

IV. ADVICE AND SUGGESTIONS FOR INSTITUTIONAL IMPROVEMENT

The team offers the following advice that may prove helpful to the university as it moves into an important new phase with the transition to a new president and a new century. These suggestions are advisory only. They derive from observations, experiences, and the discussions of the team members; in several instances they simply encourage the vigorous continuation of initiatives already being pursued. In each case they are offered to assist an exemplary institution that has accomplished much during the past decade. In no case is there any contingency with respect to reaccreditation.

1. The team strongly encourages the university to initiate a strategic planning process as the new president assumes the helm. The team has in mind a process that brings important leaders within the university community together, perhaps initially in a well planned retreat, to discuss directions, needs, particular purposes, and priorities with the end in mind of ultimately developing a guide and plan that would have horsepower and would enjoy the broad commitment in the university's everyday life. Particular issues to be addressed, in addition to concerns expressed below, might range from areas in which the university will excel and the appropriate balance between centralization and decentralization in the organization and authority within the institution to flexibility in faculty roles and rewards, funding priorities and requirements, communication among internal and with external constituencies, and the appropriate role and support of the Liberal Arts in an institution with uncommon strengths and investments in the areas of engineering, science, and technology.

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2. The team encourages the university to continue to endeavor to make the budgetary process increasingly transparent through sharing information about and seeking comment on sources of funds and funding priorities and allocations.

3. The team encourages the university to commence preparations for launching a major development campaign with a goal no less lofty than the most lofty of other major public institutions that would require the institution to stretch and with a process that should be driven by clearly formulated academic priorities and guided through a centrally coordinated effort.

4. The team suggests that the university develop an institutionalized process which over time would provide an enhanced reservoir of funds for selective investment in areas of high priority under the leadership of Academic Affairs. This would assist the university in achieving versatility and nimbleness in defining and aggressively pursuing new academic priorities as the world of learning changes over time.

5. The team encourages the university to continue its commitment to sustained investment in its research infrastructure.

6. The team encourages the university to continue to refine its plans for investment in faculty development.

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7. The team encourages the university to explore and develop joint ventures with other institutions, both non-profit and for-profit, in the commercialization of technology with a commitment to contributing to the public welfare, to student training and learning, and to generating revenue for investment in the university's priority areas.

8. The team encourages the university to continue its commitment to enhancing the diversity of the university community in its various dimensions as well as levels of leadership, to include gender equity.

9. The team suggests that the university consider incorporating provision for library acquisition funds in start-up packages, particularly in the Liberal Arts where library holdings in particular areas of faculty recruitment may be particularly deficient.

10. The team suggests that the university move to greater centralization in the management of information technology and attendant facilities and requirements, including the recruitment of a world-class chief information officer.

11. The team suggests that the university give serious consideration to elevating the level of tuition and fees given the requirements for providing outstanding educational programs in an increasingly competitive national environment.

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12. The team encourages the university to maintain its many areas of strength and successfully attend the concerns as expressed in the next and last section of the report.