

Periodic Review Report

Presented by: St. Lawrence University

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Chief Executive Officer:

Dr. Daniel F. Sullivan, President

Commission Action That Preceded This Report:

Reaffirmation of Accreditation

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Preface:

Executive Summary

Overview

Responding to our 1997-98 Self-Study, the Middle States Evaluation Team found St. Lawrence University to be “vigorous and fundamentally sound” (“Report to . . . St. Lawrence University” 1998, 2). They recognized that the decade prior to the Self-Study had been troubled in some respects and that St. Lawrence faced significant challenges in improving admissions, increasing revenues, revitalizing governance, and addressing problems in student affairs. At the same time, they acknowledged that a change in leadership in the year before the Self-Study had established a “vigorous momentum” towards improvement. We believe that we have capitalized on that momentum to make progress in all the areas of concern expressed in the Self-Study and the Evaluation Team’s report. That progress has resulted largely from bold and comprehensive strategic planning.

We have been engaged in systemic change that recognizes the complex interconnections among parts of the university and the need to undertake multiple, interrelated initiatives simultaneously. Our aims are to improve our position relative to our competitors, getting better faster than they in all the ways that matter most for the education of our students, and to do so in a way that advances the mission, as we understand it, of liberal arts education at a small, residential college. As Alexander Astin¹ and others have argued, the most effective liberal arts colleges are those that are very demanding academically—that have high expectations of their students—and at the same time are what we have sometimes called “student-centered.” Astin finds that it is

rare for a liberal arts college to be strong in both dimensions. The most selective liberal arts colleges are frequently very demanding academically but in many cases are tending to assume research missions that are detached from student learning. At the same time, many liberal arts colleges that are highly student-centered have become that way because they don't have the resources to be as demanding academically and supportive of faculty scholarship as the most selective institutions. It's hard, Astin concludes, to be a liberal arts college that is strong in both ways. Our planning since the 1997-98 Middle States review has been intended to distinguish St. Lawrence as one of the few, as a liberal arts college recognized for its academic excellence *and* focus on student learning and development.

The Mission of St. Lawrence University

A key starting point of strategic planning after the 1997-98 Self-Study was revision of the University's statement of mission, aims, and objectives. We were not in serious doubt about our mission in 1997-98, but we had conflicting statements about it in our literature. The Middle States Evaluation Team advised that we move quickly to ratify a coherent statement of mission and aims, an effort that was already underway when they were on campus. The Faculty and Board of Trustees endorsed a new statement in 1999. The mission of St. Lawrence "is to provide an inspiring and demanding undergraduate education in the liberal arts to students selected for their seriousness of purpose and intellectual promise." A liberal education, we believe, "requires breadth, depth and integration in learning. It also requires the cultivation of those habits of intellectual and moral self-discipline that distinguish a mature individual. To these ends, St. Lawrence seeks to provide an education that fosters in students an

¹ Alexander W. Astin, "How the Liberal Arts College Affects Students," Daedalus, Winter 1999.

open, inquiring and disciplined mind, well informed through broad exposure to basic areas of knowledge; an enthusiasm for life-long learning; self-confidence and self-knowledge; a respect for differing opinions and for free discussion of those opinions; and an ability to use information logically and to evaluate alternative points of view.”

Although the primary aim of liberal education is intellectual development, we are also concerned about students as whole persons. “For this reason, the University also provides an environment that encourages the students’ physical well being and provides opportunities for moral, social, religious and aesthetic growth.” Finally, we aim to “encourage an expanding sense of responsibility for and service to humanity” and to prepare students to “understand and assume the responsibilities of citizenship” (*St. Lawrence University Catalogue, 2003-2004, 4-6*).

Institutional Resources and Strategic Planning

Having reaffirmed the mission and aims of the University, we began to implement a comprehensive strategic plan to realize them and to respond to financial exigencies and the recommendations of the Middle States Evaluation Team. This process has involved closer coordination of on-campus and Board of Trustees committees and more systematic benchmarking and outcomes assessment in the areas of Admissions and Financial Aid, Finance, and University Development. Our planning has been driven by a number of related factors. First, although our endowment increased significantly in the decade prior to the 1997-98 Self-Study (from \$72 million in 1988 to \$172 million in 1997), our revenues from tuition and fees, our main source of income, were growing only marginally. This was because we were intentionally enrolling fewer students than a decade before and having to offer larger discounts on tuition, in the form of financial aid,

to meet their increasing needs and to enroll the number and quality we desired. Declining rates of retention were also reducing revenues from tuition and fees. At the same time, we were attempting to improve and expand our academic programs. Although we were maintaining our facilities well for current use, we were not investing much in new and improved facilities for the future. Higher-than-planned endowment spending supported the investments in programs and facilities we were able to make. As the Evaluation Team noted, our expenditures in the decade before the Self-Study increased at an annual average rate of 5.3%, but among our sources of revenue only endowment increased at a rate greater than that. Revenue from tuition and fees, net of financial aid, increased by only 1.9% annually. “In other words, over the past ten years at St. Lawrence endowment support increased from 9.9% to 15.6% of expenditures, while tuition and fees revenues decreased from 76.3% to 52.9%” (“Report to . . . St. Lawrence University,” 1998, 13).

The strategic plan we have developed since 1997-98 has sought aggressively to address these related problems. First, we have responded to the Evaluation Team’s recommendation that we make admissions and financial aid our “highest institutional priority.” We have invested significant resources and effort in attracting more and better-qualified applicants, and in reducing the discount rate we offer admitted students. Indeed, we have exceeded our goals by attracting more than 3,000 applicants this year, the highest total in the University’s history, and reducing the comprehensive fee discount rate by more than 1% per year in the last three years from 41.5% (class of 2004) to 36.9% (class of 2006). The mean combined SAT scores, grade point averages, and class rank of applicants and admitted students have improved in the last five years. And more applications have enabled us to be more selective, our acceptance rate dropping

dramatically from 73% and 74% for the classes of 2002 and 2003 to 57% for the class of 2007. Also, a task force was appointed in 2000 to investigate the problem of retention and recommend policies and procedures to improve our rates of retention.

Implementation of some of these recommendations has begun to show positive results. Improvements in admissions and retention have resulted in increased revenues. Although other sources of revenue are still increasing at faster rates, net tuition revenue is up \$5.5 million in 2002-03 from the year before, and since 1996-97 has increased by 30.1%, or at an average annual rate of 5%. Although we have made significant progress since 1997-98, admissions and retention will continue to be a high priority of strategic planning for the next five years. Our aims are to further reduce the discount rate to 35.4% for the Class of 2009, to further increase the academic quality and diversity of the freshman class, and to improve our retention and graduation rates by 0.7-1% per year.

Second, we made it a priority of strategic planning to improve our fundraising performance. In 1997-98 we reported that we lagged behind our peers in total private support, raising between \$5-\$6 million annually (including funds for current operating purposes), and that total philanthropic support in constant dollars had increased only 5% between 1988 and 1998. Relative to the New Comparison Group (NCG),² St. Lawrence was below the median in nine out of those 10 years. At the time of the Self-Study, we had embarked on a comprehensive capital campaign with a goal of \$75 million. Late in 1999, that goal was surpassed, and Campaign St. Lawrence was extended until December 31, 2002, with a new goal of \$130 million. The Campaign closed on that date, having

² The colleges that St. Lawrence uses for comparison in the strategic planning process. They include Allegheny C., Bates C., Bucknell U., Carleton C., Colby C., Colgate U., C. of Holy Cross, C. of Wooster, Connecticut C., Denison U, Dickinson C., Drew U, Gettysburg C., Hamilton C., Hobart and William Smith

exceeded its goal by raising \$132.2 million in gifts and pledges, payable by the end of 2005. The progress of our fundraising efforts is also reflected in annual giving figures. Total giving to St. Lawrence from private sources reached \$18.8 million in 2001-02, the largest ever received by the University. This amount topped the previous record set in 1999-2000 by 16% and is 87% more than the \$10.1 million raised in 1997-98. As a result, St. Lawrence has moved from the 25th percentile to above the median and mean of the NCG.

This very good news has been dampened by declines in the financial markets, so that unfortunately our endowment today is roughly where it was in 1997-98, after having grown to more than \$220 million three years ago. The immediate net effect has been that the income from endowment available for expenditures in 2003-04 is \$1.9 million less than in 2002-03. Despite the record-breaking success of Campaign St. Lawrence, improved fundraising remains an important goal of strategic planning for the next five years. Our goal is to reach the 75th percentile among NCG colleges in annual gift income. Assuming NCG trends remain constant, we will need to increase total annual gift income from \$19 million to \$35-40 million by 2007-08 in order to reach that mark.

Third, we embarked on an ambitious plan of facilities improvements, to be achieved in phases, the scope and scheduling of each phase depending upon the University's financial reserves and ability to secure gifts and loans. Highest priority was given to projects that were likely to help with admission and retention of students. The urgency of the enrollment problem and certain facilities needs prompted the University to borrow \$30 million in August 1998 to ensure the rapid completion of Phase I, which

C., Kalamazoo C., Kenyon C., Macalester C., Middlebury C., Muhlenberg C., Ohio Wesleyan U., Skidmore C., Trinity C., Vassar C., and Wheaton C., IL.

included renovations of Owen D. Young Library, Dana Dining Hall (the University's main dining facility), and an unused building into a new bookstore. Also, we renovated and added to residence and recreation and athletic facilities, including a renovation of the hockey arena, construction of a new (second) field house with 200 meter indoor track and a fitness center, a new 400 meter all-weather outdoor track, a new all-weather playing field, and new fields for football, soccer, softball, and baseball. Phase I projects have added 145,000 square feet to the physical plant, and renovated or refurbished another 260,000 square feet, at a total cost of \$51.5 million. Thanks to a favorable bond rating, which enabled the University to borrow additional funds, and generous gifts, several Phase II projects are now under way. These include the construction of a new student center, expected to be completed in early 2004 at a cost of \$15 million, and townhouses for 120 senior students, which will be ready for occupancy in fall 2003 and are expected to cost \$6 million. In the planning stages, with construction to begin in 2004, is a \$60 million science and mathematics facilities project, including new space for biology, chemistry, biochemistry, neuroscience, and animal laboratories, and renovation of all existing space. In addition, we plan to renovate the building currently housing the student center to better accommodate the arts. The impact of these completed and planned facilities projects on our programs, campus morale, and admissions recruitment has been large and positive.

Fourth, after a year of hard work, faculty, staff and University trustees agreed to a new compensation policy, which calculates salary pool increases according to several factors designed to bring faculty and administrative salaries into line with those at NCG

colleges. Thus, we intend to ensure that, as we improve facilities and programs, we continue to invest appropriately in our most valuable resource—faculty and staff.

Budget

Our strategic plan will have the effect of producing operating budget deficits in the short run, due mainly to the interest expense on building loans and the rapidly accelerating depreciation we must show due to additions in space. However, our budget on a cash basis (excluding non-recurring large unrestricted gifts and depreciation) has been and will continue to be positive. The operating budgets will come back into balance (including non-recurring large unrestricted gifts and depreciation) on a 3-5 year time scale. We are accomplishing this through much improved net student revenue, real budget discipline that does not slow strategic investments in programs and facilities, continued improvement in current operating and capital fundraising results, and strategic savings from large numbers of faculty retirements where replacements come in at a lower cost. Indeed, we hope to get ahead of those competitors who are responding to the economic downturn by cutting programs and staffing and/or delaying facilities improvements. If we continue to move forward while our competitors go backward, our relative position will improve measurably.

To achieve a balanced budget, the goals of strategic planning for the next five years will be to improve endowment performance and fundraising, further reduce the discount rate in financial aid to tuition, capitalize on impending faculty retirements while continuing to strengthen academic programs, and achieve further savings through budget discipline.

Academic Programs and Faculty Development

The Periodic Review Report details several major initiatives in program and faculty development. Encouraged by the Middle States Evaluation Team, the Faculty undertook a comprehensive review of the curriculum in light of the revised Statement of Aims and Objectives, addressing concerns particularly about the First-Year Program and academic rigor in the senior year. The Faculty made changes to the First-Year Program and general education (distribution) requirements, introduced variable credit options for students, and approved a Senior-Year (capstone) Experience (SYE) that departments and programs may now choose to require of students (and a majority of departments and programs have). We believe that these changes have made the curriculum more coherent, flexible, and challenging. Additionally, there have been significant developments in international/intercultural education, several of them supported by major grants from external agencies and foundations. These include the creation of a major in Global Studies, the enhancement of the Asian Studies Program, and the addition of programs abroad in Australia, China, Trinidad, and Italy. Science and mathematics education at St. Lawrence has also advanced by virtue of the Integrated Science Education Initiative (ISEI). Also supported by major grants, ISEI has fostered collaboration among faculty in the sciences and the development of a new major program in Biochemistry. Planning for new facilities has also encouraged further integration in the science and mathematics. The grant-funded initiatives in international/intercultural education and ISEI have greatly enhanced the opportunities for student-faculty collaboration in research. This development has also been advanced by the creation of a University Fellows Program, which provides funding for student-faculty collaboration outside the normal academic

calendar, and by implementation of the Senior-Year Experience. Both of these latter programs illustrate how an institution can become more demanding academically while also becoming more student-centered.

A strong tradition at St. Lawrence of faculty development in teaching and research has been enhanced by the above initiatives. To focus ongoing efforts in faculty development in teaching especially, the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) was created in 2001, supported by grants from the Hewlett and Mellon Foundations. Equipped with multi-media laboratories, CTL is now the site of regular workshops in the teaching of writing and oral communication, and in the use of technology in the classroom. The 2001-02 Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) survey shows that faculty at St. Lawrence compare favorably to NCG colleagues in teaching and research productivity.

Faculty at St. Lawrence are heavily invested in teaching and increasingly have a sense that their efforts are rewarded. With the growth and development of the Senior-Year Experience and the University Fellows Program, pedagogy with advanced students is moving steadily in the direction of guided research. The strategic focus for the next five years will be on how this movement can be established in student and faculty cultures. For students, this will mean a transformation in the academic advising relationship, where the responsibility of planning is shifted from advisors to students; SYE's and guided research are only feasible if students have intentionally prepared themselves. For faculty, the challenges will be to sustain a rich curriculum and devote the time and energy necessary to mentor student research.

Student Life and Co-Curricular Education

In the 1997-98 Self-Study, we reported several problems that continued to hamper our efforts to integrate academic and residential life at St. Lawrence. Many on campus believed that the student culture, especially as it was reflected in misbehavior related to alcohol misuse, was at odds with the academic mission of the University. The Middle States Evaluation Team challenged us to clarify our expectations for residential life at St. Lawrence and to improve communication and collaboration among students, faculty, and Student Life staff. With the hiring of a new Vice President & Dean of Student Life and Co-Curricular Education in 1998, a number of changes in organization were made to improve the integration of academic and student affairs. For example, the residential component of the FYP has been shifted to the Student Life division, so that the VP & Dean of Student Life and Associate Dean of the FYP (appointed from the Faculty) now cooperate more closely on residential issues. Several offices within Student Life have been restructured to make residential programming more co-curricular or educational.

There are several initiatives underway, moreover, to address the concerns about student culture. A task force was appointed in 1999 to study the problems of alcohol misuse at St. Lawrence. An important outcome of the study is the Alcohol Initiative, a coordinated program intended to raise awareness about the seriousness of alcohol misuse, tighten enforcement of alcohol policy, create environments in residence halls and at social events that are healthy, safe, and supportive of the academic mission of the University, and encourage more social opportunities and student activities that are alcohol free. Some early indications suggest that this initiative is having beneficial effects. Another initiative, the “Greek Engagement Project,” was launched in 2002 and is

intended to ensure that Greek letter societies at St. Lawrence are supportive of the academic mission of the University and their own goals of scholarship, fellowship and service. There is also an effort underway to strengthen residential theme communities, which are intended to provide opportunities for students to combine residential life and co-curricular education. Finally, the University's efforts to promote leadership and service have been consolidated in a new Student Life office that contains the St. Lawrence Leadership Academy and the David S. Garner Center for Collegiate Volunteerism. We believe that we are making progress in addressing concerns expressed in the last Self-Study about student life and co-curricular education. And again, our approach is to have high academic expectations of students in a highly student-centered environment. In the next five years, we will assess and continue to develop the above initiatives with the aim of further integrating academic, residential, and co-curricular programs at St. Lawrence.

University Governance

Previous Self-Studies and Middle States Evaluation Teams have identified governance as a problem at St. Lawrence. Our commitment to shared governance, to a process of decision making that delegates responsibility to several tri-partite, university committees (on which administrators, faculty and students sit) makes for some inefficiency and tension. However, the system works well more often than not, and previous reviews of it have not generated consensus for radical change. The last Evaluation Team recommended that we renew the processes by which we govern ourselves by redefining our committee structure, clarifying the purposes of each committee, and improving communication among all constituencies. In response,

Faculty Council, the chief steering and deliberative committee, initiated a review of the governance system in 2000, the outcome of which was to eliminate several moribund committees, combine others for efficiency, revise committee charges, and clarify the overall Plan for Faculty Organization. There are clearer and more regular lines of communication now among university constituencies and more cooperation between university and Board of Trustees committees. There is evidence to suggest that these improvements have been salutary. Several complex and contentious issues have been before us since 1997-98, including revision of the curriculum and salary policy, and they have been addressed effectively through the governance system. We believe that we have made progress in alleviating concerns in the last Self-Study and are comfortable with our version of shared governance.

Outcomes Assessment

Since 1997-98 we have developed a more coherent, systematic approach to assessment. The Office of Institutional Research has become the central source of information as it relates to assessment and coordinates data from national student and faculty surveys with our own institutional databases. We have a richer base of information for assessment now and are using it more systematically to monitor our performance against other selected institutions in the areas of admissions and financial aid, retention, fundraising, finances, residential life and co-curricular programs, student academic performance and satisfaction, and faculty teaching and development. As the PRR will make clear, assessment has become an integral part of our strategic planning. We have more work to do, especially to improve our assessment of academic programs and student learning, but we are pleased with the progress we have made.

Conclusion

We used our 1997-98 Middle States re-accreditation experience to jump start, focus, and invigorate the systemic change we were undertaking under new university leadership. We have much yet to do, but we are encouraged and excited by how much we have been able to accomplish in such a short time. We believe that we have responded aggressively and successfully to the issues raised in our Self-Study and to the recommendations of the Middle States Evaluation Team.

Section 1:

Introduction

Since its founding in 1856, St. Lawrence University has been dedicated to the liberal education of undergraduate men and women in a residential setting. Among the first private, undergraduate universities in New York to admit men and women, St. Lawrence remains committed to positive co-education. We seek not only to provide equal access to educational opportunities and facilities, but also to encourage male and female students of various backgrounds to interact as equals in all aspects of academic and social life, becoming increasingly aware of their individualities and potential social roles and responsibilities. Our target for enrollment is 550 new first-year students per undergraduate class, roughly 30 transfer students annually, leading (depending on retention) to about 2,200 students total, of which approximately 2,000 are expected to be on campus in any given year, with the balance off campus. With 181.4 FTE faculty currently, we have a student-faculty ratio of 12 to 1. The small size of the college helps to foster individual achievement, and students have frequent opportunities to work closely with professors in the pursuit of knowledge. At the same time, there is a strong sense of community in a small, residential college, and students are challenged regularly to discover their responsibilities to each other and as members of a community. Recently, we have recruited more students, staff and faculty from minority populations in the U.S. and from different ethnic and national backgrounds and have expanded academic programs that educate students to become informed participants in a global society.

Although devoted primarily to undergraduate education, St. Lawrence has sought for a long time to foster excellence in teaching and support primary and secondary

schools in the North Country by offering graduate education programs in general studies (leading to teaching certification), counseling and human development, and educational administration. Normally, we have 20-25 full-time, and 100-110 part-time, graduate students enrolled each semester.

St. Lawrence derives much of its character from the region in which it is located. Close to the Thousand Islands region of the St. Lawrence River and the vast wilderness of the Adirondack State Park, the rural setting of the college invites students to develop an awareness of the natural world and a sense of obligation to it. It is a rich laboratory for the formal study of the natural sciences and the sociology, political economy, and aesthetics of rural environments. And it is a rich resource for recreation, for the development of physical and psychological health and well being. However, the University is careful to guard against parochialism and intellectual detachment from the world. An advantage of its location is its proximity to Canada and the Akwasasne Mohawk Reservation. In academic and co-curricular programs on campus and abroad, St. Lawrence strives to promote the study of other cultures and nations and a sense of obligation to humanity at large. Indeed, among the significant curricular developments in the last five years are the creation of a program in global studies and the addition of programs abroad in Trinidad and China.

In 1998 the Middle States Evaluation Team acknowledged St. Lawrence's many strengths—a “well maintained, and surprisingly extensive” campus, a “serviceable and often elegant” physical plant, a faculty of “exceptionally well-trained teachers and productive scholars,” a dedicated staff, selfless trustees, and zealous students (“Report to . . . St. Lawrence University,” 1998, 1-2). They also noted, however, that we were not as

robust as we should be in comparison to colleges we refer to for planning purposes—the New Comparison Group (NCG; see “Preface,” p. 5, n. 2). Guided in part by the Evaluation Team’s recommendations, we have embarked on an ambitious plan of improvement in the last five years, even though economic circumstances might have suggested a more conservative course of action. We have been determined to improve our position among NCG colleges and to distinguish St. Lawrence as a liberal-arts college that is both challenging academically and truly focused on the education and welfare of students.

The mission of St. Lawrence University has not changed since 1997-98, although we revised our statement of it in 1999. We remain committed to providing “an inspiring and demanding undergraduate education in the liberal arts to students selected for their seriousness of purpose and intellectual promise.” In the tradition of liberal arts education, we expect students to achieve a certain breadth, depth and integration of knowledge by taking general, introductory courses in the arts, humanities, sciences and social sciences, by majoring in one or more disciplinary or interdisciplinary program, and by taking integrative seminars or independent study or research in the senior year. We seek to foster in students open, inquiring and disciplined minds, enthusiasm for life-long learning, respect for differing opinions, and an ability to use information logically and evaluate alternative points of view. To these ends, St. Lawrence offers an interdisciplinary, first-year program that emphasizes thinking, research, and communication skills; 35 major and 35 minor fields of study; and a senior-year, integrative study, research or service-learning experience. Students may major and minor in traditional liberal-arts disciplines, such as philosophy, economics, sociology, English,

French, Spanish, speech and theater, government, biology, chemistry and mathematics, or in newly emerging, interdisciplinary fields, such as gender studies, global studies, Latin American and Caribbean studies, environmental studies, neuroscience, and computer science. St. Lawrence also administers or participates with other universities in numerous programs abroad (or off-campus), sending students to study in Canada, England, France, Spain, Austria, Denmark, Italy, Kenya, India, Japan, China, Australia, Costa Rica, Trinidad, Washington, D.C., and the Adirondack State Park. More than 40% of our students study abroad or off-campus for at least a semester.

The Owen D. Young Library and Lauwers Science Library support the academic and co-curricular programs. ODY has been renovated recently and Lauwers was newly opened in 1994. Together they house a collection of approximately 534,000 volumes of books and bound periodicals, 401,000 government documents (the largest collection of U.S. Federal documents in the North Country), and 590,000 microform units.

Additionally, St. Lawrence has a campus-wide voice, data, and video network, which provides access to Internet, e-mail, on-line library services, student advising system, debit/ID/meal card system, and video projection. The division of Information Technology supports numerous electronic laboratories and classrooms and provides student, faculty, and staff development workshops in the use of technology.

In the tradition of liberal arts education at small, residential colleges, we also seek to promote the development of students as whole persons. Our residential and co-curricular programs are intended to provide opportunities for moral, social, religious and aesthetic growth and for assuming the responsibilities of leadership and service to others. Our leadership and service-learning programs have been reorganized and strengthened

since the 1997-98 Self-Study. We also strive to promote physical wellness among our students through physical education and outdoor recreation programs that capitalize on our rural setting. Since the 1997-98 Self-Study, we have created an outdoor studies minor and semester program in the Adirondacks to further integrate curricular and co-curricular education in the natural environment. St. Lawrence has also expanded its program of intercollegiate athletics since 1997-98, fielding now 32 intercollegiate teams for men and women, all of them competing in NCAA Division III except men's and women's ice hockey, which compete in Division I. We have achieved equity in men's and women's intercollegiate athletics without sacrificing excellence. Several men's and women's teams have recently been successful in post-season league, state, and national championships.

The Periodic Review Report (PRR) details the initiatives we have undertaken since 1997-98 to address recommendations of the Middle States Evaluation Team and improve our competitive position among peer institutions. Our efforts have been focused particularly on admissions and retention, facilities improvements, fundraising and financial management, academic program and faculty development, and student life and co-curricular education. The PRR intends to make clear that these initiatives are part of a comprehensive strategic plan that we have been developing since President Sullivan took office in 1996. Our approach to strategic planning in the last 5-6 years has been systemic, recognizing that, in order to be more competitive, we need to understand better the complex relationships among various parts of the University and address several problems simultaneously. We have become more intentional, transparent, and informed in our planning, relying increasingly on our office of Institutional Research to develop

reliable and consistent practices of gathering information, benchmarking progress, and assessing outcomes. The planning process has improved also through increased communication and cooperation between university and Board of Trustees committees.

We begin in Section 2 of the PRR with admissions and retention, not only because recruitment and retention of students is vital to the mission and financial health of the college, but also because the Middle States Evaluation Team, responding to our concerns in 1998 about enrollment problems, recommended that we make admissions our “highest institutional priority” for the next several years. We have done so, we believe, with great success. Section 3 focuses on institutional resources, presenting the details of the University’s budget and outlining our strategic plan for facilities improvements, fundraising, and financial management. Sections 2 and 3 are connected to the extent that the University’s budget is driven by enrollment. An important consequence of the enrollment problems we reported in 1997-98 had been insufficient growth in tuition revenues (net of financial aid) to support investments in programs and facilities. We have addressed this problem aggressively by making significant investments in facilities and programs that are calculated to enhance our recruitment and retention of students and, hence, our revenue stream. At the same time, we have improved our fundraising performance dramatically in order to support improvements to facilities and programs. Section 4 describes several initiatives in curriculum and faculty development. Again, this section reveals that our strategic planning has been systemic; we have sought to strengthen academic programs even as we address the enrollment problem and backlog of facilities needs. We believe that St. Lawrence must become more challenging academically to have the impact that we desire on the number and quality of students

applying for admission and to move us forward relative to our competitors. Section 5 outlines recent initiatives in student life and co-curricular education. These initiatives respond to our report in 1997-98 of dissatisfaction with certain aspects of student life (most notably, misbehavior related to alcohol abuse) and are also guided by strategic planning. The aim is to address both faculty and student concerns about residential life and student culture at St. Lawrence, so as to create an environment on campus that will enhance the recruitment and retention of students and be supportive of challenging academic programs. Section 6 describes the steps we have taken to improve university governance, which has been identified as a problem in previous Middle States reviews. We believe we have made progress on this front, which is evident partly in the more effective planning process we have established since 1997-98. Finally, Section 7 outlines our plan for outcomes assessment. Here, again, we believe we have come a long way since the 1997-98 Self-Study. As the other sections should make clear, we have developed consistent practices of benchmarking progress in all divisions of the University, are making more use of local and national surveys of student and faculty behaviors and attitudes in strategic planning, and are developing more and better practices of assessing educational outcomes.

We include three appendices: an organizational chart of St. Lawrence, a list of benchmarks for enrollment, and a master plan for facilities improvements. The first provides a visual overview of the administrative organization of the University. The second summarizes our strategic planning with regard to enrollment. We include it because enrollment has been a major focus of planning in the last five years and because it illustrates the process of assessment and benchmarking we have been using. This

document is the collaborative work of on-campus and Board of Trustees planning committees. The third charts the dates of completion and costs of facilities improvements since 1997-98 and, on a second page, the projected dates of completion and costs of facilities improvements currently being planned or initiated. Other relevant information or data is presented in the text of the PRR in graph or chart form, or is included in the supplementary documents we are asked to submit with the PRR (University Catalogue, faculty and student handbooks, and audited financial statements, collective bargaining agreements, etc.). We are also sending the Winter 2003 edition of the *St. Lawrence University Magazine* because it features the science research and education initiatives, charts the grant funding that has supported them, and traces the outcomes of science education at St. Lawrence in a story entitled, “Lifelong Learning.” This is relevant to our discussion of academic program development in Section 4 of the report. We will be glad to provide any other information Middle States reviewers would like to see.

The process by which we have prepared the PRR has been inclusive, critical, and closely coordinated with strategic planning. The university committee that has oversight for planning—Planning and Priorities—acted initially as the steering committee for the report, setting the agenda and helping to gather relevant information and documents. Bruce I. Weiner, Craig Professor of English, was assigned to draft the document, working in collaboration with Christine Zimmerman, Director of Institutional Research. Drafts of each section were shared with faculty, staff, and university committees that provided information and/or had relevant expertise. They were also read and discussed by relevant Board of Trustees committees. Finally, the Planning and Priorities Committee reviewed initial and revised drafts of each section, exercising final authority of approval. Once

consensus was reached on the main sections of the report, an Executive Summary was drafted and reviewed by the Planning and Priorities Committee, which voted to forward it to the Board of Trustees for its action. At its May 17, 2003, meeting, the Board of Trustees voted to approve the Executive Summary and forward it and the Periodic Review Report to Middle States. We believe the PRR presents an accurate account of our responses to the Middle States Evaluation Team's recommendations, the major initiatives we have undertaken since the 1997-98 Self-Study, and the goals we have set in the planning process for the next three to five years. The PRR sets forth an ambitious plan of improvement and, we believe, an impressive record of accomplishment since 1997-98. Although we have not finished everything we have started, or met all of our goals, we are confident that St. Lawrence is in a better position than it was five years ago to meet the financial challenges of the near future and to provide a more challenging liberal-arts education to its students.

Section 2:

Admissions and Retention

In the 1997-98 Self-Study admissions and retention were a focus of concern. St. Lawrence was struggling to achieve its strategic goals for admissions, which were to maintain the size of the student body at approximately 2,000 and improve its quality. The sizes of incoming classes were fluctuating significantly, and various measures, including SAT scores and data from CIRP and HEDS surveys, indicated that the quality of the student body was declining in the 1990s. The revenues from tuition and other sources of income were not keeping pace with the expenses of operating the University and investing in the future. We were, in fact, increasing the discount rate, the amount of tuition and fees returned to students in the form of financial aid, in order to admit incoming classes of sufficient size and quality. These factors were making it difficult to manage the University effectively and to maintain its selectivity. In addition to the challenges of recruiting new students, retention and graduation rates were declining as well.

The Middle States Evaluation Team advised that we refine our understanding of the “quality” of the students attending St. Lawrence and those we wished to attract and set recruitment goals accordingly. They urged immediate action to increase the numbers and quality of our applicant pool and recommended that the effort be inclusive. In their judgment, we needed to make recruitment and retention “a very high priority for everyone at St. Lawrence . . . we feel that this issue . . . should be your highest institutional priority in the months and years ahead.” And they suggested that we be

prepared to devote additional resources to the effort (“Report to . . . St. Lawrence University,” 1998, 6-7).

To some extent, the Evaluation Team was recommending an initiative that was already underway. Having taken office the year before, President Sullivan made the admissions efforts his first priority, establishing a management team of St. Lawrence staff to direct the recruitment process while we searched for a new Vice President and Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid. The mandate of the management team was to implement a new strategic approach to recruiting students called “prospect management.” This approach seeks to identify high school students most likely to apply for admission and succeed at St. Lawrence and to recruit them through a process of customized, personal contacts. An Enrollment Committee of the Board of Trustees was formed to aid in strategic planning, and goals for Admissions were established. Initially, our efforts were focused on recruiting a first-year class of 550 students and reducing the discount rate by 1% a year until we reach 35.4%. In the fall of 2000 we established benchmarks by which to measure the quality and diversity of our applicants and matriculating classes (see Appendix B for 2003 update of these benchmarks).

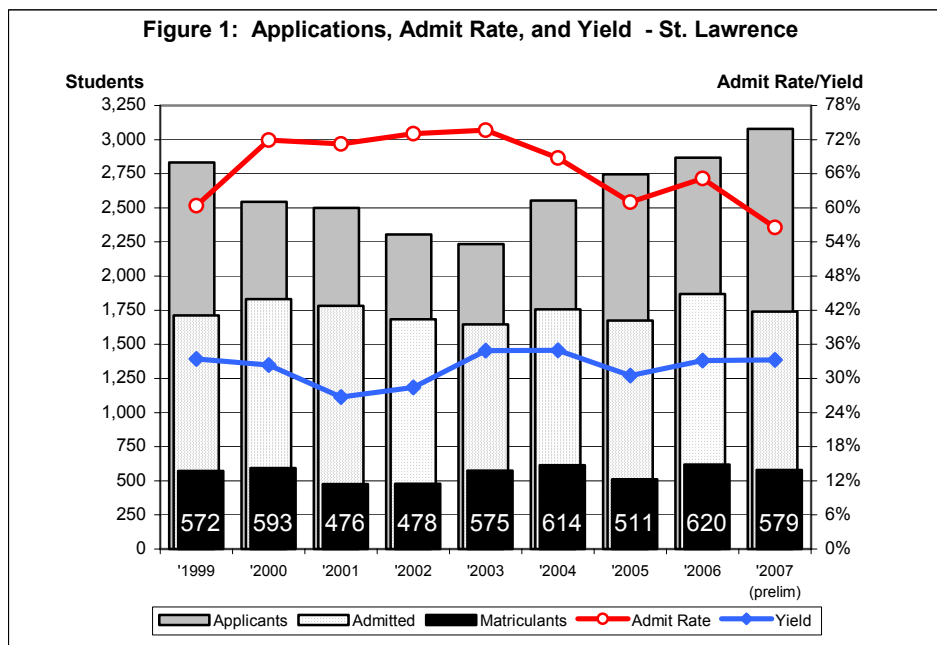
To help achieve these goals, the budget and staffing of Admissions have been increased. In 1997-98 the total budget for Admissions was \$1.1 million; in 2002-03 it was \$1.86 million, representing an increase of 69%. The expendables portion of the budget increased 68% over the same period, from \$493,000 to \$827,000. Since the 1997-98 Self-Study, the professional staff in Admissions has increased from 10 to 11.5 plus 2-4 part-time interviewers working year round. The clerical staff has increased from 6 to 8.8 over the same period, including the addition of an executive secretary. In Financial Aid,

since the 1997-98 Self-Study, the staff has increased from three to four. The University also hired a marketing firm, The Lawlor Group, in 1998 to redesign recruitment literature after completing a marketing situation analysis. New admissions brochures were created and a strategic mailing plan implemented. The new mailing plan reacts to initial contact from students as early as the summer before the junior year. Typically, a student will receive three newsletters in the summer and fall of the junior year and will begin receiving recruitment letters and brochures in the spring of the junior year, continuing through January of the senior year. The central series of mailings includes four large and two small brochures, an admissions application, invitations to on-campus and local events, and information that addresses specific academic and athletic interests. This comprehensive mailing plan is augmented by personal contacts made by professional and student staff in Admissions during the recruitment process.

In 1997-98 the Admissions Office communicated infrequently with secondary schools and limited mailings to approximately 150 schools with which St. Lawrence had established relationships. Since 1998 the Admissions Office has developed a mailing list of approximately 3,200 U.S. high schools, which receive recruitment materials at least four times a year. A small number of international schools receive literature on a regular but less frequent basis. Through this planned correspondence, and through the assignment of Admissions staff to geographic territories, we have cultivated more personal relationships with high school counselors. The Admissions staff visits high schools and attends college fairs in both the fall and spring; an on-campus weekend for counselors has been held in February 2001 and 2002; and President Sullivan and the VP of Admissions have hosted 17 meetings with counselors around the country since 1998.

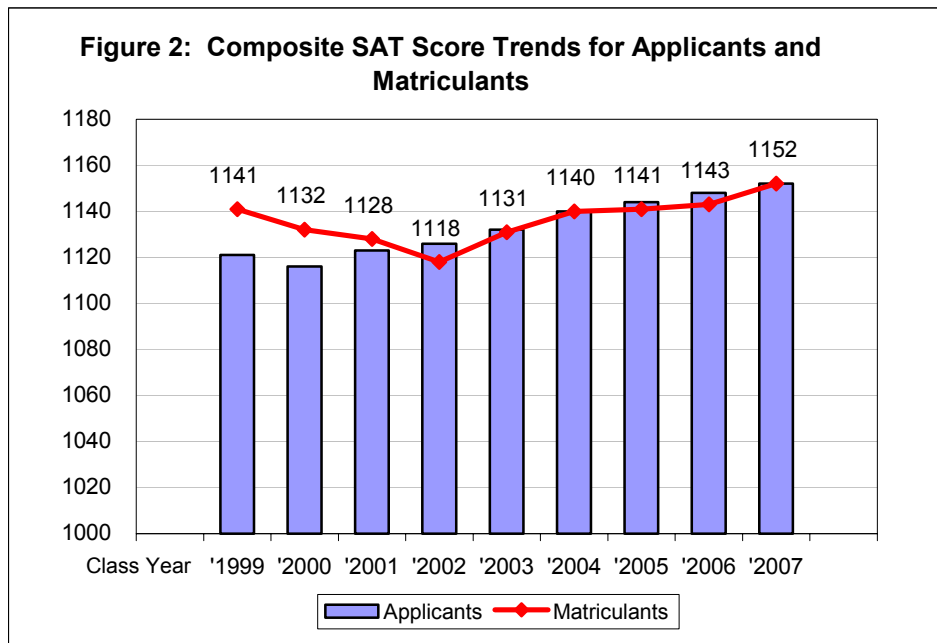
The on-campus strategy for recruitment has been revamped as well. In 1997-98 Admissions held one fall “Visit” for prospective students and two spring events for admitted students. Now it schedules four Open House Days in the fall and four events for admitted students in the spring. More faculty and staff are participating in these events, hosting visiting prospective and admitted students in their classes, and otherwise communicating with prospective students. The process of recruitment at SLU has become more inclusive since 1997-98.

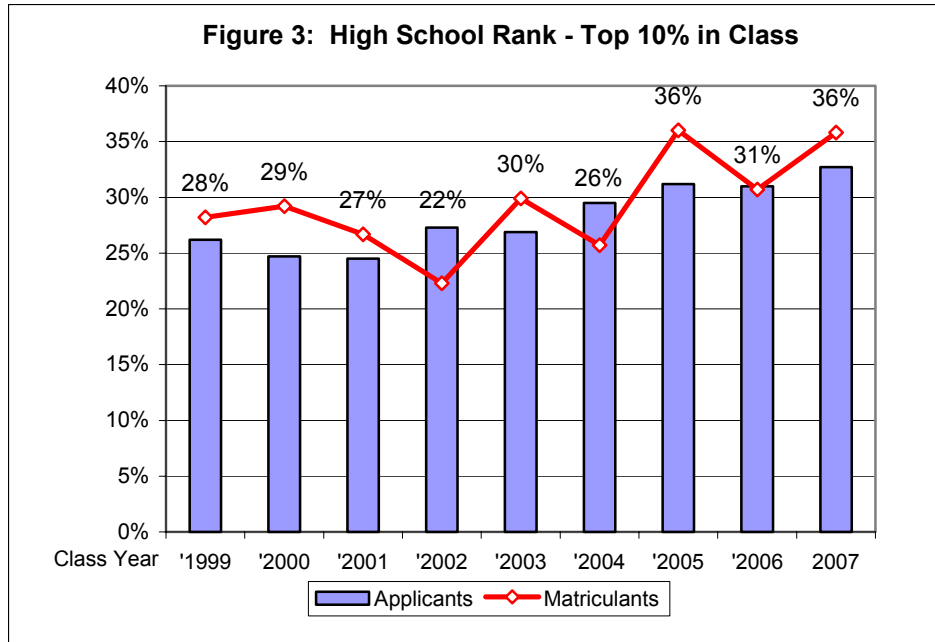
These initiatives have produced significant results. The number of inquiries from high school students has risen from a low of 18,793 for the class of 2001 (the year of the Self-Study) to 39,360 for the class of 2007. Although the number of applications continued to decline following the Self-Study, they have increased continuously since 1999, from a low of 2,235 for the class of 2003 to 3,080 for the class of 2007. Early Decision applications are also up from a low of 94 for the class of 2003 to 163 for the



class of 2007. These increases have enabled us to be more selective, with our acceptance rate dropping from more than 73% for the classes of 2002 and 2003 to 57% for the class of 2007 (see Figure 1).

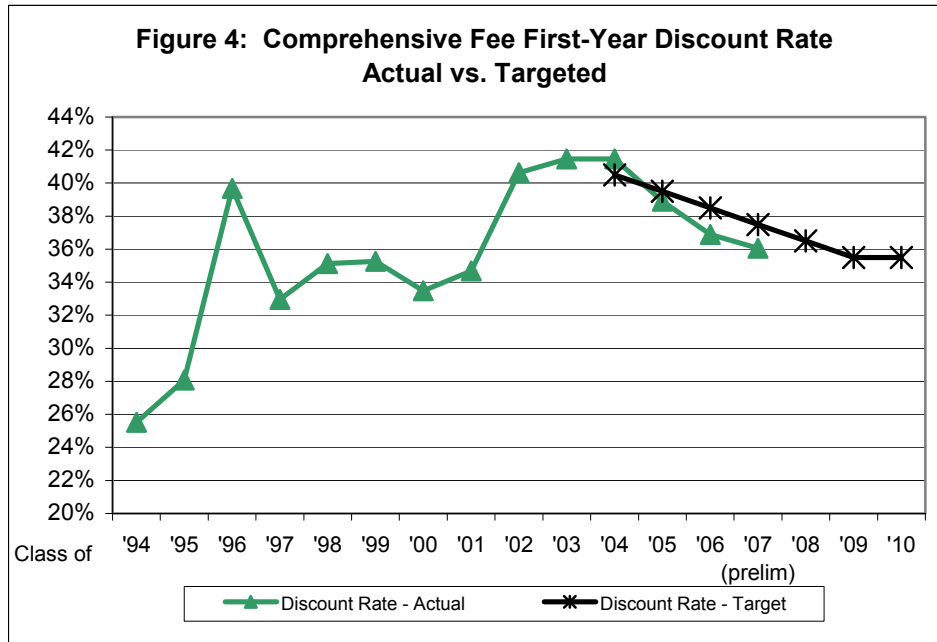
The quality of recent applicant pools and matriculating classes has improved modestly, according to standard measures. After years of decline, the mean, composite SAT score for applicants has climbed from a low of 1116 for the class of 2000 to 1152 for the class of 2007. For matriculating students, it has risen from a recent low of 1120 for the class of 2002 to 1152 for the class of 2007. Of those matriculants and applicants who are ranked by their high schools, the numbers in the top 10% and 25% are also up. Among applicants for the class of 2001, 25% were in the top 10%, and 55% were in the top quarter of their high school classes. Among applicants for the class of 2007, 33% were in the top 10%, and 61% in the top 25 of their high school classes. The increases are similar for matriculating students in those years (see Figures 2 and 3).



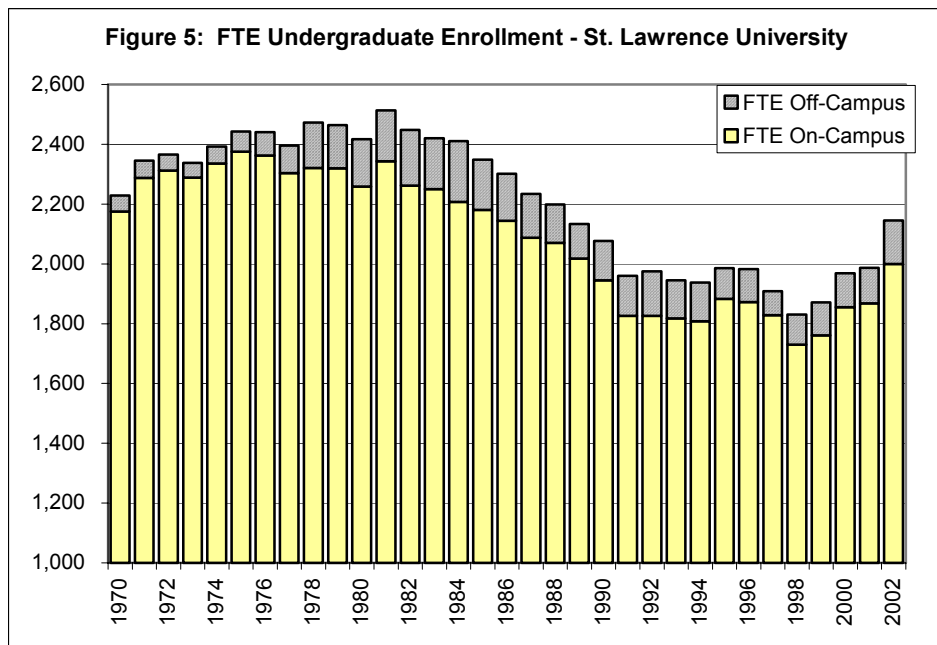


The mean high school Grade Point Averages for applicants and matriculants have also risen, if only slightly, in the last five years. However, the 2001-02 HERI faculty survey and anecdotal comments from faculty and other students point to a noticeable change in the quality of the student body, suggesting that incoming students are more inquisitive and serious of purpose than in the past. The percentage of faculty indicating that they were “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with the quality of the student body rose from 29% in 1998 to 45% in 2001. The jump is significant, although St. Lawrence faculty do not yet approach the level of satisfaction that their peers at NCG schools express (71% “very satisfied” or “satisfied” in 2001) about student quality.

We have also made headway against the discount rate, which for the classes of 2004, 2005, and 2006 (as a percentage of the comprehensive fee) was 41.5%, 38.9% and 36.9% respectively. In the last two years, in fact, we have exceeded the targeted 1% per year reduction, and preliminary data suggests we will meet or exceed the target for the class of 2007 (see Figure 4).



The enrollment trends pictured in Figure 5 reflect a conscious decision in the 1980s to reduce the size of the undergraduate student body to approximately 2,000 students (on campus) and a period in the 1990s when we struggled to achieve that



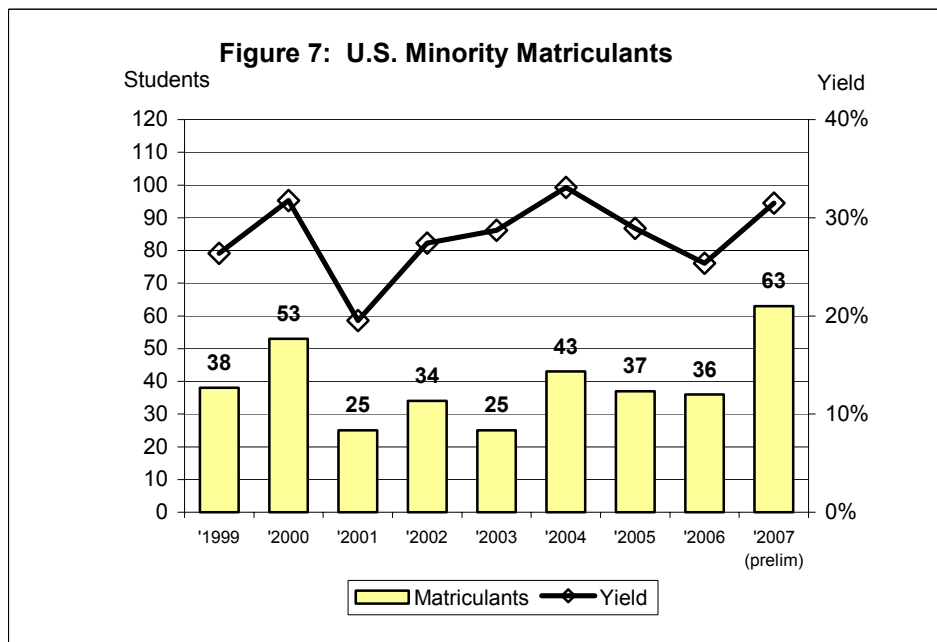
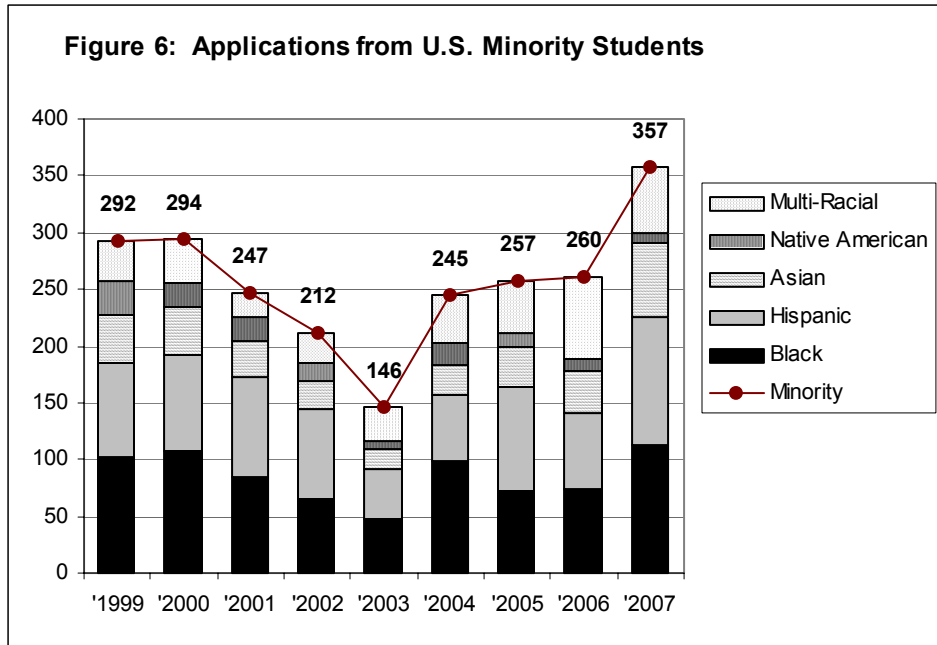
number. Our efforts to manage admissions and retention have moved us to the target, although, despite the use of forecasting models, predicting the yield from accepted students each year remains a challenge, since we cannot calculate with certainty the enrollment impact of enhancements to programs and facilities nor predict how the state of the national economy will influence college choice.

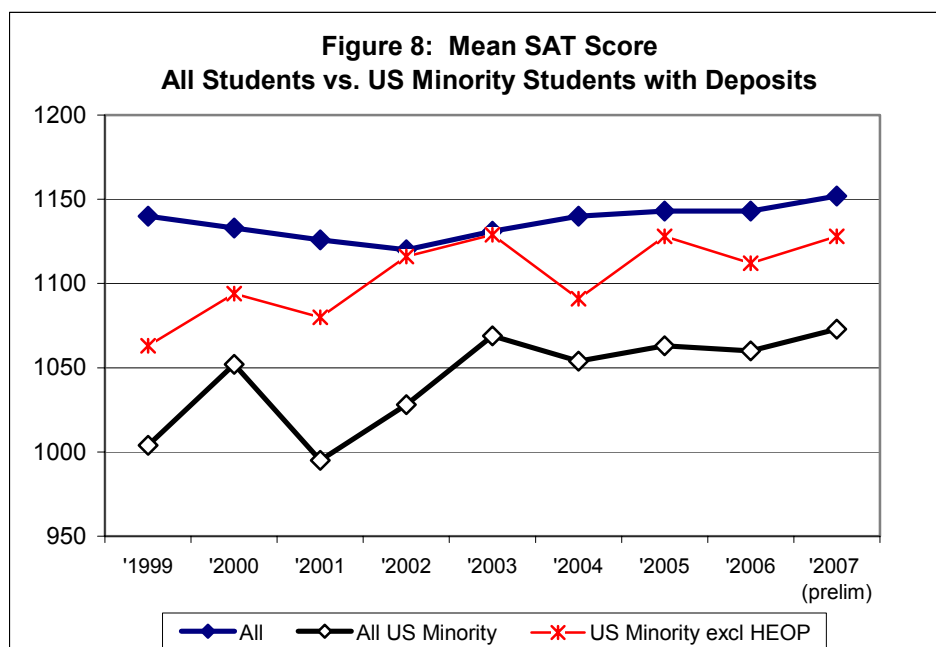
In sum, we have taken the Evaluation Team's advice seriously and have committed resources and implemented strategies to reverse the decline in the numbers and quality of our applicants. We believe that we have a better understanding of the challenges that confront us in admissions and have created a more strategic approach to them. We are encouraged by the recent increases in numbers of inquiries and applications from better qualified students and decreases in rates of acceptance and financial discount. We have a clear vision for moving forward as outlined in our strategic benchmark document (see Appendix B). We understand, also, that achieving these goals will not be easy. Our competition from other highly selective liberal arts colleges in the northeast is stiff, and we must also contend with larger public universities with lower tuition costs. We believe, nevertheless, that we have established through the planning process clear and reasonable goals for admissions and more effective strategies for realizing them.

Diversity Recruitment

A particular goal of Admissions this year has been to improve recruitment of U.S. minority students. This is part of a broader initiative to increase the diversity of the University (see Section 3 under "Diversity"). The goal of enrollment planning for the class of 2007 was to increase the percentage of U.S. minority students to 8% (from 5.8%

for the class of 2006); for the classes of 2008 and 2009 we have set goals of 10% and 12% (see Appendix B). We have surpassed our goal for the class of 2007, with 10.9% of students who have paid deposits being U.S. minorities. Figures 6, 7 and 8 show that Admissions has been successful in increasing the number of U.S. minority applications and matriculants, and the quality of those matriculants as measured by mean SAT scores.





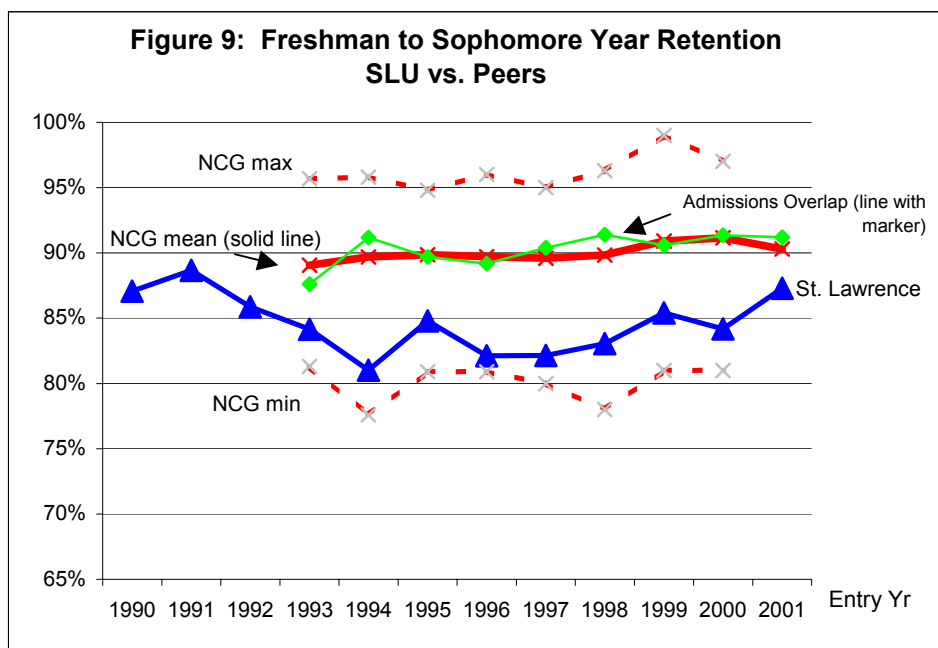
Retention

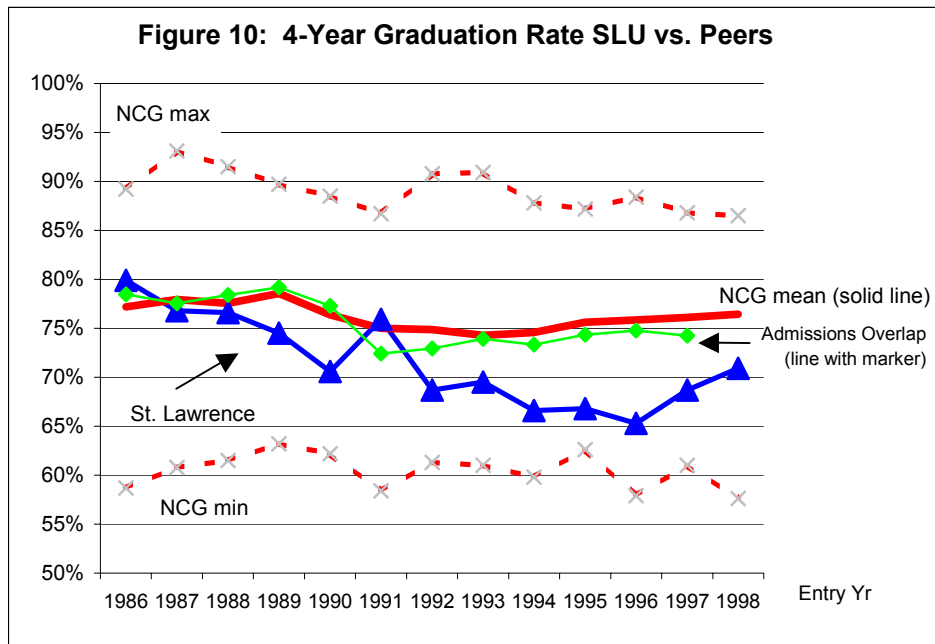
Our efforts to enlarge our pool of well-qualified applicants have been matched by efforts to improve the retention of students we admit. In the fall of 2000 a Task Force on Retention was appointed to study the problem of attrition at St. Lawrence in the context of national trends. Informed by the literature on retention, the Task Force chose to follow Tinto’s “Model of Institutional Departure”³ and issued a comprehensive report in August 2001, clarifying the nature of the problem and recommending various actions to improve retention.

The Task Force report emphasized that about half of all students who do not graduate from St. Lawrence leave within the first year, and another third leave within the sophomore year. First-year retention at St. Lawrence had decreased from about 89% for the class of 1995 to 82% for the class of 2001 (the year of our Middle States visit) and

³ Tinto, V. *Leaving College: Rethinking the Causes and Cures of Student Attrition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987.

improved only slightly within the next years. In contrast, the mean first-year retention rate of colleges in the NCG held steady at about 90% (see Figure 9). Graduation rates experienced even more significant declines throughout the 1990s. Four-year graduation rates declined from a high of 79.9% for the class of 1995 to our lowest point in history, with 65.6% for the class of 2000 (a 14% decline over 10 years) (see Figure 10). St. Lawrence's graduation rates outperformed the NCG ten years ago but now lag behind the NCG by almost ten percentage points. Finally, while recognizing that retention depends greatly on the academic *and* social experiences of students on campus, the Task Force also noted, as research in the field predicts, that attrition tends to occur at a higher rate among those students identified by Admissions to be least prepared academically for college work. For example, whereas only 5% of the students in the highest category of academic preparedness in the class of 2003 left after their first year, 28% in the lowest category left after their first year, the majority of them leaving because of academic difficulties.





The Task Force’s recommendations are wide ranging, encompassing the Admissions process; academic policy, advising, and support services; and various non-academic sources of student dissatisfaction with St. Lawrence. The recommendations for retention focus on improving “early warning” systems for identifying and aiding students in academic difficulty, improving the academic advising system, alleviating the feeling of isolation in Canton, and improving the quality of life on campus.

One of the benefits of tracking the correlation between attrition and academic preparation is that it has enabled us to identify a specific group of “at-risk” students and intervene proactively to help them. We have taken measures to strengthen our “early warning” systems and support services for students in academic difficulty, especially for those deemed “at risk.” Especially effective has been the addition of staffing in Academic Resources. Recently a part-time position for an Academic Skills Coordinator was expanded into 1.5 FTE positions: the Coordinator of Academic Achievement and the

Coordinator of Academic Support. The former coordinates the peer tutor program and works with students who are having academic difficulties. The latter also intervenes with students in academic trouble and teaches in the First-Year Program. With 1.5 positions devoted to academic support, more students can get help earlier in the semester.

The Coordinators of Academic Achievement and Academic Support have initiated an aggressive intervention program. It is based upon an early warning system, which asks faculty a few weeks into the semester to identify students who may be struggling. In the three years that the early warning system has been in place, the number of faculty making referrals has increased from 24 (fall 2000) to 109 (fall 2002). Students in academic difficulty are also identified on midterm grade reports and receive letters advising them to seek the help of Academic Resources. Students on academic probation are required to work with the Academic Resources staff, and the Coordinator of Academic Achievement is being more aggressive in seeing that students respond to the mandate. Whether on probation or not, all students who are having academic problems may take advantage of “structured academic recovery programs” offered by Academic Resources. These programs are tailored to the needs of individual students, who meet weekly with Academic Resources staff or other resource personnel (e.g. in the Writing Center or Counseling Services) to address issues such as time management, goal setting, test taking, and writing and discussion skills. The Coordinator of Academic Achievement also provides workshops for high-achieving students so that they might enhance their educational experience.

One issue that the Task Force considered which had been raised earlier was that, unlike St. Lawrence, many of the colleges in the NCG do not have a policy of suspending

first-year students in academic difficulty after a semester on campus. While members of the Task Force agreed that struggling students may benefit from a study leave, they were concerned that a full-year suspension puts returning students into a new first-year class and creates problems of social integration for them. Thus the Task Force recommended, and the Faculty voted to accept, a change in policy which allows students the option of a one-semester suspension, provided they agree to attend summer school and improve their academic standing. (This policy is for first-semester suspension of first-year students entering in the fall; January entries will still be suspended for a full year, with readmission the following fall.)

Although it is too early to assess fully the new programs of intervention with struggling students, the initial signs are positive. The number of first-year academic suspensions has declined greatly over the last two years. The usual range was about 24 to 30 first-year suspensions in the past (classes of 1996 to 2003); they have dropped to 12 students in the class of 2004 and 8 students in the class of 2005. And assessment shows further that more than 50% of the students on academic probation who have been through a structured academic recovery program have improved their grades. It is worth noting that a presentation on the work of the Retention Task Force and the policy changes it has prompted was received favorably at a recent conference of the Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium (HEDS).

Of course, students leave St. Lawrence for reasons other than academic suspension. Most of the attrition in the first two years is the result of students transferring to other colleges or interrupting their education for reasons other than poor academic performance. The Retention Task Force found that students leaving St.

Lawrence, with few exceptions, are very positive about the academic program. They like the small classes, the relationships they are able to establish with faculty members, and the quality of their courses. Their dissatisfaction is mainly with the isolation of St. Lawrence's location, the lack of transportation to nearby points of interest, and the social limitations of life on campus and in Canton, NY.

Improving the quality of life for students on campus has been the focus of the early phases of the strategic plan for facilities development. As reported in Section 3, since 1997-98 the University has constructed new athletic facilities and a new bookstore, and has begun construction of a new Student Center and townhouses for senior students that will approximate the experience of living off campus. Additionally, the University has been allocating \$1 million per year to refurbish residence halls and create more spaces in which students can socialize. The aim of these investments in facilities is to attract more applications and raise the level of satisfaction of admitted students with life on campus. The Retention Task Force also recommended that students be provided more training and support in organizing on-campus events. This recommendation is being implemented through a variety of initiatives, including the Alcohol Initiative and Greek Engagement Project, and through the Leadership Academy and Center for Student Volunteerism (see Section 5).

To relieve the sense of isolation in Canton and make it easier for students to visit local places of interest and travel home, the University is providing free transportation to nearby airports and bus and train stations, and subsidizing student use of a local taxi service. It is also making more resources available for students to take trips off campus.

Because these initiatives are recent, we do not have enough data to assess their effectiveness fully. However, some preliminary indications, such as the drop in number of academic suspensions and the improvement of students going through academic recovery programs mentioned above, are encouraging. There is evidence also that our investments in facilities are beginning to pay off. Students admitted to the class of 2006 indicated in a survey that the new athletic facilities and bookstore were important factors in their choice of St. Lawrence. One of the initiatives of the Retention Task Force was to design and implement an annual “College Success Questionnaire” that aims to measure student satisfaction and collect other data from first-year students and sophomores. Collecting input from students earlier (rather than at the time of graduation only) will enable us to assess better how our investments in facilities, academic programs, and academic resources are affecting admissions and retention. Additionally, a sub-committee of the Enrollment Committee of the Board of Trustees has been established to address the issue of retention. The focus of the sub-committee is primarily strategic and it has recently established benchmarks for measuring retention. With benchmarks established and more data in hand, we should be in a good position to report on our progress in the next Self-Study.

Section 3:

Institutional Resources

In the 1997-98 Self-Study we reported a 1996-97 operating budget of \$68 million (\$50 million net of financial aid), a June 30, 1997 endowment market value of \$172 million, 155 FTE faculty (642 full-time and part-time employees total), and 1.4 million square feet of physical plant, including extensive library and information technology facilities, on an attractive 1,000 acre campus. We possessed, we believed, the resources and resource flexibility to support an ambitious educational program. At the same time, we reported that we had not achieved sufficient enrollment and net tuition revenue control for financial equilibrium, strong enough fund raising performance, strong enough facilities and technology investment and management, and good enough employee morale to remain competitive with comparison schools and achieve the educational outcomes for students to which we aspired. We also reported that a comprehensive strategic planning process was under way to better manage the enrollment situation and coordinate efforts to improve admissions and retention with investments in facilities, academic programs, and human resources. St. Lawrence's response to volatile admissions results and static net tuition revenues during the previous decade has not been to retrench, but to initiate ambitious campaigns of fundraising, facilities improvements, and program and faculty development.

Budget

St. Lawrence's current (2002-03) operating budget is \$107 million (\$79 million net of financial aid); its June, 30, 2002 endowment market value is \$174 million; there are currently 181.4 FTE faculty (804 full- and part-time employees total), and 1.5 million square feet of physical plant. In the last three years, net student tuition revenue has begun

to grow as compared to the stagnant situation prior to the 1997-98 Self-Study until 1999-2000. The discount rate, as a percentage of tuition and fees, for entering classes reached a high of 54.4% in 2000 (41.5% of comprehensive fee) and has since dropped to 47.7% for the class of 2006 (36.9% of comprehensive fee). Net student tuition revenue has grown from \$23.8 million in 1996-97 to \$31.0 million in 2002-03, a growth rate of 30.1%. As was the case prior to 1997-98, St. Lawrence has increased all other sources of revenue faster than net tuition revenue (see Figure 11).

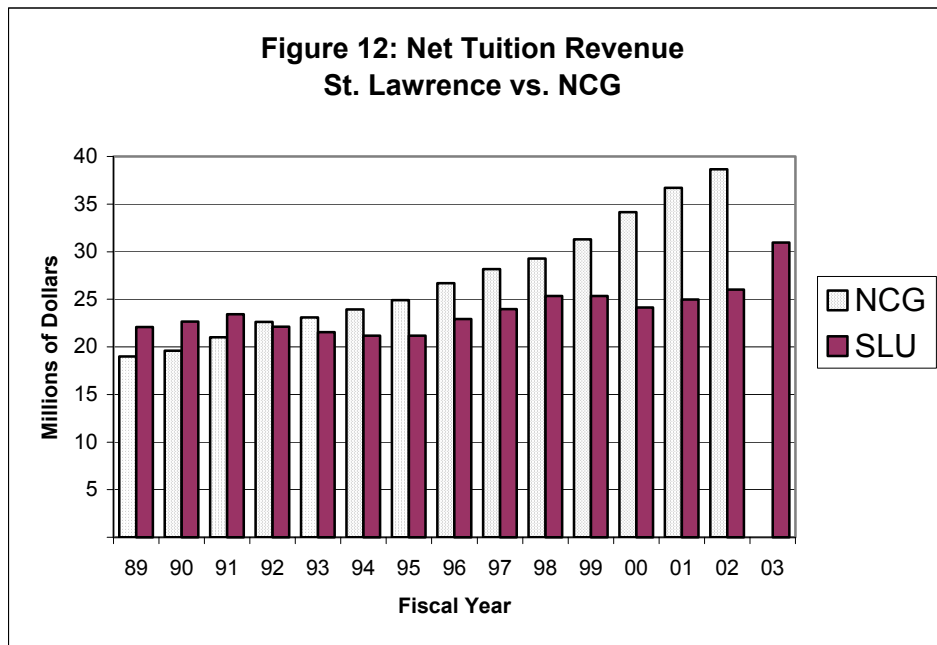
Figure 11: Growth Rates of Select Sources of Revenues

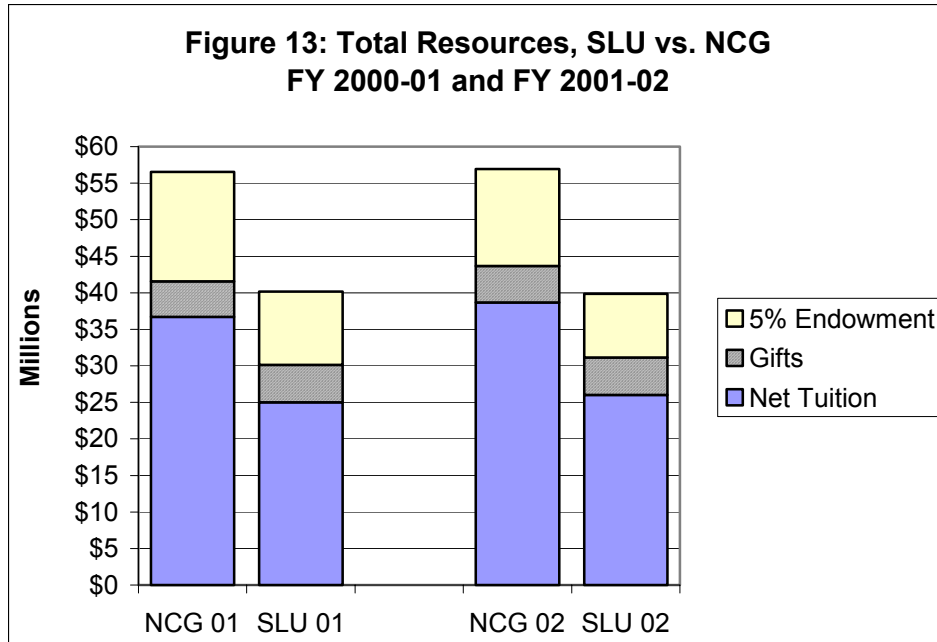
| | 1996-97 | 2002-03 | % Change |
|-----------------------|------------|------------|----------|
| Net Tuition Revenue | 23,792,738 | 30,959,900 | 30.1% |
| Room & Board Revenues | 9,867,655 | 14,288,900 | 44.8% |
| Endowment Income | 6,600,484 | 12,004,521 | 81.9% |
| Private Gifts | 3,826,637 | 7,036,500 | 83.9% |

The growth in endowment and gift income sustained investments in academic and student programs, while growth in tuition revenues remained relatively flat. In the decade prior to the 1997-98 Self-Study, net tuition revenue increased by only 13%, yet our investment in academic and student programs grew by 37% (51% on a per student basis). In the six years since 1996-97, net tuition revenue has grown by 30%, while expenditures on academic and student programs increased by 47% (34% on a per student basis). While sometimes struggling in the admissions marketplace, St. Lawrence has sought to remain competitive by maintaining the quality of its academic programs. Nevertheless, a major goal of recent strategic planning has been to achieve more control over the number, quality, and financial profile of students enrolled so as to drive down the discount rate and increase net tuition revenues over time. As noted in Section 2, and as the current budget shows, we have made progress in this regard. In the last two years,

net student revenues have increased by over 20% each year, and we are projecting increases of 5 -11% per year through 2008.

While we are encouraged by the upturn in net tuition revenues, we are still not doing as well as the schools to which we compare ourselves. Figure 12 shows that we have not kept pace with net tuition revenue increases at NCG colleges. Furthermore, as we outline later in this section, we base our new compensation policy partly on a comparison between St. Lawrence’s and the average NCG’s “resources”—defined as net tuition revenue, plus gifts and 5% of endowment. This comparison also shows that we have some catching up to do. In 2000-01 the average resources of NCG schools was \$56.5 million and it rose to \$57.3 million in 2001-02. In these same two years, St. Lawrence’s resources totaled \$40.2 million and \$39.8 million. We had roughly \$16-\$17 million fewer resources each year to spend on programs and people than the average NCG college (see Figure 13).





Facilities Planning

As we reported in the 1997-98 Self-Study, one of the costs of continuing to invest in academic programs as net tuition revenues remained relatively flat was to defer renewal of the University’s physical plant. In the decade preceding the 1997-98 Self-Study, the amount transferred yearly from the operating budget for renewal of the physical plant often fell below the recommended 1.5-2.0% of its replacement value (approximately \$1.9-2.5 million annually). The plant had been maintained well for existing uses, and we had been able to expend on average about \$2 million annually for renovation with the help of gifts and borrowing, but there was clearly a backlog of facilities needs that had to be addressed if St. Lawrence was to move forward competitively. The facilities planning process we initiated in 1996-97 indicated that it would take investments in renovation, new construction, and technology of \$9 million annually over the next decade in order to catch up. This was additional to the yearly

commitment to “recapitalization” (1.5-2.0% of operating budget earmarked for physical plant renewal). In October 1997, the Board of Trustees approved a facilities plan, including a list of priorities and recommendations for renovations and additions (see Appendix C). The plan was conceived in phases—the scope, scheduling, and duration of each phase dependent upon the University’s financial reserves and ability to secure gifts and loans. Highest priority was given to projects that were most likely to help St. Lawrence attract and retain students. The urgency of the enrollment problem and backlog of facilities needs prompted the Board of Trustees to borrow \$30 million in August 1998 to ensure the rapid completion of Phase I. This included renovations of Owen D. Young Library and Dana Dining Hall (the University’s main dining facility) and construction of a new bookstore in an old building that was being used for storage.

Also as part of Phase I, the University’s recreation and athletic facilities have been transformed extensively. A new football facility (Leckonby Stadium), large enough to seat 1,500 people, and nine-lane outdoor track have been constructed. Newell Field House (including modern fitness center, 5 indoor tennis courts, locker and exercise rooms, and facilities for the Outdoor Program) has been added on to the old Augsbury physical education center. A new all-weather, artificial-turf field has been built to serve several varsity teams and intramural programs, and new squash courts have been constructed in the old field house. The Appleton (ice hockey) Arena has been renovated to include a varsity women’s locker room, coaches’ offices, and new ice-making equipment, and to be more accessible to the handicapped. Phase I also involved landscaping improvements, including the addition of lighting and crosswalks along Park Street and the transformation of Leigh Street, which ran between the football stadium and

Augsbury Physical Education Complex, into a pedestrian walkway. Phase I projects (including some not mentioned here) have added 145,000 square feet to the University's physical plant, and renovated or refurbished another 260,000 square feet, at a total cost of \$51.5 million, including \$13 million in University reserves, \$30 million in loans, and \$8.5 million in gifts designated for construction.

Because Phase I depleted the University's financial reserves and additional borrowing did not seem feasible immediately, Phase II was conceived tentatively as having to rely upon major gifts and increasing revenues over time from improved enrollment. However, a favorable bond rating and low interest rates have made it possible for the University to borrow an additional \$40 million dollars to get Phase II, especially the building of a new student center, underway. The student center would have been a Phase I project except that the bookstore had to be relocated first to make way for it. It is central to the facilities plan in several ways. It will be centrally located, unifying what has long been perceived as a bifurcated campus (resulting from the acquisition of Canton College of Technology buildings and the location of the science complex on the south side of campus). Long identified by students as a high-priority need, the new student center will enable the University to realize more fully its "student-centered" educational mission. It will provide needed, up-to-date facilities for student organizations and social and educational activities and make St. Lawrence more attractive to prospective students. The ground was broken for the building in June 2002, and we expect it to be completed in early 2004 at a cost of \$15 million. Phase II has also included further additions to our athletic facilities. The continued generosity of members of the Board of Trustees has made it possible to construct new baseball and soccer fields

and several more squash courts. Also underway in Phase II is the construction of townhouses for senior students. These are intended to provide seniors with an attractive, economical alternative to off-campus, independent living. There will be six clustered buildings at the south end of campus comprised of 24 individual townhouse units, housing 120 students in all. The townhouses will be ready for occupancy in fall 2003 and are expected to cost \$6 million, \$1.5 million coming from gifts and \$4.5 million from loans.

Two major facilities projects are in the planning stage at the time of this writing. Beyond the programmatic benefits of the new student center, its construction gives us the opportunity to use the space vacated by current student center activities to expand the space for our programs in the arts. The improvement of the arts facilities has been a high priority for a while but has had to await the relocation of the student center. Once the new student center is completed, the arts will have nearly double the space currently available to them. The second major project before us is extensive expansion and renovation of our sciences and mathematics facilities. We are well along in a planning process that has included a comprehensive, interdisciplinary assessment of our curriculum in sciences and mathematics and facilities needs. We are currently completing a schematic design of a multi-phased, seven- to ten-year-plan that will double the space for sciences and mathematics to nearly 250,000 square feet and renovate all existing facilities. With a generous gift of \$10 million from trustee Sarah E. Johnson '82, a \$4.5 million grant from New York State's Gen*NY*sis biotechnology and economic development program, another \$2 million grant from the State, and \$10 million of

allocated Phase II borrowings, the University is preparing to begin construction in 2004 of the first part of the project—a new building for biology and chemistry.

The University has been projecting deficits of 4.5, 7.8, 9.9, and 6 million dollars from fiscal year 2002 through 2005 respectively, due mainly to the interest expense on building loans and increased cost of depreciation, which will more than double (from approximately \$5 to \$10 million) from fiscal year 2000 to fiscal year 2005. A goal of our strategic planning for the next 5 years is to achieve a balanced operating budget, excluding the costs of depreciation and non-recurring gifts earmarked for construction projects, and a positive cash flow as net tuition revenue from improved enrollment increases. We plan to achieve a truly balanced budget (including depreciation costs) by 2006-07. Improved market demand in admissions, better retention rates, and increasing net tuition revenue are the returns we expect in the future from the investments in facilities we are making now.

Endowment Management and Policy

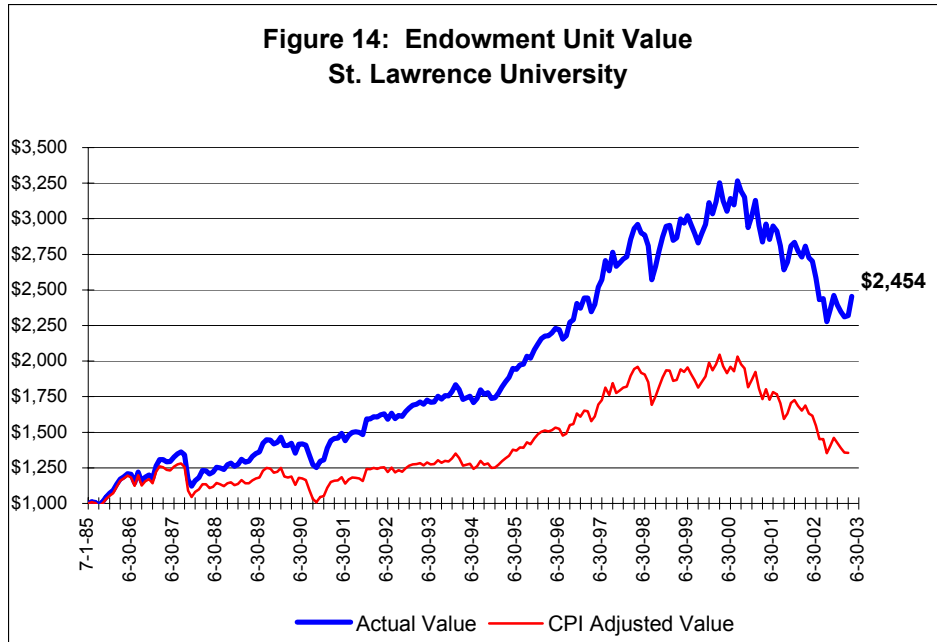
Since 1997-98 we have made several significant changes in the management of the University's investments. First, in 2000, Callan Associates was hired as our investment consultant. With their assistance the investment asset allocation was reviewed and modified, the investment policy was overhauled, several managers were released and six new managers were hired, the custodian bank was changed, the Supplemental Retirement Plan trust investments were changed, and quarterly performance reports are generated for review by the Investment Committee of the Board of Trustees. The Investment Committee now holds teleconferences to review the quarterly results when they become available in between regular Board of Trustee

meetings. While these changes were thorough and reflect sound investment-management strategies, they have not insulated the University from the declines in the investment market. They have, however, provided a sound basis for evaluation and action that may be needed. For example, in March, the mid-cap manager was released for poor performance, and a search for a replacement is underway.

Since June 30, 1998, the total value of the investments has gone from \$195 million, including \$19 million of funds that were designated for use and have since been used on capital projects, to \$162 million. The changes are inclusive of new gifts and spending. Following is a table of the total value of the University's investments, annual additions, total return, and spending for operations.

| (\$M) | Total Investment Value | New Additions | Spending | Total Return |
|------------------------|------------------------|---------------|----------|--------------|
| 1997-98 | \$195.40 | \$1.90 | \$8.20 | 18.90% |
| 1998-99 | \$206.20 | \$2.90 | \$9.70 | 14.90% |
| 1999-2000 | \$213.90 | \$3.60 | \$10.90 | 9.10% |
| 2000-2001 | \$200.10 | \$3.90 | \$11.90 | 6.60% |
| 2001-2002 | \$174.00 | \$5.70 | \$12.20 | -3.80% |
| 2002-2003* | \$161.70 | \$2.40 | \$12.00 | -10.40% |
| * As of April 30, 2003 | | | | |

The endowment portion of the University's total investments is unitized for donor relations and income distribution purposes. Figure 14 shows the change in unit value of the endowment and the dramatic decline in the recent market since 1985, and predicts the future decline in spending that will result.



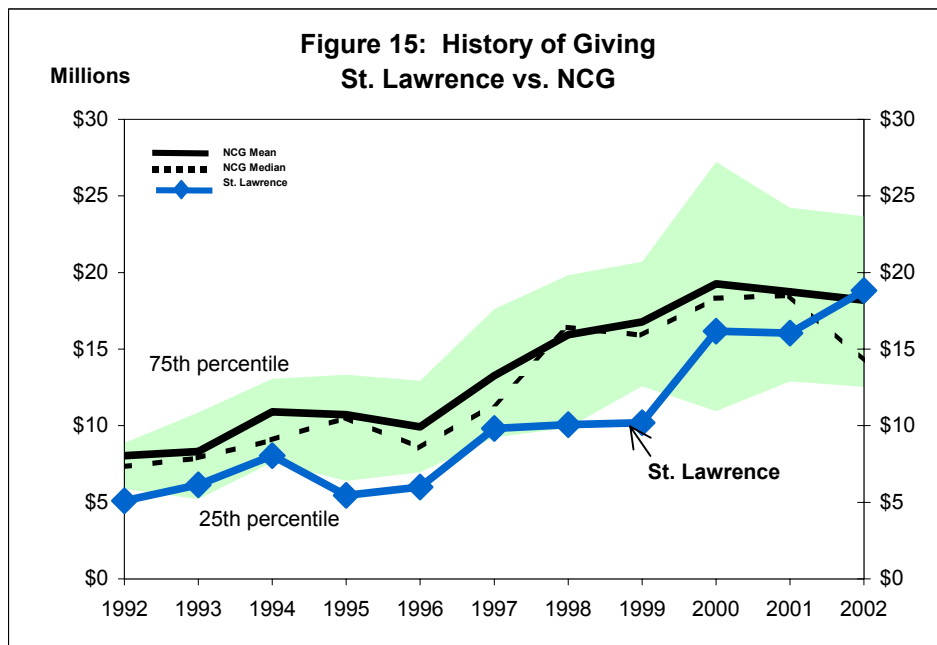
We use a spending formula based on three-year average market values, as do more than 60% of the schools that participate in the National Association of University and Business Officers (NACUBO)'s annual endowment survey. Consequently, two consecutive years of market declines have resulted in a decline in the amount that is available for support of the operating budget. For fiscal 2003-04, the amount available will be \$1.9 million less than in 2002-03. The budget strategy described earlier allows the University some time to make appropriate adjustments, but growth in revenues and a reduction in the cost structure will be necessary to achieve financial equilibrium. In addition, the Investment Committee of the Board of Trustees will maintain its vigilance over the University's investments to assure a prudent strategy for increasing the market value of the endowment.

University Advancement

In 1997-98 we reported that we needed to improve our fund-raising performance in order to achieve financial equilibrium and be more competitive. We lagged behind our peers in total private support, raising between \$5-\$6 million annually (including funds for current operating purposes). And we reported that total philanthropic support in constant dollars had increased only 5% between 1988 and 1998. Relative to the New Comparison Group, St. Lawrence was below the median in nine out of those ten years. This was not good news, given flat net tuition revenues and shrinking government support for higher education. The Division of University Advancement was being reorganized under new leadership in 1997-1998, and we had recently embarked on a comprehensive capital campaign with a goal of \$75 million. Late in 1999, the goal was surpassed, and the Campaign was extended until December 31, 2002, with a new goal of \$130 million. We can report that Campaign St. Lawrence closed on December 31, 2002, having exceeded its goal by raising \$132.2 million in gifts and pledges, payable by the end of 2005. The total includes \$21.1 million in support of facilities and \$38.3 million in support of the endowment, in addition to unrestricted and restricted gifts for other purposes. \$88.6 million came from alumni, \$13.5 million from current parents and parents of alumni, \$15 million from friends of the University, \$2.5 million from corporations, \$11.1 million from foundations, and \$1.5 million from organizations. Of special note is the level of philanthropy from St. Lawrence trustees and trustees emeriti, who donated \$35.6 million to the campaign.

The progress of our fund-raising efforts is also reflected in annual giving figures. Total giving to St. Lawrence from private sources reached \$18.8 million in 2001-02, the

largest ever received by the University. This amount topped the previous record set in 1999-2000 by 16% and is 88% more than the \$10 million raised in 1997-98. As a result, St. Lawrence has moved from the 25th percentile to above the median and mean of the NCG (see Figure 15). After dropping significantly from 45% in fiscal year 1996 to 36% in fiscal year 1998 (due in large part to staff transition), alumni donor participation trends have remained fairly flat. Total alumni donors to the St. Lawrence Annual Fund decreased from 7,767 to 7,616 and from 36 % to 33 % participation, from fiscal year 1998 to fiscal year 2002, while the overall number of alumni grew substantially with larger than average graduating classes. Our decline in donors is concentrated most heavily among alumni from the most recent 15 years of graduation. The University launched the Young Alumni Engagement Project in 2002 to address this issue.



The successes of Campaign St. Lawrence and improvements generally in fundraising are the result of strategic investments in University Advancement. The staff

has grown from 36 in 1997-98 to 45 in 2002-03. Two positions have been added to University Communications and seven positions have been added to Development, including assistant directors of Development Research, Corporate/Foundation Relations and Major Gifts. The additions to University Communications of an electronic communications manager and photo collection manager have greatly improved the technological dimensions of marketing the University and fundraising. St. Lawrence's web-site has been redesigned, for example, to allow for on-line registration for alumni events, gift donations, and purchases from the University bookstore. More effective use of the Internet has also improved our exposure in the media and to alumni. We now maintain an on-line news site where alumni may read a weekly News Digest or access the *St. Lawrence University Magazine*. The new photo collection manager is engineering a switch to digital photography and designing an archiving system that will allow for efficient storage, retrieval, and cross referencing of more than 50,000 photos taken each year. This will make the processes of communication, publication, and fundraising more cost effective.

The University Advancement budget has grown from \$2.4 million in fiscal year 1998 to \$3.7 million (budgeted) in fiscal year 2003, a 54% increase. This includes two allocations from quasi-endowment budgets for Campaign St. Lawrence, approved by the Board of Trustees in 1997 and 2000, to meet campaign related costs. The majority of these costs will be continued after fiscal year 2003 and therefore integrated into operating budgets starting in fiscal year 2004. The University Communications budget, a subset of University Advancement, has grown from \$585,065 in fiscal year 1998 to \$870,140 in fiscal year 2003 (budgeted), an increase of 48%.

Nevertheless, the fundraising operation has become more efficient in the last five years, spending 11 cents per dollar raised in 2001-02 as compared to 21 cents in 1997-98. These figures are based on the portion of the University Advancement budget directly related to fundraising. The reduction in cost per dollar raised suggests that we can increase our capacity for fundraising with strategic budget increases. In line with this strategy, two new travel positions have been approved for fiscal year 2004, one in the alumni and parent programs department and one in the major gifts department.

Despite its record-breaking success, Campaign St. Lawrence has not satisfied the financial needs of the University. The Campaign has been an umbrella initiative, the means by which we have been realizing our strategic plan and providing structure, definition and momentum to our fund-raising programs. It is important that gift income trends continue to increase if we are to meet our overall institutional objectives. We are not feeling the “burnout” that can occur at the end of a major campaign. Rather, we intend to capitalize on the successes of Campaign St. Lawrence by initiating another phase of fundraising. To support facilities and program initiatives already underway and projected in our strategic plan, we anticipate a 6-8 year fund-raising campaign, with a three-year private phase starting soon and up to a five-year public phase. The focus of this campaign will be on science and arts facilities, endowment, and continued growth in giving for current programming through restricted and unrestricted gifts to the St. Lawrence Fund. This next campaign will provide the marketing vehicle to continue to increase gift income to St. Lawrence. One of our goals for University Advancement is to reach the 75th percentile among NCG colleges in annual gift income. Assuming NCG trends remain constant, we will need to increase total annual gift income from \$19

million to \$35-40 million by 2007-08 in order to reach the 75th percentile. To do this, we need to improve our fundraising among young alumni and, most importantly, to secure more gifts in the \$5 million plus range, with annual payments on those commitments of \$1 million or more. We have identified 5-10 prospective donors at that level who will, hopefully, help us to launch the next campaign.

Human Resources

In the 1997-98 Self-Study we reported on staffing trends at St. Lawrence from 1983 to 1997. Our data showed that the size of the faculty had shrunk (from a high of 166 positions in 1989 to 151 in 1997) while the size of exempt administrative staff and clerical staff had grown by 67 and 17 positions respectively. Although the decrease in faculty positions was smaller in percentage terms than the 18% decrease in enrollment over the same period, our analysis of staffing patterns suggested that the faculty was too small to meet the educational goals of the University and that the administration was slightly overstaffed. President Sullivan proposed to increase the size of the faculty by capitalizing on impending retirements and reduce the size of the administration through reorganization and normal attrition. Since 1997-98 the size of the faculty has grown. The changes are detailed below. The net change in faculty reflects not only newly created positions but also positions that have been converted from faculty to administrative staff and vice versa. The total number of faculty positions has increased by an FTE of 17.9 or 10.9%. This compares to an increase in enrollment of 9.5%.

| Faculty* | 1997-98 | 2002-03 | Change |
|---------------------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| Full-Time Teaching | 151 | 165 | 14 |
| Part Time | 30 | 37 | 7 |
| Total Full and Part Time | 181 | 202 | 21 |
| Full-Time Equivalency | 163.5 | 181.4 | 17.9 |

* Count is for teaching faculty; does not include faculty on sabbatical/First-Year Program leave

Contrary to our intentions in 1997-98, the administrative, clerical, and services staffs have also grown. The changes in these positions are detailed below. The increase in administrative staff of 74 is due mainly to new athletic teams, new programs in Student Life, an expanded capital campaign, and growth in instructional technology. It is also important to note that several of these added positions are in support of academic programs. The clerical/technical staff has increased more modestly by 2 positions and the services staff by 36, due mainly to the addition of new buildings, expanded dining services, and the decision to bring subcontracted grounds-keeping services back in house. The total full-time staff has increased from 422 in 1997-98 to 534 in 2002-03 (26.5%). The increase in the number of part-time staff positions has been more modest, from 48 to 53.

| Administration & Staff | 1997-98 | 2002-03 | Change |
|-----------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Professional | 158 | 232 | 74 |
| Clerical, Technical | 125 | 127 | 2 |
| Service, Manual | 139 | 175 | 36 |
| Total Full Time | 422 | 534 | 112 |
| Part Time | 48 | 53 | 5 |
| Total Full and Part Time | 470 | 587 | 117 |

Compensation

Although we acknowledged in 1997-98 the importance of compensating faculty and staff adequately, we also reported that the compensation policy for faculty was a source of controversy and a weight upon faculty morale. It was adopted in 1994 to replace a policy that had been abandoned by the Board of Trustees. The new policy was designed to place St. Lawrence faculty compensation at the mean (adjusted for differences between institutions in the distribution of faculty by rank) of the New Comparison Group (NCG)—a mixture of 25 institutions from *U.S. News and World*

Report's Tier 1 and Tier 2 liberal-arts colleges. The policy also included a “merit pay” component, which a majority of the faculty opposed. Like its predecessor, this policy proved difficult to meet as the University struggled to control enrollment and increase net tuition revenues. Some members of the Board of Trustees continued to be skeptical about paying faculty at levels near the top of Tier 2 and bottom of Tier 1 schools when the University was not producing the same net tuition and gift revenues as those institutions. And they were asking why the compensation policy covered faculty but not administrators and hourly staff. As we reported in 1997-98, the compensation policy was being placed on the planning agenda for the near future and we have since addressed it, the Board of Trustees adopting a new policy in February 2001.

In October 1999 the President charged a group of faculty and administrators to consider the compensation policy. They were asked to analyze the state of faculty and administrative compensation levels at St. Lawrence relative to the NCG, the financial resources of St. Lawrence relative to the NCG, and alternative compensation policies, especially the one at Wheaton College, MA. They were to report to the Board of Trustees Compensation Committee in February 2000, and work in consultation with that committee to formulate a proposal for a new compensation policy. A new policy was proposed to the Board of Trustees in May 2000, and, after being endorsed by the Faculty and the Administrative Life Committee, approved by the Board in February 2001.

The fact that we were able to address this controversial issue quickly and collegially is a measure of the health of the institution and the effectiveness of our planning process. More careful analysis and benchmarking of our progress vis a vis the NCG has given us a more informed and sophisticated view of the compensation issue and

has enabled us to produce, we believe, an equitable and workable policy. The new policy determines the increase in salary pools for continuing faculty and administrative staff and is to be a first charge on the operating budget—that is, the percentage increase in the salary pool will have priority over other planned expenditures. The policy will be in place for five years, including an initial two years (2000-02) of predetermined salary pool increases (5.45%), and be evaluated in the fifth year, 2004-05. The calculation of salary pool increases takes into account the growth in average salaries at NCG colleges and is adjusted for inflation and for the growth or decline in St. Lawrence’s financial resources relative to the average of the NCG. Finally, it includes a “catch-up” factor for the next four years that is designed to bring faculty and administrative salaries into line with those at NCG colleges.

The resource adjustment in the policy reflects the relative situation that is discussed in the “budget” section above. The average resources of the NCG grew from \$56.5 million to \$57.3 million between 2000-01 and 2001-02. During that same time, St. Lawrence’s resources declined by \$0.3 million. In 2000-01 St. Lawrence’s resources were 29.0% below the mean, and the next year fell to 30.5% below the mean of the NCG. This relative position accounts for the adjustment in calculating salary pools. However, the policy imposes a minimum and maximum on the resource adjustment of plus or minus 2%. With a rational policy in force and a better understanding of St. Lawrence’s financial position, faculty and administrators accepted smaller increases in the salary pool than the previous two years with minimal consternation.

Information Technology

In 1997-98 we reported a number of problems in this area that had mainly to do with rapidly increasing demands for computer services and ineffective organization. At that time support for information technology was the responsibility of two departments, Computer Operations and Instructional Technology. Computer Operations was responsible for administrative data systems, network services, connections to the Internet, and desktop computer purchases, installation, and repair. Instructional Technology installed software and provided training and support for desktop computing, classroom technology, and video broadcasting and editing. Although the division of labor made some sense, there were complaints about the abilities of both departments to keep up with demands for service and about the coordination of services and planning, especially in the gray areas between “administrative” and “academic” functions. To address these problems an Information Technology Planning Committee (ITPC) was established in March 1997, to assess the state of information technology at St. Lawrence, outline future objectives, and determine the resources needed to meet them.

A significant outcome of ITPC’s work was the reorganization of information technology services, combining Computer Operations, Instructional Technology, Telecommunications, Office Services, and the Mailroom under one umbrella and placing a new Vice President for Information Technology at the head. The result of this reorganization has been more effective planning, coordination, and delivery of services. In support of these changes, St. Lawrence has continued to invest significantly in IT. Staffing for the department has increased by five full-time positions, enabling it to provide more support for the use of technology and to monitor and upgrade the various

servers we maintain more effectively. All facilities projects now include members of the IT staff so that the latest technology is incorporated into construction and/or renovation plans. The University has approved a \$1 million capital fund for IT each year since 1998-99, which makes it possible, among other things, to replace our computers regularly. The total operating budget for IT (excluding Office Services and the Mailroom) has increased by 44% since 1997-98, from \$1.6 to \$2.3 million. This increased level of financial support has allowed us to create a uniform computing environment in which everyone on campus uses a standard computer configuration (PC-clone or Macintosh) with a common suite of software, which has improved our ability to communicate and eased the burden of maintenance.

In 1997-98 IT was supporting approximately 800 desktop computers, including 165 in electronic laboratories or classrooms; a campus-wide voice, data, and video network; and access to Internet, e-mail, on-line library services, student advising system, and a debit/ID/meal card system. Today IT supports 1,449 desktop computers, including 507 in various electronic laboratories, classrooms, and public access facilities. And it has increased user capacity, network accessibility in residence halls, speed of access and reliability of Internet, e-mail, and on-line library services. In 1997-98 roughly 10% of students subscribed to network services in their residences. Today the service is provided at no extra charge to all students who live in University-owned residences. Over the same period, network capacity has grown from a 10 MB shared ethernet backbone to a gigabit switched Ethernet backbone. Utilization has declined from an 80 percent load factor to about ten percent, so users are much better served. Internet capacity has grown from one T-1 circuit to six T-1 circuits (9.2 Mbps), but demand has grown even faster.

Despite proactive management (firewall, packet shaping tools are used routinely), utilization when students are present consistently exceeds 80 percent of available capacity except during the wee hours.

Additionally, the debit/ID/meal card system has been expanded to include electronic key entrance to University buildings, and all copier-printers on campus have been networked so that employees may operate them with their ID cards and have the charges tracked to appropriated departments. Alternatively, larger jobs can be delivered electronically to the University's duplicating center to be printed on a larger copier at lower cost. Students also can access copier-printers located in residence halls.

In keeping with its main mission of providing a computing environment supportive of teaching, learning and research, IT currently maintains 44 electronically equipped classrooms and a number of portable systems. A strong working relationship has developed in the past two years between IT and Academic Affairs, which has led to long-range planning for faculty development in the use of instructional technologies. IT staff offer programs in faculty development through the new Center for Teaching and Learning at 62 Park Street. It houses multimedia project and training labs with both wired and wireless network access, designed specifically with faculty development in mind. Faculty are taking advantage of opportunities to learn about web-page design, Power-Point presentation, Smart-Board and Blackboard technology, and image and video editing in "Tuesday TechBreaks," monthly "Faculty Technology Spotlight" series, and annual (January) "Faculty TechFests." During the 2002-03 academic year, IT has offered 53 of the weekly TechBreak sessions, in which 210 students, faculty, and staff have participated. 36 people attended TechFest 2002, and 57 people attended TechFest 2003.

IT also provides regular training sessions and workshops for administrative personnel and for all university employees.

In 1997-98 we reported that several offices on campus found the University's administrative data systems inadequate for storage, retrieval, and sharing of information. One of the initiatives of the Information Technology Planning Committee was to investigate the benefits and costs of "migrating" from the University's homegrown, "Legacy" systems to a commercial, integrated "Enterprise Resource Planning" (ERP) system. In consultation with a newly established (2001) Board of Trustees Committee on Information Technology, the decision was made in 2002 to explore the change. An Administrative Migration Planning Team, with representatives from the major divisions of the University, was formed in 2002 to guide the selection and implementation of a new ERP. SCT Banner has been chosen. Presuming that the Board of Trustees elects to proceed (decision scheduled for fall 2003), implementation is expected to take 3 years and to cost \$3-5 million. The new ERP system will provide direct web access to students and employees who need to view and/or change records, rather than requiring that they go through an administrative office. As an ODBC-compliant product, it also will be compatible with new products developed over the next 5-10 years with which our present system would be unable to integrate.

Libraries

The information examined by the Middle States Evaluation Team in 1998 led them to conclude that the St. Lawrence University Libraries "are justifiably well regarded." They also noted our concerns about budget constraints, the difficulties of balancing expenditures for paper and electronic acquisitions, and the challenges of

improving the instructional role and effectiveness of the Libraries. They recommended that the University “make every effort to maintain adequate funding for library acquisitions in real terms,” that the Libraries seek to improve communication with academic departments and programs about acquisitions issues, and that we review the scope and goals of the Libraries’ efforts to teach information literacy and research skills, both in the FYP and upper-level courses. A number of changes and initiatives in the Libraries have directly or indirectly addressed these recommendations.

St. Lawrence’s investments in general operating budget, acquisitions, and facilities improvements for Owen D. Young Library (ODY) and Lauenders Science Library (LSL) since 1997-98 have been more than adequate in real terms. In 1997-98 the operating budget for the Libraries was \$2.3 million, of which acquisitions accounted for \$911,000 (or 39%) and salaries and benefits for \$1.2 million (or 51%). In 2003-03 the operating budget is \$2.8 million, of which acquisitions accounts for \$1.2 million (or 42%) and salaries and benefits for \$1.4 million (or 50%). The staffing of the libraries has increased from 10 to 12 persons since 1997-98 with the addition of a GIS Specialist/Librarian and GIS Technician. The budget for acquisitions since 1997-98 has increased on average each year by 5.2%, and we are spending 29% more dollars on acquisitions in 2002-03 than we did in 1997-98. A fall 2001 comparison shows that total library expenditures and expenditures per student at St. Lawrence were slightly below the averages for NCG colleges. A comparison of percentage increases in acquisitions budgets for 2002-03 shows St. Lawrence (at 4.1%) to be slightly above the average of NCG schools.

At the same time the Libraries have been attempting to balance acquisitions to reflect trends toward online resources and meet the needs of departments and programs. Subscriptions to printed periodicals have increased only slightly since 1997-98 (from 1,972 to 2,065) while the Libraries now provide access to over 9,000 online periodicals or e-journals (up from 8,500 in 1999-00). Since 1997-98 expenditures for printed periodicals have decreased by 28% while expenditures for electronic resources have doubled. Correspondingly, the use of print journals has declined by 50% while use of on-line journals has increased dramatically. Our collection of books and bound periodicals has grown by 13%, from 472,000 to 534,000 volumes. Our collection of government documents has increased by 11%, from 361,000 to 401,039 items, which makes ODY still the largest repository of U.S. Federal documents in the North Country. Our microforms collection has increased by 14%, from 519,000 to 590,375 units, and the collection of videos and DVD's has grown by 20% since 1999-00, from 3,536 to 4,242 items. Additionally, the Libraries make available locally and over the Internet 117 electronic databases (an increase of 57 since 1997-98) that contain both bibliographic and full-text information.

The investments in library facilities have also been substantial. In 1998-99 we completed a major renovation of Owen D. Young Library at a cost of \$6 million. The seating capacity was increased from 580 to 780 (or by 34.5%). Fourteen new group study or seminar rooms and three new electronic classrooms were created, increasing the number of computer workstations by 145. A new Special Collections Reading Room, including storage and display areas, was created, and space for the University Writing Center was expanded and improved. In Lauenders Science Library a new GIS Spatial

Analysis Laboratory has been added, including a GIS web server, five workstations dedicated to the use of GIS, and a large format color printer for maps. Wireless access throughout LSL is currently being implemented.

Other resources and services in the Libraries have also been enhanced. A new inter-library loan system facilitates desktop-computer delivery of periodical articles, and St. Lawrence has joined ConnectNY with Vassar, Colgate, Rochester Institute of Technology and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, which expedites delivery of inter-library loan books from the collections of participating libraries. ConnectNY gives St. Lawrence faculty and students quick access to more than three million volumes. The University's video collection has been integrated into the Libraries' acquisitions process and included in ODYSseus, the on-line catalogue. GIS services, as noted above, have been added, and a new "book arts" program, drawing on the resources in Special Collections, is being developed. The Libraries have also continued to develop their instructional programs, offering more classes to serve the First-Year Program (as reported in chapter) and developing opportunities for more advanced instruction in research methods for 200- and 300-level humanities and science courses.

These investments and improvements are encouraging more use of the Libraries. The number of classes devoted to research instruction in the Libraries has increased by 59%, from 88 in 1997-98 to 140 in 2001-02, and informal use of the new study group/seminar rooms and electronic classrooms is heavy. Over the same four years, the gate count of persons using the Libraries rose 47.5%, from 120,400 to 176,900. The circulation of books increased 9.4%, from 60,010 in 1997-98 to 65,661 in 2001-02. However, there are still questions about whether the Libraries are being used effectively.

A recent consultant's report (2001), for example, highlighted the fact that reference services are underused. The number of reference transactions per week (98) at St. Lawrence in 2001 fell far below the NCG average (186). This may have to do with the relocation of the reference desk in the recent renovation or with increased student use of on-line reference sources, but it may also be related to data which indicates that students are not receiving enough instruction in research skills or being asked to do enough research in upper-level courses. Although 51% of seniors in the class of 2002 indicated that the library research project in the FYP provided a good basis for future library work at St. Lawrence, 39% reported that it did not. 29% of these seniors reported that they had taken five or fewer courses outside the FYP that required extensive library-research assignments. 40% of these seniors reported making no use of inter-library loan services in their senior year. Although more research instruction is being provided in and outside the FYP today than in 1997-98, we are concerned that too few students are reaching a high level of research ability by the senior year, especially now that we are implementing the Senior-Year Experience. To address this concern, the Library Committee, working through the Center for Teaching and Learning, has initiated a program of research literacy grants, designed to encourage and support faculty who are interested in developing research components for 200-300 level courses.

Section 4:

Academic Programs and Faculty Development

In the 1997-98 Self-Study we characterized the academic programs and faculty at St. Lawrence as dynamic and innovative. We reported on several past and ongoing initiatives in the First-Year Program (FYP), University Writing Program (UWP), international and intercultural education, and science education. At the same time, we expressed concerns about planning and oversight of the curriculum, ongoing tensions (in part because of limited resources) between academic departments and interdisciplinary programs, demands of the FYP upon both students and faculty, and academic rigor, especially in the senior year. The Middle States Evaluation Team concluded that “the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences all appear to be relatively healthy at St. Lawrence,” and that the faculty’s commitments to the FYP, distribution requirements, and disciplinary and interdisciplinary majors were consistent with the University’s mission to provide an education that requires breadth, depth, and integration of knowledge. They also addressed our concerns by recommending that we improve the governance structures responsible for academic planning, further assess the FYP and UWP in order to resolve controversies about them, and continue to pursue the idea of a capstone experience as a way of addressing the issue of academic rigor at St. Lawrence. Finally, they recommended that we use the “Summer Curriculum Inventory” of 1997 (“a report we greatly admire”) as the basis for further review of the curriculum (“Report to . . . St. Lawrence University,” 1998, 7-9).

The “Summer Curriculum Inventory” did, in fact, lead to a broad review of the curriculum. Initially the faculty considered three curricular models based on the revised

statement of Aims and Objectives of the University. It chose, however, to revise the model already in place, focusing on the First-Year Program, distribution requirements, variable credit options, and a Senior-Year (capstone) Experience (SYE). The aim was to bring the curriculum into line with the new Aims and Objectives and address concerns expressed in the 1997-98 Self-Study about coherence and rigor.

The First-Year Program

The First-Year Program (FYP) forms a significant part of a student's introduction to St. Lawrence. It is designed to combine residential life and learning. Each first-year residential "college" is organized around a team-taught, interdisciplinary course that focuses on an enduring theme in human experience and emphasizes critical thinking, communication skills, and active participation in the classroom and residence.

Originally, the team-taught course was year-long, but student dissatisfaction with the duration and structure of the program and faculty interest in having more flexibility to participate and a more effective structure in which to teach communication and research skills led to a revision in 1999. Now, the interdisciplinary team-teaching (with attention to communication skills) takes place in the fall semester, and the spring semester is devoted to single-instructor seminars (FYS) that focus more intensively on speaking, research, and writing. In the spring students choose from a menu of 35 or so non-residential FYS courses, most, but not all, of which are taught by faculty from the fall FYP courses. Students who wish to enroll in their fall instructor's FYS have priority for the spring course, and in the three years of this new format, about one-third have chosen to stay with a member of their fall team. Although faculty members are still encouraged to sign up for three full years in the FYP, it is now possible to participate for shorter

periods or in either the fall or spring semesters. The greater flexibility for both students and faculty appears to have eased tensions in the FYP. Assessment data suggests that changing to single-instructor seminars in the second semester is having the intended effects. Student evaluations for the first spring seminars (2001) were much higher than for the previous spring semester of FYP, with students reporting that they learned more about research-oriented writing and were more challenged to think critically. Data from the library also indicates that research skills were receiving more attention in spring 2001, with 63% of the seminars making at least one trip to the library for formal instruction in bibliographical skills. Preliminary data from spring 2002 indicates that that number is up to 80%, with 50% of the seminars doing at least three such sessions.

Recognizing the distinctiveness of the FYP and its significance as a starting point for St. Lawrence students, the Middle States Evaluation Team recommended that we clarify 1) “how the FYP fits into the overall administrative structure at St. Lawrence;” 2) how we intend “to resolve the FYP’s considerable and seemingly misunderstood demands on faculty time and staffing needs;” 3) “how effective the FYP actually is as a way of educating students both in and out of the classroom;” and 4) how effectively the program “actually introduces students to SLU as a whole” in their first year on campus.

1. How does the FYP fit into the overall administrative structure at SLU? Since 1998 there have been two major changes in the way in which the FYP is situated within the administrative structure. First, the residential component of the program has been turned over to Student Life and Co-Curricular Education. Previously, the FYP ran the residential life component of the FYP itself, with the Assistant Director for Community Development supervising the FYP residential coordinators and training the college

assistants and so forth. The Associate Dean of the First Year (ADFY) effectively served as the dean of students for the FYP. Now, all of this work is done under the administrative structure of the office of Residential Learning Communities (RLC), which is part of Student Life. They are responsible for the full four-year residential experience. At the same time, a second change was made, which was to give the ADFY a dotted line report to the VP & Dean of Student Life and Co-Curricular Education (in addition to a solid line report to the VP & Dean of Academic Affairs) and to give the VP & Dean of Student Life the title of co-director of the FYP.

These changes have had the benefit of professionalizing the residential component of the FYP, as well as creating more opportunities for collaboration between the ADFY and the VP & Dean of Student Life. Bringing the residential experience under one office has benefited first-year students and upper-class students by providing a more seamless, integrated experience. It has also freed up the ADFY to focus on the academic side of the FYP and enabled the program to do more with faculty development, for example. A great deal depends, however, on the strength of the relationships among the ADFY, the Director of RLC and the VP & Dean of Student Life. Productive collaboration requires a trusting, open relationship among all three and constant communication to ensure consistency. The inclusion of RLC staff at last year's (2002) FYP May retreat was a step in the right direction. The current arrangement makes more sense overall, but does pose a new set of challenges for all concerned.

The Director of the University Writing Program also supports the administration of the FYP, working closely with the ADFY on faculty development, assessment, and policies related to communication skills.

2. How will you resolve the FYP's considerable and seemingly misunderstood demands on faculty time and staffing needs? The demands on faculty time in the FYP are real.

The work of the FYP remains as labor-intensive as it always has been. It is probably true that, since 1998, the changes noted in number 1 above have reduced the time faculty spend resolving residential issues. At the same time, however, improvements in our pedagogy have probably increased the amount of time faculty spend in creating assignments and grading drafts or rehearsals of communications assignments. Although the overall time faculty commit to the FYP has not decreased, shifting the focus of that time more toward pedagogical activities has probably made that time seem more valuable to faculty. We have tried to clarify the faculty's understanding of the demands of the program by creating a website and communicating more frequently with faculty and staff in a variety of ways about the FYP, but especially in one-on-one conversation with those thinking about entering the program.

The question of staffing remains a difficult one. In 2001-02, the ADFY attempted to get multi-year staffing plans from departments on an ad-hoc basis, and this met with some success. For the 2002-03 academic year, all departmental position requests must include a plan for staffing the FYP over the next several years, with the understanding that participation be proportional to the department's size. This should help systematize the staffing process by giving the program a better long-term view of whom to expect in the program in which years. Although persistent, the problem of staffing remains mostly at the margins. That is, it is always the last 2 or 3 slots that are a problem. Filling the first 33 or so is usually straightforward. Still several issues remain to be considered. The two biggest are the role of adjuncts and the participation of senior faculty. The FYP has

been staffed from about 15% to 25% by adjuncts. In an ideal world, we would not use adjuncts at all. However, for the last two years, all but one of those adjuncts have been trailing spouses/partners of SLU faculty. Employing faculty spouses/partners in the FYP may weaken the program marginally, but it strengthens the University as a whole, to the extent it enables us to hire or retain faculty we might otherwise not. One way in which we might reduce our reliance on adjuncts is to involve more senior faculty in the program. It's not clear how we might increase their participation, but it remains a challenge that must be tackled in the next few years.

3. How effective is the FYP in educating students both in and out of the classroom?

Aside from the usual course evaluation data, the FYP relies on two assessment tools in answering these sorts of questions—one internal and one external. The internal assessment tool is the annual program assessment review of student writing portfolios. At the end of each fall (and this year, the spring), we randomly collect one student portfolio from each instructor. They are masked and then read by two members of portfolio assessment team made up of both FYP and non-FYP faculty. Using a holistic scoring process linked to the program's communication-skills philosophy and goals, each portfolio is read by two people and ranked from 1 to 6, and then assessed briefly for particular strengths and weaknesses. The University Writing Director collates and analyzes this data. We have reliable data from the process extending back over several years. It enables us to see how student writing has changed, and we hope improved, over time. It also reveals what faculty are doing in terms of assignments and feedback, and thus allows us to create appropriate faculty development workshops based on observed performance. The longitudinal data suggests that we are indeed doing a progressively

better job at achieving many of our core communication skills goals, and that our students are in fact showing progress with their writing, both over the semester and over multiple student groups from year to year. There certainly remains room for improvement, but the consensus from this process over the last few years is that we are doing a “pretty good” job in addressing the goals we have set for ourselves. The data from the first FYS courses cited above also supports this conclusion.

The external data comes from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). That data from spring 2000 indicates that first-year students at St. Lawrence rank well above national averages in almost every category, and rank above the mean for similar schools in most categories. These categories include several related to reading and writing and to the mental activities that courses are demanding. In particular, SLU first-year students rank above comparable schools (with statistical significance at the 0.01 level) in areas such as “number of written papers or reports of fewer than 20 pages,” “made a class presentation,” “worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class materials,” “worked with a faculty member on a research project,” and “participated in co-curricular activities.” How much of this is due to the FYP and how much is due to other first-year courses cannot be answered definitively, but the fact that many of these categories cover precisely the sorts of activities and skills that are the focus of the FYP suggests it is an important explanatory variable.

It is equally tricky to discern the direct impact of the FYP specifically on the learning students engage in outside of the classroom. Many of the things that FYP students are involved in are not the sole province of the program. However, we do have data on the number and types of programming events that were undertaken in first-year

residences. As part of the Empowerment Programming model used by RLC over the last three years, Community Assistants (CAs) are expected to create programming and opportunities for campus involvement that falls under five different categories. Three of those categories (Wellness, Life Long Learning, and Nurturing Difference) speak directly to ways in which students can learn outside of the classroom. Over the 2001-02 academic year, for example, a total of 43 Wellness programs were offered by CAs, with topics such as “Drugs, Sex, and Diseases,” “Healthy Eating on Campus,” and events surrounding Body Beautiful Week. CAs offered 30 Life-Long Learning programs, including involvement in the university-wide leadership conference. The Nurturing Difference programming included taking students to a variety of ethnically, racially, and culturally diverse events (totaling 34) on campus, from concerts and dance, to food and religious events. Again, not all of these events were directly sponsored by FYP residential staff, but in each case first-year students were involved in attending or participating in them. In a number of cases, these events were linked to classroom topics and/or attended by faculty.

4. How effectively does the FYP actually introduce students to SLU as a whole during their initial year on campus? On the assumption that there is a strong link between exposing students to resources and opportunities available to them and “effective introduction to SLU as a whole,” the FYP is reasonably effective along these lines. As the NSSE data on co-curricular activities indicates, SLU first-year students are extraordinarily involved around campus, and the FYP plays a significant role in exposing students to what is available. FYP courses help students become aware of the academic resources and opportunities on campus. All FYP courses have a required research

component that introduces students to the library and its staff. In addition, most courses provide instruction in using the computer facilities on campus, either in-class or via workshops outside of class. Many courses make use of guest instructors from around campus, including Student Life staff, which enables first-year students to get to know a greater variety of faculty and staff. Some science faculty members believe that the FYP does not adequately introduce students to the sciences. Science faculty are encouraged to participate in the program and many have, but some feel that it is not as conducive to teaching science as it is to teaching humanities and social sciences.

Perhaps most importantly, FYP courses introduce students to the opportunities and services available in the Academic Resources area and the Writing Center. The program works closely with the Academic Resources staff and FYP faculty often refer students to that office and frequently announce in class workshops they offer (such as time-management or study skills). Some FYP faculty or CAs set up such workshops for their students specifically. The FYP Writing Mentor Program provides a way for students to learn about the sorts of services the Writing Center can provide, and the program's collaboration with the Directors of the University Writing Program and Writing Center is a way to put their work in front of first-year students.

The programs offered by RLC staff also introduce students to a wide variety of campus offices and opportunities. A look through the programs offered this past year indicates that first-year students were exposed to some, if not all, of the following campus offices: Counseling, Security, Career Services, International and Intercultural Programs, and the Chaplain's Office, among others. In addition, many of these programs involved various student organizations, providing further introductions to opportunities around

campus. Finally, this past year saw the inauguration of a Student Life Liaison Program, where a member of the Student Life staff was attached to each FYP residence to help students make the transition and plug in to campus in various ways. Although the degree to which the liaisons became involved in their FYPs varied greatly, there were some successes to build on. This is an evolving program that will undergo review before moving forward in any particular direction.

Because the FYP draws heavily on faculty resources and time, it is bound to remain controversial. However, we have addressed most of the concerns expressed about the program in 1997-98, and assessment data indicate that faculty and students view it more favorably now and that it is more effective in achieving its goals. As indicated above, there are still problems to solve and improvements to make, but the FYP is working better to introduce students to academic and residential life at St. Lawrence. Faculty, moreover, are continuing to benefit from the challenges of interdisciplinary team-teaching and the instruction of communication and research skills in the FYP. The program functions usefully as a teaching laboratory, encouraging faculty to reflect upon, broaden, and improve their teaching skills.

University Writing Program

In recommending better assessment of the FYP and University Writing Program (UWP), the Middle States Evaluation Team identified them as “two of your most important—and most controversial—programs.” Although closely associated with the FYP, the UWP reaches beyond the first year and has not been as contentious as the FYP. The UWP supports writing-across-the-curriculum instruction and portfolio assessment in the FYP; fosters the development of writing intensive courses in disciplinary and inter-

disciplinary programs; directs the University Writing Center, which serves students at all levels; administers the Writing Competency Requirement, which demands that all students write competently to be eligible for graduation; and provides faculty-development workshops in writing pedagogy both in and outside the FYP. There have been several important developments in the UWP since 1997-98.

First, the University Writing Center has expanded to include several “satellites” in French, Spanish, sociology and science. These satellites are intended to provide support for students writing in particular disciplines and are staffed by tutors who are trained and monitored by the Writing Center Director. There are currently fewer tutors (22) staffing the main Writing Center than in 1998 (29), but this is because the satellites, with 20 tutors of their own, have drawn off some of the traffic. There are also 27 student mentors working in FYP colleges who receive training in peer editing, several of whom also work shifts in the Writing Center. In sum, the Writing Center is providing much more tutorial support today than it did in 1997-98. The number of tutorials offered by the main Writing Center per year has remained steady at around 1,100-1,300, which is high for a small college. When the satellites are taken into account, the number of tutorials per year totals approximately 1,500. Student evaluations of the Writing Center are very positive, with nearly all respondents in the last year indicating that they are “very likely” or “somewhat likely” to use the Center again.

Second, in December 2000, the Faculty approved a proposal for a Supplemental Writing Instruction Program (SWIP). This is intended to provide early warning and intervention to help struggling writers before the end of their first year. These students may be identified in the first semester and assigned writing coaches to work with, but

usually they are identified at mid-year through the FYP portfolio assessment process described above. Once assessed, students who are deemed to need additional support may be directed to one or more options provided by SWIP, ranging from work with a writing coach, to short-session workshops, to credit-bearing courses in composition. In January 2003, for example, 61 FYP portfolios from students identified as struggling writers were assessed. A number of students with low scores were *required* to follow one of the SWIP options and others were encouraged to do so. The UWP and FYP are still working on the implementation of intervention strategies.

Third, other evidence suggests that the culture and rigor of writing instruction at St. Lawrence have been enhanced by the work of the UWP. The Writing Competency Requirement for graduation, for example, is being enforced more frequently by the Faculty. At the time of the last Self-Study, roughly 30 students per semester received designations that their writing was unsatisfactory (U/W); now roughly 50 students per semester receive this designation, even though students appear to be better prepared academically than they were five years ago. There is also evidence to suggest that faculty members are requiring more writing, using strategies of revision and portfolio assessment more often, and setting higher standards for writing than before. This is due in great measure to faculty-development workshops in the FYP and during the summer that focus on the teaching of writing. The Summer Institute on Writing in the Disciplines, which offers faculty across campus the opportunity to learn about and model various strategies for teaching writing, is in its 10th year. Over 80 faculty members have participated in the summer workshops, several of them more than once.

Distribution and Graduation Requirements

In reviewing distribution requirements, the Faculty was interested to bring them into line with the revised statement of Aims and Objectives and recent curricular developments. In some cases, the distribution requirements did not respond at all to our stated objectives. For example, one of the aims of education at St. Lawrence, we have long claimed, is to develop in students “an expansion of aesthetic sensibilities and capacities.” However, we did not require a course in creative expression or appreciation. In other cases, the distribution requirements did not accurately reflect our growing commitments to particular areas of knowledge. For example, we were requiring only one course in natural sciences and one course in Non-Western and Third-World studies, even though we were persuaded that students needed more to achieve basic scientific literacy and to understand the complex issues of “diversity.” The revision that the Faculty undertook in 1999-2000 was modest conceptually but consistent with the revised Aims and Objectives and the Faculty’s judgment about the minimum requirements necessary for students to achieve a sufficient breadth of knowledge. Students entering St. Lawrence must now complete one course in the categories of Arts/Expression, Humanities, Social Science, and Mathematics or Foreign Language, and two courses in the categories of Natural Science/Science Studies and Diversity. One of the Natural Science/Science Studies courses must include a laboratory, and Diversity courses must involve “critical study of sameness and difference, including diverse social and cultural practices and beliefs, either within or outside the United States.”

For graduation students are required to complete 33.5 semester course units, including the First-Year Program (3 units), the eight distribution requirements mentioned

above, and 8-12 units in a major field. Additionally, students are required to demonstrate competency in writing as judged by their professors throughout their college careers. If they are judged to be unsatisfactory in writing in two or more courses, they are required to complete an individualized program developed by the Writing Center before graduation.

Variable Credit Options

As part of its review of the curriculum, the Faculty also considered the issue of variable credit. For a long time, the norm at St. Lawrence has been that courses meet three hours per week for a 14-week semester and are assigned one unit of credit (or the equivalent of 3.6 credit hours). This has included science courses with laboratory and other courses that require more than the usual three hours of meeting time per week. The only exceptions have been the First-Year Program, which requires four hours of meeting time each week and has been valued at 1.5 units of credit each semester, and a very few other half-unit credit courses, such as in sports studies and exercise science. The reasons for considering a variable credit system were to address perceived inequities in faculty workloads and to provide more flexibility in the curriculum for faculty and students. Also, the Faculty had dropped a requirement of a half-unit physical education course, which meant that students needed other options for meeting the requirement of 33.5 units for graduation. A task force appointed to study variable credit options was not able to satisfy the Faculty's concerns about inequities in workloads, especially in relation to proposals for a Senior-Year Experience. However, the Faculty voted to accept a variable credit system. The standard course at St. Lawrence, meeting three hours per week over a 14-week semester, is still worth one unit of credit, but courses can now be offered in

increments of .25 units, which are determined proportionally to the “contact hours” in a standard 3-hour course. To encourage flexibility for students and instructors, the Faculty voted also to allow students to take any four courses in a semester (a “normal course load”), regardless of their unit value, without additional tuition charges. Students may take any five or six courses in a semester, totaling no more than 4.75 units, without additional charge. An overload now consists of either five or six courses totaling more than 4.75 units or more than six courses in a semester. The legislation has stimulated the creation of only a few new partial credit courses.

Senior-Year Experience

The most ambitious and contentious proposal for curricular change since the 1997-98 Self-Study was the Senior-Year Experience (SYE). Advocated strongly by President Sullivan and many faculty members, the proposal for an SYE was intended to address concerns generally about academic rigor at St. Lawrence and more specifically about lack of challenge in the senior year. The NSSE surveys were indicating that graduating students found their junior year more challenging academically than their senior year, that proportionally more of them enrolled in 100-200 level courses than in advanced seminars or independent study/research, and that those who did advanced work reported more learning of higher-order thinking and communication skills. The SYE was initially conceived to offer all seniors the opportunity for independent or collaborative research and reflection, within or among disciplines. It was to be the “capstone” to a liberal education we define as requiring “breadth, depth and integration in learning.” If distribution requirements provide breadth and majors depth in learning, then the SYE would require significant integration of knowledge. There was broad consensus about

the educational value of requiring such work of seniors, but the Faculty was divided about whether to require it of *all* students. A number of faculty, especially those in departments or programs with large numbers of majors, were concerned about the availability of resources to do the job well and the impact upon workloads. Many wished to move incrementally towards the requirement rather than mandate it immediately for all students. The Faculty voted, finally, to have each department and program determine whether it would require an SYE, and to have SYEs recognized, as of August 2002, by special designation on students' transcripts. Departments and programs may require an SYE as part of a major, choosing to have students complete it within the department or to accept any approved SYE. The Faculty also resolved to seek out ways to provide seniors with opportunities for an SYE and to encourage them to take advantage of them.

The SYE may take a variety of forms—independent research or creative projects, senior seminars, internships or service learning—but it must meet certain standards to receive “SYE” designation. It must build upon previous study rather than launch into unexplored territory and involve “significant academic integration.” This may mean (1) the study of theory that undergirds or overarches the details of previous study; (2) deep immersion in the exploration of a particular topic or sustained engagement in a creative project that brings prior study to bear in a concentrated way; and (3) experiential learning or internships that animate prior classroom study in new ways. The SYE must also engage students in one or more distinctive ways, such as (1) the extent to which it challenges them to perform higher-order critical thinking skills; (2) the extent to which it challenges them to demonstrate proficiency in communication/expression skills and/or research skills; (3) the extent to which its successful completion demands higher-than-

normal hours of student preparation and/or faculty-student contact; and (4) the extent to which it demands that students engage in the independent shaping, execution and communication of a substantive research or creative project. Faculty will be compensated for supervising SYE independent projects according to the formula that four projects equal one regular course. The legislation also calls upon Faculty Council to appoint an ad hoc committee to assess the development of SYE options. It will gather information about course offerings, staffing, and faculty workloads and seek to identify factors that may impede departments and programs from implementing an SYE.

Academic Programs

“Dynamic” and “innovative”—the words we used to characterize the Faculty in 1997-98—are even more applicable today. In addition to revising core components of the curriculum, the Faculty has been busy in the last five years developing new programs and strengthening existing ones. Many of these efforts have been supported by major grants and have tended to focus on diversity, international and global studies, integrated science education, outdoor education, and independent study and research opportunities for students on campus and abroad. Although the aim has been primarily to enhance the curriculum in important ways for students, many faculty have also benefited from opportunities supported by outside funding to develop programs and conduct research with students and colleagues.

1. Global Studies, Area Studies and International Education

In the 1997-98 Self-Study we reported on several initiatives to support faculty and curricular development in the broad areas of international/intercultural studies and North American pluralism. Small and large grants from the Association of American Colleges

& Universities (AAC&U), Ford and Mellon Foundations, Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education (FIPSE), and Christian Johnson Endeavor Foundation (CJEF) enabled faculty to engage in educational seminars and travel abroad and to develop new courses focusing on issues of cultural diversity. One outcome of this work was a pilot program in Cultural Encounters, an alternative track of distribution requirements that included foreign language study and study abroad. It was intended as “a multidisciplinary program for students interested in enhancing their knowledge of cultural interactions and their ability to understand, live and work in a culturally diverse world” (*St. Lawrence University Catalogue 2001-2002*, 78). Although the pilot program was not continued, mainly because it proved difficult to interest students early enough in their careers to complete the requirements, students may still elect a minor in Cultural Encounters. Some of the goals of the pilot program inform the new distribution requirement in diversity discussed above, which students may meet by taking courses developed for the alternative Cultural Encounters track.

Since the 1997-98 Self-Study, curriculum development in international/intercultural studies has focused on the global studies initiative. This initiative builds on Cultural Encounters by seeking to coordinate and support “area studies” programs and international education, and by establishing an interdisciplinary, major program of study that addresses issues of “globalization.” A one million dollar grant in 1999 from the Christian Johnson Endeavor Foundation (which also funded part of the Cultural Encounters program) provided start-up funding for five new faculty positions to support the Global Studies Initiative. The new positions provide additional resources for existing programs in African studies, Asian studies, Canadian studies, Caribbean and Latin

American studies, European studies, Native American studies, and United States Cultural and Ethnic studies, in which students may elect minors, and staffing for an interdisciplinary, major program in global studies. With funding for the positions secured, the Faculty approved a proposal for a major in global studies in the fall 1999. The new major “takes as a central premise the idea that global realities cannot be captured by one discipline or even one division of knowledge; rather, they require new approaches to knowledge that cut across fields like biology, economics, ethnic studies, literary theory and sociology.” It seeks to “prepare students with new analytical frameworks for understanding the phenomena that attract the label ‘globalization’ and for evaluating critically both the phenomena and their popular expressions” (*St. Lawrence University Catalogue 2003-2004*, 126). Students intending to major in global studies are required to take several core courses at the introductory and advanced levels, some of which provide theoretical perspectives on the study of political economy and culture and others which use a comparative or transnational approach to global issues. Many of these courses are drawn from the Cultural Encounters and area studies programs. Global studies majors must also select two areas of the world and a comparative focus, designing their courses of study around a problem or theme that will be the basis for intensive research in a senior seminar. The program requires study of a foreign language and strongly encourages study abroad. Although there has been some turnover in staffing, Global Studies is establishing a strong presence on campus, forging ties with area studies programs, sponsoring numerous events to raise awareness about global issues, and attracting increasing numbers of students to the major. In the first two years, five and six students chose to major in global studies; this year 17 students have elected the major.

Other efforts to enhance and coordinate programs in international and intercultural education at St. Lawrence have also attracted significant grant support. In 1999 the Ford Foundation provided \$350,000 for a “Crossing Borders Project,” a collaborative effort among St. Lawrence, Trent University in Canada, and the University of the West Indies in Trinidad. “Crossing Borders” was intended to foster faculty and student exchange and collaboration and to revitalize area studies programs, with a particular focus on the Caribbean and Latin America. The grant helped to stage conferences on intercultural issues and summer seminars for students at the participating institutions between 1999 and 2002. One outcome of this project for St. Lawrence has been to strengthen its commitment to a program abroad in Trinidad, which was begun in 1999 and has continued since 2001 in affiliation with Pacific Lutheran University. The program accepts up to five students from St. Lawrence, and we have sent five students in 2002 and three students in 2003. The collaboration among faculty that “Crossing Borders” was supposed to encourage has not been as fruitful as we had hoped, but some lasting relationships have been forged and faculty and students who have participated have benefited in various ways. Colleagues at Trent University are currently engaged in an assessment of the “Crossing Borders Project” as a whole.

More recently (2001), the Freeman Foundation awarded the University \$1 million to undertake a four-year initiative to expand the Asian Studies Program. The grant is confirmation of the innovative work St. Lawrence has been doing generally in international/intercultural education. Specifically, it seeks to increase the number of students enrolling in courses on Asia and majoring/minoring in Asian studies, to increase the number of students studying and conducting research in Asia, to increase the level of

knowledge and appreciation of Asia on campus, and to increase the resources and support available to educators and students interested in Asia at all educational levels in our region. The grant will fund a series of seminars for faculty development, called “Asia Across the Curriculum” and focusing on the themes of health, art, human rights, and economy. It will support curriculum development aimed especially at creating three new majors, combining Asian studies with philosophy, art history, and global studies. The grant will also support travel and research to Asia for faculty and students and the development of new programs abroad for students in China and Thailand. Finally, it will enable the development of outreach programs to grades K-16 in the region. St. Lawrence will form the North Country Consortium for Asian Studies to serve as a resource of information and support for area educators and students interested in Asia, and will host a one-week conference on Asia for regional instructors at all levels.

All of these initiatives in international/intercultural education are closely related to St. Lawrence’s programs abroad. Curricular and faculty development in Cultural Encounters, global studies, Crossing Borders, Asian studies, etc., have had as underlying goals better preparation for students studying abroad and a richer curriculum on campus to which they can return to extend their international/intercultural educations. As noted above, several of these initiatives require or strongly encourage study abroad and provide financial support for faculty and students to travel and conduct research in other countries. Some of them have encouraged the development of new off-campus programs. Since 1997-98 St. Lawrence has added programs in Australia (1997, directly enrolling students at James Cook University), Trinidad (1999, in affiliation since 2001 with Pacific Lutheran University), Italy (2000, in affiliation with Syracuse University), and Shanghai,

China (2003, in affiliation with the Council on International Educational Exchange). The Freeman Foundation Grant for Asian Studies commits us to the program in China and one in Thailand, which is currently being developed. These join programs we already have in England, Canada, France, Spain, Austria, Denmark, Costa Rica, Kenya, India, and Japan. Additionally, we have off-campus programs at American University in Washington, D.C., at Fisk University, and in the Adirondacks.

The Center for International and Intercultural Studies (CIIS) has also been encouraging more student research in connection with study abroad. This initiative has been supported by grants endowed mainly by alumni of the University. Students may now apply for “travel enrichment” or “travel research” grants. The first is intended to enhance immersion in a foreign culture by allowing students to pursue a particular academic or personal/extra-curricular interest in connection with study abroad. The second is intended to allow students to supplement their education abroad by undertaking additional travel and research. Also, CIIS awards one or two fellowships a year to faculty and students to pursue collaborative research in a different cultural setting during winter break or the summer. Since 1999-2000, 88 student travel enrichment and research grants have been awarded, and since 2001, three CIIS Fellowships have been awarded to faculty members and their student collaborators. The Freeman Foundation Grant for Asian Studies will make even more student-faculty study and research abroad possible. All of the research grants require students to present their findings in poster displays or some other public forum to the campus community, which provides us with a good means of assessing the educational outcomes of study and research abroad. The poster displays have provided impressive evidence of the kinds of learning students are

experiencing in programs abroad and through opportunities to conduct research with faculty in foreign locations.

CIIS has been concerned more broadly with assessment since 1997-98. It has been charged with reviewing off-campus programs on a seven-year cycle and has begun this year with an assessment of the program in Kenya. The reviews are conducted by the International Education Advisory Committee, a tri-partite university committee. Established more than 25 years ago, the Kenya program provides useful material for longitudinal assessment of off-campus programs and the long-term effects of international education. The CIIS staff presented a paper at a conference last year, exploring the results of a 1994 survey of Kenya program alumni. Building on this qualitative study, CIIS has been gathering quantitative information recently, administering a “pre-departure” survey to Kenya Program participants. CIIS will now be able to correlate student responses on this survey with their comments on program evaluations and senior exit surveys, providing us with additional measures of the educational outcomes of study abroad. Other St. Lawrence programs abroad will receive similar assessment in the next several years, and we will have more qualitative and quantitative data to report in the next Self-Study.

Since 1997-98 international/intercultural education has attracted significant funding, has been expanded to include new programs on and off campus, has provided more opportunities for faculty and student development and research, and has been better coordinated so that off-campus and on-campus programs are more supportive of each other. Student participation in some on and off-campus programs is not as full or steady

as we would like, but on the whole international/intercultural education is thriving at St. Lawrence.

2. Outdoor Studies and the Adirondack Semester Program

St. Lawrence's minor program in outdoor studies was enhanced in 2000 by the creation of an off-campus program in the Adirondacks, which is located currently in Massawepie Lake, NY, on a 4,000-acre Boy Scout camp that the University rents. Students spend the fall semester on site, living in canvas yurts, without indoor plumbing or electricity. It is conceived on the model of programs abroad, except in this case the immersion is in nature rather than another culture. The program is interdisciplinary in design, complementing the programs in environmental studies as well as providing an intensive way to pursue a minor in outdoor studies. Students take courses in "Natural History of the Adirondacks," "Philosophy of the Environment," "Creative Expressions of Nature," "Cultural History of the Adirondacks," and "Modern Outdoor Recreational Ethics," each of which has a significant field component. In the Adirondack Semester, nature is the classroom. Also, because students are living in sparse, close quarters and providing for some basic needs (water, heat, and disposal of wastes), the program involves practical experience in team building and community ethics. The program also includes three weeks in the southwest United States, in part to escape the cold in late fall in the Adirondacks and to provide a comparative field experience in another environment. The program continues to be developed, but students who have participated in it so far are very positive about the experiential learning it fosters. The program has been highlighted recently in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (1 November 2002; reprinted in the *St. Lawrence University Magazine*, Winter 2003).

3. Science and Mathematics Education

There have been several, significant developments in science and mathematics education at St. Lawrence since 1997-98. Science and mathematics have been a focus of strategic planning since the last Self-Study. As reported in Section 3, they are the main component of Phase II of our facilities improvements. Plans have recently been approved for a \$60 million building and renovation project to re-house and better integrate our programs in science and mathematics. This will be the largest facilities project in the history of St. Lawrence. The aim is to bring science and mathematics classrooms and laboratories up to date with developments in pedagogy and research and to attract more students interested in majoring in science and mathematics. Typically, selective liberal-arts colleges like St. Lawrence graduate 25-35% of their seniors with majors in science or mathematics (based on Project Kaleidoscope numbers that exclude psychology and some concentrations in environmental science). We have been on the low end of that range, partly due to facilities constraints, and we intend to move up. In planning for the new facilities, the sciences and mathematics departments have engaged in significant evaluation of their goals and needs. The planning, moreover, has involved them in an extensive collaborative effort, one aim of which has been to integrate science and mathematics education more fully.

Integration has been a major theme of research and curricular developments in the sciences and mathematics as well. Much of what has occurred since 1997-98 has been fostered by the Integrated Science Education Initiative (ISEI). ISEI aims to develop long-term, interdisciplinary collaboration in science education and research among faculty members and between faculty and students. It also seeks to involve K-12 teachers

and students in the region in collaborative projects of research and teaching science. ISEI has been supported directly or indirectly by grants from the McGraw Foundation, the Merck Company Foundation and American Association for the Advancement of Science, The Rockefeller Brothers Fund, the National Science Foundation, and National Institute of Health. The funding has allowed faculty members in Biology, Chemistry, Geology, Psychology, and Environmental Studies to improve their instrumentation, collaborate with each other in research and curriculum development, and to create new research opportunities for students. ISEI has also included Global Studies in the development of GIS technology for classroom and research use. With the support of ISEI funding and other grants, and with the SYE option, the student research culture in the sciences and mathematics has been greatly enhanced. More students are undertaking independent research projects, during the regular semester and during winter break and summer term. For example, Biology reports that the percentage of graduates in biology having completed some form of independent research project is up from 26% two years ago to 60% for the class of 2003. Mathematics reports that in the current class (2003), 13 of 33 majors are completing senior research projects, whereas in the class of 1998, only one of 11 majors did so. The increases are not as dramatic in all science departments but may soon be as they seek to implement the SYE for more or all majors. Despite the support of ISEI and other funding, the prospect of the SYE is causing stress for larger departments like Biology and Psychology, who, though they are planning to implement it, are hard-pressed with current staffing to provide research opportunities for more students.

The poster presentations at the annual St. Lawrence University Festival of Science testify to the outcomes of ISEI and other efforts to foster science and mathematics

education through research. These presentations show evidence often of clear and sophisticated research design and methodology, and are leading increasingly to presentations at regional and national conferences and joint publication with faculty members. ISEI-funded and other research projects in the sciences were the subject of a feature article in the winter 2003 issue of *St. Lawrence University Magazine*.

In the spring 2001, the Faculty approved the creation of new majors in biochemistry and neuroscience. Both are offspring of collaboration between faculty in Biology and Chemistry, and Biology and Psychology, and are supported by recently added faculty positions. These new majors will allow students to concentrate in important interdisciplinary fields of science and to profit from the collaboration of faculty members with research interests in these fields. Both majors are attractive to students interested in medical and research careers. Students majoring in biochemistry take a new, team-taught laboratory course in research methods, as well as courses in biology, chemistry, physics, and math. Students interested in neuroscience may choose between a molecular/cellular track or organismal/behavioral track, and students in both majors are required to do research as seniors. The new courses that have been developed for these majors are popular with students, but with the first crop of biochemistry and neuroscience majors graduating this year (2003), it is too early to assess the impacts of these programs.

Since the last Self-Study the Faculty has also approved new stand-alone majors in computer science and environmental studies. The newly named Department of Mathematics, Computer Science and Statistics has seen fewer students majoring in computer science than were projected, roughly five per year so far. However, the number of mathematics majors is up dramatically since 1997-98, from 11 in the class of 1998 to

33 and 42 in the classes of 2003 and 2004 respectively, and enrollments in statistics courses and interest in the minor program in applied statistics are strong. The department hopes that the increased interest in mathematics generally, another faculty position in computer science (recently added), and improvements to the major will draw more students to it as well. Until 1999 environmental studies had been an interdisciplinary, combined-major program. That is, students could major in environmental studies only in combination (through a coordinated curriculum) with anthropology, biology, chemistry, economics, English, geology, government, philosophy, psychology, or sociology. In 1999 the Faculty approved a stand-alone major in environmental studies to meet the interests of students who wished to concentrate in this field. The new major continues to emphasize the integrative, interdisciplinary approach of environmental studies and requires students to develop a depth of interest in a sub-area of the discipline. Students may still opt, however, for the established, combined majors. The number of students selecting the solo major in environmental studies has climbed to 8-9 per year, while the number of combined majors has remained steady at between 20 to 25 since the solo major was implemented.

We expect the construction of new facilities, scheduled to begin in 2004, to launch science and mathematics education at St. Lawrence into a new era. The developments in the last five years have begun to anticipate that transformation. The sciences and mathematics have become more integrative, pushing beyond the boundaries of established disciplines into new interdisciplinary fields of investigation. Faculty members are collaborating more in teaching and research and developing new interdisciplinary programs, and more external funding is being sought and won to support

their efforts. The student research culture and opportunities for student-faculty collaboration in research have been significantly enhanced by ISEI and other initiatives. Even more student research is being encouraged as departments implement versions of the SYE. These developments bode well, we think, for the future of science and mathematics education at St. Lawrence.

4. University Fellows Program

The development of a student-research culture at St. Lawrence has also been enhanced by the creation in 2000 of the University Fellows Program. The program is intended to provide opportunities for student intellectual growth and close student-faculty collaboration outside the normal academic calendar, especially for initiatives that require special financial support. The fellowships are awarded normally for 8-10 weeks of study during the summer. Students receive room and board for that period and a stipend of \$2,500 to offset the loss of summer earnings. They are also eligible for supplemental support if their work takes them off campus. Faculty members who direct the fellows receive an honorarium of \$1,250. As in the case of other grant-supported student research, University Fellows are required to report on their projects to the campus community in the fall, usually during Family Weekend. Since the program was inaugurated, including a pilot run in the summer of 1999, 60 students have been awarded fellowships. They have undertaken projects in nearly every discipline in the curriculum, and their presentations of their work have demonstrated the benefits of providing students opportunities outside the regular curriculum for intellectual growth and collaboration with faculty members.

Intercollegiate Athletics and Recreation

Just before the 1997-98 Self-Study, Intercollegiate Athletics and Recreation, whose name was changed in 2000 from Sport and Leisure Studies, was moved from the Division of Student Life and Co-Curricular Education to the Division of Academic Affairs. At the same time roughly, the major program in sport and leisure studies was discontinued and a minor program in sports studies and exercise science put in its place. Also, a requirement for graduation of .5 credit course in “wellness” was dropped. These developments may seem contradictory, but the aims were 1) to make more efficient use of resources to improve intercollegiate and recreational athletics and achieve gender equity; and 2) to reconceive of athletics as an educational activity in its own right. The department advocated that coaching be viewed *as* teaching and the Administration and Faculty concurred, accepting President Sullivan’s argument that the purpose of intercollegiate and recreational athletics at a liberal arts college is “to teach things to students that are hard to teach in the core academic program” (“Report on the Board of Trustees Meeting,” June 9, 1997).

Since 1997-98 intercollegiate athletics and recreation has been a focus of strategic planning. Athletics became a priority in Phase I of the Facilities Plan because we concluded that improvements would help to attract and retain students with academic promise. This conclusion runs contrary to Shulman and Bowen’s study of national trends in college athletics (*The Game of Life*, 2001), but our reading of our own admissions market suggests that the determination and discipline of student-athletes who choose to attend small, liberal-arts colleges are good predictors of academic success. Our assessment data suggests that our investments are paying off. Admitted students for the

classes of 2004, 2005, and 2006 have indicated that the athletics facilities and programs were very important in their decision to attend St. Lawrence. And the percentage of students participating in intercollegiate athletics who made the Dean's List has risen in the last year from 25% to 33%.

Part of the strategic plan for athletics was to add seven new intercollegiate sports in 1999, including men's and women's golf, men's and women's squash, men's and women's crew, and women's softball. Also, in 1998, women's hockey was elevated to Division I status, joining men's hockey as the only Division I sports at St. Lawrence. All other Division III sports are treated equally, and there is no tiering since junior varsity teams have been eliminated. Since 1999, all men's and women's head coaching positions have been full time. Also in 1999, assistant coaching positions were added for all intercollegiate sports, including the opportunity for these assistants to complete a graduate program at the University in two years. These additions have enabled us to reach our goal of gender equity, in terms of number of intercollegiate sports for men and women and equal treatment of these sports. Equity, moreover, has not come at the expense of excellence. The women's ice hockey team finished second in the country in 2001, and the women's basketball team finished second in the country in 2002. Men's soccer was the national champion in 1999 and reached the national semi-finals again in 2002. Several other men's and women's teams have garnered league titles and competed in post-season tournaments in the last several years. Recently, St. Lawrence was one of 10 universities selected to receive a NCAA Division III Ethnic-Minority and Women's Internship Grant for 2003-05. The grant will support a two-year internship in Intercollegiate Athletics and Recreation for an ethnic-minority or female coach.

There have also been additions to club sports, including coed rugby and hockey, and participation in intramural athletics has improved dramatically. Currently, more than a thousand students participate in intramural athletics each year. If one takes into account also the health and fitness programs for students developed by intercollegiate athletics and recreation and the outdoor program since 1997-98, St. Lawrence has certainly improved its capacity to achieve its aims, which are not only to promote “the continuing intellectual development of its students” but to educate them “to make the best use of their leisure time during their college years and their future lives” (*St. Lawrence University Catalogue 2003-2004*, 5). Some faculty members are skeptical about the academic implications of the new emphasis on athletics. We will continue to assess the impacts of athletic facilities and programs on admissions, retention, and academic performance to ensure that intercollegiate athletics and recreation continues to support and enhance the academic mission of the University.

Faculty Development

The foregoing, hopefully, has made clear some of the ways in which faculty members at St. Lawrence have continued to develop in the last five years as teachers and scholars. They have been ambitious and innovative in creating new programs and improving established ones, in pursuing individual and collaborative scholarly projects, and in securing numerous grants to support their work in teaching and scholarship. St. Lawrence faculty members continue to be productive scholars. In the recent (2002) Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) Faculty survey, the percentages of faculty reporting having published five or more articles in professional journals (56%), chapters in edited volumes (12%) and books (4%), and who, in the last two years, have given

performances (14%) and presented or published papers of books (12%), correspond closely with those of faculty at NCG colleges. The HERI survey shows also that, in the last two years, St. Lawrence faculty were more likely than their NCG colleagues to teach an interdisciplinary course (64% vs. 57%), team-teach a course (52% vs. 41%), attend a teaching enhancement workshop (67% vs. 59%), and use computer aided instruction in most or all courses (36% vs. 23%). Also, more St. Lawrence faculty responded affirmatively to these questions than they did in 1999, especially to the questions about attending workshops (67% vs. 54% in 1999) and using computer-aided instruction (36% vs. 12% in 1999).

There is a strong tradition at St. Lawrence of faculty development in teaching. This reflects the Faculty's commitment to the primary mission of the University and to excellence in teaching as a professional goal. As noted above, short and extended workshops on campus, grant-supported projects, and travel to conferences on pedagogy are regular features of faculty life at St. Lawrence. Recently, faculty development in teaching has been brought into sharper focus by the creation of the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL). The mission of the Center is to promote student learning by facilitating excellence in teaching. It does this by supporting a wide range of professional development activities that enable faculty members to become more knowledgeable about teaching and learning, and more creative and collaborative in their teaching practices. Many of the workshops that are offered in computer-aided and writing instruction now take place in CTL, which is equipped with multi-media laboratories designed for faculty development. CTL also sponsors a regular "Shop Talk Series," at which faculty members lead discussions on pedagogy and related classroom issues.

In 2001 the University received a grant from Hewlett Foundation (\$150,000) to support a “Teaching Fellows Institute for Oral Communications” (OCI) for two years. The aim of the institute is to help instructors improve their teaching of the listening and speaking skills necessary for critical thinking and reflective and productive discourse. The OCI involved faculty in three-day workshops in January 2002 and 2003, follow-up seminars during the spring semesters, and fall meetings to assess the implementation of new teaching strategies. The response of faculty participants to the first two institutes has been very positive. “The OCI workshop has already changed the way I think about communication in the classroom,” one faculty member comments. Another remarks, “I’m already using many of the things we talked about in my [First-Year Seminar] this semester” (CTL News, Spring 2002, 3). Although the Hewlett grant runs its course after this fall, we are considering to continue a scale-down version of the OCI. The emphases that St. Lawrence faculty place on communication in the classroom is reflected in the 2001 HERI survey. A larger percentage of St. Lawrence faculty than NCG faculty indicate that in *all* courses they use student presentations (35% vs. 21%), classroom discussion (64% vs. 54%), and group projects (17% vs. 9%). More St. Lawrence faculty than NCG faculty also indicate that in *all* courses they use term or research papers (25% vs. 19%) and multiple drafts of written work (13% vs. 8%). The programs offered by the CTL, OCI, and Summer Institute on Writing in the Disciplines, and faculty-development initiatives in the First-Year Program, Instructional Technology, international/intercultural education and the sciences, are working to insure that excellence in teaching at St. Lawrence is adequately nourished.

Academic Planning and Oversight

In the 1997-98 Self-Study a number of concerns were identified about academic planning and governance generally, and the work of the Academic Affairs Committee (AAC) in particular. Since that time, there have been a number of positive changes concerning the way the AAC deals with academic planning and assessment issues more broadly. One concern was that the AAC often became so bogged down in the details of course approval that it had no time to consider overall curricular and academic policy issues. The AAC addressed this concern in two ways. First, it reorganized the way course approvals are handled. Each proposal is now assigned a ‘shepherd’ charged with checking supporting materials and contacting departments or programs with questions or concerns. The ‘shepherd’ then presents the proposal to the entire committee, highlighting issues that call for further discussion. In the past two semesters, this greater efficiency has translated into more time to address broader issues. The AAC has also become more deliberate about the way it handles policy matters. Curricular projects are now assigned to subcommittees for necessary background research and the crafting of concrete proposals. The subcommittees then report to the full committee for further deliberation and possible action.

There are two useful examples of how this new process has worked. First, there is the AAC’s participation in the ‘Data Migration’ project begun last summer. This new system will clearly affect key academic functions like registration and advising, and so the AAC was charged with organized faculty involvement in the initial vendor selection process. To that end, the AAC participated in vendor demonstrations for faculty and support staff, made site visits to review products, and represented the Academic Affairs

division at the campus-wide committee charged with making a final recommendation to senior staff. The AAC regularly reported back to Faculty Council during this lengthy and complex process, and finally brought a formal recommendation to Council for review and approval.

A second example of how this more effective process functioned is the recent work by the AAC on the Senior-Year Experience. Faculty Council charged the AAC with fleshing out critical details of implementation, including matters from compensation to effects on the larger curriculum and faculty culture. To accomplish this work in a timely fashion, the AAC formed an SYE subcommittee that worked closely with the Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs and the Registrar. The subcommittee reported back regularly to the entire AAC and periodically to Faculty Council. Finally, the subcommittee brought its completed report back to the AAC for final discussion. The report was then forwarded to Faculty Council, where it was reviewed and approved as policy.

Another aspect of the work with the Senior-Year Experience legislation is also worth noting, that having to do with assessment and longer-term budget and curricular planning. The original SYE legislation included a clause requiring Faculty Council to formulate a plan for assessment of the SYE. The AAC implementation report to Faculty Council highlighted a number of key issues to be included in that assessment. Faculty Council charged the AAC with proposing a process for ongoing assessment, and the AAC has now forwarded the outlines of a plan to be undertaken in fall 2003. These recent events are significant for two reasons. First, they represent a commitment to assessment that is built into legislation from the start. Second, the assessment process

crafted by the AAC will be ongoing, collaborative, and integrated into the governance system. As appropriate, the AAC will work with departments and programs, with other university committees, and with student government. It is in these ways that the AAC has responded to the call to make academic planning more coherent, more accountable, and more closely tied to the governance system.

Conclusion

We have redefined major elements of the curriculum, worked to improve established programs, and introduced several new programs in the last five years. We will continue to develop and assess established programs and fully implement the new ones in the next five years. We will also be working to reconfigure programs in the sciences and arts to take full advantage of new and renovated facilities. Another strategic focus for the next five years will be on how recent developments to encourage student research can be supported and established in student and faculty cultures. We expect this to transform the academic advising relationship, placing more responsibility on students to plan for the Senior-Year Experience and other research opportunities. For faculty, the challenges will be to sustain a rich curriculum and devote the time and energy necessary to mentor student research.

Section 5:

Student Life and Co-Curricular Education

In “The American Scholar,” Emerson wrote: “Character is higher than intellect. Thinking is the function. Living is the functionary.” As a small, residential liberal-arts college, St. Lawrence is committed to educating the whole student. We are concerned that students learn not only to think well (as students of mathematics, biology, philosophy, or literature) but also to live responsibly, making thoughtful choices about their activities outside the classroom that will enrich the experience of college for themselves and others. In our Statement of Character, we challenge students to question, “Have you enlarged your knowledge of obligations and your capacity to perform them?” and we list “a personal ethic of considered values” among the aims of a St. Lawrence education. An important strategic initiative in the last decade or more has been to make residential life at St. Lawrence truly “co-curricular.”

In the 1997-98 Self-Study we reported a number of problems that continued to hamper our efforts to achieve this goal. Despite efforts to develop residential communities for first-year and upper-class students that combine living and learning, to modify Greek letter societies, and to expand programs in leadership development, the perception of many on campus (especially among the faculty) was that student culture remained at odds with the academic mission of the University. Much of the focus was on student misbehavior related to alcohol misuse. The Middle States Evaluation Team found disagreement on campus about the nature and extent of the problem. They made several recommendations, encouraging us to clarify our expectations for student life

outside the classroom and to improve communication and collaboration among students, faculty, and Student Life staff.

Aims and Objectives

The Evaluation Team suggested that “the faculty, administration, and students work together to articulate a clear, forceful statement” of the way in which student residential life is expected to support the academic mission of the University and include it in the University’s statement of “Aims and Objectives,” which was then being revised. The kind of broad, integral reconsideration of the aims of student life that the Evaluation Team had in mind did not take place, mainly because work on the statement of “Aims and Objectives” was well advanced and a new VP & Dean of Student Life and Co-curricular Education had just been hired. Nevertheless, the hiring of a new VP & Dean, the reorganization of the division that attended her appointment, and the Middle States Self-Study all served to focus attention on the “co-curricular” mission of the Student Life division. Perhaps we should have more forceful language in the University’s statement of “Aims and Objectives” about the relationship between academic and residential life, but there is no lack of clarity about the mission of Student Life and Co-Curricular Education in this regard. Much of the division’s work since the 1997-98 Self-Study has been focused on enhancing the co-curricular content and experience of residential life at St. Lawrence.

Organizational Changes and Enhanced Communication

Much has changed in the Division of Student Life and Co-Curricular Education since the 1997-98 Self-Study. A new VP & Dean was appointed in 1998; other staff have been hired with the aims of reorganizing the division and increasing the level of

professionalization (the Ph.D. is now encouraged of new directors of Student Life offices); and there has been a renewed sense of mission and boost in morale. To address some of the problems we reported in the Self-Study, the Evaluation Team recommended that we consider structural changes and other informal means of bridging the gap between the Academic and Student Life divisions and improving collaboration among administrators, faculty, and students on student life issues. They pointed, in fact, to a recent change in the reporting structure of the Associate Dean of the First-Year Program as “a promising model” of “more effective integration of academic and student affairs at SLU.” The residential component of the First-Year Program is now housed within the Student Life division, and the VP & Dean of Student Life and Co-Curricular Education and Associate Dean of the First-Year Program (appointed from the Faculty) collaborate closely on residential issues. The responsibility for first-year student orientation has also been shifted from the First-Year Program to Residential Learning Communities, enabling greater cooperation between FYP faculty and Student Life staff. (For more detail, see Section 4 under First-Year Program). There is a closer working relationship also between the VP & Dean of Student Life and Co-Curricular Education and the new University Chaplain, who reports now to both the VP & Dean of Student Life and the President.

Other structural changes have been made to enhance the co-curricular mission of Student Life. Several offices within the division have been refocused: Student Activities and Organizations has become Co-Curricular Education and Programming; Residential Life has become Residential Learning Communities; Career Planning has become Career Services and Leadership Education. These are changes in more than name. The efforts to make the residential, co-curricular experiences of students more educational are

reflected in the yearly goals of these offices and the strategies they employ to achieve their aims. This intentional refocusing is clearly evident in the annual reports of the Student Life division for the last three years. Additionally, the University's efforts to promote leadership and service among students have been consolidated in a new Student Life office containing the St. Lawrence Leadership Academy and the David G. Garner Center for Collegiate Volunteerism. This reorganization of resources is intended to highlight the University's commitment to the ideals of informed citizenship, improve the leadership-training program, and enrich opportunities for leadership and community service. This new office will coordinate its efforts with the academic program in Service Learning, further bridging the gap between Student Life and Academic Affairs.

The division of Student Life and Co-Curricular Education has also responded to the Evaluation Team's recommendation regarding improved communication. The VP & Dean of Student Life and Co-Curricular Education appears regularly at student government (Thelomathesian Society) meetings, hosts weekly dinners for faculty, students and staff, and organizes "That's Life" Sunday evening conversations for students and staff. She has also reported to Faculty Council on several student-life issues and initiatives. She sends a "Dean's Daily" e-mail to all students and selected faculty, staff, parents, and trustees and writes twice a year to parents and students about various student-life issues. More formally, there have been efforts to enhance the role of Student Life staff on standing and ad hoc committees, such as First-Year Program Chairs Council, the Committee on Residential Programs and Initiatives, the Committee on Planning and Priorities, the Hewlett Pluralism and Unity Steering Committee, and the Retention Task Force.

The Division of Student Life and Co-Curricular Education has also responded to the Evaluation Team's recommendation that student life issues be aired more publicly on campus. The Division hosts open forums in the student center and residence halls to address issues of concern to students and supports student-initiated forums, such as one recently to discuss the Greek Engagement Project. Students, faculty, and staff have the opportunity as well to address student-life issues on standing committees, such as FYP Chairs Council and the Committee on Residential Programs and Initiatives. Finally, there are forums twice a year in which students, representatives of the faculty, and members of the Board of Trustees exchange views on student life and co-curricular education at St. Lawrence. Beginning this year, the VP & Dean of Academic Affairs and the VP & Dean of Student Life have met regularly to discuss issues of mutual importance. It is fair to say that more information about Student Life is being shared, and that the Student Life and Academic Affairs Divisions are cooperating more effectively than was the case five years ago. Some evidence of this can be found in the HERI Faculty Survey data from 2001, as compared to 1998. In 2001, 75% of the faculty responded they were satisfied or very satisfied with their relationships with the administration (compared to 60% in 1998); fewer faculty felt that social activities on campus are overemphasized (22%, down from 41% in 1998), and more faculty agreed that student affairs staff have the support and respect of the faculty (67%, up from 53% in 1998).

However, there are still some challenges ahead of us. While survey ratings from seniors and first-year students point to increases in overall student satisfaction and increased satisfaction with the student center and student activities (our ratings are at or above the comparison group), students continue to be less satisfied than students

elsewhere with residential life, health services, and career services. We are trying to address these issues through the implementation of new programs and services. For example, Career Services and Leadership Education now offers advising sessions on preparation for graduate school and is reviving the “majors fair” this year. Residential Learning Communities made changes to the housing lottery and now allows groups of friends to live together on the same floor of a residence hall through “block housing.” Also, we expect that the on-campus, independent living option in Senior townhouses will have a positive impact on student satisfaction with residential life. We continue to monitor student satisfaction closely.

Current Initiatives

Three major initiatives were prompted by the 1997-98 Self-Study and Middle States Evaluation Team’s recommendations. The first was the appointment of a task force, made up of faculty, students and administrative staff, to study the problems of high-risk drinking at St. Lawrence. The objectives of the task force were as follows:

- To raise awareness of the seriousness of alcohol problems on campus.
- To review the policies and practices with regard to alcohol use and misuse at St. Lawrence.
- To provide environments, in both residential halls and at social events, which are healthy, safe and support the educational mission of St. Lawrence.
- To create social opportunities and support current student activities which are alcohol free.
- To support research practices that relate to collegiate alcohol issues.

The Alcohol Task Force reviewed the literature on college age drinking, institutional data about alcohol use and disciplinary practices, and CORE Survey (conducted at St. Lawrence in April 1999) data about student perceptions and behaviors.

It also applied for, and received, a 2-year grant from the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) to conduct a “College Norm Misperceptions Project.” The project is informed by the idea that college-student drinking behavior is partially driven by perceived norms. Research shows that students often misperceive these norms, assuming that their peers drink more than they do. It may be possible, therefore, to reduce high-risk drinking among college students by correcting their misperceptions. The Task Force issued its report in September 2000, which included 18 recommendations. These have led to the development of the SLU Alcohol Initiative, which is sponsored through President Sullivan’s discretionary fund. \$100,000 was allotted to support the initiative in its first 18 months and \$60,000 for the current academic year, 2002-03. The Alcohol Initiative is overseen by an Advisory Council and directed by the head of Counseling Services.

The Alcohol Initiative (AI) involves a four pronged approach to high-risk drinking at St. Lawrence. It includes, first of all, a coordinated research program to further educate the University community about student alcohol use and misuse and to track the progress and outcomes of AI. Second, it is developing research-based interventions, intended to reduce high-risk drinking and its effects. These include the Alcohol Skills Training Program and “Norms Misperception Project.” While geared toward the campus community as a whole, these interventions focus specifically on First-Year colleges, Greek letter societies, athletic teams, and those who violate alcohol policy. Third, AI works with various campus groups to create and support alcohol free and low-risk drinking social alternatives. For example, AI sponsors weekend late-night hours at the bookstore and athletic facilities and provides “mini-grants” of up to \$300 to students,

faculty and staff who apply to host an alcohol-free or low-risk alcohol event. In 2002-03, the AI developed the “First-Year Cup,” a program which encourages first-year students to get involved in academic, social, and athletic activities that are alcohol free or low risk. For every involvement, students earn points for their first-year college, and point leaders received an award at the end of the fall and spring semester. Fourth, AI works with other campus groups to promote “life-skills” training. For example, in the last two academic years, AI has helped to sponsor a Wellness Luncheon series, an “Art of Living” series, a marathon training group, and an alcohol support group. Working with Counseling Services, AI has helped to expand and fund a peer education group. Peers Educating Peers (PEP) is a student organization that seeks to advance a lifestyle among St. Lawrence students based on a “wellness” model. To this point, PEP has focused mainly on helping students make good decisions about alcohol use and sexual relationships.

There is some evidence to suggest that the work of the Alcohol Task Force and AI may already be having beneficial effects. spring 2001 and fall 2002 CORE surveys show that between spring 1999 and fall 2002 the percentage of students engaging in “frequent” binge drinking (three times or more in a period of two weeks) has dropped from 43% in spring 1999 to 29% in spring 2001 and 23% in fall 2002. This is still above the national norm of 22.7%. However, St. Lawrence is also challenged by the fact that significantly more of its students (compared to students attending private liberal-arts colleges nationally) report frequent consumption of alcohol for their last year of high school. According to the CIRP 2002 survey, for example, 82% of our male first-year students and 67% of our female first-year students reported occasional or frequent consumption of

beer in their senior year of high school. This compares to 55% for male first-year students and 44% for female first-year students at the national level.

The CORE surveys also show decreases in the average number of drinks consumed in a week, although the percentages are still higher than the national norm. Our challenges (as outlined below) relate in particular to higher drinking levels of fraternity members and male students. Since 1999 we have become more consistent and rigorous in enforcing our alcohol policy. The CORE data clearly documents that students have a better understanding of our policy, realize that it is more strictly enforced, and are becoming more involved in alcohol and drug prevention programs. As a result, the number of students who come before our Judicial Board for alcohol-related violations has nearly doubled in the last four years (up from 125 in 1998-99 to 244 in 2002-03). At the same time, cases of alcohol poisoning have declined. Although it is too early to judge, we are hopeful that the Alcohol Initiative will help to promote more responsible use of alcohol among students and reduce the consequences especially of high-risk drinking. A goal for AI is to expand its focus over the next few years to include drug prevention and smoke-free programs.

A second initiative has been to review the status of Greek letter societies at St. Lawrence, in light especially of faculty and administrative actions in 1987 and 1992 to reform them. The result of this review is the “Greek Engagement Project,” launched in the spring 2002 by Student Life and Co-Curricular Education. The announcement of the project sparked some controversy, since some faculty members thought it begged an essential question: why “engage” a residential and social institution in which expressed student interest and actual membership has been declining steadily since 1989? Interest

in rushing/pledging has decreased from 22% of all eligible students in 1996 to 17% of all eligible students in 2002. In the 1980's 40-50% of all eligible students were members of fraternities and sororities; by fall 2002, only about one-fifth of all eligible males and one-third of all eligible female students were members. The project report admits, "The system has not proven to be culturally viable, neither growing in popularity nor securing broad-based support among the University community." Nevertheless, the "Greeks" remain a significant force, since their members often hold leadership positions in student organizations and non-members continue to see fraternities and sororities as an important social resource on campus. The mission of the "Greek Engagement Project" is "to identify exemplary models of Greek life, to adapt and improve upon these models, and to recommend what steps and changes need to be implemented to insure that St. Lawrence University has an inclusive, progressive and collaborative system, emphasizing scholarship, fellowship, and service." The challenges for the Project will be to address declining membership, low rates of occupancy in Greek houses at a time of housing shortage on campus, negative impacts of pledge periods on student grade point averages, and higher incidences of alcohol use among Greek society members.

A third initiative of Student Life is aimed at strengthening Residential Theme Communities. These have a long history at St. Lawrence, having begun in separate "cottage" buildings in 1971 and expanded in 1995 to include residence hall suites and floors. In 1997-98 we reported that 90 students were living in nine theme residences. In the fall of 2002, there were 33 theme residences housing 409 students. They represent a substantial commitment on the part of the University to meet the co-curricular needs and interests of upper-class students through residential programs. Theme residences are

intended to create living environments that promote education about a shared academic interest or social issue, both for participating members and the campus community. The Residential Theme Communities initiative, however, was prompted by concerns expressed in the 1997-98 Self-Study about student residential life in general and a perceived need to address the sophomore year, when students are in limbo between the "living/learning" communities of the First-Year Program and upper-class residential options.

Although still in draft form, the report on Residential Theme Communities may be summarized here. It is concerned, first of all, to reinforce the co-curricular function and effectiveness of residential theme communities. To this end, it recommends revising the procedures by which residential theme communities are established and sustained, so that they are truly supportive of the academic mission of the University. Second, it seeks to strengthen the academic integrity of theme residences by establishing procedures to monitor and aid students whose grade point averages fall below 2.5. Third, in an effort to promote stronger and more consistent leadership in theme residences, the report recommends that designated coordinators in theme residences participate fully in the offerings of the Leadership Academy and consult regularly with the Academy's Project Director. This will bring theme residences into line with Greek letter societies, whose officers are required to participate in leadership training. Lastly, in order to insure that members of theme residences and the community as a whole are held accountable for violations of the Code of Student Conduct, the report recommends changes in the procedures by which cases of misconduct are adjudicated.

All three initiatives are part of a conscientious response to recommendations of the Middle States Evaluation Team and are aimed at improving student residential life in ways that support the academic mission of the University. All are linked in their efforts to create residential communities that support various kinds of learning, to promote leadership and community service as an integral part of the residential experience at St. Lawrence, and to reduce the negative impacts of alcohol use and misuse on student life. Certainly the outcomes of these initiatives will form the basis of our review of Student Life during the next Middle States Self-Study.

Outcomes Assessment

The initiatives described above demonstrate how the Division of Student Life and Co-Curricular Education collects and is making more effective use of information now than it did at the time of our last Self-Study. We have coordinated a number of evaluative measures, including data from Senior Survey, National CORE Alcohol Survey, Co-curricular Education and Programming Satisfaction Survey, Leadership Academy Evaluation, Counseling and Wellness Satisfaction Survey, and Security Data Reports. There is closer collaboration between the Division of Student Life and the Director of Institutional Research and broader sharing of information about student life with other divisions of the University. While many statistics are still individual data points and not yet part of an integral database, we are more purposeful and systematic in collecting and analyzing data, and better information is now guiding the discussion of key issues and formation of policy in Student Life and Co-Curricular Education.

Section 6:

University Governance

The last three Middle States Evaluation Teams have identified university governance at St. Lawrence as a problem. This does not surprise us, since they were responding partly to our self-criticism, but we are baffled somewhat by the persistence of the issue in spite of our efforts to address it. There have been times when conflict between the Faculty and Administration has caused the governance process to break down, but those times have not been typical of university governance at St. Lawrence. Our commitment to shared governance, to a process of decision making that delegates responsibility to several tri-partite, university committees (on which administrators, faculty, and students sit) makes for some inefficiency and tension. Students sometimes feel marginalized in the process, faculty desire even more control over it than they have, and administrators are sometimes frustrated by faculty actions. However, the system works well more often than not, and, despite some persistent criticism, there has not developed a consensus for radical change. In the 1997-98 Self-Study, we reported that we responded to the previous Evaluation Team's recommendations by appointing a task force to consider and propose alternatives to the governance system, and that the Faculty rejected these in favor of improving the system in place. We believe that we have responded conscientiously once more to the recommendations of the 1997-98 Middle States Evaluation Team: to "rejuvenate the processes by which SLU governs itself and to redefine your committee structure by clarifying the goals and purposes of each committee you have" and "to enhance and secure communications among all constituencies of the

university through creation of a universally understood and respected governance structure” (“Report to . . . St. Lawrence University,” 1998, 7).

Soon after the new Statement of University Aims and Objectives was endorsed in 1999, Faculty Council, the chief steering and deliberative committee, initiated a review of governance, picking up where the previous task force on governance left off. There was little sentiment for restructuring the system radically. Rather, in keeping with the Evaluation Team’s recommendations, Faculty Council’s intentions were to rejuvenate the processes of governance by reducing the number of committees and clarifying their charges. This work occupied Faculty Council between 2000 and 2002. Several moribund committees were eliminated, others were combined to improve efficiency, and some had their memberships and/or charges revised. Faculty Council also took up the Plan for Faculty Organization, clarifying the distinctions between university committees, faculty committees, and representatives to the Board of Trustees and eliminating discrepancies between actual practice and the description of faculty organization in the Faculty Handbook.

It is too early to tell whether this streamlining has made governance at St. Lawrence more effective. However, there is plenty of evidence to suggest that governance, even while being revised, has been working well since 1997-98. We point again to our deliberations over the curriculum and the salary policy. Both issues were complex and contentious, yet they were addressed effectively through the governance system. The committees charged with researching the issues and making proposals for change performed admirably, Faculty Council provided effective guidance, and the deliberations of the Faculty were orderly, open, and conclusive. Not all the issues taken

up by Faculty Council or university committees have been effectively resolved, but governance at St. Lawrence is constantly self-critical. We are regularly scrutinizing our policies and procedures in order to make them fairer and more effective—most recently, for example, the committees and procedures to review cases of academic grievance and sexual harassment and assault. Increasingly in the last several years, a cooperative spirit has characterized the relationships between the Administration, Faculty, and students, and there appears to be more confidence in the governance system. One indication of this trend comes from the HERI Faculty survey, where the percentage of St. Lawrence faculty indicating that they are “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with relationships with the Administration rose from 60% in 1998 to 76% in 2001.

There have also been efforts to improve communication among all constituencies of the University. Faculty Council stays in closer touch with university committees, invites senior administrators to report on current issues or initiatives, and communicates regularly with representatives of Thelmo, the student government. The University’s website now makes available to everyone on campus Faculty Council and Faculty meeting minutes and reports. Senior administrators also report regularly to the Faculty, Thelmo, or the university community at large about current issues or initiatives. And President Sullivan hosts a series of brown-bag lunches each year to discuss issues of interest or concern to particular constituencies or the university community as a whole.

Finally, President Sullivan’s efforts to enhance the role of the Board of Trustees in university governance have been salutary. The work of Board committees is now better coordinated with the work of university committees, and there is more cooperation between them, especially on issues of strategic planning. Faculty and students regularly

report to Board committees at three meetings each year, and consequently there is more exchange of information and ideas. This too has boosted confidence in the governance system, which has become a more shared, cooperative process from top to bottom. We do not claim to have it right yet, and there are still conflicting views about governance at St. Lawrence, but we do believe that we have made progress in responding to the Middle States recommendations.

Section 7:

Outcomes Assessment

The 1997-98 Self-Study mentioned little about outcomes assessment, and the Middle States Evaluation Team agreed with us that we were “still a long way from a coherent, systematic approach to assessment” (“Report to . . . St. Lawrence University,” 1998, 9). The Evaluation Team recommended that we make better use of existing measures of student learning and our Office of Institutional Research. We are pleased to report that we have made significant progress over the past five years. Assessment has become an integral part of our strategic planning process. Our overall plan for institutional assessment can be summarized in terms of procedures we have been establishing since 1997-98:

- Identify and commit to timely, frequent participation in national surveys, which make it possible to benchmark our performance against other selected institutions.
- Integrate these survey results with existing institutional databases to maximize the richness of information we have available for assessment.
- Use information from national surveys and our institutional databases to monitor our performance against key, selected benchmarks over time, to: a) assess the impact of efforts to change St. Lawrence systemically, and b) identify issues for more intensive study and action.
- Engage in intensive, multi-method assessments of specific areas of the University in support of systemic change.
- Use the results of these assessments to inform policymaking and proposals for change. Include faculty, students, staff, Board of Trustees, and other key stakeholders (as appropriate) in discussions of change and planning, as part of our commitment to shared governance.

To bring coherence to the plan, the Office of Institutional Research now serves as the central source for information, in particular as it relates to longitudinal trends and value-added assessment. The Director serves on several university committees, including

as a resource to the institution's Planning and Priorities Committee. In recognition of the increased demand on the office, President Sullivan added the position of Assistant Director of Institutional Research in 2000-01 (bringing the staffing to 2), with the expectation that 0.25 FTE of the office will be in support of grant activities.

As previous sections of PRR have indicated, we now participate regularly in national and consortia studies to monitor our performance in inter-institutional and historical comparison. Examples of these studies include the CIRP Freshman Survey, the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), the HEDS Senior Survey, the CORE Survey on Alcohol and Other Drugs, the HERI Faculty survey, and the NACUBO benchmark study. We are also instituting in-house surveys, such as a library survey to study the information literacy of our seniors, and a "college success" questionnaire administered to first-year students and sophomores in the spring semester to address proactively areas of student discontent and need. In the areas of admissions, financial aid, retention, finance, and University advancement, we have established indicators that trace our performance over time relative to the NCG and that set performance targets for the next 3-5 years. These benchmarks have been approved by the Board of Trustees. They guide our institutional planning and resource allocation and measure our progress.

In collaboration with the Director of Institutional Research, President Sullivan has initiated intensive assessment in the last two years of three important areas of the University. The first was a review of the role of athletics at St. Lawrence, based on Shulman and Bowen's book, *The Game of Life*.⁴ The analysis seeks to establish direct measures of student-athlete performance, such as admissions criteria, academic

⁴ James L. Shulman and William G. Bowen, *The Game of Life: College Sports and Educational Values*. Princeton University Press, 2001.

performance, rates of retention, etc., and draws upon longitudinal data from our CIRP and Senior surveys. The analysis was shared with faculty in a written report and discussed at a brown-bag lunch on campus. It was also discussed at a Board of Trustees retreat, to which Gordon Winston, Professor of Economics at Williams College and advisor to *The Game of Life*, was invited. The study will be updated this summer in order to further assess the outcomes of our investments in athletic and recreational facilities and programs and our recruitment of student-athletes.

A second paper focused on results from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), with the aim of further informing initiatives in the area of student life and co-curricular education. And a third paper presented findings from the 1998 and 2001 HERI Faculty surveys and was intended to initiate discussion of a range of issues related to faculty life and development. These papers have also been subjects of discussion in open forums and by university committees. Both are intended to guide future discussions of policy and strategic planning to establish a campus environment that supports academic rigor, teaching effectiveness, student learning and development, and faculty development.

Additionally, several task forces and standing or ad hoc committees have engaged in significant assessment of university practices and policies in the last five years. These include the Retention Task Force, the Hewlett Steering Committee, the Diversity Task Force, the Greek Engagement Project, the ad hoc Compensation Committee, and the current Health Care Task Force. They have all been supported by the Office of Institutional Research, engaging in extensive review of past practices and outcomes, establishing benchmarking procedures, and proposing changes that are linked to the goals

of broader strategic planning. We are also making assessment an integral part of new programs. This was initiated with the First-Year Program and is a prominent feature, as we have noted, of the legislation to create the Senior-Year Experience. The programs associated with the new Center for Teaching and Learning, such as the “Oral Communication Institute,” also incorporate regular assessment.

Changes in our administrative computing environment have also made it possible for other administrative offices to be more effective in assessing outcomes. With the utilization of a new data warehouse, and with tables stored in MS Access databases, administrative departments have gained direct access to information from the administrative computing system and have become more self-sufficient in performing data analyses. Not only is the warehouse replacing many mainframe reports, but also it has enabled departments to look at data in ways that were not possible before.

Outcomes assessment is relatively easy where the measures are largely quantitative, as in admissions, retention, finances, fundraising, and even in academic programs when one is counting number of courses, majors or minors, papers or presentations assigned, research projects undertaken, students going on to graduate school, etc. However, the difficulty lies, as everyone knows, in qualitative assessment of what and how students are learning. We are as daunted by this challenge as everyone else, but we have made progress in assessing student learning in the last five years, in terms of both quantitative and qualitative measures.

The most prominent measures of teaching and learning at St. Lawrence are student evaluations of courses. Students evaluate every course in every semester using a standard form. The standard form is required by the University’s policy on tenure and

promotion. Departments and programs may also ask students for additional evaluation, using forms of their own design. A revised version of the standard form, which asks students to evaluate in writing, as well as rate, aspects of the course and the instructor's teaching, was implemented in spring 2002. Although we have only three semesters experience with the new form, the consensus of the Faculty and of the Committee on Professional Standards, which hears cases for tenure and promotion, is that the new form is providing better information about teaching and learning. The standard form has the virtues of being both formative and summative. It provides instructors with feedback every semester, enabling them to compare their results with colleagues in their departments or programs or across the University and to adjust as they go. At the same time, it provides instructors, departments, programs, and the Committee on Professional Standards with a reliable measure over time of teaching effectiveness and development.

Although assessment of academic programs is less regular than course evaluation, we are making progress in that regard too. First, regular participation in national student and faculty surveys makes it possible for departments and programs to do better assessment. A case in point is the assessment that the Asian studies program undertook to support its successful application for a Freeman Foundation Grant (see Section 4). Asian studies was able to show that its own program and St. Lawrence's commitment to international/intercultural education generally was distinctive among liberal-arts colleges and worthy of further development. Many departments and programs have been prompted recently by facilities projects, the implementation of the Senior-Year Experience, or by curriculum and/or staffing developments to engage in assessment and are drawing on Institutional Research and their own resources for information, analysis,

and benchmarking. We noted in Section 4, for example, that the Center for International and Intercultural Studies has been charged with assessing all off-campus programs on a regular cycle and has begun that work.

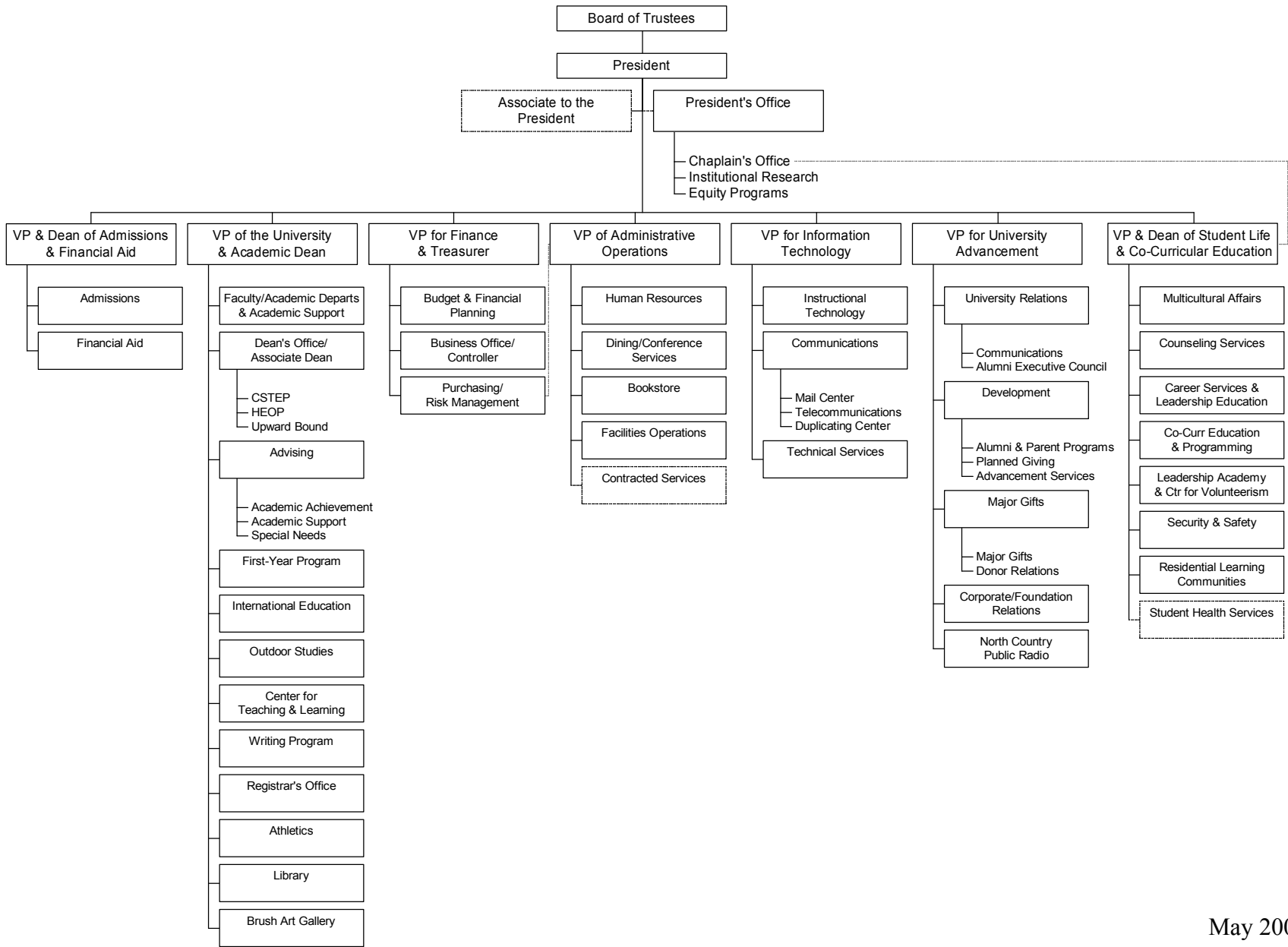
We also noted in Section 4 that the First-Year Program uses mid-year portfolio assessment to identify students in need of additional instruction in writing and to assess writing instruction in the program. We believe that portfolio assessment in the FYP can be a model for further assessment of writing and communication skills at later stages in students' careers. Potentially, portfolio assessment could be linked to the Senior-Year Experience to establish an effective four-year program of assessment. Because the SYE is supposed to demonstrate "integration in learning" and students' proficiency in higher-order critical thinking, communications/expression, and/or research skills, it can be by itself an effective means of measuring student learning over four years. Tied to portfolio and other kinds of assessment in the freshmen, sophomore, and junior years, the SYE can give us a clearer picture of how students have developed over time and to what extent they have mastered the intellectual and creative processes and skills we identify with education in the liberal arts.

We have done much in the last five years to make outcomes assessment an integral part of our planning process, especially in those areas where outcomes can be quantified, establishing regular and reliable practices of data collection, analysis, benchmarking, and institutional comparison. We are doing more quantitative and qualitative assessment of student learning too, but the challenge before us is to coordinate the various kinds of assessment we do of academic programs. Even then it will be difficult to make outcomes in student learning clear. For example, we can quantify the

dramatic increase in number of students doing research independently or collaboratively with faculty members in the last five years. But, although the results of that research are palpable to us at the SLU Festival of Science, University Fellows forum, and other venues at which students present their findings, it remains a challenge to describe or “quantify” their learning for a report such as this. We have made great progress in assessing outcomes at the institutional level. Our goal for the next 3-5 years is to refine those assessment procedures and to improve especially our assessment of student learning, so that we may account more fully for what students learn and how they develop intellectually in the course of four years at St. Lawrence.

Appendix A

St. Lawrence University - Organizational Chart



Appendix B
Benchmarks For Enrollment
St. Lawrence University

| | 1999-2000 Class of 2004 Actual | 2000-2001 Class of 2005 Actual | 2001-2002 Class of 2006 Actual | 2002-2003 Class of 2007 (as of 5/25/03) | 2002-2003 Benchmarks Class of 2007 | 2003-2004 Benchmarks Class of 2008 | 2004-2005 Benchmarks Class of 2009 |
|--|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|--|--|---|
| Inquiry Total | 37,510 | 37,923 + | 35,509 + | 39,358 + | 35,000 | 35,000 | 35,000 |
| Applications | 2,554 | 2,745 + | 2,867 + | 3,080 + | 3,000 | 3150 | 3300 |
| % ED Applications | 4.9% (124) | 4.9% (134) -- | 5.8% (166) -- | 5.3% (163) -- | 6.7% (200) | 7.1% (225) | 7.8% (260) |
| Mean SAT of Applicants | 1140 | 1144 -- | 1148 -- | 1152 +- | 1152 | 1154 | 1158 |
| % Applicants Top 10% Rank | 29.5% | 31.2% -- | 31.0% -- | 32.7% + | 32% | 33% | 34% |
| % Applicants Minority | 9.6% (245) | 9.4% (257) -- | 9.1% (260) -- | 11.6% (357) + | 10% (300) | 11% (347) | 12% (396) |
| % Applicants: No Need | 30.5% (780) | 31.5% (866) + | 30.9% (884) + | 24.8% (763) +- | 25% (750) | 24.8% (780) | 24.8% (820) |
| # of HS in Applicant Pool (U.S. only) | 1063 | 1103 + | 1144 -- | 1193 + | 1180 | 1220 | 1250 |
| % Private&Parochial Schools (U.S. only) | 29.7% (316) | 29.6% (327) -- | 30.1% (344) -- | 31.3% (374) + | 30% (354) | 31% (378) | 32% (400) |
| % Private&Parochial Apps (U.S. only) | 35.0% (794) | 34.7% (828) -- | 34.4% (854) -- | 35.5% (952) + | 30% (900) | 30% (950) | 30% (990) |
| % Admitted | 68.8% (1757) | 61.0% (1674) -- | 65.2% (1869) -- | 56.6% (1741) +- | 58% (1740) | 56% (1764) | 54% (1782) |
| % Yield | 34.9% (613) | 30.5% (511) -- | 33.2% (620) + | 33.0% (574) + | 31.6% (550) | 31% (550) | 30.8% (550) |
| Mean SAT of Matriculants | 1140 | 1141 -- | 1143 -- | 1152 + | 1150 | 1152 | 1154 |
| % Matriculants ranking top 10% | 25.8% | 36.0% + | 30.7% -- | 35.8% + | 35% | 37% | 38% |
| % Matriculants: Minority | 7.0% (43) | 7.2% (37) -- | 5.8% (36) -- | 10.8% (62) + | 8% (44) | 10% (55) | 12% (66) |
| % Matriculants: No Need | 24.8% (152) | 30.7% (157) +- | 30.5% (189) +- | 34.3% (197) + | 31% (170) | 33.6% (185) | 36.3% (200) |
| Number of U.S. HS in Class | 388 | 361 -- | 405 -- | 385 +- | 385 | 400 | 420 |
| Comp. Fee Discount Rate | 41.5% | 38.9% + | 36.9% + | 36.1% + | 37.4% | 36.4% | 35.4% |

"no need" defined as did not ask for aid or asked, but had no financial need

Appendix C
Master Plan for Facilities Improvements
St. Lawrence University 1988 - 2003

| PROJECT DESCRIPTION | Totals | 1988 | 1989 | 1990 | 1991 | 1992 | 1993 | 1994 | 1995 | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 |
|------------------------------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Hulett & Jencks | \$0.5 | \$0.5 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Whitman Hall | \$1.2 | | \$1.2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Rebert Hall | \$0.4 | | \$0.4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Dean Eaton Hall | \$0.3 | | \$0.3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Carnegie | \$1.7 | | | \$1.7 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Noble University Center | \$0.8 | | | | | \$0.4 | | | | | | | \$0.4 | | | | |
| Payson Hall | \$1.4 | | | | | | | \$1.4 | | | | | | | | | |
| Madill Hall (Launders Ctr) | \$2.7 | | | | | | | \$2.7 | | | | | | | | | |
| 62 Park Street | \$0.5 | | | | | | | | \$0.5 | | | | | | | | |
| Appleton Arena | \$6.3 | | | | | | | | \$1.3 | | | | \$5.0 | | | | |
| Valentine Hall | \$0.4 | | | | | | | | \$0.4 | | | | | | | | |
| Softball Field | \$0.4 | | | | | | | | | | | | \$0.4 | | | | |
| ODY Renovation | \$6.0 | | | | | | | | | | | \$6.0 | | | | | |
| Brewer Bookstore | \$2.8 | | | | | | | | | | | \$2.8 | | | | | |
| Dana Renovation | \$5.0 | | | | | | | | | | | \$5.0 | | | | | |
| Outdoor Track | \$0.8 | | | | | | | | | | | | \$0.8 | | | | |
| Artificial Turf Field | \$1.8 | | | | | | | | | | | | \$1.8 | | | | |
| Weeks Field | \$0.8 | | | | | | | | | | | | \$0.8 | | | | |
| MacAllaster House | \$1.0 | | | | | | | | | | | | \$1.0 | | | | |
| Leckonby Stadium | \$1.2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | \$1.2 | | | |
| Augsbury Phase I | \$1.3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | \$1.3 | | | |
| Leigh Street (Creasy Way) | \$2.2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | \$2.2 | | |
| Fieldhouse/Fitness Center | \$12.9 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | \$12.9 | | |
| University Inn Renovation | \$1.6 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | \$1.6 | |
| Residential Refurbishment | \$4.6 | | | | | | | | | | | | \$0.6 | \$1.0 | \$1.0 | \$1.0 | \$1.0 |
| Annual Facilities Capital | \$11.9 | \$0.3 | \$0.3 | \$0.4 | \$0.4 | \$0.4 | \$0.4 | \$0.4 | \$0.5 | \$0.5 | \$1.2 | \$1.2 | \$1.2 | \$1.0 | \$1.0 | \$1.2 | \$1.5 |
| Security Access/Lighting | \$1.0 | | | | | | | | | | | \$0.4 | | \$0.6 | | | |
| Robie Squash Center | \$2.0 | | | | | | | | | | | | | \$1.2 | | \$0.8 | |
| Tom Fay Baseball Field | \$0.6 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | \$0.6 | |
| MacAllaster Soccer Field | \$0.6 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | \$0.6 | | |
| Boathouse | \$0.3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | \$0.3 | |
| Student Center | \$15.0 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | \$6.0 | \$9.0 |
| Senior Townhouses | \$6.0 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | \$6.0 |
| Sciences - Architect's Fees | \$4.0 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | \$4.0 |
| Total By Year (in millions) | \$100.0 | \$0.8 | \$2.2 | \$2.1 | \$0.4 | \$0.8 | \$0.4 | \$4.5 | \$2.7 | \$0.5 | \$1.2 | \$15.4 | \$12.0 | \$6.3 | \$17.7 | \$11.5 | \$21.5 |

**Additional Facilities Improvements
Planned for 2004 and Beyond ***

| PROJECT DESCRIPTION | Totals | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | Beyond |
|----------------------------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Administrative Systems Migration | \$4.0 | \$0.5 | \$2.0 | \$1.5 | | | | | |
| Residential Refurbishment | \$5.9 | x | \$0.9 | \$1.0 | \$1.0 | \$1.0 | \$1.0 | \$1.0 | |
| Sciences - Phase I | \$33.8 | | | \$11.5 | \$10.0 | \$12.3 | | | |
| Sciences - Phases II, III, IV | \$22.2 | | | | | | \$9.0 | \$6.0 | \$7.2 |
| Arts Renovations | \$12.0 | | \$1.0 | \$6.0 | \$5.0 | | | | |
| Academic Renovations | \$10.0 | | | \$2.0 | \$2.0 | \$2.0 | \$2.0 | \$2.0 | |
| Wellness Center | \$2.0 | | | \$2.0 | | | | | |
| Energy Conservation Projects | \$2.0 | | \$0.5 | \$1.5 | | | | | |
| Arts in Residence | \$7.0 | | | | | | | | \$7.0 |
| Athletics, Continued | \$7.0 | | | | | | | | \$7.0 |
| Annual Facilities Capital | \$9.9 | x | \$1.5 | \$1.6 | \$1.6 | \$1.7 | \$1.7 | \$1.8 | |
| Canaras Winterization | \$1.0 | | | | \$1.0 | | | | |
| Anticipated Total Cost | \$116.8 | \$0.5 | \$5.9 | \$27.1 | \$20.6 | \$17.0 | \$13.7 | \$10.8 | \$21.2 |

x = Expense included in spreadsheet above

* pending successful fund identification from multiple sources