colleges and Schools
Prepared after study of the institution's self study report
And a visit to the campus on March 24-27, 2002

The members of the Team:

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This report represents the views of the evaluation team as interpreted by the Chair; it goes directly to the institution before being considered by the Commission. It is a confidential document prepared as an educational service for the benefit of the institution. All comments in the report are made in good faith, in an effort to assist The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey. This report is based solely on an educational evaluation of the institution, and of the manner in which it appears to be carrying out its educational objectives.
RICHARD STOCKTON COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY

AT THE TIME OF THE VISIT

Date when instruction began:
1971

Year of first graduating class:
1973

President/CEO:
Vera King Farris

Chief Academic Officer:
David Carr

Chairman of the Board
Michael Jacobson
Report of the
MIDDLE STATES EVALUATION TEAM
to
THE RICHARD STOCKTON COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY

PROLOGUE

The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey is a college of liberal arts, sciences, and professional studies within the New Jersey system of Higher Education. Named for Richard Stockton, one of the New Jersey signers of the Declaration of Independence, the College was authorized by the passage of the state's 1968 bond referendum for higher education and accepted its charter class in 1971.

More than 6,000 students are enrolled at the College, which provides distinctive traditional and alternative approaches to education. Stockton seeks to develop the analytic and creative capabilities of its students by encouraging them to undertake individually planned courses of study that promote self-reliance and an acceptance of and responsiveness to change.

ORGANIZATION

According to the Middle States Association publication *Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education*, it is anticipated that a college or university, in order to be effective, should have a carefully developed Constitution or Bylaws, defining clearly the responsibilities of the governing board, the CEO, other officers, the faculty, students, and other significant constituencies, and essential committees. After studying all of the materials that were sent to us by the College, the Team felt that the institution had an effective organization as defined by Middle States. The only question that we had was why there was no division of Institutional Advancement. During an interview with the President, she informed us of her plan to recommend such an organizational change to the Board of Trustees. We commend the President for this timely decision.

MISSION, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES

According to the *Characteristics of Excellence* a basic characteristic of excellence in an educational institution is the clear expression and active pursuit of its mission and goals in relation to its students, its staff, its supporters, and the community-at-large. "Each institution operates in terms of such fundamentals as the discovery, preservation, and dissemination of knowledge and information, the development of student character, and the preparation of its students to live in a constantly changing world. It aims to introduce students to general and specialized knowledge, to increase their interest in intellectual matters, to enrich their cultural lives, to help them develop powers of discrimination and judgment, to foster their commitment to ethical, intellectual, social, and-where appropriate-religious values, and to encourage the pursuit of lifelong learning. These
are basic aims of higher education and should be expressed in suitable terms in statements of institutional missions and goals."

Richard Stockton College has a very clearly stated Mission with goals that are delineated with benchmarks and outcomes that are measurable. When interviewing the various constituents on campus, the team observed that all were familiar with the Mission including the expanded section on Graduate Education. The goals as stated are sufficient in facilitating their purpose at the institution.

GOVERNANCE AND LONG RANGE PLANNING

Within the last 10 years, the institution has undergone some very significant administrative changes. Paramount among these are the new powers, which were granted to the Board of Trustees of the College under the Higher Education Restructuring Act of 1994. In assuming its new powers, the Board began the process of initiating an institutional plan, which was devoid of any guidelines imposed by external agencies of the State. Among the new powers that have been given to the Board are the following:

- To develop an institutional plan (free of any guidelines externally established);
- To set tuition and fees (free of any guidelines externally established) after conducting a public hearing on same;
- To retain supplemental legal counsel of the institution's choosing;
- To invest College monies and approve facilities construction.

In an effort to determine whether the Governance process was understood by members of the campus community, and was working as intended, team members conducted extensive interviews with the following individuals or groups: members of the Board of Trustees, the President of the College, each of the major Divisions of the college, the Executive Oversight Committee, the Steering Committee of the Faculty Assembly, the Stockton Federation of College Teachers, and the Student Senate. The Governance process appears to be understood, and for the most part, constituent groups believe that it works well.

During these same meetings and discussions, the Team also asked questions regarding the planning process on the campus. Stockton College has been engaged in planning throughout the tenure of the current President. It is one of her highest priorities. Most of our discussions about Planning were related to the Vision 2010 document. Everyone is in agreement that this document has had a profound impact on the campus community. The campus involvement in the production of this forward-looking document was unparalleled in the campus' history. As a consequence of the feedback we received concerning Governance and Planning, we offer the following observations:
Strengths of the Governance System:

- Total campus participation is encouraged.
- The expanded powers of the Board of Trustees.
- The decentralized nature of the process.

Weaknesses of the Governance System:

- Decisions are not always made in a timely manner, given the number of reviews and committee actions required, and there is not always immediate feedback in response to proposed action items.

Suggestions:

- That the administration establish a system of review that will allow for more timely feedback to constituent groups.
- Organization Chart for Committees and Task Forces - The administration should consider developing an organization chart for committees and Task Forces similar to that for the general administration. To see this information charted might serve to clarify the purpose for which these committees and task forces were established.

Strengths of the Planning Process:

- The Board of Trustees and the administration are to be applauded for having instituted the "Vision 2010" planning effort, and the process which elicited the participation of all institutional groups. The Team believes that it is an excellent beginning of a complete Long Range Planning Process.
- Each major division at the institution is engaged in some level of strategic planning.

Weaknesses of the Planning Process:

- The fact that the planning process is a decentralized model has caused a few faculty to believe the process to be "superficial and without merit." But the faculty who hold that point of view appear to be few in number and do not represent the sentiment of the majority.
- The planning process, outside of Vision 2010, is not very well understood by all campus constituencies.
Suggestions:

- The administration might consider spending some time educating the faculty and the institution as a whole on the process of planning which is in place. There appear to be some mixed feelings about what is actually in place, outside of Vision 2010. Perhaps workshops and seminars could allay any misunderstandings expressed during this visit. Additionally, the team suggests that a set of evaluative measures be established to ensure achievement of the stated goals and objectives of Vision 2010, with the offices responsible for these evaluations clearly identified.

ADMISSIONS, ENROLLMENT AND RETENTION

The commitment of the institutional goals of "quality, excellence and access" is demonstrated through the planning, operations and implementation of new initiatives in Enrollment Management. The rise in standards, enrollments, and graduation rates provides numerous indications of the successful implementation of efforts to meet the needs of current students and attract highly qualified, motivated students at all levels.

Students speak candidly regarding the outstanding faculty, the responsiveness of administrators, the quality of academic programs, and the expectations that upon graduation they will be ready for the next step, whether they are pursuing further study or employment.

The balance of new first time students - freshmen - and students with experience at other institutions of higher education - transfer students - provides unique opportunities as well as challenges. Development of distinctive orientation programs for each population reflects an understanding of the importance of the transition to not only the College, but to the campus as a community. Dedicated planning and innovations reveal opportunities for enhancements of the first-year experience as the first-year experience may afford a specific focus for increasing student engagement and, ultimately, retention.

The goals and objectives as outlined in the self study and other related documents have been well articulated and the outcomes related to enrollment planning are very positive. Enrollment growth, academic qualifications, institutional recognition, focus on financial aid, and the development of partnerships contribute to the achievement of strong retention and excellent graduation rates. The College has "raised the bar" by increasing its SAT, increasing its enrollment of minorities and increasing its overall enrollment during the past 10 years. The demographic projections for the next decade suggest that additional and on-going efforts to attract and respond to changing student demands related to enrollment decisions will be important for successfully meeting enrollment goals.

In facing changing enrollments, continued intentional efforts to enhance retention, to respond to the expectations of the current and anticipated student populations will be
important. Additional efforts related to the identification and thorough understanding of the experiences of students who are less involved, including those who are nontraditional students or who commute to the campus, will serve to enhance retention and the services provided to students.

STUDENT LIFE

The Student Affairs Division has developed a strong reputation on the campus, with students and among the College community. Based upon the self-study, the materials and publications, and the broad reports of those who were interviewed and with whom informal contacts were made during the team visit, the division is creative, works diligently to respond to the needs and interests of students, understands the broader vision of the institution, and is dynamic in identification of strategies and approaches to meet the needs of the students. Sensitivity to the varied needs and interests of both a changing population and differing facets of the current student body (undergraduate vs. graduate, traditional vs. non-traditional, part-time vs. full-time, freshmen vs. transfer, and residents vs. commuters) is evident in the programs, services and specifically the integrated three-year planning initiatives. The student-centered, learning-focused environment provided by Student Affairs strong collaboration with a caring faculty and dedicated staff across the institution results in a passionate appreciation of a Stockton College experience as reported by students at a variety of levels.

It is important to note that Student Affairs’ guiding principles as stated in the Self Study document are thoroughly addressed in the programs, services and initiatives as described in interviews, materials and documentation of outcomes. Simply stated, these principles are evident in thought, word and deed.

As is true with any changing and developing institutions, challenges will continue to force careful choices and informed decision-making at all levels. The following suggestions identify several issues that can be anticipated to be important issues for consideration through the coming decade; housing alternatives, campus space for students, staffing enhancements, and athletic program enhancements:

- The demand for housing on or close to campus is considered a pressing issue. As the development of alternatives and response to opportunities becomes a reality, the ability to respond with speed and thoughtful long-range insight will be an advantage.

- Continued enhancements of facilities and the development of a central location where students could convene, such as a student center, would address several issues that were articulated by numerous individuals and constituencies. To achieve continued success within Student Affairs in the future, the well-established efforts to mentor and develop leaders at all levels of staff will need to continue. In addition, the review of staff enhancements including the recognition of the extended efforts of the professional staff to be available to students on their terms - 24/7 - may become necessary. Continued development of athletic and recreation programs and facilities provide options for students. This development needs to include response to growth of the student body, responsiveness to changing interests and the competitive nature of programs to attract the academically talented students—both athletes and non-athletes.
The potential for the future of the quality of the experience for the Stockton student is strong. A wonderful sense of pride, strong loyalty, employees' length of service, and a genuine understanding of the individual students that comprise the Stockton College student population characterize the feedback on the Stockton experience. In recognition of the guidelines as set forth in the Characteristics of Excellence, Student Affairs clearly meets the Standard.

FACULTY

According to the Characteristics of Excellence, The faculty is responsible for devising and developing an institution's academic, professional, research, and service programs within the framework of its educational mission and goals. The faculty must consist of competent, committed individuals, academically prepared and qualified. Their roles and responsibilities should be clearly defined in official institutional documents. A principal responsibility of the faculty is to teach. To provide proper instruction, faculty must remain knowledgeable about advances in their disciplines and in pedagogy. Where appropriate to institutional mission and goals, faculty should be engaged in scholarship. Regardless of the type of institution or its mission, all faculty should demonstrate continuing professional growth and accept responsibility for maintaining the highest level of professional excellence.

The faculty of Stockton College clearly meets the criteria for "Faculty" as defined in the Standards. The faculty constructs and delivers the educational program of the College and does so within the context of the College's Mission. Faculty positions have increased significantly during the last decade. At the same time the percentage of faculty holding terminal degrees has increased from 91% to 95%. The percentages of minority and women faculty have remained consistent and there is a healthy diversity and sense of equality on the campus. Effective teaching is the priority that permeates the life of the faculty. All faculty are required to perform 1/3 of their teaching in the General Studies programs. This is consistent with the College's Mission as a liberal arts institution and, at the same time, appears to enhance the College's focus on teaching as its primary purpose. In addition it is assumed that tenure cannot be achieved nor promotion garnered without significant evidence of scholarship.

The faculty participate in the governance of the College through the Faculty Assembly and its committees. In addition faculty engage in curriculum development and personnel evaluations at the Program and Divisional level. Faculty participate in the hiring process.
in a manner that is consistent with common practice in higher education. Recently the College revised the process of evaluation for tenure and promotion by establishing a College-wide Personnel Committee, elected from the faculty-at-large. There is general agreement on the campus that the system is a significant improvement over past practices. The Board of Trustees is scheduled to review this policy during the current calendar year. In a very innovative approach to assisting senior faculty, the College has made provisions for faculty in their transition to retirement. Support is also provided for tenured faculty whose five-year reviews or their self-identified needs suggest changes in their approaches to their profession and/or teaching.

The College is commended for the creation of the Institute for the Study of College Teaching. The Institute is provided with a budget and is a faculty operation. The Institute provides a combination of research opportunities and collaborative work aimed at improving the teaching process and the understanding of that process. The Center includes a number of Fellows selected for two years. The Fellows conduct workshops for new faculty twice a week and workshops open to all faculty once a month. They must disseminate their research findings to the profession. Presentations have been made to the appropriate meetings of the American Association of Higher Education and of the Lily Foundation, as well as several regional gatherings. New faculty are provided with a one-semester course reduction and required to participate in the Institute’s programs.

The faculty at Stockton is expected to engage in academic advising and in that role is referred to as "Preceptors." Because of increasing enrollments and the ability of students to select their own Preceptor after their initial enrollment, some Preceptors carry a larger than ideal advising load. This may make the preceptorial ideal, i.e. that students receive more detailed and effective attention than in the traditional advising process, something that cannot be attained.

Finally, it is apparent that the number of full-time faculty positions although they have increased significantly has barely kept pace with overall enrollment growth. Certainly the College makes every effort to expand the faculty, but funding is unavailable to meet all of the perceived needs. The team suggests that the College carefully examine the relationship between continued enrollment increases and the number of FTE faculty needed to meet the educational needs of that enrollment.

Faculty Professional Development

*Characteristics of Excellence* notes that "support for professional advancement and development and the encouragement to pursue these goals are characteristics of enlightened faculty policies." Stockton College provides support and encouragement through several initiatives such as the following:

The College has developed the Institute for the Study of College Teaching which has been clearly described in the previous chapter.
The Research and Professional Development Committee of the Faculty Assembly which supports faculty projects ranging from as little as $160 to $5,000. The funds support visiting speakers, sabbatical projects, student support, travel and necessary supplies.

A Distinguished Fellows Program which began in 1986 provides $5,000 awards for faculty summer projects.

A Career Development Committee annually makes approximately $15,000 available to tenured faculty seeking to master new material or re-orient their careers. This fund is targeted particularly to faculty who have been assessed through the post-tenure review process which occurs every five years after a faculty member is tenured.

A competitive Sabbatical Program is open to individuals with six consecutive years of service.

A Transition from Classroom to Retirement program provides senior faculty with support in their transition from classroom to retirement. The program for an individual takes place over four years and is a commendable effort to provide support for long-term faculty while enabling them to continue to offer the College the benefit of their experience and learning.

The College also offers faculty the assistance of a grants officer who meets with faculty to assist them in the development of proposals. The amount of grant support won by the faculty has increased consistently in the past three years.

The efforts of the College to support the faculty's Professional Development are commendable in their purpose and design and in the success of the efforts of faculty supported by them.

**EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS, CURRICULA, AND ASSESSMENT**

The *Characteristics of Excellence* sets clear guidelines for assessing an institution's educational programs and curricula: "There must be a demonstrable relationship between the stated mission of the institution and the goals and objectives of the educational program." Richard Stockton College serves the people of New Jersey with a 98% in-state enrollment and by its balancing disciplinary study and liberal arts study. Stockton is justifiably proud of and committed to its foundation in the liberal arts, one of its obvious strengths.

While Cultural Diversity is not a graduation requirement, it is a desirable outcome, and in that light, the Five-Year General Studies Self Study Report has described the perceived need to work with two distinct cohorts in this area, entering freshmen and transfer students.
Stockton students' scores on ETS's Profile Short Form Test were above the national mean in most categories. Students who had completed their General Studies requirements by the time of the test scored in the 87'' to 92'' percentile in comparison with upperclassmen across the nation. These scores are solid and attest to the students' academic preparedness upon completion of their lower division course work.

*Characteristics of Excellence* also states that "Curricula should be clear, grouping emphases and options into readily perceived patterns." Stockton College's 27 undergraduate majors, 34 undergraduate minor and certificate programs, and 6 masters degrees reflect its steadfast dedication to the liberal arts and set it apart from more traditionally organized institutions. Likewise, the importance of strong transfer policies is a must, given the number of students who are now entering higher education through a Junior or Community College. Stockton is to be commended for entering into 33 articulation agreements with various community colleges principally in New Jersey, for signing the General Education Foundation for Associate in Arts and Associate in Science Transfer Programs in New Jersey's Community Colleges, and for being one of two colleges in New Jersey that has agreed to be part of the pilot group to adapt Maryland's ARTSYS to New Jersey's transfer environment.

Alternative learning modes such as Washington, DC, internships, international educational opportunities, and service learning opportunities are all available to students. These experiences are very much in the spirit of the Middle States Commission's standard that recognizes "college level learning derived from work or other life experience [that] may facilitate a student's progress without compromising an institution's integrity or the quality of its degrees." Stockton is to be commended for its collective openness to consider alternative modalities of delivering graduate education in the forms of satellite/off site cohorts, summer and weekend intensive courses.

*Characteristics of Excellence* stipulates that "The curriculum for graduate study should provide for the scope of research and stimulation of independent thinking which studies at the graduate level presuppose and develop." The Graduate Education Mission Statement clearly articulates the college's commitment to deliver quality programs advancing inquiry and application of new knowledge and advanced career opportunities. Among the college's six master's degree programs, to date the three professional master's programs have achieved external accreditation. Richard Stockton College is to be commended for its timely achievement of this milestone. Similarly, the master's programs in Business Studies, Holocaust and Genocide Studies, and Instructional Technology have demonstrated the desired depth and breadth of the learning experience balanced between discipline-based course work, practical, and the thesis.

Richard Stockton College is an academic institution that is in the "particularly advantageous position to integrate community services with its programs, consistent with its goals and objectives." The College has well served the educational needs of the residents of South Jersey through such programs as Environmental Studies, Marine Science, Public Health, Speech Pathology and Audiology, and its new track in Hospitality Management.
Increasingly, educators are emphasizing the importance of building assessment into the institutional framework. Stockton College has begun to work on this task by educating the college community about how assessment aids faculty to teach better, to refine their pedagogical strategies, and ultimately to implement a system for communicating assessment results. The College began to engage in assessment training in the fall of 2001 when a group of five faculty, the Director of the Institute for the Study of College Teaching, and the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs attended The American Association for Higher Education Collaborative Assessment workshop. The five faculty are to initiate the institutionalization of the student assessment protocols for their academic disciplines within the division in which the faculty are housed. The importance that Stockton is placing upon assessment is reflected in its having a goal for learning assessment and a Faculty Assembly Standing Committee on Learning Assessment. Clearly this standard is being met.

Strengths:

Richard Stockton College is to be commended for its strengths in the following areas:

- Recognition by the Carnegie Commission as a "Highly selective liberal arts college,"
- Passionate and committed faculty, staff, and administrators.
- Progressive and innovative liberal arts based curricula with a multidisciplinary General Studies component,
- Institutional and faculty commitment to fostering teaching excellence,
- Infusion of technology into the curricula,
- Commitment to the expansion of paid educational internships,
- Initiating graduate programs, and
- Increasing commitment to assessment of student learning.

Suggestions:

- We suggest that the Faculty Assembly Subcommittee on Learning Assessment consider monitoring the progress of the implementation of Assessment Plans among the College's programs.
- We suggest that the College establish collaborative structures to maximize the impact of 2010 outcomes in the College community.
PUBLIC SERVICE AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The College engages with the community through the vehicles of student internships and student service learning experiences. Internships fall into several categories. They may be a program requirement or a programmatic recommendation, e.g. a practicum in the schools for Education students or in a social service agency for a Social Work or Public Health student. Examples of College-wide internships include work at the Washington Center as well as internships designed by a student with the guidance of a faculty member. Required internships have amounted to over 5000 practica/placements during the last five academic years. These include internship in Education, Nursing, Physical Therapy, Public Health, Speech Education, Social Work and Gerontology. In addition nearly 1,200 additional optional internships have taken place during the same period of time. In order to participate in the internship program a student ordinarily must have a qualifying grade point average; must have identified a faculty sponsor; and must complete 60 hours of service per credit hour earned.

Service Learning may be a requirement in a particular course or it may be an individual activity developed by a student. The College, in an effort to assure quality, provides an annual workshop for outside providers of Service Learning experiences. In addition, students engaged in Service Learning must keep a diary and participate in reflective sessions with other student participants as well as providing written reports for the supervising faculty member. It is clear that internships of the above types have an increasingly prominent place in higher education. If the College is to continue to expand such opportunities, however, it will be necessary to consider the most efficient way to recruit additional providers, ensure that the providers are offering appropriate experiences, train and compensate faculty appropriately, ensure that a student's lack of mobility is not dis-enfranchising; and efficiently manage an oversight of the program(s).

In addition to internships and service learning, student volunteerism plays an important part in the College's relationship with the larger community. In a variety of organized ways students work with organizations such as Habitat for Humanity, Americorp, religious organizations, and programs such as Read Across America. Participants in these activities are organized by diverse campus groups, e.g., the Campus Religion Council, the student athletes, the Greek Council, and Los Latinos Unidos. Undoubtedly numerous students perform volunteer work outside of student organizations. Such student activity is an important part of the College's Mission.

LIBRARY & LEARNING RESOURCES

Rapid technological change, new service and support demands, changing user behavior and new pedagogical interest typify the issues facing the library, media support and distance learning, computing, and telecommunications. Each of these units provides essential support to the entire campus community, making them critical to the success of teaching and learning and student life. Each of these units is working energetically to address the unique issues of their constituents, and working cooperatively and collaboratively among themselves and other units on campus. The sense of the campus community is that these units are meeting the overall Middle States standard of providing "quality, accessibility, availability and delivery of resources on site and elsewhere."
Library

The growth of Stockton is mirrored in the growth of the library. There has been considerable growth of collection development funds over the last ten years, a major physical expansion of the library, and a continuing and evolving effort to develop an information literacy program that reaches a broad base of students at various stages in their educational careers.

Strengths:

The librarians offer a variety of information literacy programs for both faculty and students. For faculty, the librarians partner with the Institute for the Study of Teaching, the Academic Computing Technology Bootcamp, and teaching workshops offered by the faculty Union, addressing the inclusion of information literacy as a core competency in the overall curriculum. The student information literacy program is comprised of a variety of components including a workbook used in 80% of Freshmen Seminars; coursework-related instruction on request, and an elective four-credit course. Establishing a formal assessment of these components is underway.

The library’s acquisition budget is one of the only budgets on campus that receives an automatic budget increase annually. This practice, while not fully insulating the library from spiraling inflationary costs, has allowed the library to maintain a strong periodical and monographic collection while building a collection of full-text periodical databases. Access for campus constituents to digital collections is offered from any computer, on or off campus, and is appreciated and used heavily by students.

The historical allocation of collection development funds is currently being re-evaluated by the Faculty Assembly Library Subcommittee, in conjunction with the Director of the Library. A realignment of purchasing power with the current curriculum priorities of Stockton should address a variety of collection development issues.

Librarians are actively engaged in faculty governance and institutional task forces.

Suggestions:

As Stockton looks to continued development of new programs, it is imperative that the library be an active partner in this process. An analysis of existing and needed resources should be done in conjunction with academic program development.

Information literacy as an integrated component across the curriculum will be a new accreditation standard for Middle States. This will require that the campus arrive at a shared definition of information literacy, as well as, a more structured and integrated program. The current information literacy effort provides a fruitful basis for beginning a campus discussion.

The enormous growth of virtual resources (i.e. electronic databases, full-text resources, digital books, the Internet) has radically altered student use of the library. Stockton, like so many other academic libraries, is experiencing declines in student use of print materials, physical visits to the library, and reference interactions. New service models need to be developed that reconnect students with the expertise of a librarian.
Promotion for librarians needs clarification. Team members, even after reading the materials on the topic, were unclear as to how the process works for librarians who wish to seek "personal growth" promotions.

Center for Instructional Media and Technology

The role of the Center has been broadened recently from media collection and distribution to include distance education. Current distance education on campus includes telecourses, online course and supplemental use of computing in the curriculum. This new focus on distance learning lays the groundwork at the college to build on a grass roots interest among faculty to further integrate technology into the curriculum.

The creation of a Center for Instructional Technology is currently in the final planning stages. This Center will have staff that includes a distance education coordinator to provide local training for WEBCT, the college's selection course management software, an instructional designer that will work with issues of pedagogy, and an instructional technology specialist. In addition, a development lab, with cutting edge equipment, will provide onsite resources for faculty to experiment with new technologies with direct staff assistance.

Media services provide support to a growing number of multi-media classrooms on the campus. Media service and computing services work cooperatively to maintain, upgrade and support these classrooms. The faculty uses these facilities extensively and current demand outstrips supply. The current media collection is a rich and valuable information resource for the campus. Presently, it is a non-circulating collection intended primarily to support faculty teaching. Providing broader access to this collection to the campus community should be considered, in terms of both circulation and access to holdings.

A significant growth in both faculty and student use of distance learning activity on the campus will have implications beyond The Center for Instructional Technology. Some of those issues are being addressed in the Vision 2010 document; as that planning proceeds it might be advantageous for the institution to have the library, Computing Services, the Institute for College Teaching, and The Center for Instructional Technology begin to work in a formalized manner to articulate the basic issues of support and service-that will emerge from expanded online courses.

Computing Services

Computing Services has a strong presence on campus and is universally recognized for its outstanding support and service to faculty, staff, and students. It provides the literal and figurative backbone of technology services for the campus. Technology infrastructure has clearly been a priority for the college in recent years and the results are evident throughout the campus. Strategic planning and adoption of best practices have been effectively used to ensure that computing is supporting the academic and the administrative needs of the campus.

An expansive number of general-purpose labs, computer classrooms, specialized labs, and 24/7 labs located in residence halls are well used. Students are uniformly pleased with the availability of these resources. The ratio of FTE student to computers in labs is an impressive 9: 1. In addition, over 30 electronic classrooms are available to faculty. A
robust training program, such as Technology Bootcamps, as well as a variety of specialized offerings on application software provide the campus community ample opportunity to upgrade their computing skills. Informative handbooks, designed specifically for faculty and another for students, provide guidance to services, infrastructures, and instruction to all aspects of campus computing.

An infusion of funds from state programs provides the institution with means to continually upgrade current facilities and plan new ones. A planning and decision-making process is in place among the Academic Deans to ensure that curriculum priorities drive the selection of new technology projects and facilities. Computing Services is actively addressing the short-term and long-term budget, staffing and space needs that will be required to continue to maintain the level of service support and infrastructure expansion. Strong working relationships with faculty have been established; the computing subcommittee of the Faculty Assembly brings computing staff and faculty together to discuss issues and provide direct input into computing decisions.

A migration to a new administrative computing system will be necessary in the near future. The issues inherent in such a transition are well known to Computing Services. Budget and staffing projections have been prepared. The larger issue at hand will be preparing the campus for such a transition when funding becomes available. The next stage of strategic technology planning for the campus is critical. The campus has done an excellent job in creating a strong information, computer, and support infrastructure. And it has been done through informal cooperation and collaboration. As the institution grows in numbers of students and programs, the development of a more formal planning process among the library, media and technology, and computing has the potential to create new synergies and opportunities in services, staffing and funding.

FINANCIAL RESOURCE ALLOCATION

The team has observed that like the other Divisions of the College, the Finance and Administration Division has a dedicated and experienced staff that is loyal to the College. This staff is a mix of long term and newer employees who will provide leadership in the future.

Richard Stockton College enjoys a sound financial base that is the byproduct of over ten years of solid financial planning. In 1990, the groundwork was laid with the creation of a "Strategic Financial Plan" that established seven financial principles. The principles all focused on maintaining the College's financial vitality. To insure that the "Plan" is working as intended, the College has annually prepared an "Implementation Report" to assess its progress. Adherence to this plan has allowed the College to, among other things, reserve funds for plant renewal and replacement, budget funds for equipment replacement, particularly technology equipment, and insure that debt service requirements are met. This planning, along with the flexibility provided from fiscal autonomy and the prospects of continued enrollment growth, enabled the College to receive a bond rating upgrade from Moody's Investment Services, which will benefit the institution through lower interest rates on future debt issues.

The College has also benefited from the receipt of $21 million in Higher Education Capital Improvement Funds which were utilized to address deferred maintenance needs, and $2.5 in Equipment Leasing Funds(ELF) used to renew technology equipment and
network infrastructure. Moreover, the college has succeeded in adding $2 million to the operating budget from the State of New Jersey and has earned approximately $0.5 million through the New Jersey Performance Funding Indicator Program by getting a perfect score of 100% for each of four (4) consecutive years.

Stockton College has exceeded enrollment projections that were established in 1990. Current enrollment levels were not anticipated until after 2004. Despite the rapid rise in enrollment the College has taken seriously its objective to maintain affordability by keeping the tuition below the average of the state college sector. Because state funding is no longer driven by enrollment, the anticipated enrollment growth through 2010 could be problematic. Goals 6 and 8 in "Vision 2010" dealing with capacity and facilities must critically address the ways that the College will deal with the anticipated growth. Another issue that will have to be addressed in the current decade is the need to replace the existing administrative computing system. The Financial Records System has been used for 10 years and is no longer state of the art. Current estimates of the costs to replace the system stand at $1.5 to $2.0 million. The amount of revenue derived from "other sources" has increased substantially since 1990 but additional sources of revenue must be sought out. The College may need to consider investing resources in creating a high functioning Development office to begin developing a culture of philanthropy within the community.

PHYSICAL FACILITIES

Instructional buildings, laboratories, computers, athletic facilities, student activity buildings, and libraries provide tangible support for an institution's instructional program.

The college has had a facilities master plan in place since 1990 and has used that document in the development of the current campus layout. Although there have been significant strides made to increase needed space, there remains a shortage of approximately 75,000 net assignable square feet in academic and support space. There are plans to construct new science labs by adding on to existing buildings and converting the current science labs into classroom space. This will help, but not eliminate the problem. There is also a shortage of faculty office space that will be partially addressed with the construction of offices for faculty engaged in the Faculty Transition Program.

Although the campus is composed of 1600 acres, useable acreage is at a premium. There are only 105 buildable acres on the campus. The Facilities Master Plan is 10 years old and has served the college well; but with the anticipated growth and the relatively small amount of useable land, the plan is in need of updating. Another need that will be driven by enrollment growth is that of parking. The idea of a multi story parking deck was mentioned as a solution, but there has been no feasibility study performed. The college is also looking into the possibility of the private development of student residence halls/apartments with a leaseback to the college as a partial solution to address housing needs as well as land issues.

Another area of concern involves the existence of two separate and distinct maintenance departments, one managed by the Facilities Department within Administration and Finance, and another managed by Housing and Residential Life. The college may wish to consider reviewing this arrangement in an effort to consolidate operations and reduce costs.
In the area of maintenance, the college has benefited greatly from the receipt of the $21 million Higher Education Capital Improvement fund appropriation. This funding source has reduced to nearly zero the amount of deferred maintenance. There has been and continues to be an appropriate level of funding to provide for an adequate level of housekeeping and maintenance.

The big challenge for the campus in the future will be how it responds to the reality that the enrollment is growing faster than it can create new physical capacity. The good news is that the campus is aware of this challenge and is actively pursuing alternatives.

**TRANSITION**

Middle States does not have a standard that deals specifically with leadership transition, but the team felt that we should make a few comments. The Board of Trustees will soon initiate a search to fill the vacancy that will be created upon the retirement of President Vera King Farns. Filling the position of Chief Executive Officer on a campus is a major challenge under ordinary circumstances. But when you are replacing a living legend, a President who is both nationally and internationally respected and revered, it is even more challenging. Add to this the fact that the Board of Trustees is likewise in transition as new members are added and vacancies are filled. Only one member of the current Trustees has been through a Presidential search process on this campus. Thus, the Board itself will have a very “sharp learning curve.” The Team was happy to learn that the Board is already receiving proposals from some of the nation’s leading Executive Search firms, to assist with the search process.

We are not suggesting for one moment that things are destined to fall apart when the President retires. What we are saying is that it will be another major challenge for the institution! There is so much momentum at the College that you do not want to lose. We hope that you will continue to pull together. The Vision 2010 will be an excellent tool for the new CEO to begin the next decade of service. Vision 2010 has brought this campus to a new level of engagement, enthusiasm, and excitement that we sincerely hope will continue.

**CONCLUSION**

Middle States accreditation is an expression of confidence in an institution's mission and goals, its performance, and its resources. Based upon the results of an institutional self study and an evaluation by a team of peers and colleagues assigned by the Commission, accreditation attests the judgment of the Commission on Higher Education that an institution has met the following criteria:

- That it is guided by well-defined and appropriate goals;
- That it has established conditions and procedures under which its goals can be realized;
- That it is accomplishing its goals substantially;
- That it is so organized, staffed, and supported that it can be expected to continue to accomplish its goals, and
That it meets the standards of the Middle States Association's Commission on Higher Education.

It is the judgment of the Visiting Team that you have met these standards in a commendable fashion.

It is also important to us that we commend President Vera King Farris for the outstanding leadership that she has provided during the last 19 years. Her "palm prints" will forever be a part of the Richard Stockton College legacy. She has achieved her dream of building a world-class public Liberal Arts College in southern New Jersey.