

ADVANCEMENT SECTION

I. OVERALL OBSERVATIONS ABOUT THE INSTITUTION

The University community takes pride in their commitment to investing the fiscal and human resources necessary to provide quality educational and support services to an underserved student population. In this, Chicago State University plays a unique role in public education in Illinois. The University has more African American students (82.5%) than any public University in Illinois and more African American graduates than any university in the United States with the exception of six historically Black colleges and universities. This commitment has not been at the expense of academic excellence as evidenced by the University's efforts to achieve specialized program accreditations in such fields as social work, music, education, nursing and occupational therapy.

II. CONSULTATIONS OF THE TEAM

Financial Stability

The University has been faced with recent uncertainties regarding financial support from the State of Illinois. In 2000-2001, after eight years of steady increases from the State, CSU was faced with its first budget shortfall in regard to the State appropriation. The University received 3.5% less than the previous year and at mid-year, experienced another 1.15% reduction. The base budget in 2002-03 was the 2001-02 base, minus 5%. In addition, CSU had to return another \$1 million for health care costs. Some of these reductions came as a result of CSU not meeting its enrollment targets – another major challenge of the University. This forced the University into position freezes, position eliminations because of these freezes, cuts in travel, and reductions in other parts of the operation. The University has been reluctant to engage in layoffs and realignments. If these reductions in State support continue, the University may want to consider these options because most of its costs are in personnel.

The University recognizes that it must pursue other sources of revenue. It is to be commended for its grant activity which has resulted in an increase of \$17.8 to \$22.9 million from 1998 to 2002. The academic programs have received most of the benefits. CSU also realizes that private fund-raising is now essential. To that end, annual giving now exceeds \$100,000 and the endowment is now over \$2 million. The University is about to launch its first-ever capital campaign to raise \$10 million over 10 years to enhance its endowment. The Team agrees that a culture of philanthropy needs to be created. The Team believes that the Board of Trustees and the CSU Foundation Board should now take leadership roles in generating external support. Typically, alumni associations are also centrally involved. The University may want to consider organizing current students into an alumni/ambassadorial group because once they graduate; they typically become the institution's most loyal and proactive supporters. There should be

adequate staffing for effective fund-raising. Currently, the University has no annual giving or planned giving professionals. CSU may want to consider adding these important positions.

Other potential sources of revenue are tuition and fee increases. The Team recognized that because the student body is economically challenged, there is a limit to tuition/fee elasticity (ie., the Pell Grant threshold). But current tuition levels are 47% below the average of the other public universities and the fees are the second lowest in Illinois. The University has no technology fee. The University faces many challenges in regard to funding for technology and in the maintenance of the computer systems and machines. CSU may want to consider these tuition/fee options.

The budget situation of the University is likely to get worse before it improves. Although the University has been able to address budget cuts without any lay-offs, at some point this could be at the expense of services to students. The administration may need to consider the possibility or re-assignment of lay-off rather than leaving critical positions, in areas such as dormitory maintenance and financial aid, vacant.

Athletics

The University currently competes in Division IAAA of the NCAA. Its 12 athletic teams appropriately reflect gender equity considerations under Title IX. Financial support also demonstrates gender equity. In May 2002 there was a site visit by the NCAA in regard to its periodic certification review. The athletic department prepared a comprehensive self-study document for the visit and the NCAA, as a result of the document and the visit, recertified the athletic programs.

But the issue facing the University is not NCAA compliance or gender equity, it is the financial resources required to sustain the programs at the Division I level. The previous NCA Team advised the University to carefully examine this issue. The present Team reiterates that advice. The University may want to review its divisional alignment and consider other options such as Division II or Division III for some or all of its athletic teams. In the 1980's the teams were competing in Division III at Chicago State University. The need for this review is necessitated by the fact that the athletic teams have had difficulty competing in Division I and, therefore, do not meet annual revenue projections. Effective booster groups may be one alternative to funding shortfalls, the newly appointed, part-time athletic fund raiser may help, and so may the new convocation center, but the Team advises that a complete review be done. The NCAA can provide assistance in this regard as can best practices at other comparable colleges and universities.

The Challenge of Communication

The Team repeatedly heard concerns about the lack of communication and its correlation, the lack of empowerment in regard to governance. Many faculty, staff and student members of the community expressed concern about their roles and their lack of knowledge about important decisions. Frequently, decisions seemed to be made that were outside of the formal governance structures, such as the Faculty Senate and the Student Government Association. One example was the appointment of a search committee for the Provost position. Faculty Senate leadership do not perceive that they were appropriately consulted. Another perception involves possible revision of admission standards and the role of faculty in any process to do so. In regard to the students, many in the open meeting expressed concern about the lack of accurate information and being “bounced around” from office to office in search of answers. The professional staff have no formal mechanisms for communication and many do not feel respected.

The Team strongly advises that immediate steps be taken to address this serious issue. It is having a negative impact on morale. Among the steps the University may want to consider are the following:

- the Board of Trustees do systematic academic program review with an objective of cost-benefit and communicate to all the results of such reviews the purposes of the \$2.6 million Title III grant proposal be widely shared, especially the section dealing with the proposed honors college and its potential positive effect on retention.
- an examination of effective one-stop student service centers with consideration given to the establishment of one at CSU.

Student Services

The team found significant evidence that the formulation of the Student Services Division at Chicago State University in 1998 was an inclusive process, spearheaded by strategic planning, which led to the creation of a division that included many traditional Student Affairs areas. These areas provide a vast array of services to an underserved population. The main purpose of these units appears to be the provision of services that contribute to the academic, personal, and career success of CSU students. Student success is evaluated through the assessment process utilized by these units. Given the five-year development of this division and the financial constraints of the institution, this area is fulfilling its mission.

The units do face a number of challenges in order to improve. Lack of reporting lines to the Associate Vice President impacts the opportunity to obtain desired results of Student Development Coordinating Committee. Staffing levels are also problematic for some of the units including the Women’s Resource Center and the Abilities Office. Campus life activities need better coordination, marketing, and implementation.

Residence Life also faces some challenges in staffing levels and in the timeliness of completing maintenance requests. From an enrollment management perspective, in order

to more effectively manage the enrollment of students living on campus, the following must be addressed:

1. Why are the halls not filled to capacity?
2. What is the impact of deferred and present maintenance issues?
3. What resources are needed for residence hall programming? Source? Must RA's use their personal resources for programming for which they are later reimbursed by the University?

Enrollment Management

The concept of enrollment management focuses on organizational activities that exert influence over student enrollments. Primary goals should be: to define the institutional characteristics, institutional marketing, create a mechanism that enables all relevant campus constituencies opportunity to participate in the creation of marketing plans and activities, strategic planning and decision making regarding the role and the amount of financial aid for students, and to make commitments of resources for enrollment management purposes. Institutions want to engage in this process when there is a decline in the number of young people graduating from high school, increased competition for students, and declining enrollments. Enrollment management tools might include predictive modeling, programs and activities; outcomes based research regarding recruitment and retention, and the assessment of students' satisfaction with services and instruction.

At Chicago State University, enrollment management efforts are led by a loosely organized group that has representation from student and academic affairs. An Executive Director of Enrollment Management has chief responsibility for the Office of Admissions, and the Registrar convenes the group. The group appears to have little influence in the decision making process and no responsibility in resource allocation. The lack of the appropriate alignment of offices that constitute Enrollment Management group does not create positive synergy. Neither dotted lines nor direct lines appear in the organizational chart for the majority of offices that engage in this process. Collaboration in programming which might include the Office of Admissions Registrar, and the Office of Financial Aid appear to be meager to non-existent. These three offices need to be able to problem solve and create innovations for prospective and current students in a manner which impacts their level of satisfaction and impacts their enrollment at CSU. As was apparent in the findings of the Student Satisfaction Inventory and the Student Open Meeting, students do not feel that administration thinks their concerns are important, nor do they feel that their concerns are being addressed by the administration. During the Open Meeting, students expressed that they came to Chicago State because someone at CSU would care about them and attend to their needs. While 2001 Campus Climate survey results from students are positive, most students in the open meeting verbally reported that what they wanted did not align with their experience.

Human Resources

The division of labor at CSU is well defined as employees are represented by six unions, civil service employees, and a group consisting of director level and higher. Union 4100 – the faculty bargaining unit – has not finalized their contract.

Seemingly, there are some sticking points related to salary and negotiating style that are unresolved.

There appear to be staffing concerns within Human Resources. Whether that is insufficient staff or training of current staff, it was difficult to discern. One area of concern is how searches are completed. Much seems left to the good will of the hiring supervisor. In addition, there does not appear to be a formal program for professional development for staff. Nor does CSU staff seem to have a voice in the decision making process. HR is an area that needs to use greater assessment tools. Moreover, the Team recommends an office review by external reviewers to assess problem areas and quality of service to the University community.

Image

Some of the faculty, staff and students of the university appear to think of themselves and the institution as “second rate.” The current president is countering that perception with a number of initiatives, including program accreditation, faculty scholarship and increased admissions requirements. The institution should continue to focus on initiatives that encourage pride in the institution and its faculty, staff and students.

Weekend College and Honors Program

The institution has requested advice about starting a weekend college and an honors program. The Team views these initiatives as consistent with the mission of the institution and would likely meet the needs of current students as well as attract new students. The weekend program in particular, might help ease some of the space allocation difficulties that CSU now faces. The institution should be aware, though, that many students who attend a weekend college will not take all of their classes on the weekend; at times during their education, they will find that evening or online classes are more convenient.

Critical to the honors program will be issues of residence life. If the institution expects to attract top quality students from outside the region, campus life will become more important for these students. Issues of residence hall programming and maintenance may play a factor in the retention of these students.

Distance Education

Although the institution has accomplished much relative to the development of student learning outcomes assessment for most of their academic programs, insufficient work has been done relative to distance education courses. The University should focus immediate

attention on developing program and course level assessment measures for distance education courses. Furthermore, the institution should develop and implement standardized student evaluation of instruction for distance education and distributed learning courses. Increased opportunities for faculty professional development in instructional design and technology considerations in distributed courses is also suggested.

General Advancement Suggestions:

While faculty maintain high standards and are encouraged to engage in scholarship, adequate funding should be developed to support quality teaching. As an example, the Health, Physical Education and Recreation department indicated no money for replacement of equipment or for professional development. This may be reflected in other areas, such as science and technology, which was cited in the 1993 NCA report as needing improved facilities, but is not in a master plan for a new building until 2020.

The new Library requires support enhanced library collections beyond Internet resources, especially to support graduate needs.

Despite isolated examples of grants, funding for both undergraduate and graduate programs has not shown significant change over the past ten years to support student or faculty scholarship or research.

The demand for “aggressive recruiting” is circumscribed by the time limitations of faculty who support this process. This is a particular need in reaching out to the population in the region who are “first generation” to enter college.

The College of Education cites “labor intensive processes” to maintain student records, which could be resolved through implementation of technology-based data management systems.

Although there are minutes of regular meetings and appropriate reports submitted to federal agencies, IACUC policies and procedures are not available on the website or in printed format. It would assist researchers and students to understand federal guidelines and policies if the University’s internalization of federal guidelines and policies were readily available on the web and in printed format.

The sciences have a long history of research activity and dedication to student success. However, as the infrastructure has aged and economic limitations have been imposed by the State’s budgetary climate, laboratory and equipment upgrades have not kept pace with the needs of the departments or faculty. The 1993 NCA report indicates that the science building was not designed for research, thus the laboratories were retrofitted prep rooms or recycled instructional lab rooms. Continued attention should be given to this area and identification of grants earmarked for improvement of laboratories may be helpful.

The Graduate College would benefit from the effort of the Graduate Council and Dean to review and update the criteria used for appointment to graduate faculty status. One of the underpinnings of graduate education is creative and prepared graduate faculty. Regular review of the criteria will assure that Chicago State University maintains an appropriate faculty complement. The Graduate Catalog should include which faculty have graduate faculty status, something vital to recognizing the accomplishments of graduate faculty.

CSU science programs would benefit from evaluation of laboratory and classroom resources including space and equipment. Adequate physical resources will encourage faculty and student continued development in the sciences.

Evaluation of the use of evening and weekend hours would benefit those disciplines that report a shortage of classroom and laboratory spaces. This evaluation is necessary if expanded offerings are to be considered.

Care must be given to not losing sight of the accomplishments of this University in meeting the developmental needs of its service population. Certainly great service and achievements have been leveraged by this commitment.

III. RECOGNITION OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS, PROGRESS, AND/OR PRACTICES

Chicago State University plays a major and unique role among the public universities in Illinois. It provides notable service to its largely underserved minority students and to the economically challenged area population. The NCA Team recognizes and commends CSU on the following partial list of notable Achievements:

1. The significant number of minority students served (82.5% of its students are African American and 6% are Hispanic American) and the significant number of minority student graduates-the highest percentage of African Americans in the United States except for six historically Black institutions.
2. The variety of unique programs which address the needs of the student population such as the Minority Biomedical Research Program funded by NIH which has resulted in over 250 minority students graduating in the sciences; the Business Enterprise Program which leads to certification for minority business leaders, and the Hispanic Future Professionals Academy which is designed to increase the number of Hispanic high school graduates and provide transition mechanisms to higher education.
3. The significant external financial resource initiatives such as grant generation which has increased income from \$17.8 million to \$22.9 million from 1998-2002; the planned capital campaign to raise \$10 million for endowment, and the recent increases in annual giving and endowment.
4. The development and integration of a major university-wide planning process from which has emerged thematic priorities under-girding resource allocation and reallocation and institutional initiatives on campus.

5. The development of a well-organized assessment plan for each academic unit of the university that appropriately measures student learning outcomes. The units have used the assessment results to make modifications in their curriculum. Other university divisions have also taken the assessment process seriously and used the self-study process and ongoing assessment to improve their services to students and staff. In many disciplines the institution has achieved Level III assessment implementation.
6. The success of CSU graduates clearly reflecting the institution's commitment to and the fulfillment of its historical mission. Increased academic standards and innovative academic programming, particularly noted in the College of Business and in the university's graduate education programming, and a strong institutional value on effective teaching have resulted in increased student interest in attending CSU.
7. The major commitment to the technology infrastructure of the institution, which has resulted in a greatly enhanced ability to provide reliable administrative and academic computing support. The leadership of the university computing and information technology division is dedicated to their role as service providers to the campus.