Philadelphia University
Periodic Review Report

*Prepared for:*
The Middle States Commission on Higher Education
and the Philadelphia University community

June 2011

President Stephen Spinelli Jr, Ph.D.

Decennial Evaluation: June 2006
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SECTION I: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

This Periodic Review Report (PRR) presents a comprehensive review of Philadelphia University and its progress since the decennial self-study and re-accreditation by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education in 2006. The report details that the university has entered a promising new phase in its development distinguished by an inclusive planning process, grounded by a clear mission and guided by the institution’s Strategic Plan, the first since its founding in 1884. Changes in the institution build on the unique strengths of the university, respect its legacy as a professionally oriented institution, and reflect a new leadership team committed to transparency and sound financial management.

The PRR describes the advancement of the institution, directly responds to the challenges identified in the previous self-study, depicts a faculty-led assessment process, and presents a greatly strengthened relationship between institutional planning and budgeting. The university’s foundation has been enhanced by an improvement strategy that dovetails the institution’s response to the 2006 accreditation report with the implementation of the Strategic Plan.

ABOUT PHILADELPHIA UNIVERSITY

Description and History
Philadelphia University is a private, professionally oriented master's university located in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. It enrolls 3,403 FTE students with 2,722 FTE in undergraduate programs. In addition, the university offers summer, evening and special baccalaureate and certificate programs to nontraditional students through the Office of Continuing and Professional Studies.

Founded in 1884, as the Philadelphia Textile School, and granted the right to award baccalaureate degrees in 1941 as the Philadelphia Textile Institute, the school achieved university status in 1999 and changed its name from Philadelphia College of Textiles and Science to Philadelphia University.

Today Philadelphia University is an experiential learning community that values integrity, creativity, and the free exchange of ideas. The university prepares graduates for successful careers in the evolving global marketplace by purposefully blending liberal arts and sciences with professional studies. Expanding its early 20th century focus on education for the textile industry, to encompass first business, then science, health and finally architecture and design, the university diversified its undergraduate degree programs to more than forty by the beginning of the 21st century. Since 2006, it has also added three professionally oriented undergraduate liberal arts degrees in the fields of communication, sustainability and law.

In addition to these undergraduate programs, the university has twelve active graduate programs and one doctoral program, the Ph.D. in Textile Engineering (2003). Current programs offer Master of Science (M.S.) degrees in Taxation, Fashion Apparel Studies, Textile Design, Textile Engineering, Occupational Therapy (1998), Midwifery (1998), Physician Assistant Studies (2000), and Interactive Design and Media (2002). Since the self-study (2006) the university has launched M.S. degrees in Disaster Medicine and Management (2006), Sustainable Design (2007), and Construction Management (2009) with Industrial Design and Interior Architecture to be launched in fall 2011.

A number of individual academic programs have achieved additional professional accreditation since the university was first granted Middle States Accreditation in 1955. These include Midwifery, Occupational Therapy, Physician Assistant Studies Program, Architecture, Interior Design, Chemistry, Biochemistry, Landscape Architecture and Industrial Design. In 2009-2010 the university applied for the Accreditation
Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET) for engineering accreditation and received a very positive review. The final determination on accreditation by the ABET commission will be in July 2011. As of July 2010, the University is in pre-candidacy for Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) accreditation and was assigned a mentor in fall 2010. The candidacy request will be submitted in the spring 2012, and if accepted, an official visit will follow before 2016.

**Strategic Planning**

With the strong leadership of a new president, Dr. Stephen Spinelli, appointed June 2007, Philadelphia University is now focused on realizing fully the opportunities associated with its university status. The president lead a broadly inclusive process for the development of a Strategic Plan (2008-2013), the first in the institution’s history, and one of the most significant accomplishments of the past five years. Inspired by the goal of transforming the institution into a 21st century model for professional university education, a broad set of stakeholders including faculty, students, administrators, trustees, alumni, and industry experts defined seven initiatives that would bring this vision to reality. (The Strategic Plan, the planning and implementation processes are explained in Section II, pages 7-9.) The PRR highlights how the Strategic Plan, its goals and initiatives, create the roadmap for all new developments, changes, improvements, and decisions related to the institution. It is the single most important driver for the ways the university evaluates institutional effectiveness and articulates the budget process and priorities. The implementation of the Plan itself hails a new comprehensive and inclusive process that places a premium on data-based decision making.

**Summary of Major Institutional Changes**

In July 2011, in order to implement the innovation agenda in the Strategic Plan, the academic organization has been consolidated and streamlined from six schools (Science and Health, Design and Media, Architecture, Liberal Arts, Business Administration, and Engineering and Textiles) into three colleges: Design, Engineering and Commerce; Architecture and the Built Environment; and Science, Health and the Liberal Arts. The new organization takes effect on July 1, 2011.

The college system is designed to encourage academic collaboration and create an administrative structure that more effectively and efficiently serves the needs of students and faculty. It also forms the College of Design Engineering and Commerce (C-DEC), an initiative of the Strategic Plan. The colleges create a networked organization that clarifies administrative roles, aligns responsibilities and improves communication across the university.

A striking new building for the College of Design Engineering and Commerce, the **DEC Innovation Center**, embodies the university's commitment to innovation, interdisciplinary collaboration, and integrative learning. The project is schedule to break ground in June 2011.

Implementing the Strategic Plan has required several important changes to the ways the university is led and governed. The Board of Trustees has changed in order to make it more diverse, uniformly engaged, and capable of supporting the initiatives in the Strategic Plan. The executive administration has also been rationalized to align with the university’s current needs and support planning efforts. The most significant of these changes are the new positions of Vice President for Administration and Chief Operating Officer, and Chief Financial Officer, which have taken the place of a Vice President for Finance and Administration.

The academic leadership has been modified and elevated to implement the academic dimensions of the Strategic Plan. These changes include: a Provost (and Office of the Provost) rather than a Vice President of Academic Affairs (and Office of Academic Affairs). A position of Vice Provost has also been added to focus primarily on supporting faculty involved in curricular change. An Executive Dean of Research and a Director Teaching Innovation and Nexus has been created to directly support two academic initiatives in

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1 Nexus Learning refers to pedagogies promulgated by the Strategic Plan emphasizing teaching and learning with connections to the real world (opportunities for students to apply theory), active student engagement to encourage synthesis and analysis, and student
the Strategic Plan. A Director of Institutional Research has been established in order to ensure that decision-making is driven by data.

Supporting the Strategic Plan and its implementation, the provost has initiated a plan for academic growth that aligns strategic enrollment expansion with hiring of new full-time faculty for leading curricular initiatives. (The Academic Growth Plan is described in more detail in Section III, pages 23-24). Finally, in order to pursue the Strategic Plan mandate for integrating curricular and co-curricular learning, the university is expanding services to students through new staff and new facilities, including with state-of-the-art dormitories with significantly increased capacity. The new facility is scheduled to open in fall of 2011.

ABOUT THE PERIODIC REVIEW REPORT

Preparation of the Report

Mirroring the widespread engagement in the Strategic Planning process, the preparation of Philadelphia University’s Periodic Review Report has engaged all constituencies at the university and has drawn on the working committees and task forces engaged in implementing the Strategic Plan. Changes in leadership and personnel have meant that several members of the 2006 Self-Study Steering Committee have retired or left the university. Drawing from existing committees of faculty and administrators, Provost H. R. Swearer deputized and advised a PRR Coordinating Committee comprised of Gwynne Keathley, Vice Provost; Dr. Geoffrey Cromarty, accreditation liaison and Vice President for Planning and Institutional Research; Jim Hartman, Chief Financial Officer; Dr. Lloyd Russow, Associate Provost; Dr. Patricia Thatcher, Director of the Learning and Advising Center; Dr. Matt Baker, Dean of the School of Science and Health; and Dr. Marion Roydhouse, Dean of the School of Liberal Arts.

These individuals worked with various constituencies and groups, including the Director of Institutional Research, to draft the sections of the report. Section II: Summary of Responses to Recommendations is based on drafts prepared by the Coordinating Committee; Section III: Major Challenges and Opportunities is based on the work of the President’s Council and Provost’s Council; Section IV: Enrollments and Financial Trends and Projections is based on the work of the Budget Advisory Committee and Enrollment Management group; Section V: Student Learning, Assessment and Continuous Improvement is based on the work of the Assessment of Student Learning Committee and the Undergraduate and Graduate Education committees; Section VI: Institutional Planning and Budgeting is based on the work of the President’s Council and the Budget Advisory Committee. The President, Provost, the PRR Coordinating Committee and relevant groups reviewed final drafts of the report.

collaboration. Signature Learning was the original term for this pedagogy in the Strategic Plan. Instead of the term Signature Learning, the university has recently decided to refer to this pedagogy as Nexus Learning. Thus all references in this document will refer to Nexus Learning.
Organization of the Report

SECTION II: Summary of Responses to Middle States Suggestions and Self-Study Recommendations
Since the Middle States review team did not make recommendations in its report, this section focuses on progress and updates to suggestions from Middle States and recommendations contained in the self-study. Many of these issues focus on outcomes assessment and institutional planning.

SECTION III: Major Challenges and Opportunities
The university’s new Strategic Plan and its implementation serve as the guide to identify the opportunities and the challenges for the institution. This section describes the outlook for the university as it is managing change and realizing the Strategic Plan’s initiatives to innovate in education, facilities, curriculum, analytics, organization and applied research.

SECTION IV: Enrollment and Finance Trends and Projections
This section demonstrates the financial health and soundness of Philadelphia University, and provides specific information about enrollment, enrollment growth, as well as financial statements, bond ratings and capital projects.

SECTION V: Student Learning, Assessment and Continuous Improvement
This section details the organization of and support for institutional and learning outcomes assessment at Philadelphia University. It also describes the assessment of institutional effectiveness, together with the goals and assessment of general education. Documents included in the appendices are outcomes assessment grids and narratives for all undergraduate and graduate programs as well as student life educational programs.

SECTION VI: Institutional Planning and Budgeting
This section demonstrates how budgeting and planning work together to realize the university’s mission and Strategic Plan.
Certification Statement:
Compliance with MSCHE Requirements of Affiliation and
Federal Title IV Requirements
(Effective October 1, 2009)

An institution seeking initial accreditation or reaffirmation of accreditation must affirm by completing
this certification statement that it meets or continues to meet established MSCHE requirements of affiliation
and federal requirements relating to Title IV program participation, including relevant requirements under the
Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 such as those on distance education and transfer of credit.

The signed statement must be attached to the executive summary of the institution’s self-study report.

If it is not possible to certify compliance with all such requirements, the institution must attach specific details
in a separate memorandum.

_____________________________________________________________________________

(Name of Institution)

is seeking (Check one): ___ Initial Accreditation ___ Reaffirmation of Accreditation

The undersigned hereby certify that the institution meets all established requirements of affiliation of the
Middle States Commission on Higher Education and federal requirements relating to Title IV program
participation, including relevant requirements under the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 such as
those on distance education and transfer of credit, and that it has complied with the MSCHE policy, “Related
Entities.”

___ Exceptions are noted in the attached memorandum (Check if applicable)

__________________________________________  ______________________
(Chief Executive Officer)  (Date)

__________________________________________  ______________________
(Chair, Board of Trustees or Directors)  (Date)
SECTION II: SUMMARY OF RESPONSES TO RECOMMENDATIONS

INTRODUCTION
Philadelphia University’s 2006 self-study for the Middles States Decennial Review proved to be a signal moment in its history. Inspired to significantly improve and accelerate planning processes, assessment of learning, and effectiveness, the university steering committee made thirty recommendations for improvement in the self-study. The Middle States visiting team made no recommendations and sixteen suggestions.

As summarized in Section I, dynamic changes have occurred at the university that have significantly shifted institutional priorities and planning to be more data-driven and to prioritize greater stake-holder involvement and a more reflective and student-centered mission. Many of the responses below refer to these changes.

Responses to the Middle States suggestions (MSS) and university self-study recommendations (SSR) are categorized and discussed below according to the appropriate Middle States Standard of Excellence. Because many of the Middle States suggestions reiterated the self-study recommendations, we chose to include our responses to the Middle States suggestions in the document. Complete lists of the Middle States suggestions and the self-study recommendations are included in Appendix A.

STANDARD 1: MISSION AND GOALS
(MSS: 1) It is suggested that the university conduct an evaluation of the mission statement and restate the elements more clearly in order to differentiate itself from its competitors and to more clearly identify additional potential outcomes. In addition, it is suggested that the university clarify aspects of concern to faculty, such as the specific role of research and the blend that is valued by the institution (e.g., pedagogical, empirical, theoretical).

Upon successful Middles States reaccreditation in 2006, Philadelphia University promptly began to outline a planning process to develop its first Strategic Plan and worked with Dr. Michael Middaugh, then assistant vice president for institutional research and planning at the University of Delaware, to guide the university through the process of revisiting and refining its mission statement. Throughout the fall of 2006 and spring of 2007, the Vice President for Planning and Institutional Research solicited input, held meetings, and collaborated on the development of a revised mission statement (presented to the university community by the President on March 26, 2007), which would guide the Strategic Planning process.

As approved, the mission statement reads:

PHILADELPHIA UNIVERSITY MISSION STATEMENT
Philadelphia University is a student-centered institution that prepares graduates for successful careers in an evolving global marketplace. By blending the liberal arts and sciences, professional studies, interdisciplinary learning, and collaborations in and out of the classroom, students learn to thrive in diverse and challenging environments. Our students are encouraged to form supportive relationships with each other as well as faculty, staff, and alumni in an academically rigorous setting that is focused on intellectual and personal growth. Philadelphia University is an experiential learning community where integrity, creativity, curiosity, ethics, responsibility, and the free exchange of ideas are valued.

In 2007, the university developed its first Strategic Plan to support and advance the university mission. This plan provides a framework for planning at the college and school levels (SSR1), clarifies the role of research in promoting excellence in teaching, and guides us in continuously improving our institutional mission of providing a distinctive and significant learning environment (MSS1, MSS2, MSS15). This process is described in more detail in the following response.
STANDARD 2: PLANNING, RESOURCE ALLOCATION, AND INSTITUTIONAL RENEWAL

(MSS: 2) It is suggested that the university more clearly articulate operational and educational goals that define the actions planned in order to actualize the mission. This will better guide faculty, administration, and staff in making decisions related to planning, resource allocation, program and curriculum development, and definition of program outcomes.

(SSR: 1) Develop a formal, university-wide Strategic Planning process to provide better integration of division, school, and department plans.

(SSR: 2) Continue the current emphasis on growing the endowment by including an endowment component in future fundraising campaigns.

After the retirement of long-term President, James P. Gallagher, Ph.D., the Board of Trustees selected a new President, Stephen Spinelli, Jr., Ph.D., in June 2007. During the transition during the summer of 2007, the new President began working with the President’s Council to develop the process for the university’s first Strategic Plan. They identified three key strategic areas and created committees that would develop plans to support them:

- Academic Excellence
- Excellence in the Student Experience
- Alumni and Community Engagement

An Executive Committee, which included the Chairs of the Committees (the membership of which is includes the chairs of all academic standing committees), integrated and coordinated the initiatives developed by the committee.

The President’s Council worked with the Chairs to identify the Strategic Planning committee membership. The committees established subcommittees based on the critical areas they identified. More than 160 members of the university community participated in the committee process with 20 more submitting comments through a Strategic Planning website, which carried updates on the progress and substance of the planning process.

In developing initiatives, the committees first asked how the strategic goals would define the Philadelphia University experience. They also considered the physical, financial, fundraising, technological, and human
resources needed to implement the plan; they also looked for ways to integrate the objectives with those of other committees and developed initiatives that can be measured.

Throughout the process, the subcommittees presented ideas from its deliberations to the relevant committee. Members of the primary committees then discussed these initiatives with the Executive Committee, which identified major themes for the committees to explore further and integrate with other committees.

After further discussion and refinement, the committees presented their recommendations to academic and administrative leadership; those leaders identified seven key initiatives, which President Spinelli shared with the Board of Trustees in June 2008. The Board of Trustees enthusiastically endorsed the strategic direction that Dr. Spinelli presented and charged the university with developing a written plan for the future. The seven initiatives of the Strategic Plan are the following:

1. **Formalizing our Nexus Learning Approach**: Engaged Learning, Active, Collaborative, Connected to the Real World and Grounded in the Liberal Arts.

2. **Promulgate an academic learning community that will embrace all the elements of the design, engineering and commerce curricula where constant collaboration and teamwork are the keys to creating successful leaders.** Establish the College of Design, Engineering and Commerce (DEC), creating a new model for professional education in the 21st Century.

3. **Advance applied research to serve Nexus learning, industry and societal needs.** Increase the level, scope, quality and visibility of research, creative activity, knowledge creation, and innovative and reflective practice by faculty, staff, and students.

4. **Invest in academic strengths to create leaders in the professions.** Philadelphia University will support and build academic strengths by providing graduates with superb professional preparation built on a foundation of conjoint liberal-professional education that prepares graduates for practice and leadership in their professions, industries, and the global marketplace.

5. **Provide distinctive opportunities for graduate and professional students.** Philadelphia University will be recognized as the regional leader in career-oriented graduate and Bachelor’s degree completion programs.

6. **Develop innovative facilities that enhance 21st century learning.** Physical space that fosters collaboration and innovation for students and faculty will promote the pedagogy that encourages active participation to support curricular and co-curricular goals.

7. **Integrate student coursework with purposeful and intentional learning experiences outside of the classroom.** Philadelphia University’s co-curricular programs will contribute to the professional and personal growth of students, enhance a sense of community, and reinforce the concept of an integrated learning environment.

[For a copy of the full Strategic Plan, see Appendix A or http://www.philau.edu/strategicplanning/ebook/.]

After the Board of Trustees adopted the Strategic Plan, the institution initiated an implementation plan that identifies goals and milestones for each initiative of the Strategic Plan. This plan is available in Appendix A and online, http://www.philau.edu/strategicinitiatives/implementation.htm. The President provides progress reports at Board of Trustee meetings (four times a year) and at regular intervals with the campus community.

The budget process (see Section VI) and fundraising campaigns (see Section III) have also been designed to support the priorities of the Strategic Plan. The development office initiated a planning process, including a
feasibility study, for a comprehensive fundraising campaign that includes endowment growth to support the Strategic Plan initiatives. At the time (2008), the Board of Trustees announced of a campaign and began the “quiet” phase. On April 30, 2011, the campaign officially launched with a public announcement of $28.5 million in gifts. In this campaign, at least $10 million is targeted for endowment.

At the midpoint of the implementation phase, the senior leadership team is reviewing the initiatives and goals with an eye toward recommending changes, reprioritizing initiatives, and considering strategic issues for the next major institutional planning process.

STANDARD 3: INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES
(SSR: 27) Develop a plan to renovate older residence halls and build additional housing. Meeting growing interest and demand for on-campus housing and providing the highest quality residential experience possible has been a focal point for the institution. The university has increased the number of resident assistants by ten since 2006, and redistributed resources to hire an additional full-time, live-in professional staff member. To meet the increased demand for housing, the university has expanded beds available in Independence Plaza by 100 without compromising the quality of the residential experience. The institution has completed renovation of an additional 318 beds in the Falls Center, a facility with high quality, modern amenities. Beyond providing new beds, the institution is committed to improving current facilities evidenced by recent investments in making all on-campus residences wireless. Renovations are also underway at Scholler Hall, the institutions’ original residence hall. (Additional information about facilities development included in Section III: Major Opportunities and Challenges, pages 28-29, and Appendix C.)

STANDARD 4: LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

(SSR: 3) Continue efforts to diversify the Board of Trustees in terms of ethnicity, gender and professional fields to reflect campus programs and needs.

(SSR: 4) Strengthen shared governance by expanding interactions among the Board of Trustees and campus constituencies.

(SSR: 5) Enhance the development of Board of Trustee members through routine assessment of individual trustees and a formal mentoring program for new trustees.

The Board of Trustees selected a leader in 2007 that was committed to developing and achieving clear strategic outcomes, value creation, leadership development, and growth. The Trustees recognized, especially with the adoption of the Strategic Plan, that the Board would need to grow and improve if it wanted the university to be successful. As a result, the composition of the board has changed since the 2006 self-study.

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<td>Non-Caucasian</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Senior Executive</td>
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Through a transparent and disciplined new nominating process, the Board has 78% more alumni, 66% more diversity, more C-level executives, and has added Trustees with experience in Philadelphia University’s fields of study.

Most significant is the Board’s adoption of an annual self-assessment survey, which the Board has used to assess its activities and make changes in support of its goals. In the first year of the assessment (2008), for
instance, the Board of Trustees identified a planning retreat as an activity that was lacking in its operations. Led by the new Board Chair, the Board designed a retreat in place of its next meeting, which served as a platform for planning a fundraising campaign in support of the Strategic Plan. The Board has used each annual assessment in June to improve its performance.

STANDARD 6: INTEGRITY

(SSR: 7) Clarify and publicize university policies with regard to the intellectual property of students, including the publication of student work on the Web both for course requirements and for university recruitment purposes.

In fall 2010, the president hired a consultant and veteran business developer, Graham Morrison, to advance and refine the university's policies related to Intellectual Property, particularly in regard to the commercialization of the products and inventions developed and designed by the university and its faculty. Following on this work, the university created a new position in fall 2010, the Director of Innovation, which manages partnerships between the university and industry and government for the development of specific research or consulting projects.

These agreements leverage the expertise and capabilities of the faculty and its programs, and require the clear articulation of the intellectual property and ownership of the work. A fully articulated framework and process for developing third party relationships, along with contracts templates and guidelines, will be available to all faculty members in fall 2011.

An approved patent policy, a copyright policy, and polices for on-line course materials reside on the university public folders, accessible to anyone in the Philadelphia University community with a valid account.

(SSR: 8) Further explore the implications of the Academic Integrity Policy (AIP) survey.

In fall 2004, the Undergraduate Academic Standards Committee distributed a campus wide survey to students and faculty on the topic of the Academic Integrity Policy. The resulting report articulated the campus awareness and attitudes about institutional policies, summarized reported violations of the academic integrity, and provided recommendations for further action. The findings were distributed and served as a tool for campus conversations on academic integrity.

A significant result of the report is a more uniform statement of academic integrity, now required on every course syllabus. The institution expects every instructor to review the Academic Integrity Policy with students at the beginning of each course.

Due to the fact that failure to cite work properly is the most commonly reported Academic Integrity Policy violation, a number of initiatives have been implemented to support students in appropriate research and citations. The library and the Learning and Advising Center offer workshops, documents, and in-class presentations that explain research, citations practices, and provide citation examples and resources. The Learning and Advising Center also provides writing assistance on a one-on-one basis and a writing instructor who specializes in writing concerns among students for whom English is a second language. The College Studies (general education) program has deepened its focus on academic honesty across the curriculum, supported by workshops for faculty and constant communication between faculty and the liberal arts dean on plagiarism in particular. An information literacy initiative also extends student understanding of academic honesty as they learn to evaluate, cite and embed information.

Academic integrity policies are updated annually and published online in the student handbook (http://www.philau.edu/studenthandbook and http://www.philau.edu/studenthandbook/1011/academicpolicies.htm).
STANDARD 7: INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT

Middle States Suggestions

1. (MSS: 7) Ongoing assessment of policies, practices, and implementation is needed to provide a formal long-range agenda to integrate mission, programs and facilities.
2. (MSS: 15) As the Strategic Plan is developed, the institutional assessment plan should be developed through the same process to ensure that the goals for planning and the assessment of progress will be in alignment.
3. (MSS: 16) The operational plans presented by various divisions of the university would be strengthened by including clear measures for assessing progress toward the goals outlined.

Self-Study Recommendations

1. (SSR: 29) Create an ongoing university-wide planning and institutional assessment process that assembles and reviews institutional effectiveness measures and results in recommendations for continuous improvement.
2. (SSR: 30) Develop measures to assess the effectiveness of graduate programming and continuing studies programming including measures of student satisfaction and retention and graduation rates.

See also Section V, Part A: Institutional Effectiveness and Section VI: Institutional Planning and Budgeting

As stated earlier in this section, the university has developed a Strategic Plan and an accompanying implementation plan to set the goals and key benchmarks for each initiative. These planning processes are coupled with ways that the institution assesses itself in key areas such as student success and learning, facilities and program support, growth trends, enrollment management, and retention and persistence. Several tools and activities are in place to provide this feedback that is then integrated into the business processes of the institution.

A new position in Institutional Research, hired in 2007, provides a focus on not only gathering data, but also analyzing the information and creating comparison data from semester to semester and year to year. It has been critical to the strategic leadership in all areas of the institution that this information is available online (http://www.philau.edu/ir/) and consistently collected and analyzed from year to year.

In 2011, a University Analytics Initiative improves alignment of our business processes with the Strategic Plan, and uses technology to integrate data from across the university in a single accessible source. The system provides real-time data and automates reporting to support decision-making and to drive operational efficiency up and down the university structure. (See Section III, page 24, for a description of University Analytics. See Appendix B for an example of the University Analytics dashboard)

In addition, the university has created a university assessment plan for the assessment of student learning in all academic programs and administrative units. The assessment of institutional effectiveness and student learning is described in depth in Section V, pages 38-50, of this report.

The university conducts a variety of student surveys and participates in both the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and the Noel-Levitz Satisfaction-Priorities Survey. Results to NSSE and Noel-Levitz and graduate student surveys are available to the campus community via http://www.philau.edu/ir/. Middle States reviewers may see NSSE results at https://www.philau.edu/ir/msche/nsse.asp?password=msche and Noel Levitz surveys results at https://www.philau.edu/ir/msche/nl.asp?password=msche. This data is carefully considered and integrated into the planning process to inform decisions, where relevant, at all levels of the institution.
The university could benefit from establishing a cost model to routinely measure the degree of subsidy or profit derived from each academic program. Additional resource allocation to institutional research activities should help financial staff program assessment activities.

In the academic year 2008-09, financial analyses of course delivery provided cost estimates for all graduate programs for 2007-08, 2008-09 and projections for the subsequent two years. This analysis helped to establish a cost model and has led to the development of a budget template now included in all graduate program proposals. The model also provides advance alerts for programs that are performing below expected enrollments and/or above expected costs. The same principles have been applied to develop a cost model for the undergraduate programs. The template developed for undergraduate program budgets will be required for all proposed new majors.

While these models include direct costs such as faculty, the university is currently engaged in an in-depth assessment of faculty resources to address analyze faculty load, research expectations and the potential impact of redeploying additional full-time faculty in freshman classes. This is described in more detail in Section III. The analytics tools and the Director of Institutional Research, both mentioned above, will assist further to provide data and metrics in decision-making to support resource allocation.

STANDARD 8: STUDENT ADMISSIONS AND RETENTION

(SSR: 26) Develop a university-wide retention plan and retention plans for each academic program. Philadelphia University takes its responsibility to retain and graduate students very seriously and has seen a steady improvement in its retention and persistence to graduation since the 2006 self-study. The establishment of a Retention Task Force in 2008 led to data-driven recommendations and actions that helped increase both retention and persistence to graduation with retention and graduation rates, 79% and 62%, being at their highest in 2010. (Retention Task Force 2008-2010, Retention & Persistence Committee 2011, and retention and persistence outcomes described in Section V, page 43).

Retention and graduation rate information is available [http://www.philau.edu/ir/trends.html](http://www.philau.edu/ir/trends.html). [This information is available to Middle States reviewers by request.] The final report of the Retention Task Force (2008) is in Appendix A.

STANDARD 9: STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

(SSR: 6) Explore and develop clear policies and procedures for students to file grievances against faculty, staff, or members of the university administration in areas other than sexual harassment and adverse academic decisions.

The university updates the policies and procedures annually and publishes a new student handbook every year. Each incoming student receives the student handbook that is also posted on the university web site. With the new Provost, the university has developed a clearly defined list of decisions that students may appeal and have carefully planned and articulated the appropriate process and personnel involved for each. All of the appeal processes are described in the student handbook.

STANDARD 10: FACULTY

(MSS: 8) The university needs to continue to assess the diversity of its faculty and make plans to increase this diversity.
(SSR: 19) Develop a comprehensive faculty-staffing plan that includes hiring more fulltime faculty and that assesses the ratio of fulltime to adjunct faculty appropriate to the university’s size and program mix.

(SSR: 20) Build a more diverse teaching faculty through rigorous efforts to recruit and retain minority faculty.

As part of the institution’s evolution as a university, it has developed more comprehensive, integrative planning processes that build on the strengths of the institution and drive the Strategic Plan. As part of an academic planning process, the Provost hired a consultant in fall 2010 to perform an in-depth analysis of the current faculty make-up, distribution, and ratios of faculty to both adjunct faculty and students by program and by school. The central driver of the plan is the pressing need to increase and diversify the number of FT faculty members on campus. See Section III, pages 23-24, for a full description of the ‘academic growth plan.’

In the next few years with anticipated growth and new academic development, the university seeks to increase diversity of its faculty in terms of age, race, gender, ethnicity, scholarship and expertise. It has requested a presentation by the Educational Advisory Board (EAB, a educational consulting firm) on the topic of diversity, as a way to launch this focus with benchmarked data and best practices research.

(MSS: 9) The university needs to continue to assess faculty salary levels in relation to comparable institutions.

(SSR: 21) Continue efforts to increase faculty compensation to the level of comparable institutions and to equalize compensation of male and female faculty.

Philadelphia University implemented a plan to raise the salaries and compensation (salary plus institutional contribution to benefits) of the faculty to favorably compare with those classified as Master’s II institutions in the annual American Association of University Professors (AAUP) reports. The goal has been to reach and sustain salary and compensation at the 80th percentile compared to national averages of Master’s II institutions reported by AAUP. The university has exceeded the goal when comparing compensation for full professors and associate professors, and is within 10% of the 80th percentile and within 1% of the median for assistant professors.

Despite the negative economic conditions experienced nationally, Philadelphia University has been able to raise faculty salaries every year, with the exception of 2009 (when the faculty received a bonus). The university has long-held a reputation for a generous benefit packages.

(SSR: 22) Develop consistent guidelines and expectations for the orientation, support, coordination, assessment, renewal, and reward of adjunct faculty.

(SSR: 25) Examine and develop consistent, formal peer and student teaching evaluation procedures for all faculty including adjuncts, visiting faculty and administrators who teach.

The university is committed to the consistent and on-going preparation of its faculty, both full-time and adjunct. The Office of the Provost organizes the new faculty orientation program for full-time faculty. This orientation provides a comprehensive overview for incoming faculty to support their teaching and work with students. The Center for Teaching Innovation and Nexus Learning will be revising the orientation to include ongoing pedagogical workshops for new full time faculty (to be effective fall 2011).

Organized by each school (soon to be in each college), orientation for adjunct faculty is a day-long event that introduces the faculty to the individual program curriculum, the Learning and Advising Center, the Library, and provides introductions to the nature of our students by the Dean of Students. Specific workshops follow
to provide faculty introductions to the on-line course management systems, introductions to specific software, ways of handling plagiarism in the classroom and incorporating active pedagogy.

The university launched an online course evaluation system for all courses in the institution in fall 2010. The online system ensures consistent administration of the evaluation instrument and collection of data. In an effort to align the procedures and content of the evaluation process, the Center for Teaching Innovation and Nexus Learning has initiated a review of student evaluation forms to increase consistency and to shift the focus of the course evaluation survey to emphasize the assessment of the outcomes of student learning. The faculty is expected to propose a revision to the evaluation in spring 2012, for implementation in 2012-13.

(SSR: 23) Examine procedures and policies at all stages of the personnel process to promote greater consistency across schools and greater clarity for probationary faculty of all types.

(SSR: 24) Develop guidelines for faculty personnel reviews that balance increasing demands on both professional development and service in relation to the university’s mission of outstanding teaching.

A large section of the university Organization of the Faculty document is devoted to renewal and assessment of full-time faculty. Schedules with specific dates indicate what material should be submitted, when and to whom. Included also is the time frame for feedback at each stage of the assessment process. This process is strictly followed and consistent across schools.

In fall 2008, the university created more consistent expectations and evidence for the review of teaching effectiveness. In addition to student evaluations for each course, dossiers include syllabi, grades, examples of exercises and projects, student work and statements of teaching philosophy. Peer reviewed, classroom observations for each faculty are also included as part of the reviews.

In 2011, the reorganization of the university has prompted the need to revise aspects of faculty governance and the procedures of its committees, including the review of faculty promotion and tenure, a process inextricably linked to the work of the faculty. This comprehensive revision will take place through the 2011-2012 academic year. It seeks to more clearly articulate the recognition of faculty contribution to teaching, new curricular initiatives, and participation in the priorities of the Strategic Plan. It also seeks to streamline and make more effective and efficient the work of faculty service. The Provost’s Office is working with the Secretary of the Faculty and the chairs of the standing committees to design a process to revise the faculty governance and its committee structure to reflect the new organization of three colleges (see Section 3: Major Challenges and Opportunities).

The faculty manual includes expectations and guidelines for assessing part-time faculty. The subcommittee for adjunct faculty, as part of the standing university Faculty Affairs and Development Committee, includes adjunct faculty from all schools, and is charged to review and recommend revisions of policies and procedures regarding adjunct faculty compensation, benefits, working conditions, coordination, performance review and evaluation, and community and communication issues.

STANDARD 11: EDUCATIONAL OFFERINGS
(SSR: 10) Continue to monitor the balance and mix of majors among the schools at the university and how this impacts the university’s operations and resources.

The university is monitoring its balance and mix of major programs through an ongoing assessment process, or sunset policy, which reviews academic quality and the ability to meet accreditation requirements, an evaluation of enrollments, the cost of education, and resources requirements for each program. Programs will be phased out that do not draw a strong cohort of students, are too expensive to run, or lack the abilities to offer a broad enough curriculum and maintain acceptable levels of academic quality.
In addition to setting a policy for the review and closure of programs, the university is aggressively planning for new programs and degrees that leverage its inherent capabilities and new opportunities and synergies among our current programs and offerings. For example, new majors in the liberal arts were introduced in 2008 to provide a wider range of transfer options for internal students.

(SSR: 12) Establish a writing plan in each school and in Continuing and Professional Studies that identifies writing-intensive courses and addresses curriculum design, writing assessment, and faculty development.

(SSR: 13) Add the development of oral communication skills as a formal student-learning goal and create appropriate strategies for achieving and assessing that outcome

As part of the university commitment to writing across the curriculum, each program has identified the writing intensive courses in the major; many programs have identified more than one writing intensive course and several have writing intensive courses as designated electives. Additionally, all graduate programs are currently in the process of developing a statement on writing that identifies the values and characteristics of successful communication in the discipline. These statements actively guide the curriculum development of these emerging graduate programs. At all levels, faculty and the Director of the Writing Program have collaborated to develop writing assignments, rubrics and other assessment tools that speak to the disciplinary conventions of each field.

This expanded collaboration has allowed for increased conversation regarding the Writing Intensive guidelines. Curriculum development at all levels will continue, in close consultation with the Director of the Writing Program, to further refine how the writing intensive (WI) courses target and teach writing skills and meet the WI course criteria. In addition, with the expectation of the capstone project, each major program will scaffold the teaching and learning of research, writing and communication skills through the curriculum.

In many respects, our programs, such as Writing Across the Curriculum has focused on our largest population, the undergraduate students, and the expectation in the past had been that adult learners in continuing education and graduate programs possessed these skills when they matriculated. This, as we learned when assessing student work, is increasingly not the case.

The university continues to address the expectation surrounding graduate and adult student research (SSR12 and SSR14). Most graduate programs include a thesis, dissertation, synthesis project, or other culminating experience that involves research and written presentation of that work. The guidelines for the documentation format have been updated nearly every year; a document available to students focuses on the research process which describes responsibilities of the participants (students, faculty, committee members, etc.), the services and assistance available from the university as well as the scope and expectations associated with graduate research. Research and theses workshops, as well as meetings with writing tutors have become a required component of all graduate programs that include research. Online programs (M.S. Occupational Therapy and Midwifery, for example) have developed materials to support their students. In 2011, the university will continue the evaluation of existing curriculum, and as new program proposals are brought forward, we will assess where and how writing can be most effectively integrated to prepare students for these culminating experiences, as well as for their careers.

STANDARD 12: GENERAL EDUCATION
(SSR: 11) Explore strategies to enhance communication concerning the goals and requirements of the College Studies program.
The College Studies program is the general education curriculum for undergraduate students. The College Studies Committee, made up of faculty from across the university, reviews curriculum and oversees the assessment processes of the general education program. It was established to improve communication about the program through the active involvement of faculty from areas outside of the liberal arts and sciences. This committee meets monthly, has membership from each school, and is charged with reviewing course proposals and the guiding the assessment processes for the College Studies curriculum.

‘Formalizing our approach to Nexus Learning,’ the first initiative of the Strategic Plan, calls for the liberal arts to underpin collaborative, real world, active engaged learning experience. As the university advances the work to realize this pedagogy across the institution, the connections to College Studies will be more clearly supported with high-impact experiences grounded in the liberal arts. The former Dean of the School of Liberal Arts is the inaugural director of the Center for Teaching Innovation and Nexus Learning. Her expertise and knowledge of the College Studies curriculum will help make these relationships more explicit.

In addition, a program review for the College Studies program, with external reviewers, is scheduled for fall 2011. As part of pre-programming for the program review, the university hosted two College Studies Community Summits that invited outside speakers to serve as a springboard to discuss ideas in general education. Dr. William Sullivan, previously Senior Scholar at the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, anchored a discussion and faculty workshop about the integration of the liberal arts and professional studies, and Dr. Ashley Finley, from the AAC&U, anchored discussions and faculty workshops about high-impact practices and the use of assessment to support student-centered learning and innovation in curriculum. This series of discussions provided an opportunity to share current goals of the program, discuss new and emerging ideas in general education. It also served as the platform for planning curriculum change and improvement in the College Studies program. These community-wide events also greatly enhanced the communication regarding the goals and requirements of the College Studies program.

(SSR: 15) Review current mathematics offerings in light of various program needs.

The mathematics curriculum at Philadelphia University serves the goals of the College Studies Program and the needs of the majors. It also provides math courses congruent with the varied level of math preparation students have when they arrive at the university. The goal for the College Studies Program is to provide a quantitative literacy and familiarity of calculus. Practical applications such as the interpretation of graphic data, the use of quantitative software and hardware, compound interest, and others are stressed.

In 2008 there was a thorough review of the math curriculum that included a university summit. This examined many issues including: math courses required, sequences offered and the use of statistics as a math option. Current practices at other institutions, best practices, university data and the math education literature was examined. It was determined that because some students come to the university with good math preparation, the goal of the College Studies math curriculum (interpretation of graphic data; use of quantitative software and hardware, and familiarity with the principles of derivative and integral calculus) could be achieved for many students with only one math course, and in some cases with none. The math placement system was revised and a new policy approved by the faculty. Students with credit for calculus (AP or transfer) will need no math courses, and students who place into Introduction to Calculus or Calculus I will need only one math course. All others need two courses. This created two additional math options:

1. Introduction to Calculus and any free elective
2. Calculus I and any free elective

The new system was based on math knowledge in relationship to program goals, not on a predetermined number courses or credits. While the number of College Studies math courses (5) has not changed since 1990, there is more flexibility in the required number and sequence of courses students can take to meet their needs, goals and math acumen.
STANDARD 13: RELATED EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

(MSS: 3) It is unclear how academic and co-curricular programs are currently organized or how they will be modified in order for students to “acquire a global perspective” and engage in “active citizenship,” two clearly articulated and measurable outcomes in the current mission statement.

The specific outcome of “acquiring a global perspective” and engaging in “active citizenship” are not stated explicitly in the current mission statement (see Section II, page 6) or the current Institutional Outcomes, (see Appendix D), but these concepts remain important to the education and learning experiences of the students at Philadelphia University.

Acquiring a global perspective

The institution has long had the goal of focusing efforts to strengthen programs and services that broaden student experiences, enhancing their knowledge of other peoples, cultures and economies, and supporting their abilities to acquire a global perspective. The College Studies program explicitly sequences students’ learning from local/regional to more global concerns throughout their four years in the program. In the first year students are introduced to the theme “Finding Philadelphia” in an American history course and a writing course. In sophomore and junior years, foreign languages and area studies courses provide a global focus in preparation for a capstone in senior year that addresses international issues, and requires students to frame a topic or problem in their discipline within a global context. The College Studies program also supported increased study abroad opportunities by designing upper level courses that could be taken abroad, to balance the tight sequencing and restricted option of professional major programs.

Study Abroad participation for semester-long programs has grown from 102 students in 2004-05 to 185 students in the 2010-2011 academic year. Faculty-led ‘short courses,’ which provide immersive travel study experiences within the context of a course, have also had a noticeable increase in participation, with over 90 students taking short courses to Hong Kong, Italy, China (mainland and Hong Kong), Argentina, Costa Rica and France in 2010-2011.

Additionally, there has been an intentional expansion of inter-cultural and multi-national programming in Student Development with the express desire to increase campus conversations and dialogue around the area of global issues. Programming such as UNITY Week, Windows on the World and theme months have been well attended with many productive co-curricular and curricular collaborations with faculty who incorporate the events and themes into course work.

Serving and Learning in Philadelphia: active citizenship

In an effort to expand the civic engagement offerings, Philadelphia University sent a delegation of faculty and student affairs professional staff to the Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) Greater Expectations Institute in 2008 with the goal of designing service-learning programs and activities for the institution. The result was "Learning and Serving in Philadelphia," a service-learning initiative that encourages the development of Philadelphia University students as active citizens and professionals by nurturing an ethic of service and by promoting personal and professional responsibility.

The framework supports community engagement in the first two years, sponsored by Student Affairs and designed to involve students in service initiatives in the community. In years two and three, the program promotes social action through service programs focused on meeting community needs. In the third and fourth years, service-learning in College Studies emphasizes the development of active citizenship, and service-learning in the major supports the student development as a civic professional. (See Appendix A for a diagram of Serving and Learning in Philadelphia program or http://philau.edu/community/forfaculty.html).

Launched in 2008, SERVE-101 is a one credit civic engagement and service-learning course designed for students to gain insights into the reciprocal nature and responsibility of citizenship for the individual and
community. In these courses students learn through both practical applications of service projects and critical reflection on their activities. To date over 200 students have enrolled in the course, providing over 3,375 hours of service valued in the excess of $75,000 on in kind service to the community in the last two years.

Community Service PLUNGE and Day of Service are ongoing programs that have supported community service efforts since 2008. Faculty mini-grants and departmental support have also promoted service-learning initiatives in the academic programs including Interior Design, Occupation Therapy, Industrial Design and Environmental Sciences. (Additional information about Student Development programs in Section III, pages 25-27.)

(SSR: 14) Continue to develop individual school plans for information literacy in conjunction with library professional staff and the Information Literacy Task Force.

Since 2007, Information Literacy (IL) Committee has been a standing subcommittee of the Undergraduate Education Committee. The subcommittee has updated the existing University Information Literacy plan and skills rubric, which forms the basis for individual school plans. To drive development of each school plan, subcommittee representatives are working with their associated School Education Committees to identify optimal school and programmatic Information Literacy learning outcomes and courses most suited to be IL targeted. Information literacy learning outcomes have been actively integrated into the assessment plans for each program. (see Appendix D: Assessment Materials)

(SSR: 17) Expand study abroad participation by outreach to under-represented disciplines/populations and by increasing financial resources available to students.

The International Scholars Program (ISP) began as a collaborative effort between the college success program and the honors program. The purpose of ISP was to increase the participation of students from moderate to low-income families in international study. Site selection intentionally excluded western European countries to avoid overlap with the university’s established Study Abroad sites and to encourage the university to consider Study Abroad partnerships in nations that represent a departure from United States’ cultural and intellectual heritage. ISP destinations included: Beijing, China (2005), Cape Town and Johannesburg, South Africa (2006), Rio de Janeiro and Salvador de Bahia, Brazil (2007) and Istanbul, Turkey and Tunis, Tunisia (2008). There were a total of 54 students and 16 faculty members who participated in the International Scholars Program. 26 out of 47 eligible students followed this experience by studying abroad for a full semester.

The director of Study Abroad has an avid interest to develop scholarship funds for under-resourced students and families in the university. Creative approaches to raising these funds will be a goal of the Study Abroad office in the upcoming years.

STANDARD 14: ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING

Middle States Suggestions:
1. (MSS: 5) Although an impressive degree of assessment occurs, assessment measures, analysis and follow up in all areas need to be formalized to go beyond simple data collection and be more conducive to self-reflection.
2. (MSS: 6) It is suggested that hard measures and goals be articulated for all academic programs in terms of learning outcomes and that compelling evidence be created on how learning outcomes are assessed and met.
3. (MSS: 11) The recommendation at the end of the chapter is critical to maintain a culture of assessment. “Develop a strategic and integrated plan to assure that schools and programs are consistently implementing monitoring and communicating their outcomes assessment initiatives” will be important to stay front and center.
Self-Study Recommendations:

1. (SSR: 9) Review undergraduate and graduate programs and courses to ensure that objectives are clearly identified and expressed in terms of student learning outcomes.

2. (SSR: 16) Implement assessment processes for the accelerated degree completion program offered by Continuing and Professional Studies and make improvements as appropriate.

3. (SSR: 18) Improve assessment of the academic success of study abroad students.

4. (SSR: 28) Develop a strategic and integrated plan to assure that schools and programs are consistently implementing, monitoring and communicating their outcomes assessment initiatives.

The university has developed a multi-faceted, systematic approach to assessment that works at multiple levels to identify whether students and graduates have acquired the knowledge, technical skills and attitudes the institution believes they should have. The university assessment plan articulates the student learning outcomes for each educational program, the measures used to evaluate outcomes, and the articulation of the response to the results of the process to ensure the continuous improvement in each program. The Assessment of Student Learning Committee coordinates this effort in the institution and has been instrumental to the support and creation of a culture of assessment, continuous improvement and inquiry at all levels and in all units of the university.

The Office of Institutional Research (IR) has been central to the efforts to assess student learning and has provided an important foundation and data to inform the university assessment plan. With IR, the University Data Analytic initiative also supports data-driven decision making and benchmarking for student learning assessment in all units of the institution. (See Section II, page 11; and Section III: Major Challenges and Opportunities, pages 23-24)

The university assessment plan includes all educational programs, co-curricular programs and administrative units. This includes accelerated completion program offered by Continuing and Professional Studies and the Study Abroad program. This overall view of assessment at this institution will be available on our website by January 2012. The university is currently working with a website developer to catalog the assessment plans and metrics for each program and make it a dynamic resource available to the public. In the meantime, mission statements and programmatic outcomes will be included in the 2011-12 academic catalog, available online by August 2011, http://www.philau.edu/catalog/.

The university assessment plan and the assessment of student learning are described in more detail in Section V: Student Learning, Assessment and Continuous Improvement.

(MSS: 12) Since assessment will continue to demand greater levels of sophistication, the need for additional staff/faculty resources should be examined, as there is just one faculty member with release time who serves as coordinator for outcomes assessment.

The new organization of the university (see Section III: Major Challenges and Opportunities) identifies specific faculty in each of the three colleges who will receive release time to serve as the coordinator of outcomes assessment for each college. These roles will be supported by the Vice Provost and Director of Learning and Advising, currently co-chairs of the Assessment of Student Learning Committee who also serve as outcomes assessment coordinators for the institution.

(MSS: 10) Continued participation in NSSE surveying could benefit from complementary pairing with other student assessment instruments and the application of their findings in planning improvements in student support. A need for data that reflects trends and patterns is needed for long-range planning.
(MSS: 13) Although there is significant data from NSSE, CIRP, etc., additional information and data will require a greater degree of interpretation to be useful for Student Life program assessment. There are significant program initiatives that need to be translated into learning outcomes in the student life area in order for there to be more sophisticated assessment.

(MSS 14) As the VP for Academic Affairs and the VP for Enrollment and Student Affairs develop more joint programs, learning outcomes developed collaboratively could serve the FYE program as well as the Career Planning as target areas for academic and student life collaboration... Excellent programs are being presented but they currently do not articulate student learning outcomes or how they can be assessed.

The university has invested both time and resources to collect trend data to inform the improvement of the student support programs and the development of the student life area. The university completed the NSSE survey in 2005, 2006, and 2009, and conducted the AICUP First Year Survey, and Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Survey in 2006 and 2009. Data from Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Survey informed improvements to administrative operations such as pre-registration, registration and communication about financial holds/financial aid processes.

Data from NSSE and Noel-Levitz also guided long-range planning, and lead to the identification of a goal of the Strategic Plan: integrating curricular and co-curricular learning. With this initiative, the university has invigorated its first year experience program with the introduction of service-learning (see SERVE 101, Section II: page 17) and learning communities. In 2010-2011, SERVE-101 piloted a first year learning community program that paired a SERVE-101 course with a major course in the first year, and aligned community service activities with specific course material. In its first year (2010-11), the learning community/service-learning program won a national award "Promising Practices in Student Affairs and Academic Affairs Collaboration" from NASPA – Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education.

The university has also extended the relationships between Career Services and the academic majors through an active internship program. Following a recommendation of a program review in 2007, the Office of Internship Programs was moved from the Office of Academic Affairs to Career Services. This past year Career Services placed 219 students, primarily from fields of fashion, business and design, at 130 sites over nine states. All of these students receive degree credit for their participation in these internships, and the hands-on experience is valuable extension of their professional learning.

Career Services has also launched a focused program, coordinated with faculty, that integrates reflection and career preparation. Administered by a career services professional within a course, CareerEDGE is a multi-step program that guides students through reflection on their career goals and opportunities using an e-portfolio format.

Student Development, Career Services, Residential Life programs are deeply engaged with student learning assessment and have clearly articulated learning outcomes as part of their assessment plans. Please see Appendix D: Assessment Materials. More information about collaborative efforts between Student and Academic Affairs in Section III, pages 25-27.

CONCLUSION
With 30 recommendations for improvement, the self-study served as a catalyst for initiating new comprehensive planning and improvement strategies, exemplified by the development of a new university mission, a new strategic plan and more integrated approach for evaluating institutional effectiveness. The self-study enabled the university to identify areas in need of improvement and served as a resource for the development of the new Strategic Plan. This section demonstrates that the university has made significant progress with many of these recommendations being integrated into the formal goals and objectives of the institution since the self-study.
SECTION III: MAJOR CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

In the recent five years, Philadelphia University has redefined its goals and created a new vision for its future derived from comprehensive and inclusive planning. The new President Dr. Stephen Spinelli (2007) and new Provost and Dean of Faculty, Dr. H. R. Swearer (2009) together with the Board of Trustees, the senior leadership, and the faculty have advanced the initiatives of the Strategic Plan and lead the institution forward through a number of institution-wide changes in the pursuit of becoming a premier model of professional education, the underlying ambition of the Strategic Plan.

Challenges for the institution lie primarily with implementing an integrated group of transformative changes, all driven by the goals and initiatives of the Strategic Plan and all recognized as significant opportunities for improvement in the institution. The focus of these changes are summarized below:

- Streamlining the organization of the university to facilitate implementing the Strategic Plan (Standards 2, 4, 5)
- Transitioning to a learning-centered institution to advance the mission and Strategic Plan (Standards 10, 13, 14)
- Developing new planning models for decision-making, and creating metrics for a competitive edge (Standards 2, 10)
- Designing and implementing new curricula and academic programs to support the Strategic Plan (Standards 11, 13)
- Increasing the focus on applied research, an initiative of the Strategic Plan (Standards 3, 10, 13)
- Creating innovative facilities and renovating buildings envisioned in the Strategic Plan (Standard 3)
- Launching a new fundraising campaign to drive the Strategic Plan (Standard 2)

STREAMLINING THE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNIVERSITY TO FACILITATE IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGIC PLAN (Standards 2, 4, 5)

The Strategic Plan, (2008-2013), establishes the platform for designing and delivering innovative academic programs in order to better serve students and to differentiate the university in the marketplace of higher education. Implementing the Plan requires a flexible administrative and academic organizational model that effectively and efficiently delivers curricula and services to students and faculty. The fundamental premise of the Plan is to create a responsive organization with the ability to scale with carefully targeted enrollment that leverages the existing infrastructure (Standard 2: Planning, Resource Allocation, and Institutional Renewal).

New Academic Organization

Phase I
In the spring 2010, the university initiated the first phase of a comprehensive academic reorganization through the formation of the College of Design, Engineering and Commerce (C-DEC). Within the college, the School of Business Administration and the School of Design and Engineering bring together more than half of the undergraduate enrollment at the university.

Phase II
Initiated in the spring of 2011, the second phase of restructuring brings together the School of Liberal Arts and the School of Science and Health into the College of Science, Health, and the Liberal Arts (C-SHLA). The new College includes the Division of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the Division of Health Professions. This new structure creates greater integration of College Studies, the general education curriculum, unifies synergistic programming in the health professions disciplines, streamlines administrative structures, and provides opportunities for academic collaborations.
The second phase of restructuring also transforms the School of Architecture into the College of Architecture and the Built Environment (C-ABE). The new name reflects the growth and diversification of programs in the College from Architecture to Construction Management and Sustainable Practices in the last few years. The internal organization of academic programs will remain the same, but the administrative structure will change to achieve greater efficiencies and more effective delivery of services to students and faculty.

When the entire reorganization is complete (Summer 2011), the university will consist of three colleges and together will work as a networked organization that is flexible and responsive to carefully targeted enrollment growth. Each college will share bands of administrative and academic personnel that vertically report directly to the executive deans of their colleges, while also benefitting from lateral relationships to university councils composed of colleagues with similar roles in other colleges. (See Appendix B for organizational charts and schematic diagram of roles within the new colleges.)

Administrative reorganization
A new structure among the senior administrative staff reflects the growth and maturity of the institution and appropriately supports the university, making it more flexible and integrated and better able to pursue the initiatives of the Strategic Plan (Standard 5: Administration). In 2009, designating an Office of the Provost and a Provost/Dean of Faculty, instead of the Office of Academic Affairs and the Vice President of Academic Affairs, established the position of the Provost as the chief academic officer, leading the vision, policy and operations of the academic units.

In June 2011, with the friendly resignation of the current Vice President for Finance and Administration, the role has been restructured to create two positions to respect the increasing responsibilities associated with administrative operations and finance and to respond to the growth of the university. The new Vice President for Administration and Chief Operating Officer will oversee human resources, facilities and physical plant, legal affairs, risk management, mail services, security and summer programs/conferences. The new Chief Financial Officer will be responsible for all business and finance operations, dining services and the university bookstore.

In fall 2009, with the retirement of the Vice President of Enrollment Management and Student Services, the Dean of Students and the Dean of Enrollment Management assumed more responsibility and leadership in their areas. Each reports directly to the President and attends the President’s Council. This allows for the separation of these areas of responsibility and greater focus on student life as an integral component of the Philadelphia University educational experience.

With the designation of an inaugural director of the Center for Teaching Innovation and Nexus Learning, the university has established a new office explicitly charged to support the learning of our students, and the pedagogical practices of the faculty. This position starts July 2011, reports to the Provost and leads a new phase in shaping the university’s identity as a learning-centered institution.

Challenges posed by the new organization
Effectively integrating faculty, administration, and staff
The challenge of the academic unit reorganization is to appropriately define the roles and responsibilities of the new positions in each college, to identify the personnel to fill these positions, to create parity in the relationships among these roles in each college, and to restructure effectively the budgets for each college and new area in such a way that allows refinement, adaptation, and improvement over time.

Revising Faculty Governance
The new college system requires that the faculty, working closely with the Office of the Provost, revise the Organization of the Faculty (Standard 4: Leadership and Governance). The challenge of revisioning faculty governance is to design an efficient and effective process that represents faculty interests, respects the history and tradition of the institution while anticipating its future.
Although initiated by the new academic organization, the faculty intends to leverage the opportunity of reworking governance to examine ways to create more productive and consistent practices for faculty investment in service workloads and work on committees. This process will lead to a review of current policies and procedures that include, but are not limited to, curriculum review and development, faculty promotion and review, student academic standards and conduct review, and general communication and decision-making among the faculty. Addressing these issues will also contribute to a substantial update and revision to the Faculty Manual. The challenge is to design a system that is responsive to change and maintains its flexibility over time to support the growth and evolution of the university. With the goal of establishing a new committee structure by faculty elections in spring 2012, the timeline requires concentrated work and faculty commitment through the summer and fall 2011.

TRANSITION TO A LEARNING-CENTERED INSTITUTION TO ADVANCE THE MISSION AND STRATEGIC PLAN (Standards 10, 13, 14)

In July 2011, the university will establish the Center for Teaching Innovation and Nexus Learning. The Strategic Plan calls for a deeply embedded set of “Nexus learning,” experiences consisting of active, engaged, real world, collaborative pedagogy, and the integration of professional focus grounded in the liberal arts and sciences. Defining a distinctive pedagogy for the university and supporting faculty to deepen teaching approaches with proven results in student learning helps the university advance its mission and improve the delivery of our programs. The Center is positioned to foster an institutional culture of teaching excellence by supporting faculty as they engage with pedagogies encouraged by the Strategic Plan. It identifies and promotes local and national models of teaching effectiveness and high impact, integrated learning (or Nexus Learning). The Center communicates these models to the university community, actively supports and recognizes teaching excellence, and develops tools to help faculty assess their performance in the classroom. It also engages in faculty development and collects evidence to assess its impact (Standard 10: Faculty, Standard 14: Assessment of Student Learning).

This center advances the work of a faculty “Nexus Learning Action Team” that has convened regularly for two years (2009-2011) to initiate conversations with faculty and students across the institution about effective teaching and learning. The action team solicited examples of effective teaching pedagogies, and conducted student focus groups, which captured a view of our current teaching practices that stress active and engaged learning. The team also analyzed each aspect of the current student learning experience, leading to a baseline description of active and engaged learning. This material formed the foundation of a primer of best practices or a repository of faculty teaching narratives that describe engaged learning at the university. The primer will be available online by late fall 2011, and faculty will be able to contribute to it over time. It will be the evidence of our expanding expertise in deep learning practices.

The Center will be challenged by a demand for services relative to the depth of its resources. It has critical potential and opportunity to help the university improve the impact of its programs and meet the goals of the Strategic Plan.

DEVELOPING NEW PLANNING MODELS FOR DECISION-MAKING, AND CREATING METRICS FOR A COMPETITIVE EDGE (Standards 2, 10)

Academic Growth Plan
In fall 2010, the university hired a consultant to work closely with the Provost and academic leadership to develop a model for academic growth to serve as a powerful tool to plan resource allocation in an integrated way with a multi-year budget planning process. It supports a more sophisticated planning process for faculty growth to meet new academic program goals and inform ways to diversify the faculty. This initiative relates to Standard 2: Planning, Resource Allocation and Institutional Renewal and Standard 10: Faculty.
The work of the consultant provides a comprehensive audit of our current faculty make-up and distribution and analyzes the characteristics of the current full-time faculty including discipline, rank, contract status, teaching load, salary, duration of employment, and ratios of FT faculty to students and to adjuncts by school and by program. It evaluates the use of online teaching, team teaching and compares studio, lab, and lecture use among the different programs. Taking these characteristics into account, the consultant has identified weaknesses and where faculty should grow to meet the academic program initiatives of the Strategic Plan.

Using this baseline data, the consultant is designing a dynamic model based on situation analysis that considers scenarios of enrollment growth, costs per program, tuition costs, infrastructure and faculty allocations. It provides a comprehensive analysis of the current conditions and takes into account new program development and enrollment growth to predict consistent and dependable tuition revenue for investing in additional full-time faculty.

This analysis will then inform qualitative planning with deans and faculty to expand enrollment in areas that enhance academic quality, leverage existing resources, and support the implementation of the Strategic Plan. The planning tool is a dynamic, proactive model informed by data and responsive to changing conditions of the economy, enrollments, tuition, and other variables. The intention is to support academic program growth, increase diversity of our faculty in terms of expertise and backgrounds, and advance the initiatives of the Strategic Plan in the next five years. The study and plan will be completed by September 2011.

As stated in Section II, the University Analytics initiative uses technology to enable immediate access to data from across the institution to facilitate strategic and informed decisions. This initiative identifies Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that translate and quantify goals into a numerical metrics to measure progress. The creation of operations dashboards, or real time graphical snapshots of the status of the KPIs, provide fast feedback for specific leadership areas of the university, including the President's Council, Provost's Council, development, admissions, and various aspects of academic support and operations. (Please see Appendix B for an example of the University Analytics dashboard.)

The investment of time, resources and budget in a new position (Director of Institutional Research, 2007), consultants (Academic Growth Plan, 2010-11), and technology (Analytics Dashboard, 2011) can be challenging, if not a struggle, for an institution of this size. Ultimately, however, these practices lead to more effective and informed decisions with the promise of more efficient operations. Data-driven decision-making is fundamental to the university's ability to implement the Strategic Plan and its initiatives.

DESIGNING AND IMPLEMENTING NEW CURRICULA & ACADEMIC PROGRAMS TO SUPPORT THE STRATEGIC PLAN (Standards 11, 13)

New core curriculum for the College of Design, Engineering and Commerce (C-DEC) (Standard 11)
The College of Design, Engineering and Commerce delivers a new curriculum and learning experience to students in design, engineering and business majors so they are prepared to think critically about the world, and have a multi-dimensional understanding of their rapidly evolving fields. It is an integrated education that serves as a unique learning model that creates “an educational structure around achieving innovation,” a goal of the Strategic Plan.

The C-DEC curriculum provides students in design, engineering and commerce shared methods and a common language that prepares them to collaborate effectively and to work across disciplines. In addition to courses in their major, a set of four courses and an integrative capstone experience provide skills and knowledge that are relevant to today's careers, transferable to other fields and practices, and applicable to emerging opportunities. By gaining insights from creative processes, business models, systems thinking, and tools for developing empathy and human understanding, students learn effective strategies for innovating that
taken together broaden the expertise of any one area, add educational value to each major, and ultimately, prepare students for strategic leadership in their careers.

Challenges associated with implementing the C-DEC curriculum
A number of implementation challenges are related with implementing C-DEC. The first, completed in 2010-11, has been the revision of seventeen major programs in C-DEC to integrate the new core curriculum and its corresponding approval by the University Education Committee and the faculty of C-DEC. Starting with the initial offering in 2011, each new course will be delivered to approximately 350 students, a challenge of size and scale for identifying the teaching staff, appropriate facilities, and faculty development and preparation to teach the course. To be effective, the content of the new core curriculum will also need to be dynamically integrated into the majors so that students will be able to form connections and make the material relevant to their professional practices in business, design and engineering.

With the launch of the first core course in the fall 2011, eleven full-time faculty members have met during the spring semester 2010 on a weekly basis to develop assignments and assessment rubrics, refine the syllabus and attend faculty development workshops. This model will be repeated for each of the new core C-DEC course introduced in the upcoming years. Developing appropriate technology to support the goals of the curriculum, and designing the appropriate assessment processes to improve on its delivery are also challenges to this implementation.

The university also challenged to provide the faculty teaching core C-DEC courses with sustained development. In the two recent years, the Provost Office has offered funding for research grants and conference attendance related to the new C-DEC curriculum and Nexus Learning as a way to spark faculty development and research in these areas. This funding program has distributed 29 awards in the last two years that have benefited over 55 members of the faculty.

Graduate Program Growth (Standard 11)
The Strategic Plan requires the university to build graduate and professional programs. Since 2006, the university has launched three new graduate programs in Disaster Medicine and Management (2006), Sustainable Design (2007), and Construction Management (2009). With the addition of M.S. degree programs in Interior Architecture and Industrial Design in fall 2011, and Design Management and Trauma Counseling in fall 2012, the university intends to nearly double the enrollment in graduate programs by 2013.

New graduate programs have identified based on their ability to build on the strengths and capabilities of the faculty and programs, to broaden our current offerings, and to distinguish the institution within the marketplace of higher education. Graduate programs also provide opportunities to serve non-traditional sectors of the population that seek advanced degrees for professional advancement and career changes. Furthermore, building graduate programs allows the institution to respond proactively and strategically to declining undergraduate demographic trends.

The university’s initiative to expand graduate enrollment is challenged by the significant time required to develop new programs, prepare them for state approval, and bring them to market. It can take up to twenty-four months from program proposal to launch. The Graduate Council, chaired by the Associate Provost, supports the coordination of the administrative responsibilities of the graduate program directors. Program growth has been coupled with a thorough assessment process to evaluate our current offerings with a ‘sunset policy’ mentioned earlier in this report.

Co-curricular Expansion (Standard 13)
New divisional leadership in Student Affairs in 2007 provided an opportunity to realign and expand both the quality and quantity the co-curricular programs and services. Driven by the Strategic Plan, the redistribution of critical areas within Student Affairs greatly enhanced programming in areas such as: career and internship
development, civic engagement and service-learning, residence life, diversity initiatives, First-Year Experience programming, and leadership development.

**Career and Internship Development**
As discussed in Section II, page 20, the inclusion of internships as part of Career Services has allowed the institution to maximize relationships with industry partners and strengthen student life contributions to academic programs.

**Civic Engagement and Service-Learning**
With the development of a civic engagement course (SERVE-101, described in Section II) and the expansion of specialized and campus-wide service programs, the university has been able to grow and support its community service programs. The first campus-wide *Day of Service*, initially part of President Spinelli’s Installation celebration in 2008, is a dedicated day each fall semester that includes planned service activities for students, faculty and staff in the neighboring community. These coordinated efforts have provided great momentum and increasing results. In 2008-09, Student Development Programs, including the Day of Service, sponsored an estimated 11,800 direct service hours for a value of approximately $236,000 to the neighboring communities; in 2009-10, an estimated 12,128 direct service hours for a value of approximately $246,000 to the neighboring communities.

**Residence Life & Education**
The reorganization of the Department of Residence Life and Housing, along with the establishment of an additional live-in residence life staff member, has allowed for deliberate focus and expansion of both operations and programmatic efforts that either targeted first-year students in residence or created more connectedness to campus: the “Community Curriculum,” a highly intentional programming and intervention plan for first-years in residence (87%), and the Commuter Services Program.

**Diversity Initiatives**
UNITY Week is a campus-wide effort that affirms the diversity represented within the university community and the value and vitality that pluralism brings to our individual and collective experience. Unity Week is a collaborative effort by more than thirty committed students, faculty, and administrators to coordinate a series of performances, speakers, dialogues, open classes, food, and music. The two week span of events annually engages between 1,100 and 1,400 students in discussions and culturally relevant events. The UNITY Week format ties in the themed monthly programming which include Black History, Hispanic Heritage, Women’s History, GLBT History within a broader context of social justice issues.

**First-Year Experience Programs**
Begun in 2000 as a pilot residential program, the First Year Experience (FYE) program has expanded to a truly collaborative campus wide initiative in which student affairs and academic affairs are key stakeholders and partners. FYE is coordinated through Student Development Programs, in cooperation with the College Studies Program and various academic programs. The first-year experience program begins with START and New Student Orientation and the Summer Reading program. It includes faculty orientated academic advising and is centered in a residential experience. As stated in Section II, pages 17 and 20, service-learning and learning communities have also been introduced as part of FYE program.

**Leadership Development**
Philadelphia University's mission motivates the faculty and staff to do more than educate professionals; it seeks to develop students as leaders in their chosen profession. The institution works towards that mission by focusing on leadership development, both inside and outside the classroom. Student Affairs professionals engage student leaders in training programs, workshops, and individual supervisory and advising meetings that enhance their strengths and seek to build on or create new areas of competence.
Initiated in 2010, the LEAD (Leadership, Engagement, Assessment and Development) co-curricular certificate program is designed for upper-class students looking for leadership development opportunities that will contribute to their personal advancement and help achieve their leadership potential. Using Kouzes and Posner’s nationally recognized Five Practices of Exemplary Student Leadership as a foundation, the majority of the program consists of workshops that participants elect to attend based on their individual interests and leadership goals. Common program features include: the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI), support and guidance from a leadership mentor, and the autonomy to select relevant workshops to the student’s LEAD Plan. Following the success of LEAD and at the request of LEAD alumni, in 2011, the LEAD Scholars program was developed to further enhance the application of leadership theory for juniors and seniors specifically.

Challenges
As with most co-curricular programs, the challenges are the coordination and communication with the academic programs, faculty and academic administrators so that student learning is enhanced, coordinated and more integrated inside and outside of the classroom. Identifying the funding and appropriate staffing to adequately support co-curricular activities are not always prioritized in the budget process. Finally, in Career Services and with learning communities there are development and cultural challenges for adapting new technologies for instruction and assessment with the use of e-portfolios.

INCREASING THE FOCUS ON APPLIED RESEARCH, AN INITIATIVE OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN (Standards 3, 10, 13)

Increasing the level, scope, quality and visibility of research, creative activity, knowledge creation, is one of the seven initiatives of the Strategic Plan. The university identifies research as an important part of maintaining and expanding faculty credentials, continually enhancing academic excellence, as well as providing additional financial support for the institution. Many of the university’s full-time faculty are currently engaged in research, supported either by university funding or private, state and Federal funds. The university has received funding from various Federal and state agencies such as the National Science Foundation, the U.S. Department of Commerce, the U.S. Department of Defense, the U.S. Department of Education and the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, in the last several years. To date the funded research has totaled over $23 million in support. In 2010, for the first time, a faculty member received a prestigious Guggenheim Fellowship, usually reserved for larger research institutions.

In July 2010, the university appointed an Executive Dean for University Research in order to focus and support these activities on campus. The new dean convened the University Research Council (URC), made up of faculty representatives, to define and implement a Strategic Plan for university research. This group also established the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP) to give students opportunities to work with faculty on research projects.

In 2010, the university established the Philadelphia University MAG Composites Institute with an initial commitment of $1.1 million from MAG IAS, a world-leader and developer in advanced industrial automation systems. The Composites Institute will use the funding primarily to develop a unique composite textile structures laboratory to conduct research in textile-based composites for aerospace, automotive and alternative energy. The university is seeking additional government and industrial funding sources to complement the initial contract.

In 2010 the university initiated the Edward P. Marram Biomedical Textile Structures Laboratory to conduct seminal research in the field of tissue engineering for implantable nano-based materials for a wide range of clinical applications. This work is funded by the US Department of Commerce, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and a private philanthropist. This funding extends research initiated in 2008 with the creation of
the Pennsylvania Advanced Textile Research and Innovation Center (PATRIC), funded by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development with a contract for $1,255,000. In addition to biomedical textile structures, PATRIC’s mission is to conduct research on textile apparel product safety and protection from toxic chemicals used to treat textiles.

The university’s Engineering and Design Institute (EDI), located at the Center for Sustainability, Energy Efficiency and Design (SEED), focuses on interdisciplinary approaches to design for sustainability to solve difficult technical and aesthetic challenges. The Institute has been successful in partnering with other local universities to obtain $1 million in grant funding from the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development in 2006-2007 and follow-up funding of $750,000 in 2007-2008. These multi-year grants allow the EDI a consistent source of funding.

An original contract with the U.S. Army for $1,724,000 in 2004 for the Laboratory for Engineered Human Protection (LEHP), has led to the appropriation approximately $9,000,000 for research into comfort and protection of military garments. The LEHP research is performed at the Philadelphia University Research Center (PURC), which houses the university’s expanded sponsored research program and the Grundy Lab.

**Challenges**

With a demanding teaching load, faculty do not always have appropriate time to develop new research projects. While there is an off-campus facility, PURC, there remains limited space for new research activities.

**CREATING INNOVATIVE FACILITIES AND RENOVATING BUILDINGS ENVISIONED IN THE STRATEGIC PLAN (Standard 3)**

The university is actively working to develop and enhance its institutional resources to support needed facilities for our current programs and student population and to support new curricular initiatives in graduate programs, the new college of C-DEC, and applied research, all goals of the Strategic Plan. In addition, “developing innovative facilities” is an explicit and critical mandate of the Strategic Plan. The university has completed a number of renovation and construction projects to support current programs and new initiatives (Standard 3: Institutional Resources).

In 2010 the university completed a major interior and exterior retrofit of an existing campus building to create the Center for Sustainability, Energy Efficiency and Design (SEED). This adaptive reuse allowed for the first LEED certified building on campus. This new cutting edge center will provide space for our growing graduate programs in sustainable design, construction management, and interior architecture.

In fall 2011, Philadelphia University will open its newest residential facility. The Philadelphia University Residences at Falls Center will feature attractive, state of the art, open-concept apartments with living rooms, private bathrooms and contemporary kitchens. On-site parking, security, wireless internet, convenience store, social lounges, studio space and access to an on-site café will make this an extremely attractive choice for on-campus living for upper class students.

**Philadelphia University Research Center (PURC),** a research center, located approximately two miles from the main campus, houses the university’s expanded sponsored research program. This 18,750-square-foot, leased facility provides faculty research space for the Grundy Lab, the Laboratory for Engineered Human Protection and the Engineering and Design Institute.

Currently in development is the DEC Innovation Center, a new building to house the new collaborative projects, curriculum, and research for the College of Design, Engineering and Commerce. This approximately 39,000 square foot building is in construction documents, with ground breaking scheduled for June 2011, and the
occupancy planned for fall 2012. The university issued bonds in late April 2011 to fund the construction of the building.

In the summer of 2010, the Design Center’s studio space became a flexible space for students and classes to work collaboratively on inter-disciplinary projects. Several faculty offices were also created for representatives from the Schools of Business Administration and Design and Engineering. The facility serves as bridge to the opening of the new C-DEC building in the fall of 2012 and allows us to pilot the layout and resources required for a collaborative learning space. It will serve as the classroom space for the first C-DEC course, Integrative Design Process, launching in fall 2011.

**Challenges**

As the university seeks to implement its ambitious Strategic Plan it also requires more sophisticated master planning and space planning than needed in the past. Working with Sasaki Associates, an architectural and planning firm in Boston, MA, the university has begun a master planning process to address the priorities of the Strategic Plan, the needs of the campus community, and the sensitivities of a campus in a suburban neighborhood. The university now requires multi-year resource planning proposal coupled with program growth. Fund-raising strategies currently underway to support the new DEC Innovation Center are described in the following section.

**LAUNCHING A NEW FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN TO DRIVE THE STRATEGIC PLAN**
(Standard 2)

**Challenges: The Economy and Alumni Engagement.** The financial downturn in 2008 created a challenging economic climate for most, if not all, institutions of higher education, and for all organizations that depend on philanthropic support to any significant level. Philadelphia University was not immune, yet benefited from (1) careful, pragmatic campaign planning; and (2) a proactive, “opportunistic” focus on major-gift fundraising.

Beyond a difficult economy for fundraising, a second challenge exists: a significant portion of Philadelphia University’s alumni have not, over the years, been deeply engaged in university life. To address this issue, the university has directed significant resources to the area of alumni relations. Tactics used to deepen alumni engagement include:

- Increased use of “affinity-based” alumni programming that reflects some of the university’s hallmark disciplines (e.g., alumni gatherings focused on networking opportunities for students and alumni from specific industries such as accounting, architecture, graphic design and the health sciences).
- Increased use of technology, including “RamNet” (the university’s alumni intranet), as well as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.
- An alumni survey to elicit alumni feedback on a range of university issues (the survey will be implemented in fall 2011).

These efforts have resulted in incremental increases in alumni engagement. Evidence of this success includes important increases from fiscal years 2010 to 2011, including: a 30% increase in RamNet registrations; a 31% increase in attendance at alumni events; a 22% increase in Facebook “fans”; and a 22% increase in LinkedIn members.

**Campaign Planning and the Feasibility Study.** In late 2008, now armed with a dynamic Strategic Plan in need of funding - but still in the midst of an alarming economic downturn - the Board of Trustees approved the implementation of a campaign feasibility and planning study (“the study”). A number of university constituents (donors and donor prospects, many of whom are alumni, as well as existing and prospective
corporate and foundation supporters) were interviewed and engaged in detailed conversations to inform the scope, scale and timing of a major fundraising campaign.

The Campaign: “Fuel” for the Strategic Plan. At the June 2009 meeting of the Board of Trustees, and with a great deal of campaign planning completed (in accordance with the study), the Board voted to approve *Power to Innovate: The Campaign for Philadelphia University*. The Campaign has a goal to secure a minimum of $40 million in gifts and gift commitments over five years. Target funding sources include individuals (both alumni and non-alumni), corporations, foundations and government agencies.

The Campaign is comprehensive in scope, and funds raised are supporting major components of the university’s Strategic Plan. Chief among these components is construction of a 39,000 square-foot, $22 million building, the *DEC Innovation Center*, to house the new College of Design, Engineering and Commerce (DEC). Other projects and initiatives to be supported by the Campaign include: scholarships; endowed chairs; applied research; academic exhibits; the renovation of an historic building on campus that will house documents and educational exhibits associated with the career of former U.S. Senator Arlen Specter; an endowment to support the long-term operation of the aforementioned project; the “gray to green” renovation and conversion of a former gymnasium into a LEED-certified academic building; and the construction of a synthetic turf athletic field.

To date, thirteen volunteers (eight of whom are Trustees) have been assembled to assist in advancing the campaign. Several more volunteers, each positioned strategically to perform outreach to specific constituencies of the university (e.g., alumni, parents of current and former students, corporations, foundations and government funding agencies) are being recruited and will be added in the coming weeks.

More Campaign Planning. To confirm the feasibility of the Campaign’s goal, two consulting organizations were retained in October 2011 to research and analyze our constituent database and make recommendations regarding the philanthropic capacity of the donor prospects within that database. The findings of both consulting organizations (one of which performed a meta-analysis of our entire constituent database, the other a more detailed analysis of our most highly rated donor prospects) indicated that there are sufficient donor prospects to reach and exceed the campaign’s $40 million goal.

In anticipation of increased cultivation and solicitation activity, in May 2011, the Office of Development and Alumni Relations hired an additional major gifts officer who will join two other “frontline” fundraisers in pursuit of campaign gift commitments of $25,000 and above. Three additional fundraisers are on staff and will focus on garnering gifts below $25,000.

Quiet Phase. The “quiet phase” of the campaign was extremely successful, and was highlighted by a number of extraordinary gifts. These included:

- $10 million for the *DEC Innovation Center* (from an individual donor)
- $1.575 million (from an individual donor; this gift is unrestricted)
- $1.1 million to establish the Philadelphia University MAG IAS Composites Institute (from a corporation)
- $700,000+ for scholarships (from many individual donors)
- $400,000+ for the Arlen Specter Center for Political Science and International Relations (from several donors)
- $250,000 to establish the Edward P. Marram Biomedical Textile Structures Lab (from an individual donor)
- $200,000 for an endowed fund in the School of Business (from an individual donor)
- $175,000 for the Center for Sustainability, Energy Efficiency and Design (from a foundation)

Public Announcement. Despite a diminished national climate for philanthropy in recent years, the university raised sufficient funds to announce the public phase of the campaign on April 30, 2011. At the university’s premiere annual celebration, the *Evening of Innovation*, President Spinelli reported that $28.5 million had been raised in public and private gifts. This sum represented more than 70% of the campaign’s goal with
more than three years remaining in the campaign. In subsequent weeks the fundraising successes continued and as of June 1, 2011, the campaign stood at $29 million.

It is noteworthy that Power to Innovate was launched two years following the successful completion of The Campaign for Philadelphia University, a three-and-a-half-year fundraising campaign that garnered $21.9 million in pledges and gifts on its $20 million goal. Of the funds committed, $16.6 million was designated for construction of The Kanbar Campus Center and The Gallagher Athletic, Recreation and Convocation Center.

In sum, the university is moving from what had historically been a largely “staff-driven” model of fundraising to what is now a more organic “volunteer-driven” model. The result will be an enduring culture in which all stakeholders feel that they are responsible for - and benefit from - the university’s overall advancement.

CONCLUSION

Philadelphia University is an institution fully engaged with transformational change as guided by a carefully articulated and ambitious Strategic Plan. Despite the challenges of implementation, change management, timing and scale, these changes afford us the opportunity to pursue a new educational platform that will differentiate the institution in the market place and allow the university to become an innovative model for professional university education.
SECTION IV: ENROLLMENT AND FINANCIAL TRENDS AND PROJECTIONS

The university's financial operations remain strong, but will continue to require constant and careful management in light of the highly competitive conditions that are compounded by the current economic environment. As a result of appropriate risk management, diversification of academic programs, and financial flexibility, we continue to successfully guide the university during these unprecedented times. 2010 yielded many successes and Philadelphia University will continue to manage diligently to support its students and preserve its financial strength in 2011 and 2012.

The university’s top priorities are meeting enrollment expectations, providing the necessary level of financial aid resources, and securing the adequate funding to support our academic programs and implement the Strategic Plan. In addition, growing the unrestricted reserves, and expanding external support and fundraising will be critical components of further advancing the institution.

The university has had a consistent track record of positive operations and balanced budgets. For the period ending June 30, 2010, the operating budget surplus was $4.8 million, the highest in university history. This continued operational performance has been a measure of strength as noted by both Moody’s and S&P in their rating reviews, including an upgrade by Moody’s prior to a $17.8 million bond issuance in April 2011. (See Appendix C for rating reviews.)

Enrollment Management & Trends

The following table sets forth the university’s headcount and full-time equivalent enrollment for the five-year period beginning with the fall semester 2007 (based on 12 and 9 credit hours constituting one full-time-equivalent for undergraduate and graduate, respectively):

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full Time Undergraduate</td>
<td>2,545</td>
<td>2,565</td>
<td>2,612</td>
<td>2,681</td>
<td>2,540</td>
<td>2,602</td>
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<tr>
<td>Graduate Credit Hours</td>
<td>7,955</td>
<td>8,310</td>
<td>9,797</td>
<td>10,708</td>
<td>10,023</td>
<td>10,023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer Undergraduate Credit Hours</td>
<td>3,701</td>
<td>2,871</td>
<td>3,078</td>
<td>2,914</td>
<td>2,700</td>
<td>2,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evening Undergraduate Credit Hours</td>
<td>1,751</td>
<td>1,934</td>
<td>2,420</td>
<td>3,301</td>
<td>2,932</td>
<td>2,932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off-Campus Undergraduate Credit Hours</td>
<td>986</td>
<td>693</td>
<td>1,292</td>
<td>1,542</td>
<td>950</td>
<td>950</td>
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</table>

The university’s fall 2010 undergraduate day enrollment was 2,681. This represents the largest enrollment in the institution’s history and follows a trend of increasing enrollments since 2007 (2,545). Projections for undergraduate enrollments are relatively level, with no dramatic increase or decline expected in the next three-year period. Increased retention rates contribute to enrollment growth in the last few years. Retention increases are due to more competitive and proactive advising, community-building efforts and increased extra- and co-curricular activities, as well as increased financial aid, contribute to enrollment growth in the last few years. The university’s professional focus and career and graduate school placement continue to resonate with college-bound students and their parents.

Graduate enrollments were relatively stable through 2006-07, and then rose dramatically, nearly 35%, between 2007 and 2010. Most of the growth in graduate enrollment came from the launch of new M.S. programs Sustainable Design (2007) and Construction Management (2009). Changes in marketing have contributed to the growth in existing programs, including the development of networking and community through Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, blogs and other social networking media. Substantial changes to the graduate assistantship program have also increased enrollments of well-qualified students.

The university will launch a number of new graduate programs in the next three years that will continue to increase enrollment. Two new programs being considered are Practice Doctorate in Midwifery and
Occupational Therapy Doctorate, which will yield small enrollments, but are necessary to meet accreditation requirements and industry needs. The institution is also considering M.S. programs in Prosthetics & Orthotics, Trauma Counseling, Real Estate Development, Design Management and Environmental Sustainability.

Integrating admissions with financial aid and analyzing admissions data and prospective student profiles on a weekly basis have enabled the university to maximize net revenue while increasing student quality, program diversity and geographic distribution.

Financial Trends
The university, like most other enrollment-driven institutions, has traditionally and consistently managed its financial operations closely, creating operating and capital budgets that match conservative enrollment estimates. Capital spending is mainly driven by strategic initiatives, or in areas that have deferred maintenance needs. The management of our annual operations has been noted and lauded by the external ratings agencies as part of the university’s strengths.

Management of the university’s balance sheet is also of the upmost importance. Building cash reserves, growing the endowment and managing to an appropriate level of debt are the ongoing priorities in this area.

Operating Budget
As a matter of practice, the university has constructed annual operating budgets with projected expenditures plus debt service balanced by an equivalent or greater amount of projected revenues.

The university utilizes a four-year budget model, which is updated on an on-going basis (See Appendix C). The model takes into consideration historical data and trends, along with regional and national economic factors that have an impact on higher education costs. In addition, revenue and expense projections for new majors and programs, along with cost controls, are considered in order to maintain a sound and accurate budget model. The annual budget and four-year budget model are developed through input from President’s Council, academic deans and department heads in order to ensure that the budgets address strategic initiatives while maintaining existing programs and services. The university uses line item review that is intended to assure available revenues, or reduced costs, are properly applied for the implementation of planning goals.

The growth in the university’s operating budget over the past three years, current year and two years forward is depicted in the following graph.
The university has averaged a $6.1 million annual unrestricted operating surplus and a $14.3 million annual unrestricted operating surplus available for debt service over the past five years. Total net assets increased $23.4 million or 34% over the same time period. These financial results and conditions came from increased enrollment, modest tuition increases and controlled expenses. Also, residence halls averaged 98 percent occupancy during this time period.

Set forth in the table below is the university’s unrestricted net operating surplus and operating surplus available for debt service for the fiscal years indicated as reported on the audited statement of activities.

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<tr>
<td>Operating surplus</td>
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<tr>
<td>less operating</td>
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<td>expense</td>
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<tr>
<td>unrestricted</td>
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<tr>
<td>Operating surplus</td>
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<tr>
<td>plus depreciation and</td>
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<tr>
<td>interest expense</td>
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<tr>
<td>unrestricted</td>
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<tr>
<td>surplus available for</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>debt service</td>
<td>$13,364,045</td>
<td>$12,926,774</td>
<td>$11,619,674</td>
<td>$16,749,420</td>
<td>$16,923,940</td>
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The operating financial results for 2010-2011 are projected to continue this upward trend. For fall 2010, the full-time day enrollment of 2,681 exceeds the 2,538 budget by 143 students or 5.6%. In addition, the graduate fall 2010 enrollments are above the budgeted level. Residence halls were at 100 percent occupancy for fall 2010. These fall 2010 statistics, coupled with the continued prudent management of operating expenses, indicate the university is likely to achieve a strong level of operating results for 2010-2011.

Balance Sheet

Investments & Net Assets

The year-end market value of the university’s investments, which constitute the university’s endowment, for the last five fiscal years is summarized in the table below. Investments consist primarily of equity securities of a variety of domestic and international companies, bonds that consist primarily of United States Government and corporate obligations of investment grade quality, alternative investments to diversify market exposure and short-term investments that primarily consist of cash equivalents. While quasi-endowment assets can be utilized by the university, if necessary, for operating expenditures at the discretion of the Board of Trustees, the assets contributed to the university as endowment cannot be so utilized.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Endowment</td>
<td>$11,116,830</td>
<td>$11,411,438</td>
<td>$11,623,893</td>
<td>$11,887,467</td>
<td>$12,366,621</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quasi-Endowment</td>
<td>6,844,353</td>
<td>8,096,117</td>
<td>7,401,143</td>
<td>5,748,877</td>
<td>6,255,470</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5,230,094</td>
<td>7,350,838</td>
<td>6,210,775</td>
<td>983,545</td>
<td>1,385,413</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$23,191,277</td>
<td>$26,858,393</td>
<td>$25,235,811</td>
<td>$18,620,289</td>
<td>$20,003,504</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The university’s investments as of April 30, 2011 have grown to approximately $24.7 million, reflecting current market growth.

In concert with an ongoing review of its investment strategy and current diversification by university officials, the Finance Committee of the Board of Trustees and outside investment counsel, the university remains
committed to its long term strategy of preservation of its restricted principal in perpetuity, and insuring the prudent investment of funds to meet the short and long run spending needs of the university.

Under Commonwealth of Pennsylvania law, the university is limited to spending between 2% and 7% of its accumulated endowment each year. The university allocates to income each year a portion of endowment net realized gains under a Board-approved endowment spending policy of 5% of the trailing three-year average of the market value of endowment assets. Since net realized and unrealized gains on permanently restricted endowment assets may eventually be spent by the university, such gains are recorded in the financial statements as temporarily restricted net assets until transferred to unrestricted net assets. During the years ended June 30, 2010 and 2009, the university transferred $941,486 and $861,239, respectively, of endowment net realized gains from temporarily restricted net assets to unrestricted net assets. These transfers are included in net assets released from restrictions in the statements of activities.

The university’s investments and other assets, net of its liabilities, are recorded as the university’s net assets in its financial statements. By the nature of restrictions placed by donors, certain net assets are available to be expended by the university, while others are not. The following table reflects the university’s total net assets and expendable net assets at the end of each of the last five fiscal years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total net assets</td>
<td>$75,054,167</td>
<td>$86,287,945</td>
<td>$87,980,128</td>
<td>$84,128,843</td>
<td>$91,826,592</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>less permanently restricted net assets</td>
<td>$(11,116,830)</td>
<td>$(11,411,438)</td>
<td>$(11,623,893)</td>
<td>$(11,887,467)</td>
<td>$(12,366,621)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>less investment in Plant (1)</td>
<td>$(47,813,280)</td>
<td>$(47,209,856)</td>
<td>$(47,840,299)</td>
<td>$(51,498,968)</td>
<td>$(54,031,609)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expendable Net Assets</td>
<td><strong>$16,124,057</strong></td>
<td><strong>$27,666,551</strong></td>
<td><strong>$28,515,936</strong></td>
<td><strong>$20,742,408</strong></td>
<td><strong>$25,428,362</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The growth in the university’s unrestricted net assets, as represented by the following graph, reflects the overall growth and financial stability during the five year period.

![Philadelphia University Unrestricted Net Assets](chart.png)
Long-Term Debt

The university’s long term debt as of June 30, 2010 is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pennsylvania Higher Educational Facilities Authority (PHEFA) Revenue Bonds:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Series of 2009</td>
<td>$12,045,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Series of 2007</td>
<td>15,055,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Series of 2006</td>
<td>10,640,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Series of 2004</td>
<td>28,345,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital Leases: Technology</td>
<td>362,549</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bank loan</td>
<td>679,121</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Less unamortized bond premium (discount) | 70,001 |

$67,126,670

During 2011, the university completed two transactions related to its long-term debt:

- The 2011 bonds, a fixed rate issue through PHEFA, provided funds for the construction of the new Design, Engineering and Commerce academic building (DEC Innovation Center), as well as refinancing the bank loan mentioned above. Total amount of the bond issue was $17.8 million.
- The 2011(B) bonds, a bank–held bond also issued through PHEFA, refinanced the series 2004(B) bonds, which were variable rate bonds backed by a bank-issued letter of credit. The new bonds eliminate the risk of having our cost of capital tied to the bank’s credit rating and eliminated the remarketing risk as well.

The university continues to monitor the level of debt on its balance sheet, and has plans in place to retire some of the new debt earlier than the required redemption period.

Capital Projects

The following is a table of the capital projects since 2006 and their funding. A full description of these projects is in Appendix C.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Building</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Funding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Kanbar Campus Center</td>
<td>New Construction: 75,000 sq ft</td>
<td>2004 bond issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gallagher Athletic &amp; Convocation Center</td>
<td>New Construction: 54,000 sq ft with 245-car underground garage</td>
<td>2004 bond issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Althouse Hall</td>
<td>Renovation: 35,000 sq ft</td>
<td>State grant and 2006 bond issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Hayward Hall</td>
<td>Renovation: 16,500 sq ft on ground floor</td>
<td>Annual Capital Budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Smith House</td>
<td>Renovation</td>
<td>Annual Capital Budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Independence Plaza Apartment Complex</td>
<td>Renovation for 87 additional beds</td>
<td>2009 bond issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Hayward Hall: Biomedical Engineering Lab</td>
<td>Renovation electrical, installation of equipment</td>
<td>Annual Capital Budget and excess operating funds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Center for Sustainability, Energy Efficiency and Design (SEED)</td>
<td>Interior and exterior retro-fit of existing building; LEED certified</td>
<td>2009 bond issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Elliot House</td>
<td>Renovation of interior and exterior space</td>
<td>Deferred maintenance reserves generated by excess operating margins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Scholler Hall</td>
<td>Renovation: upgrade of electrical service, air conditioning, bathrooms</td>
<td>Deferred maintenance reserves generated by excess operating margins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Residences at Falls Center</td>
<td>Leased residential facility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>DEC Innovation Center</td>
<td>New Construction: 39,000 sq ft</td>
<td>2011 bond issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Near future</td>
<td>Roxboro House, Philadelphia Register of Historic Places</td>
<td>Renovation/restoration (3800 sq ft) for Arlen Specter library &amp; research center</td>
<td>Fundraising and university reserves</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Rating Agencies
The current economic environment continues to place pressure on the higher education industry as a whole. According to Moody’s January 2011 Annual Sector Outlook for U.S. Higher Education for 2011, they have revised their outlook to stable from negative for diversified market-leading colleges and universities in the public and private sectors in the United States. However, for the large majority of rated universities, they maintain a negative outlook. This larger segment is comprised of less diversified universities that are most directly challenged by tuition pricing and state funding threats.

Despite these challenges in the higher education marketplace, Philadelphia University received a ratings upgrade this spring by Moody’s, going from Baa2 with a negative outlook to a Baa2 with a stable outlook, while Standard & Poor’s maintained our BBB rating. Both rating agencies pointed to the university’s prudent financial management that results in consistently positive operations as the main reason for their optimistic outlook.

The full reports from both rating agencies are included in Appendix C.
SECTION V: STUDENT LEARNING, ASSESSMENT AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

BACKGROUND
During the self-study process for the Middle States decennial review in 2005-06, Philadelphia University administration and faculty recognized the value of assessment for continually improving student learning and educational programs. In the following five years the university has established that assessment is integral to the creation of a culture of learning, and a formalized Nexus learning approach, an initiative of the Strategic Plan. Nexus learning encourages students to collaborate with peers, faculty, staff, and alumni in a curriculum rich in experiential and interdisciplinary learning. Nexus Learning is buttressed by the foundational aspiration that professional studies and the liberal arts should be purposefully designed to be dynamic and reflexive.

Our strong culture of assessing learning outcomes had been too isolated in individual academic programs and inconsistently aligned with larger institutional goals. Aligning programmatic learning outcomes with institutional goals became possible with new leadership in 2007, the adoption of a new Strategic Plan in 2008, and the concomitant participation of all stakeholders in the Plan’s creation and implementation. The university has made substantial progress and will complete the first two-year cycle of a comprehensive plan that aligns current practices of the assessment of institutional effectiveness and assessment of student learning by July 2013. (See “Institutional Effectiveness” and “Aligning Assessment Cycles” diagrams that detail this timeline and process: Appendix D.)

The inclusive development of the assessment process has yielded a number of fundamental outcomes for Philadelphia University that guide our work:

• An effective assessment plan is integral to the university’s mission and informs the Strategic Plan and its initiatives.
• Faculty and Staff need to have ownership of the assessment process with support from the Provost, Institutional Research, budget planning, and Student Life.
• The assessment plan will work at multiple levels in the institution: courses, programs, colleges, and the university.
• The assessment plan will be a useful, systemized, and sustained evaluation of all aspects of the university including institutional effectiveness, student learning, the student experience, and administrative services.

Integrative assessment conforming to the outcomes above insures that the overarching strategic goals of the university are aligned both across and within academic and administrative divisions.

A. INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT

The institution has developed and implemented an assessment process that evaluates its overall effectiveness in achieving its mission and goals and its compliance with accreditation standards.

DATA SOURCES, ASSESSMENT PROCESSES, and the STRATEGIC PLAN
Philadelphia University assesses the effectiveness of its programs and overall functioning in a variety of meaningful ways. In order to determine how well our students are learning and how well our administrative services are functioning, Philadelphia University administers and uses a variety of instruments to evaluate its institutional effectiveness.

Each year data compiled through sources articulated below feed analysis used to inform the beginning and the end of each yearly planning cycle. At semi-annual retreats of the President’s Council, in January and June, this group reviews the data and based upon their findings adjusts, maintains, or elaborates on plans for short- and long-term planning cycles. These retreats evaluate and review the documentation of progress toward the
The achievement of each of the seven initiatives of the Strategic Plan as well as efficiency in the Administrative Services divisions. The President's Council:

- Collects and updates Strategic Plan outcomes and progress on the initiatives.
- Develops strategies for how information and data can be better utilized to advance the mission of the institution.
- Advises and assists with data collection and analysis required for improvement.
- Develops a strategy for reporting and communicating data and data analysis.
- Shares across divisions the latest assessment results and strategies, and through the executive deans, shares the results with faculty.

The new dashboard analytics data reporting system (described in Section III, page 24) provides an easily accessible scorecard for comprehensive assessment of institutional effectiveness. It identifies specific areas of targeted intervention, and allows units to align more readily and easily with institutional goals and processes.

Listed below are data sources incorporated into Philadelphia University’s semi-annual analyses conducted to gauge progress on the Strategic Plan as well as evaluate institutional effectiveness. While this list is not exhaustive, it does sample the range of assessment activities that occur on a regular basis throughout the institution and that are used to anchor assessment of the institution in general and progress toward implementing the Strategic Plan in particular.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of Data Source/Tool</th>
<th>Timeline, when administered or collected</th>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>Middles States Standards of Excellence</th>
<th>Strategic Plan Initiatives (Appendix A)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Admissions Databases: System stores demographic and academic data on inquiries, applicants, and matriculated students as well as prospects for graduate and undergraduate programs.</td>
<td>Continually updated and grown throughout admissions recruitment year.</td>
<td>Weekly updates provided to all Program Directors, President and Provost Council members to inform program, college and institutional planning.</td>
<td>1, 2, 5, 8</td>
<td>2, 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment Prediction Data: approaches to enrollment prediction have been honed to provide more accurate information for both graduate and undergraduate programs.</td>
<td>Quarterly.</td>
<td>Shared at semi-annual President and Council retreats and in consultation with the Deans.</td>
<td>1, 2, 5, 8, 2, 5</td>
<td>2, 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development Database Benefactor system records and stores demographic data on alumni, interested individuals, giving prospects, other donors. It is in sync with Datatel our HR and Student Information System.</td>
<td>Continually updated and grown by institutional advancement and alumni relations.</td>
<td>Shared with President, President's Council, Board of Trustees Quarterly.</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5</td>
<td>2, 4, 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Results: Quarterly financial forecasts developed by the CFO. Yearly external audit in July-August.</td>
<td>Quarterly/Yearly.</td>
<td>Shared regularly with President's Council and quarterly with the Board of Trustees as both early warning and tool for longer range planning.</td>
<td>2, 3, 5, 6, 7</td>
<td>1-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yearly Budget: A yearly budget is compiled using a negotiation process informed by the Strategic Plan involving the President, Provost, CFO, Deans, and Administrative unit heads. The University Budget Advisory Committee (faculty and staff) also participate in negotiations.</td>
<td>Yearly cycle. Dec.: Submittal of College and administrative unit budgets. Jan./Feb.: President's Council Review March: University Budget Advisory Committee Review. Sept./Nov./March/Jun: Board of Trustees Finance Committee Review.</td>
<td>Recent improvements include higher levels of input from individuals and groups across the organization, and budget prioritization driven by Strategic Plan.</td>
<td>1, 2, 5, 7</td>
<td>1-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description of Data Source/Tool (continued)</td>
<td>Timeline, when administered or collected</td>
<td>Comments</td>
<td>Middles States Standards of Excellence</td>
<td>Strategic Plan Initiatives (Appendix A)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Administrative and Staff Employee Evaluation</strong>&lt;br&gt;Standard Instrument.&lt;br&gt;Ties individual to unit and institutional goals.</td>
<td>Yearly. Due to Unit heads in May. Due to Human Resources in June.</td>
<td>Systematized via the annual merit process and linked to the budget process via the Strategic Plan. Evaluation includes planning performance expectations, managing performance, setting goals and appraising results for coming year-aligned with Strategic Plan. Articulates Quality Improvement Process, if necessary.</td>
<td>2,5,6,9</td>
<td>2,4,6,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3 to 5-Year Plans</strong>&lt;br&gt;Each administrative unit and academic college at the university writes a three to five year plan that sets goals and a common agenda for the unit to support the initiatives of the Strategic Plan.</td>
<td>Timelines vary, but consistently developed for each unit. With the 2011-12 year, all new colleges and academic support units will complete a three to five year Strategic Plan. Revised yearly as part of annual report.</td>
<td>Collaborative planning process among the members/staff/faculty of the particular unit; outcomes and goals assessed each year, revised as necessary as result of assessment.</td>
<td>1,2,3,5,7</td>
<td>1-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Annual Reports</strong>&lt;br&gt;Each administrative and academic unit at the university provide an annual report assessing achievement of goals established according to the university Strategic Plan, the mission and the 3-5 year plan for the unit.</td>
<td>Yearly-due in May to unit’s designated President’s Council member.</td>
<td>Reviewed by each supervisor, shared as necessary at semi-annual retreat of President’s Council in June. The process ties units to long-range planning and institutional goals.</td>
<td>1,2,3,5,7</td>
<td>1-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Faculty Activity Reports</strong>&lt;br&gt;All tenured, tenure track and contract faculty complete a standardized faculty activity report.</td>
<td>Due to Deans in April. Due to Provost in May.</td>
<td>Faculty activity reports are used in the annual merit determination that is fundamentally guided by the Strategic Plan. Ties individuals to institutional and unit goals.</td>
<td>1,7,9,10</td>
<td>1,2,3,4,5,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Faculty Teaching Reports</strong>&lt;br&gt;All full-time faculty prepare teaching reports which include an assessment of teaching effectiveness, course syllabi, grading sheets, graded assignments, and other course material.</td>
<td>Due to Deans in April. Due to Provost in May.</td>
<td>Systematized through the merit process and provides data on individual faculty as well as comprehensive data on strengths, weaknesses by school and college as well as insight into student progress.</td>
<td>1,7,9,10,11,12</td>
<td>1,2,3,4,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Faculty and Administrative Surveys</strong>&lt;br&gt;HERI: Higher Education Research Institute&lt;br&gt;LibQUAL+ (Library Service Quality Survey)&lt;br&gt;Space Utilization Survey (internal)</td>
<td>HERI: first Administered 2007 Triennially re-administered 2010 (Still awaiting most recent data). LibQUAL+: first administered 2010, to be conducted every 2-3 years.</td>
<td>Deans, Provost and President’s council review for areas of action.</td>
<td>3,9,10,7</td>
<td>1-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Course Evaluation</strong>&lt;br&gt;Students complete anonymous, standardized, on-line course evaluations which provide qualitative and quantitative feedback on the course and teaching to Faculty and Deans.</td>
<td>Administered in last 3 weeks of each semester and shut down on last day of classes. Shared with Faculty member and Dean simultaneously after grades submittal.</td>
<td>Aggregate course evaluations useful for academic planning. Currently re-examining course evaluation formats to better align with assessment of student learning. A recommendation from the faculty for a revision is expected in spring 2012.</td>
<td>8,9,10,11,12</td>
<td>1,2,4,5,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description of Data Source/Tool (continued)</td>
<td>Timeline, when administered or collected</td>
<td>Comments</td>
<td>Middles States Standards of Excellence</td>
<td>Strategic Plan Initiatives (Appendix A)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alumni Surveys and Hiring Statistics</strong></td>
<td>Collected semi-yearly by Career Services, reported through President’s Council member.</td>
<td>As with student surveys in general, a problem with utilizing alumni and hiring data has been the response rates and amount of data collected to gain information with actionable validity.</td>
<td>7,14</td>
<td>2,4,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employer Surveys/Focus Groups</strong></td>
<td>Intermittent and by Program. Reported through Dean to Presidents Council.</td>
<td>Consensus appears to be that focus groups and individual interviews are the most effective method for collecting data since survey response is generally very low.</td>
<td>7,14</td>
<td>2,4,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Faculty Meeting, Provost’s Council, and Board of Trustee Meeting Minutes</strong></td>
<td>Monthly faculty meeting; Bi-monthly Provost Council meetings; Quarterly Board Meetings.</td>
<td>Minutes are available in the public folders, accessible to the university community with a log in.</td>
<td>4,1,2</td>
<td>2,3,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Benchmark Studies:</strong> Requested by Provost or President when necessary to compare the university with outcomes, curricula, costs, and activities at reference schools.</td>
<td>Carried out during Strategic Planning in 2007-08; ongoing practice to contribute to planning research and analysis.</td>
<td>The institution is a member of the Educational Advisory Board, a consulting firm provides benchmark studies, best practice research and analysis from research conducted at universities nationwide on requested topics. Consultants hired as necessary to conduct studies.</td>
<td>7,2,3</td>
<td>1-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Portfolios/Culminating Projects</strong></td>
<td>Collected at the close of each semester.</td>
<td>Program faculty, directors, alumni groups, and deans meet to discuss final projects in light of curricular objectives.</td>
<td>7,14</td>
<td>1,3,4,5,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Retention and Persistence Data</strong></td>
<td>Distributed weekly to President’s Council; shared through Retention and Persistence Committee and the Institutional Resources webpage.</td>
<td>Regularly used in decision making by President, Provost, Deans and Directors with the input of faculty and staff members of the standing Retention and Persistence Committee.</td>
<td>1,2,7,9,13</td>
<td>1,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>External Examination Results</strong></td>
<td>Annually.</td>
<td>Primarily demonstrates extent to which learning objectives are met for health sciences graduate and some undergraduate programs and School of Business undergraduate program and MBA.</td>
<td>7,14</td>
<td>1,7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Use of Assessment to Drive Institutional Improvement

While assessment is used to evaluate and benchmark our progress toward implementing the Strategic Plan, it also drives institutional improvement, such as responding to the National Survey of Student Engagement Data (NSSE) and Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Data (NL).

Philadelphia University’s NSSE 5 Deep Learning Scales, demonstrate that over the past five years freshmen and seniors have recorded increasingly positive responses to their experiences at the university. All 5 scales, Academic Challenge, Active and Collaborative Learning, Student Interaction with Faculty, Enriching Educational experiences and Supportive Campus Environment have trended upward, though some more than others. Students report that Academic Challenge and Enriching Educational Environment are the university’s strong suites. Both of these scales stand above the mean for all universities participating in the NSSE and score close to the top 10%.

Taking this information together with direct assessment of student learning, the President, faculty and other university constituents, decided to move Active and Collaborative Learning to a prominent position in the
new Strategic Plan. Reasoning that professionals are required to work dynamically in teams to produce knowledge, products, and services, active, collaborative and integrative learning, referred to as Nexus Learning, forms the bedrock of the new Strategic Plan, as its first initiative. Professional development grants, budget allocations, and other incentives have encouraged faculty to prioritize this type of student learning. Thus the Strategic Plan has improved institutional effectiveness by aligning pedagogy with student learning.

Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Survey has also indicated that student satisfaction with the university also has risen throughout the past five years. In particular, students have rated administrative functions of the university higher since a number of more student-centered operational changes were instituted. The single most effective change occurred around the registration process. Students in 2006 expressed dissatisfaction with the cumbersome registration process and their inability to get desired courses and sections. Systematic changes and upgrades to the Datatel Corporation’s registration module, more data-driven analysis and planning of course sections, and simplified pre-requisite data, have transformed the registration process. Students in 2009 expressed significantly increased satisfaction with pre-registration.

These examples are only two of many instances in which assessment has been used for improvements. The university recognizes that in order realize the full potential of the Strategic Plan in all aspects of campus life, it must continue and even intensify assessing institutional effectiveness.

Information is available to all university constituents on the password protected Institutional Research website, www.philau.edu/ir/. Available on this site are Noel-Levitz data, NSSE data other survey data as well as the Common Data Set that includes information about admissions, enrollment, financial aid, clubs and other aspects of undergraduate life. [Results to NSSE surveys are available to Middle States reviewers at https://www.philau.edu/ir/msche/nsse.asp?password=msche. Results to Noel Levitz surveys are available at https://www.philau.edu/ir/msche/nl.asp?password=msche.]

**Retention and Persistence**

Philadelphia University has raised its expectations for student retention and persistence to graduation since the 2006 self-study. The institution has devoted considerable attention to establishing a responsible target for retention and persistence. In 2007, the president created the Retention Taskforce to: 1) analyze and understand major factors affecting undergraduate retention; 2) document current retention efforts; 3) formulate a plan for tracking and assessing retention, and 4) make recommendation for improving retention and persistence to graduation.

Chaired by the new Institutional Research Director, the task force provided data-driven analysis and recommendations on retention and persistence to the president. Suggestions included more focused and consistent academic advising beyond the first-year, technological improvements to the advising and registration modules, clearer identification and better tracking of students deemed at-risk, and better coordination and programming between Academic and Student Affairs. (The final report of the Retention Task Force (2008) is in Appendix A.) Enacting these recommendations, the institution has seen a steady increase in retention and graduation rates through 2010. This marks the highest retention and graduation rates, 79% and 62%, since the 2006 self-study. Efforts are underway to maintain these rates and improve graduation rates through a new administrative standing committee on retention and persistence co-chaired by the Dean of Students and the Director of the Learning and Advising that represents the Provost’s Office. More information on retention and persistence is available on the Institutional Research web page: www.philaU.edu/ir and upon request.

**Program Review**

The purpose of periodic program review is to provide a regular process for encouraging programs and colleges to reflect on how to improve teaching, service, research, professional and creative activities. Program review is essential for continuous improvement of institutional effectiveness and to encourage programs to
take steps to ensure that they serve the university’s mission and strategic direction. The goals of program review are to:

- Conduct program assessment informed by experience and knowledge external to the institution.
- Clarify rationales for teaching, professional activities, research, and service missions.
- Review indicators of the quality of programs and student outcomes.
- Establish plans for future including improvement and monitoring improvement toward measurable benchmarks.

The program review elements currently planned for implementation in fall 2011 include: 1) a self-study with quantitative and qualitative indicators of program quality; 2) an external review that includes a site visit and a report with recommendations 3) a response to the report by the Provost Office 4) response to the report and Provost Office comments by the program with self-identified recommendations that include a plan for continual improvement.

This plan provides expectations and goals that will be reviewed periodically by the dean, provost and president. Several of the written components required in the self-study are fundamental to assessment of student learning: mission statements, educational goals, curriculum and learning outcomes, student qualifications and performance and identification of benchmarks for student learning.

Programs are reviewed on a cycle of five- to six-years. Those with external professional accreditation visits undergo a modified procedure requiring them to include assessment elements for the university that are not typically required by accreditation agencies. These programs are expected to write a response to the recommendations resulting from the review and develop a plan for improvement. The university plans to align a consistent and structured system of program reviews with ongoing accreditation visits in fall 2011. An overview of program review, and a program review schedule are available in Appendix D. Philadelphia University’s process is centered on assessment and will link program review to Institutional Effectiveness (Standard 7) and Assessment of Student Learning (Standard 14).

B. ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING

Student learning assessments should demonstrate that, at graduation, or other appropriate points, the institution’s students have knowledge, skills, and competencies consistent with institutional and appropriate higher education goals.

INTEGRATING STUDENT LEARNING ASSESSMENT INTO INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT

Philadelphia University has a history of using assessment to advance student learning; however, formalized assessment was only intermittently reported by faculty and program directors to the chief academic officer. Since 2006 and the self-study, faculty have increased their commitment to assessing student learning and recognize that it is critical for improving the quality of our programs, achieving the university’s goals, and implementing the Strategic Plan. Currently all programs have developed learning goals and outcomes and are in the process of assessing student learning. Faculty contributions to the Strategic Plan have resulted in student learning that comprises four of the seven initiatives of the Strategic Plan: 1) formalizing our Nexus Learning approach, 2) investing in academic strengths to innovate and enhance student learning, 3) integrating the curricular with the co-curricular, and 4) building graduate and professional programs.

Aligning assessment of student learning with core initiatives of the new Strategic Plan has allowed the university to better coordinate its assessment efforts without disenfranchising faculty members and program directors that must lead the process.
Progress in Assessment of Student Learning
Faculty, deans, and administrators have significantly strengthened the culture of assessment at Philadelphia University since 2006. The department of Institutional Research has facilitated the compilation, integration, analysis and dissemination of data to the university community as a whole. Program directors have lead the faculty in implementing more consistent, useful, planned, accurate, and sustained assessment of student learning. Advancement in this area includes:

1. Developing an assessment plan to assure that colleges and programs consistently implement, monitor, and communicate their outcomes assessment initiatives.
2. Creating an Assessment of Student Learning Committee, co-chaired by the Vice Provost and Learning Center Director, and comprising faculty and staff members from all university units: academic affairs, student affairs, and administration.
3. Creating learning outcomes for division of Student Life programs and active assessment and communication process for FYE, Career Services, and Residence Life.
4. Increasing faculty understanding of how to evaluate and use the assessment process.
5. Presenting learning outcomes and assessment plans for all new programs before approval for implementation by the university’s Graduate Education Committee and Undergraduate Education Committee.
6. Creating more meaningful and higher quality assessment plans in all programs.

1. Plan for Assessment of Student Learning
Between 2008 and 2010, first interim Vice President of Academic Affairs Roydhouse and then Provost H.R. Swearer charged all programs with developing assessment plans aligned with university wide learning outcomes and the new Strategic Plan. The program level plans were established to document continuous improvement and provide assurance of student learning consonant with the Strategic Plan and the mission and goals of the institution. Though the assessment of student learning is a process undertaken at the program level, there is a communication plan that connects the assessment of student learning to larger institutional goals, budget and decision-making, in particular decisions affecting institutional effectiveness. (Appendix D: University Assessment Plan of Student Learning, Institutional Outcomes, and Appendix A: Strategic Plan)

Starting in 2011-12, program directors will be required to provide assessment reports to their Academic Dean each June in order to align assessment of student learning with the President’s Council’s yearly evaluation of institutional progress. The annual assessment reports will present student learning outcome results, as well as proposed changes in curriculum, pedagogy, activities and other areas that will improve student learning. This information will be shared at program director meetings and with program faculty in order to determine substantive changes to curriculum, new opportunities for learning, and methods for strengthening student learning through interdisciplinary collaboration.

These results are then, communicated to the Provost as updates to progress on the Strategic Plan, and integrated by the dean and program director with the unit budgeting process. The Academic Deans present to the Provost their budgets in December, including initiatives resulting from assessment of student learning. In June, final budget decisions are communicated to the Deans and Program directors so that learning initiative planning may begin with implementation at the beginning of the fall semester. The timing and direction of this reporting aligns assessment of student learning results with the university budget process as well as progress toward achieving the Strategic Plan. (Appendix D: Aligning assessment of student learning with institutional effectiveness diagram.)

Program assessment reports will be simultaneously submitted to the co-chairs of the Assessment of Student Learning Committee, who will review the reports and distribute them to all committee members. Committee members facilitate the assessment and communication process by:
• Sharing across divisions the latest assessment results and strategies so that units across campus can learn from one another.
• Advising the Provost on mechanisms that might be used to help communicate the status of the assessment, and best practices reports to all university constituencies.
• Developing a strategy for coordinating data and reporting data to inform and improve institutional effectiveness.
• Developing strategies for how information and assessment data can be better utilized to advance the overall mission of the university.
• Facilitating and training program directors and faculty in the development and implementation of student learning assessment plans that advance the overall mission of the institution.

2. Establishing the Assessment of Student Learning Committee
In 2010, the Provost created the Assessment of Student Learning Committee and charged this committee with facilitating assessment and the communication of learning outcomes throughout the university community. Delegated by their respective deans, committee members comprise representatives from all academic units as well as the division of student life. Assessment committee faculty members receive a course release. Committee members serve as assessment of learning facilitators as well as the chief link in the communications network that connects assessment of student learning to the achievement of institutional effectiveness and the Strategic Plan. Co-chaired by the Vice Provost and the Director of the Learning and Advising Center, the Assessment of Student Learning Committee is the most significant university group trained and invested in assessment practice and interpretation. This year, half the committee members attended Middles States workshops on assessment of student learning and the use of assessments results. All members of the group participated in a special on-campus session with AACU scholar and Director of Assessment, Ashley Finley. Dr. Finley also facilitated a workshop (April 14, 2011) on creating a culture of assessment for all faculty at the university.

3. Student Affairs Participation in Assessment of Student Learning
Since 2007, the Dean of Students and the staff of the Division of Student Affairs have developed and implemented plans for the assessment of student learning. In particular, the departments of Student Development, responsible for First Year Experience (FYE), and Service-Learning, and the Department of Residence Life, responsible for the Residential Community and Diversity Curriculum, have provided outstanding leadership in constructing learning outcomes consonant with university learning outcomes, and the new Strategic Plan.

In particular, student affairs made significant progress in measuring, sharing and improving student learning in the areas of appreciation of diversity, service to the university and larger Philadelphia Community, and increasing student satisfaction with the freshman experience. Summaries and annual reports from Student Affairs will be included in the Assessment of Student Learning Committee report to the Provost and university community. The progress in formalizing assessment and integrating student affairs learning outcomes with the Strategic Plan and institutional learning outcomes has led to significant gains in student satisfaction as evidenced in the AICUP first year Survey results and in the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Survey.

4. Greater Faculty Understanding of Assessment
Led by the Assessment of Student Learning Committee, the Philadelphia University faculty has made strides in learning best practices in assessment of student learning. Faculty facilitated training materials and workshops have explained the value of articulating learning outcomes and how to select and create programmatic measures to carry out assessment. Committee members have served as in-house consultants, training and providing feedback to program directors as they endeavor to articulate learning outcomes and
develop goals. Information sharing has found a significant place in faculty meetings, which in large measure have been turned over to assessment and sharing of outcomes at least two times per semester.

One of the reasons for the increased awareness and openness to assessment of student learning on campus has been to willingness of assessment committee members to offer other faculty the training and resources necessary to be successful. In conjunction with the Director of the Learning and Advising Center, committee members have provided one-on-one consultation for developing and improving learning outcomes and assessment plans for faculty and program directors. Examples of workshops held for faculty include:

- Taxonomies as a guide for articulating learning outcomes.
- Translating evaluation of design artifacts and products into learning outcomes.
- Developing and using rubrics for grading and program assessment.
- Learning outcomes in syllabi.
- Examples of what works—best-practice programs.

In addition, other professional program accrediting bodies such as NAAB, CITA, NASAD, ACOTE, ABET, and AACSB have in recent years placed their emphasis on assurance of student learning in addition to documentation of program inputs. Therefore, faculties from professionally accredited programs and those seeking accreditation have a double incentive to measure student learning and document curricular changes in order to affect continuous improvement.

5. Assessment of Student Learning Required for all New Programs
To align new program growth with the budget process and student learning outcomes, all new programs submit a full assessment of student learning plan before budgetary approval and implementation. In addition to planning for the feasibility, marketing and dissemination of plans for new academic programs, the university requires that proposals present a complete student learning assessment plan before university approval in the Undergraduate Education Committee or Graduate Education Committee.

New program hearings are open to the university community and all may comment, advise, and suggest revision to any part of the assessment plan before implementation. This practice works to further align assessment of student learning with budgeting start-up and maintenance costs for all new programs. An example of best practice of this required assessment plan is provided in Appendix D for the M.S. in Disaster Medicine and Management. The assessment plan provides useful learning outcomes together with a well-constructed plan for gathering data on student learning from multiple stakeholders and constituents.

6. Creation of More Meaningful and Higher Quality Plans
Student learning outcomes are now aligned with the new initiatives of the Strategic Plan. Our institutional learning outcomes have resulted in more meaningful and, in many instances, higher quality assessment activities. In all programs, graduate and undergraduate, faculties are engaged in an on-going process of assessing student learning on the course level and the program level. As indicated in the program assessment grids in Appendix D, programs are at different stages of their assessment plans. Each program demonstrates all of the Fundamental Elements of Assessment of Student Learning (Suskie, Student Learning Assessment: Options and Resources, 2nd edition, MSCHE 2007, p.81) though some may be more advanced and have completed more cycles than others.

Middle States has specified characteristics related to Standard 14 that accredited institutions are expected to exhibit. The table below evaluates Philadelphia University’s adherence to these characteristics (See Appendix D for all program grids and assessment plans).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard 14: Fundamental Elements of Assessment of Student Learning</th>
<th>Comments Regarding Philadelphia University's Adherence</th>
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| Clearly articulated statements of expected learning outcomes for all programs that aim to foster student learning and development.  
• Integrated with one another  
• Consonant with the institution’s mission  
• Consonant with standards of higher education and relevant disciplines | All Philadelphia University programs, including new programs in development, those in student affairs, have clearly articulated Learning Outcomes that integrate with Institutional Outcomes and the Strategic Plan Initiatives. Philadelphia University uses an institutional rubric to track each program’s progress in implementing the Fundamental Elements of Assessment of Student Learning. (See Appendix D for Institutional Rubric) |
| A documented, organized, and sustained assessment process to evaluate and improve student learning that meets the following criteria:  
• Systemic, sustained, and thorough use of multiple quantitative and or/qualitative measure that:  
  - Maximize the use of existing data  
  - Relate to the goals they are assessing  
  - Are of sufficient quality that results can be used to inform decisions with confidence  
  - Include direct evidence of student learning  
• Support and collaboration of faculty and administration  
• Clear realistic guidelines supported by institutional resources  
• Sufficient simplicity, practicality, detail and ownership to be sustainable  
• Periodic evaluation of the effectiveness and comprehensiveness of the institution’s student learning assessment process | While some programs at the university have significant data bases extending back for more than 15 years, it has been since the 2006 self-study that learning outcomes across the university have been of sufficient simplicity, practicality, detail and ownership to be sustainably assessed and results shared across the institution.  
A second benchmark year, the launch of the Strategic Planning process in 2008 saw the decentralized learning assessment practiced by individual programs, drawn into a closer relationship to the institutional Strategic Plan and institutional learning outcomes in each academic unit. With the new Provost in 2009, the formation of the Assessment of Student Learning Committee in 2010, program directors and faculty took on the ownership for learning assessment. This resulted in simpler plans, geared toward practical methods that used a variety of home grown but rigorous direct measures of student learning.  
Continued administrative support is provided through opportunities for professional development in creation and use of assessment, course release supporting faculty members of the Assessment of Student Learning Committee, and planned retreats to evaluate the effectiveness of the current assessment plan. For more information about communication see the discussion above under the heading “Improvements” and Appendix D a compendium of student learning assessment plans. |
| Assessment results that provide sufficient convincing evidence that students are achieving key institutional and program outcomes | This is evidenced through direct assessment of student learning in all of the university’s programs, indirect measures such as senior surveys, employer surveys and alumni surveys, as well as rising retention and persistence to graduation statistics, Philadelphia University students are achieving key institutional and program outcomes. Note that for many programs including graduate health sciences, science, general education, architecture and design programs, the majority—in many cases 100%—have achieved key institutional and program outcomes. |
| Evidence that student learning assessment information is shared and discussed and used to improve teaching and learning | See discussion above under “Improvements” and Assessment of Student Learning Committee |
| Documented use of student learning as part of institutional assessment | Documentation of student learning and learning outcomes assessment has led directly the establishment in 2011-2012 of a new university department, the Center for Teaching Innovation and Nexus Learning. Conceived as a faculty development unit, the goals of the center are to provide faculty with training in active, integrative, experiential pedagogies in order to innovate and enhance collaborative student learning. Supporting faculty pedagogical innovation helps meet the advanced learning goals of the Strategic Plan. |
College Studies: The General Education Program
The link between assessment of learning and institutional outcomes is most visible in the assessment processes that have been put into place for institutional goals related to College Studies, Philadelphia University’s general education program as well as in other university-wide programs.

The College Studies Program has one of the deepest assessment archives at the university and continues to lead the institution in pioneering innovative instruments to carry out assessment of institutional effectiveness. Beginning in 2009, the College Studies program led a pilot of an e-portfolio initiative that provided design majors and other selected students an opportunity to reflect directly on their learning when faced with the results of their work, captured in the portfolio and available for reflection at their own convenience. Preliminary results indicated that students appreciated the opportunity to seat their work in an electronic repository, but that reflection needed to be rewarded with a course grade, or a form of academic credit or recognition in order for students to diligently reflect on themselves as students and learners. The pilot is ongoing with faculty receiving more training in how to use e-portfolio to enhance and capture student learning.

College Studies program is integrated into the Assessment of Student Learning Committee and represented by one of their senior faculty members. The program, like the others at the university, follow the same schedule of assessment and reporting that aligns them with processes for budgeting and assessing alignment with the Strategic Plan. One of the outgrowths of the deep assessment provided by the College Studies program has been the creation of a new university department, the Center for Teaching Innovation and Nexus Learning. The former Dean of the School of Liberal Arts and the curriculum designer of the College Studies Program will serve as the Center’s first director.

Writing Across the Curriculum Program, Learning Communities, and Honors Program
Philadelphia University is dedicated to providing special programs with the resources they need to achieve overall effectiveness and success. While each program conducts its assessment using different methods, there are commonalities that connect their missions with institutional effectiveness. Writing Across the Curriculum addresses the overwhelming need for pre-professional programs to graduate students who can clearly and concisely write for multiple specialist and lay audiences. Learning Communities provide students with the opportunity to value the affective aspects of learning as they also enhance teamwork and collaboration. The Honors Program seeks to challenge the university’s talented students to do more, think better, and aim higher as they pursue competitive fellowships, seek graduate admission, and appreciate the integration of their profession within an interconnected and complex global context.

More than in other traditionally focused disciplinary programs, students in both learning communities and the honors program are tracked using a series of institutional surveys. Students are surveyed about experience in the program, and the degree to which expected learning outcomes are met. Focus groups are used early in the programs, so that issues can be addressed. Retention, student success, and other institutional data are tracked for these students and compared with that of students outside the program. Finally longitudinal analysis including graduation and graduate school acceptance rates are tracked as important indicators of program success.

Evidence of Meaningful Success: Using Assessment of Student Learning to Drive Curricular Change
A review of the 47 assessment grids and plans for academic programs found that in the past 2 years more than half of the programs, 53%, developed new courses or other curricular changes to address increasing student learning and greater achievement of learning objectives. Another 40% of programs developed or revised learning activities to address gaps or shortcomings in student learning. Finally half of the programs will be introducing active, collaborative, and interdisciplinary courses to their curricula in order to engage students in deeper, lasting learning and meet the Nexus learning initiative of the Strategic Plan in 2011-2012.
The Assessment of Student Learning Committee developed a rubric (available in Appendix D) to track each program’s progress in implementing an effective assessment strategy. The rubric evaluates 12 areas in learning and outcomes assessment such as quality of learning outcomes, type and number of measures, evidence of the use of assessment to improve student learning, and sustainability of the plan. While a perfect score of 36 was possible, the highest score achieved by any undergraduate program, B.S. Textile Design, (see Appendix D) was a 34. The median score on the rubric was a 25, and the lowest scores were a few programs at 17. The program directors and the co-chair of the assessment committee each applied the rubric to the program assessment plan and discussed the outcomes. More than 75% demonstrate that the program had completed some assessment and 70% had assessed more than one learning outcome. Twenty percent had been through more than three cycles of assessment since 2006. All programs that assessed learning outcomes used the results to make changes in their curricula, activities, and or pedagogy.

CONCLUSION

Recommendations for the Future
Since the 2006 self study, assessment of student learning has aligned with institutional processes related to budgeting and the initiatives of the Strategic Plan. This linkage as improved assessment as academic and administrative leaders have emphasized the importance of evaluating students learning. The Committee on Assessment of Student Learning will compile a list of initiatives during the 2011-13 academic years:

FALL 2011
• Program review. Implementation of a consistent and university-wide process with a multi-year schedule – fall 2011

SPRING/SUMMER 2012
• Development of a website (currently in the early stages) to provide a place to display assessment of student learning plans for all programs, provide a resource archive to assist faculty in carrying out assessment. January 2012
• A written assessment plan for each college at the university detailing timeline, expectations, and uses for assessment of student learning. June 2012
• Yearly assessment of student learning reports for each program – first due June 2012
• University Planning retreat to plan for 2013 Strategic Plan – June 2012

FALL 2012
• Formal establishment of an assessment meeting for all college faculty to discuss interesting, concerning, or enlightening findings. September 2012
• Additions to the course evaluation survey that specifically ask students if course outcomes were clear, and if course activities/assignments for the class contributed to meeting the learning objectives. Faculty revision and recommendation by spring 2012, implementation 2012-13

SPRING/SUMMER 2013
• Aligning students learning assessment and institutional effectiveness – June 2013
• Expansion of the pilot for e-Portfolio to include C-DEC in addition to student affairs units – spring 2013.
SECTION VI: INSTITUTIONAL PLANNING AND BUDGETING

The 2006 self-study process truly created a new culture of institutional planning, assessment, and improvement at Philadelphia University. The following timeline shows significant, continual progress.

A newly designed budget process and a major fund-raising campaign reflect the university’s commitment to providing resources to its strategic initiatives.

The President’s Council leads the planning, budgeting, and implementation efforts of the university. It meets weekly to discuss significant and broad strategic university issues, and semi-annually for long-term planning sessions or retreats. The President’s Council, under the strategic direction of the Board of Trustees, provides the executive leadership to support the growth and health of the university. (See Appendix A for membership of President’s Council.)

The President’s Council began the Strategic Planning process in 2007, for example, by setting broad themes for deans, directors, and others to develop. Throughout the Strategic Planning process, the President’s Council served to encourage collaboration and systemic integration from the committees charged with developing initiatives and goals, sharing themes and direction with the Board of Trustees for its approval and modification. With the adoption of the Strategic Plan, the President’s Council again worked with deans and department heads to develop an implementation plan, which the President’s Council reviews twice a year and shares with the Board of Trustees.

To support the Strategic Plan further, the President’s Council developed an inclusive Budget Advisory Committee and process for ensuring that the Strategic Plan initiatives and goals are prioritized each year in the budget development process. Members of the Budget Advisory Committee serve as ambassadors, advocates, and communicators by sharing critical budget information and priorities with their departments to promote institutional priorities throughout the campus community. Likewise, the campus community uses the Strategic Plan initiatives to assess individual and programmatic progress toward Strategic Plan implementation. As described in Section 5, the use of assessment data, the communication of priorities and progress, and, indeed, the Strategic Plan as a roadmap unanimously supported by the Board of Trustees, has created a culture of continuous improvement.

Budget
Management continues to address the pressures that the current economic environment has placed on Philadelphia University and on the higher education industry as a whole. The budgeting process requires managers to submit zero-based budget requests along with lists of additional new initiatives, including personnel, operating, technology and instructional equipment. In addition to this quantitative component that indicates how the funds are expended, the Provost’s Office also provides guidelines and the evaluation matrix by which the requests are evaluated. Budget managers submit a narrative response that highlights the specific priorities being addressed, the assumptions used in developing the budget, and the specific goals and
objectives being met. One of the key components of this process is that the narrative needed to address how the spending plan supports and aligns with the Strategic Plan.

A new process introduced during the 2009-2010 year was the formation of the Budget Advisory Committee (BAC) to review and provide advice on university budget planning. It meets on a regular basis and provides input to the President, President’s and Provost’s Councils, along with other university constituencies with regard to allocation of resources in support of initiatives and their alignment to the Strategic Plan. The BAC is charged with ensuring the integration of planning and budgeting. Through its advisory role, the BAC maintains effective communication and distributes updates to the campus community and their respective departments as appropriate. (see Appendix A for committee membership of BAC.)

Review and prioritization of requests continue throughout the spring semester as we moved toward the final budget approval process. Budget initiatives are ranked and prioritized on a grid by their value in support of the Strategic Plan along with their value to students. The final approved budget supports the growing educational, technological, and residence life needs of our students and the high quality of our existing and new academic programs, including the funding necessary to support the College of Design, Engineering and Commerce, the DEC Innovation Center, and the addition of the Falls Center for additional residential opportunities for students.

**Master Planning**

The successful implementation of the Strategic Plan requires actions at many levels, including an assessment of how the Philadelphia University campus and its facilities support the Plan initiatives, including the overall learning environment, space needs, and the organization of academic programs across the campus. These include the founding of a new College of Engineering, Design and Commerce; a mandate to expand the number of faculty and for faculty to engage in research; a desire to promote a living/learning environment; a mandate to promote an interdisciplinary, ”liberal-professional” curriculum and to expand graduate education, particularly in the fields of Architecture and Health Sciences.

Enlisting the services of Sasaki Associates, an internationally known planning firm, the university began a master planning process in 2009 to assess opportunities to improve the overall learning environment, reflecting the new pedagogical approaches articulated in the Strategic Plan vision, consider what can be accommodated within existing facilities, what additional facilities are needed, and how to ensure that new investments are most effective, given current financial realities. As a result of the work with Sasaki, the university identified a new 39,000 square foot academic building to house multi-disciplinary projects in the new College of Design, Engineering and Commerce. The master plan also identified a deficit of 760 beds to accommodate the university’s plans to develop a residential campus.

As further support of the Strategic Plan and its implementation, the Board of Trustees asked the university administration to develop plans to accomplish the needs identified in the master planning process. Accordingly, the university engaged an architect to design a new academic building and pursued residential housing options, including off-campus opportunities to create a residential environment for Philadelphia University students.

The Board subsequently approved plans for an academic building, DEC Innovation Center, including a plan of finance and fundraising campaign to support the construction (beginning June 2011), and a plan to lease 353 beds at a nearby housing complex (fall 2011).

**Action Research**

As a complement to measurement of goal achievement by traditional quantitative methods, action research was employed in order to support success of the Strategic Plan initiatives, to increase the potential for sustainability, and to move the institution toward a learning orientation. For our purpose, action research is defined as a researcher/facilitator, acting as an agent of the organization involving stakeholders both in
setting the research agenda and in creating useful knowledge based on assembled data in order to learn more about what is happening and in order to more effectively direct subsequent actions.

Action research activities began at the conclusion of the first year of Strategic Plan implementation. They included two campus-wide surveys on implementation progress followed by 13 open-ended interviews with deans and faculty to further probe perceptions, effectiveness of communication modes, and the extent to which the campus was developing a common language and institutional identity as envisioned by the Strategic Planning process.

Two years into the implementation, the university re-administered a survey utilized during the planning process to assess change across a number of institutional dimensions such as predominant communication patterns, decision-making processes, external-internal orientation, risk inclination, and levels of collaborative versus silo behaviors. As in the first administration of the survey instrument, participants were asked to rate these dimensions as they would expect to see them in an “ideal” institution and then re-rate them as currently perceived in our institution. The “ideal” ratings were quite stable over the two-year period. Of particular interest was a reduction in the gaps between the “ideal” and “current” ratings of the characteristics as compared to the gaps between “ideal” and “current” reported two years earlier.

In all cases, results of action research were fed back to leadership. Reviewing the research together, the president, provost, deans and senior administrators made some significant midcourse corrections to the implementation process, including better communication of the Strategic Planning priorities, reorganization of the College of Design, Engineering and Commerce (followed by the subsequent reorganization of other academic programs), and more focused efforts on integrating strategic initiatives. Although not derived from traditional quantitative measures, action research has been helpful in guiding implementation timing, structures, and communication vehicles as well as confirming that the campus community perceives significant progress with implementation, increased openness of communication and greater understanding of the transformed institution.

CONCLUSION

Philadelphia University is currently in the midst of implementing its Strategic Plan and transitioning to become a stronger, more effective, more differentiated institution in professional university education.

This report represents that the university views rigorous and integrated planning as a fundamental component of its operations. Planning has become a means of fulfilling the institutions’ mission and accelerating its advance toward ambitious strategic initiatives. This new culture of planning is characterized by a trend toward greater inclusiveness, integration of disparate university units at increasing levels of complexity, a focus on data-driven decision-making, and flexibility to adapt planning as information emerges or conditions change. The university is poised to advance by building on its strengths and by creating a culture of assessment to make continuous improvements to meet its goals.

Philadelphia University appreciates the opportunity to prepare this report, and engage our community in dialog for its preparation. It has been an important time to reflect on the previous five years and to anticipate the future directions of the university. We look forward to the next occasion to report on our progress at the decennial self-study and visit in 2016.
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2011-12 Academic Catalog will be available August 2011.