Report to the
Faculty, Administration, Trustees, Students
of
State University of New York College at Oneonta
Ravine Parkway
Oneonta, New York 13820-4015

by
An Evaluation Team representing the
Middle States Commission on Higher Education

Prepared after study of the institution’s self-study report
and a visit to the campus on March 17 – 20, 2013

The Members of the Team:

James Muyskens, Chair  President, Queens College of the City University of New York, 65-30 Kissena Boulevard, Flushing, NY 11367. E-mail: james.muyskens@qc.cuny.edu. Phone: 718-997-5550.

Scott R. Anderson  Associate Professor; Information Systems Librarian, Millersville University of Pennsylvania, Ganser Library, P.O. Box 1002, Millersville, PA 17551-0302. E-mail: scott.anderson@millersville.edu. Phone: 717-871-2377.

Lisa Angeloni  Vice President for Enrollment Management, The College of New Jersey, 200 Pennington Road, P.O. Box 7718, Ewing, NJ 08628. E-mail: angeloni@tcnj.edu. Phone: 609-771-3289.

Mosen Auryan  Director of Assessment, Hunter College of the City University of New York, 695 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10021. E-mail: mauryan@hunter.cuny.edu. Phone: 212-396-6299.
Marion Hughes  
Assistant Professor of Sociology, Towson University, Department of Sociology, Anthropology & Criminal Justice, 8000 York Road, Towson, MD 21251. E-mail: mhughes@towson.edu. Phone: 410-704-2930.

Claudine Keenan  
Dean, School of Education, The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey, 101 Vera King Farris Drive, Galloway, NY 08205-9441. E-mail: Claudine.keenan@stockton.edu. Phone: 609-526-3593.

Barbara G. Lyman  
Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania, 1871 Old Main Drive, Shippensburg, PA 17257-2299. E-mail: bglyman@ship.edu. Phone: 717-477-1371.

Greig W. Mitchell  
Former Vice President for Finance and Administration, Salisbury University, MD. Mailing Address: 4835 Goose Creek Drive, Salisbury, MD 21805. E-mail: greig.mitchell@comcast.net. Phone: 410-912-0691.

Patricia Pierce Ramsey  
Professor and Chair, Department of Natural Sciences, Bowie State University, Bowie, MD. Mailing Address: 111Stan Fey Drive, Upper Marlboro, MD 20774. E-mail: pramsey@bowiestate.edu. Phone: 301-860-3334.

Working with the Team, Representing the State University of New York

Linnea LePresti  
Assistant Provost, Office of Academic Affairs, State University of New York, SUNY Plaza, Albany, NY 12246. E-mail: linnea.lopresti@suny.edu. Phone: 518-320-1452.

This report represents the views of the evaluation team as interpreted by the Chair, and is being sent directly to the institution before being considered by the Commission.

It is a confidential document prepared as an educational service for the benefit of the institution. All comments in the report are made in good faith, in an effort to assist SUNY Oneonta. This report is based solely on an educational evaluation of the institution and of the manner in which it appears to be carrying out its educational objectives.
AT THE TIME OF THE VISIT

President/CEO:
Dr. Nancy Kleniewski

Chief Academic Officer:
Dr. E. Maria Thompson
Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs

System Chief Executive Officer:
Dr. Nancy L. Zimpher
Chancellor
State University Plaza
Albany, NY 12246
Phone: 518-320-1355
E-mail: Nancy.Zimpher@SUNY.edu
Context and Nature of the Visit

Institutional Overview and Scope of the Institution

The State University of New York College at Oneonta (SUNY Oneonta) was founded in 1889 and joined the State University of New York (SUNY) in 1948 as a charter member. Today the College is one of sixty-four SUNY campuses and one of thirteen comprehensive colleges within the SUNY system. The college serves around 5900 undergraduate students and around 200 graduate students, offering seventy undergraduate and nine graduate/post-baccalaureate programs through 24 academic departments. In Fall 2012, SUNY Oneonta had 259 full-time and 234 part-time faculty members.

The College’s main campus is located in the City of Oneonta in a geographic area at least 60 miles from the larger cities of Albany, Binghamton and Utica. Hence, with 1,100 faculty and staff, the College is a major employer in the area. The College was recognized by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching in 2010 for its service to the area and was awarded its Community Engagement Classification.

In addition to its main campus, the College maintains several programs in Cooperstown: the Cooperstown Graduate Program in History Museum Studies and the Biological Field Station. The College has ventured into Distance Education primarily with two online programs: a Master’s Degree in Educational Technology and a Master’s Degree in Dietetics.

The Self-Study Report and Process

The SUNY Oneonta Self-Study Report that the Evaluation Team received prior to its visit provided the team with a well-crafted, precisely written guide to the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges facing the College. The Self-Study was created over a period of over two years, allowing for participation by disparate groups and individuals across the campus. The processes by which the document was developed were transparent and consultative.
The College chose the comprehensive model for its Self-Study, enabling it to analyze all programs and services while also taking a more in-depth look at three areas critical to the College’s mission and to its future: Teaching, Learning and Scholarship; Engagement; and Shared Stewardship. The resultant document is a useful guide to institutional planning and action in the coming years.

The Self-Study benefits from two presidential initiatives. In President Nancy Kleniewski’s first year (2009), she worked with the College Senate to create a college-wide Analysis and Action Plan for Planning and Assessment. This plan has been a catalyst for assessment at the institutional level and within academic departments and administrative units. President Kleniewski also initiated a Strategic Planning process that provided direction and priorities through 2015. Subsequent to this, she also established the Budget Advisory Committee, bringing faculty, staff and administrators together to provide advice and help to assure that the budgetary process advances the College’s Strategic Plan.

**Affirmation of Continued Compliance with Requirements of Affiliation**

SUNY Oneonta was initially accredited on January 1, 1949 as a State Teachers College. Accreditation was reaffirmed in 1952 when SUNY was formed. Since that time, the College has been subject to periodic accreditation evaluations and has had its accreditation confirmed each time. In June, 2003, the institution was commended in the reaccrediting process for the quality of the self-study report. Ten years later, they are once again to be commended for an excellent, comprehensive and clearly written report.

The decennial reaffirmation of accreditation by MSCHE in 2003 resulted in the visiting team making no formal recommendations. However, the report included several suggestions, including implementing strategies that will attract and retain a more diverse study body and providing additional support for assessment and planning.

In 2007, notice was acknowledged that the college sought the substantive change to support the on-line distance education Master of Science degree program in Nutrition and Dietetics. In 2012, notice was acknowledged that the College sought the substantive change to support an additional location at Springbrook, 2705 State Highway 28, Oneonta, New York.

Based on our review of the documents provided and certification by the institution (a copy of the MSCHE Certification Statement is included in the Self-Study), the team affirms that the College continues to meet the requirements of affiliation in *Characteristics of Excellence*. 
Compliance with Federal Requirements; Issues Relative to State Regulatory or Other Accrediting Agency Requirements

Based on our review of the self-study that includes the MSCHE Certification Statement of Compliance with federal Title IV requirements, the team affirms that the College is in compliance.

Evaluation Overview

SUNY Oneonta faces many of the same challenges of other public institutions of higher education. Across the country including New York State, support for higher education has fallen. Specifically, the College has experienced a decline in the proportion of its budget derived from state tax support from 20% in 2008 to the present 12% of the all funds budget. Over the past several years, the College has reached a balanced budget through increasing revenue and carefully managing its reserves. Strong fiscal management will be required going forward. The Evaluation Team believes that the necessary personnel and components are in place and urges continuing to implement the StAR Resource Allocation Model.

Tuition and other costs of an education have risen. While the SUNY Compact to raise tuition each year for the next several years is crucial for the College’s bottom line, these increases put additional strain on the pocketbooks of students and their families. The Evaluation Team is encouraged by the success of the Development Office in raising private funds to help financially needy students as well as funding for academic programs, student services, and the college endowment.

The number of traditional students in the high school pipeline is shrinking. Graduate enrollments are dropping. This means that the College will need to consider how to increase total headcount by reaching beyond the traditional undergraduate population. The Evaluation Team urges the College to develop a cohesive enrollment plan that carefully analyzes all potential undergraduate, graduate, and international enrollment streams. To be successful in this effort, the College will need to sharpen its sense of identity and develop a clearly understood and recognized “brand” that is embraced by faculty, students, staff and administration.

Students entering college today learn in ways that differ from the past, due to technological advances like the World Wide Web and the smart phone. The on-going work on General Education and the faculty’s enduring tradition of excellence in teaching provide a strong foundation for meeting these challenges and staying abreast of the new, exciting ways by which technology can enrich the learning experience.
The Evaluation Committee commends the College for the design of a highly coherent approach to planning that begins with a clearly articulated and strikingly succinct mission statement. The College’s strategic plan with its six broad goals called “Pillars” offers a clear blueprint for the next several years. Action plans have been developed to implement the plan and to provide performance indicators to be used in tracking overall advances for each of the six pillars. We commend the College administration for its commitment to openness, transparency and collaborative deliberation in working with the various task forces contributing to the effort and for its success in building a re-energized, collaborative senior team. We commend the College for its investment and energy expended in developing institutional assessment protocols and processes – all contributing over time to the creation of a culture of assessment.

The Evaluation Team is encouraged by the renewed focus on the academic side of the house, allowing for greater opportunities for faculty development and strategic hiring. The opportunity to build and strengthen the academic units has been made possible by the thoughtful planning and frugal budgeting that garnered resources that could be made available for redirection.

The Evaluation Committee heartily endorses as institutional “to do’s” the recommendations included in the self study report [summarized on pp. 96-97 of the report]. We commend the College for its commitment to move forward with the self-imposed “to do’s.”

**Compliance with Accreditation Standards**

SUNY Oneonta meets all fourteen standards.

**Planning and Resource Allocation (Standards 1, 2 and 3)**

SUNY Oneonta has articulated a mission, vision and goals that define its purpose. They have developed strategies for assessing progress in meeting these goals. They have established clear policies and procedures to link planning, assessment and budgeting.

**Standard 1: MISSION AND GOALS**

- The institution’s mission clearly defines its purpose within the context of higher education and indicates who the institution serves and what it intends to accomplish.
- The institution’s stated goals, consistent with the aspirations and expectations of higher education, clearly specify how the institution will fulfill its mission.
- The mission and goals are developed and recognized by the institution with the participation of its members and its governing body and are used to develop and shape its programs and practices and to evaluate its effectiveness.
Summary of Evidence and Findings:

- The institution has a clearly articulated and strikingly succinct statement of its mission: “The SUNY College at Oneonta unites excellence in teaching, scholarship, civic engagement, and stewardship to create a student-centered learning community.” This distinctive mission statement was adopted in 2010 and is accompanied by both a statement of values and a set of six broad institutional goals called “Pillars.”

- The mission statement, asserted values, and overarching goals were developed by The Strategic Planning and Resource Council (SPARC) launched in 2009 by the President. Of three task forces associated with SPARC, it was the Governing Ideas Task Force (GITF) that was charged to develop new statements of mission, values, and goals. The Institutional Distinctiveness Task Force (IDTF) of SPARC was charged to establish standards and processes for identifying the institution’s particular programs and services that distinguish it from peers with a similar mission. Lastly, the Organizational Structures Task Force (OSTF) was charged to examine existing functions and structures and recommend adjustments designed to increase organizational efficiencies and effectiveness.

- The development of the institution’s mission, values, and goal statements was a highly inclusive, engaging, and transparent process. SPARC comprised representatives of faculty, staff, students, alumni and community and the council and its task forces worked assiduously to engage all major constituent groups in the articulation of the mission, values, and goals that would guide the implementation of the objectives and activities of the strategic plan. The College Senate gave final approval to the resulting product, “Mission, Vision, Strategic Plan 2010,” in April 2010 (See http://www.oneonta.edu/sparc/SPARCstructure.asp).

- Documentation of highly inclusive, thoughtfully designed, and sustained planning processes arising from the institution’s mission and goals abounds on the SPARC website which includes materials delineating membership and charges, structure and timelines, task forces, correspondence, and various related documents.

- The evidence indicates that the work of SPARC and its three task forces led to a distinctive mission statement, the articulation of clear values to guide priorities, and six overarching institutional goals that stem from the institution’s mission and that indicate how the college will fulfill its mission and act on its values. The institution’s goals, while alluding to how progress will be measured, are nevertheless sufficiently broadly stated that they allow the institution the flexibility of making mid-course adjustments as may be necessitated by changing internal and external challenges and opportunities.

- The mission and goals guide the constituents of the institution in making decisions related to planning, resources, academic and support program development, and articulation of related outcomes. Clear evidence of adherence to mission and goals can be seen in the Strategic Allocation of Resources (StAR) model and the associated Strategic Plan Funding Distributions for fiscal years 2010-2011, 2011-2012, and 2012-2013. Documents related to both show intentional linkages to the mission and goals.

- Through the vehicles of APAC and IAC, the College units’ respective efforts to implement the strategic plan are systematically assessed. The work of both groups reflects alignment with the mission and goals of the institution.
Significant Accomplishments, Significant Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices:

- The institution is to be commended for its design of a highly coherent approach to planning which begins with a clearly articulated and strikingly succinct statement of its mission.

Suggestions:

- It must be noted that the 2010-2015 Strategic Plan is in its first iteration under the leadership of the current president and her leadership team and it is not clear from the evidence that conscious attention to the six institutional goals or “Pillars” yet permeates the institution and, in particular, typically guides all major activities related to planning, academic and support program development, budget, and assessment. For instance, the operating budgets of academic departments have recently been increased by over 50 percent. While these increases were not tied to departmental outcomes linked to the six “Pillars,” the rational allocation formula can be linked in the future to the StAR model to incent strategic change. Thus, a suggestion to the institution is to seek and exploit all available opportunities to align planning, budgeting, implementation, and assessment with the mission statement, asserted values, and overarching goals or “Pillars” of the strategic plan.

Standard 2: PLANNING, RESOURCE ALLOCATION AND INSTITUTIONAL RENEWAL

- An institution conducts ongoing planning and resource allocation based on its mission and goals, develops objectives to achieve them, and utilizes the results of its assessment activities for institutional renewal.
- Implementation and subsequent evaluation of the success of the strategic plan and resource allocation support the development and change necessary to improve and to maintain institutional quality.

Summary of Evidence and Findings

- From SPARC to SPC to StAR, SP2010 contains clear institution-wide goals and objectives that are linked to mission and goal achievement, and are used for planning and resource allocation at the institutional level. The IAC has aligned its annual reporting and improvement planning processes to the strategic plan pillars.
- Although the consultative process may not have been as inclusive or transparent as some constituency groups would have liked, the processes for planning and improvement have been clearly communicated, provide for constituent participation and have begun to include the use of institutional assessment results as a means to monitor performance.
At the top-most level, decision-making processes and authority for planning and renewal are well-defined and transparent. A new StAR allocation process has been well-communicated via in-person presentations and several postings on the College web site. The Budget Advisory Committee has also accomplished a transparent framework for making recommendations to the operational allocations process, in keeping with effective instructional planning goals.

The institution has implemented a framework for assigning responsibility for improvements and accountability, and at the top-most levels (President’s Cabinet) implementation of this framework has been documented for one complete cycle of annual reporting (2011-2012) and another cycle is underway (2012-13).

Recent SUNY-Faculty-Senate endorsed changes to the periodic Program Review process and reporting template have been inaccurately attributed to administration by a minority of faculty members.

The records of institutional improvement at the top-most levels are documented in the Performance Indicators and the two annual reports to the Cabinet that are also posted to the SP2010 web page.

While periodic assessment of these processes currently takes place alongside annual updates to the performance indicators, there is little documented evidence of how the College has changed the process itself. Interviews confirm that the previous processes for planning, allocation and renewal were not at all transparent and not clearly aligned with institutional priorities; however, there is no “sunset” of the previous plan.

SP2015 will begin next year, which should be undertaken simultaneously with a clear analysis of what the College has learned about the effectiveness of the SP2010 processes.

**Significant Accomplishments, Significant Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices:**

- Documentation of top-level framework, update reports and performance indicators is clear, transparent, readily-accessible and easily understood.
- Progressing from a seasoned senior leadership cabinet of independently-minded individuals to a newly re-energized, collaborative team is commendable. Ongoing success in this regard will further strengthen the next level of implementation by School and Program in Academic Affairs. Administrative support units have already implemented a full assessment and planning cycle.

**Suggestions:**

- To continue integrating strategic planning into every level of the organization, particularly into the academic programs, the College should consider devoting more
time to build cross-coalitions among planning teams for improved communication. Department chairs can only begin to value the processes for strategic planning if it becomes a part of their existing responsibilities. Communication improvements must also go beyond simple messaging and substantively streamline the workload of academic leadership.

- Planning conversations can and should happen in multiple forums and settings: mini-sessions at Senate, School and Department meetings can go a long way to filling in communication gaps and obtaining front-line feedback from those stakeholders who haven’t made the time to embrace the strategic plan on their own. Taking it to each group will improve trust and confidence as well.
- For optimum results in continuous improvement, assessment and planning must be integrally linked so that out of every assessment activity and/or conversation, stakeholders move to incorporate their results into actionable change. Moreover, those who implement change must also document their rationale for decision-making and share it broadly with any entity that may be impacted by the change.

**Standard 3: INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES**

- The human, financial, technical, facilities, and other resources necessary to achieve an institution’s mission and goals are available and accessible.
- In the context of the institution’s mission, the effective and efficient uses of the institution’s resources are analyzed as part of ongoing outcomes assessment.

**Summary of Evidence and Findings:**

- SUNY Oneonta, as a constituent institution of the State University of New York has consistently had and presently has sufficient resources in all categories to meet and achieve its mission in an excellent manner. Its FY 12-13 annual All Funds Budget including auxiliaries of $106.7 million adequately supports its 5,800 full-time students and 250-acre main campus. The three largest sources of revenue supporting this are campus tuition and related revenue (32%), dorm rents (29%), and state tax support (12%). Both state tax support and tuition rates are determined by SUNY and the State of New York.
- Oneonta’s Core Operating Budget which excludes auxiliaries is $46.4 million FY 12-13. State tax support provides 27.9% of this with 72.1% from campus tuition and other revenue. This excludes employee benefits which are centrally budgeted and directly state funded.
- Consistent with public higher education industry trends the College has experienced a decline in the proportion of its budget derived from state tax support from 20% in 2008 to the present 12% of the all funds budget. The decline was off-set in part by increases
in tuition and other campus revenue. The college estimates that it realized a cumulative budget shortfall of $9.8 million over this period absorbed by savings, increases in tuition and non-tuition revenue and, applications of campus reserves. This enabled the campus maintain a balanced budget, meet the required reserve requirement of 10-25% of state tax support, and continue strategic initiatives. Overhead assessments on income fund accounts and enrollment growth also supported this success.

- Effective financial planning requires a fair degree of predictability and consistency in major revenue sources. Since 2008 total funds available to the campus have grown slowly but consistently from $99.5 million to 106.7 million or 7.2%, averaging less than 1.5% annually. The greatest volatility was demonstrated in state tax support which declined by -32% (-6.4m) and tuition that increased by +28% (+7.5m). A legislative policy increasing tuition by $300 per year for five years went into effect for academic year 2011-12. This should result in a higher degree of predictability in this important revenue source but may also continue the trend toward a lesser proportion of state support.

- The institution routinely develops, publishes, and shares current and long term financial projections to guide deliberations and planning. This process is largely historically based, first funding on-going activities with adjustments for mandatory changes, and then identifying discretionary funds available for the funding of initiatives.

- The College’s programs are well supported by its 240-acre campus and 40 buildings. According to the Facilities Master Plan based upon SUNY space guidelines this building inventory includes sufficient classroom, laboratory, and faculty office space to support the projected modest enrollment growth. Accordingly, Oneonta has wisely chosen to place priority in its capital program on adaptation and renovation of academic facilities, campus sustainability, and aesthetics with some long-term new construction for student recreation and services. The capital program is currently supported by state bond funded capital projects totaling $14 million annually for critical maintenance and $66 million for major capital projects in Fitzelle Hall and Science II. Capital projects in student auxiliary and other similar revenue generating services are financed through university funded debt.

- The campus has a highly comprehensive maintenance and repair program consisting of routine, preventive, and work-order driven daily maintenance to sustain building quality. In addition, the facilities department undertakes department funded minor projects such as office renovations on an as requested basis.
Significant Accomplishments, Significant Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices:

- Through prudent financial management the College came through the past five years of budget uncertainty and austerity with a balanced budget in each year and a savings fund of $2.5 million to invest in strategic initiatives.
- The College has implemented rational and consistent policies and procedures for determining the allocation of resources in support of strategic directions. The College is on a trajectory to fully integrate strategic, operational and divisional budgeting and resource allocation with planning and assessment.
- The 2010-2015 Strategic Plan with its six pillars, goals, objectives and assessment instruments serves as the foundation for college-wide strategic funding. Strategic funding initiatives are selected by the President’s Cabinet following broad consultation and input. In 2010 the process resulted in a funding commitment of $350,000 annually for two years with the goal of increasing the funding for strategic goals to $500,000 in subsequent years.
- A Vacancy Review Process is established to assure that all vacant positions are reviewed by the President’s Cabinet to assure they support the strategic plan.
- The President’s Cabinet developed and has begun implementation of the Strategic Allocation and Resource (StAR) model. This model includes the Strategic Planning Committee and a broadly representative Budget Advisory Committee that will review the budget independently and recommend an amount to be released for strategic spending. It also includes a campus-wide system for the submission by departments and divisions of funding proposals directly linked to the strategic plan. Proposals approved for funding will have built into them means for monitoring progress and assessing effectiveness.
- Operating budget allocations to academic departments are determined by a publicly disclosed formula based upon differential cost functions and credit hour production.
- Facilities are highly functional and well maintained and the campus is neat and attractive.
- The campus has conducted a carbon footprint analysis, developed a Climate Action Plan and identified sustainability as a pillar of the Strategic Plan.
- Technological resources are adequate and an effort is underway to improve efficiency and effectiveness in this area through consolidation of both administrative and academic services in a single administrative entity under a Chief Information Officer.
- The existence of adequate institutional controls is documented through successful comprehensive and special purpose audits as well as a structure for internal review.
- The efficiency and effectiveness of information technology services is being improved through consolidation of administrative and academic services in a single office under a Chief Information Officer.
Suggestions:

- Continue implementation and increase understanding of the StAR Resource Allocation Model to assure campus wide acceptance and support.
- Institute periodic assessment of baseline resources for both academic and administrative departments.
- Develop a more regular and comprehensive review of campus staffing levels by unit/department.
- Continue to consolidate and strengthen IT support to include developing policies and procedures to better coordinate the acquisition of systems and equipment across campus to assure adequacy, compatibility, and supportability.
- Incorporate productivity and cost effectiveness metrics in program reviews.

Leadership, Collaboration, and Institutional Integrity (Standards 4, 5 and 6)

Collaboration between administrative leadership and the faculty and governance bodies was a major theme in the evaluation. Our report makes a number of suggestions for enhancing the tradition of collaboration that we found on the campus.

Standard 4: LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

→ The institution’s system of governance clearly defines the roles of institutional constituencies in policy development and decision-making.
→ The governance structure includes an active governing body with sufficient autonomy to assure institutional integrity and to fulfill its responsibilities of policy and resource development, consistent with the mission of the institution.

Summary of Evidence and Findings:

- The overarching governance structure includes an active and autonomous governing body which oversees all 64 campuses of SUNY including the College at Oneonta as described in the SUNY document Policies of the Board of Trustees.
- There are governance structures in place such that all major institutional constituencies have vehicles for exercising defined roles in policy development and decision making. These include, external to the institution, not only the SUNY System Administration but also the State of New York. Internal to the institution, four governance groups contribute to policy and decision making, namely, the College Council, the President’s Cabinet, the College Senate, and the Student Association.
- Governance groups operate in an environment which includes collective bargaining units representing multiple classes of employees, including faculty, where the bargaining agreements articulate conditions of employment.
- The evidence indicates that each constituency has a vehicle for carrying out its separate but complementary role and processes are such that there is open and frequent communication among constituents.
• In fact, the current College senior administration is to be commended for the considerable openness, transparency, and collaborative deliberation that stakeholders repeatedly refer to as a hallmark of the college leadership.

• However, leadership and governance would be further strengthened if certain issues can be successfully addressed. For example, the restructuring of Academic Affairs from two to five divisions each with a separate dean is expected to enhance the timeliness of decision making while maintaining if not enhancing current levels of consultation and collaboration. With only two deans, there appear to be some structural bottlenecks causing delays in operations and decisions.

• It must be noted, nevertheless, that if as part of the restructuring each dean will not have an associate chief academic officer for each of the divisions, that this may well create a structural impediment to successful implementation of the restructuring. This aspect of the plan for restructuring bears rigorous reexamination and benchmarking, such as via CUPA-HR data or an AASCU survey on the matter.

_Significant Accomplishments, Significant Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices:_

• The current College senior administration is to be commended for the considerable openness, transparency, and collaborative deliberation that stakeholders repeatedly refer to as a hallmark of the college leadership.

_Suggestions:_

• As Academic Affairs is restructured from two divisions to five, the loss of the Associate Dean position bears reconsideration for how the academic units will achieve operational and strategic goals.

_Standard 5: ADMINISTRATION_

→ The institution’s administrative structure and services facilitate learning and research/scholarship, foster quality improvement, and support the institution’s organization and governance.

_Summary of Evidence and Findings:_

• SUNY Oneonta, a constituent institution of the State University of New York, is under the control and policy direction of the SUNY Board of Trustees and Chancellor as well as its own College Council. The President is appointed by the SUNY Trustees and is responsible for the administration of the college and appointment of its officers. Primary assistance to the President in her administrative duties is provided by the seven-member President’s Cabinet which includes the vice presidents representing each of the four major divisions as well the human resources officer, communications officer and presidential assistant. The President, appointed in 2008, is well-qualified as are all the institution’s officers. All are subject to a formal system of performance evaluation.
including self-evaluation, written performance programs, annual reports, divisional reports, and assessment plans. A formal published organization chart documents reporting relationships and areas of responsibility.

- Oneonta actively engages in a process to assess the effectiveness of the administrative structure. In 2009 the President appointed an Organizational Structure Task Force to study the organizational structure and make recommendations. This study led to decisions to create an Office of Institutional Research, establishment of a Graduate Studies Office, and the merging of academic and administrative information technology. Further, the Task Force study raised issues about the organizational structure of the Division of Academic Affairs in regard to the number of academic divisions and deans. These issues were addressed by the Provost in 2012 with the announcement that the number of academic divisions and deans would be increased from two to five and administrative support to the provost increased.

- The fully integrated planning, budgeting, and assessment system to which Oneonta aspires requires a mature and sophisticated information support system. Steps in the direction of establishing such a system were taken through the establishment of the Institutional Research office.

**Significant Accomplishments, Significant Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices:**

- The institution took the initiative to proactively review its administrative structure and to implement changes deemed appropriate.
- Performance indicators have been developed to track progress toward achievement of the six pillars of the strategic plan
- Operational and strategic objectives have been established throughout the administrative structure of the organization and as have formal assessment procedures.

**Suggestions:**

- Consider consolidating enrollment management functions into a single administrative entity to unify effort.

**Standard 6: Institutional Integrity**

*In the conduct of its programs and activities involving the public and the constituencies it serves, the institution demonstrates adherence to ethical standards and its own stated policies, providing support for academic and intellectual freedom.*

**Summary of Evidence and Findings:**

- SUNY campuses and their employees are subject to the Policies of the Board of Trustees as well as University-wide policies and procedures that have been established by the
Trustees and SUNY System Administration. Also, the College has clear sets of internal policies and procedures to guide its academic, administrative, and operational functions. Based on the University self-study document and other institutional documents such as the College Handbook, the institution demonstrates adherence to ethical standards and its own stated policies, providing support for academic and intellectual freedom. However, based on interviews with key constituent groups of the institution, it appears that the processes for implementation of these policies may not be consistently implemented.

**Significant Accomplishments, Significant Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices:**
The Education Trust singled out SUNY Oneonta for its success in improving graduation rates among Hispanic students, ranking the College No. 11 on a listing of public institutions showing the largest gains from 2004 to 2010 (i.e., 38.9% to 60.8%).

**Suggestions:**
- Consistently implement policies across the institution
- Complete the work of the PCOD on determination of an appropriate structure and staffing for the College’s approach to diversity and inclusion.
- Update the existing webpage for the Office of Equity and Inclusion to reflect the current status of that office.

**Student Recruitment and Retention (Standards 8 and 9)**

SUNY Oneonta has improved its student profile of admitted students and increased student engagement. It faces a challenge of numbers going forward.

**Standard 8: STUDENT ADMISSIONS AND RETENTION**
→ The institution clearly seeks to admit students whose interests, goals, and abilities are congruent with its mission and seeks to retain them through the pursuit of the students’ educational goals.

**Summary of Evidence and Findings:**
- For over a decade, SUNY-Oneonta has intentionally sought enrollment stability and has committed institutional resources to improve the student profile of admitted students and to increase student engagement, success, and retention to graduation.
- SUNY-Oneonta has experienced increases in demand for admission, which has allowed the College to increase selectivity and the academic quality of the students. The improved academic profile of its applicants and enrolled students has resulted in improved student retention and graduation rates: first-year 2011 retention at 84.2%, four-year graduation at 50%, and six-year graduation at 64%.
• Student diversity is a priority on-campus and has the attention from the President and a strong presence in the strategic plan. SUNY Oneonta has a small Black (3%) and Asian population (1%). Yet the number of underrepresented students has increased on-campus due to the significant increase in the Hispanic/Latino enroll over the past decade. SUNY Oneonta’s overall AALANA inquiries increased by 13% during the 2012 admissions cycle.
• Admissions policies and criteria are available to assist prospective students in making informed decisions. Prospective students receive information through a variety of methods, such as website pages, view books, publications, recruitment events, and letters and communication from academic departments. SUNY Oneonta is identifying strategic methods to communicate with students using social media.
• The population of enrolled students from economically and educationally disadvantaged backgrounds who are not eligible for general admission and are admitted through the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) represents approximately 3% of undergraduates. SUNY-Oneonta provides a comprehensive program of support through the EOP which allows these students to succeed at a good rate.
• The Financial Aid Office oversees all aspects of the College’s need-based student financial aid programs, including loans, grants, and work-study and is responsible for ensuring institutional compliance with relevant mandates. The Financial Aid Office works in harmony with the Director of Admissions and collaborative work is done in the distribution of merit scholarships.

Significant Accomplishments, Significant Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices:
• SUNY Oneonta should be commended on its outstanding effort in the retention of its student athletes. First to second year athletes are retained at 92% in comparison to the general cohort at 84.2%. The athletic/faculty liaison model coupled with the faculty mentorship team should be a model that is duplicated across campus with varying cohorts.

Suggestions:
• It is clear based on multiple discussions that the branding of SUNY Oneonta is an area that needs to be addressed institutionally. Having a concise brand identity that is embraced by faculty and staff is an important element in building a cohesive understanding of the institution. This cohesive understanding will aid SUNY Oneonta in building a strong sense of community and assist in the recruitment, yield and retention of students. Having a well-recognized and admired brand or identity is essential to the success of the College’s plans to increase enrollment and to move to the next level of excellence.
• With the exception of Undergraduate Admissions, all enrollment revenue streams to SUNY Oneonta have declined over the past five years. With the projected decline in NY State high school graduates, the College needs to consider how to increase total
headcount without relying primarily on the traditional undergraduate population. As we all know, enrollment management is a complicated matter. Success in enrollment management is essential to the financial wellbeing of the College. The College could benefit by hiring/promoting a Cabinet level professional who focuses on total institutional enrollment. A cohesive enrollment plan that incorporates undergraduate, graduate, international and all enrollment streams would help the College develop aspirational yet real enrollment projections and calculate the net revenue that could be generated. The person in the position should be charged with all areas that support the retention of students and would benefit from managing the Office of Financial Aid and Records and Registration. A close working relationship with the Provost’s Office is essential in helping to develop an enrollment management plan.

- Enrollment and enrollment projections by academic major should be designed and reviewed for “right sizing” academic units. Currently admissions produces a class to which the academic and support units must respond, making it extremely difficult to have the right number of seats available in popular and high demand courses and majors. Replacing reactive planning with proactive planning would reduce this uncertainty for all concerned and help students move toward graduation in a timely manner.

- Develop a SUNY Oneonta peer/aspirant list that is widely distributed throughout campus and used for benchmarking and assessment purposes.

Standard 9: STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

→ The institution provides student support services reasonably necessary to enable each student to achieve the institution’s goals for students.

Summary of Evidence and Findings:

- SUNY Oneonta provides a comprehensive program of student support services appropriate to student abilities and needs that is reflective of the College’s mission and consistent with student learning expectations.

- Academic Advising generally takes place in the academic departments after students declare a major. The Academic Advising Center provides essential transition and advising services for new students and transfers. Students at SUNY Oneonta discussed their satisfaction with the advising center and in particular with the Director. In conjunction with Residential Community Life, the Center selects and supervises 15 Academic Team Members (ATMs). These students provide peer academic support within the residence halls.

- The academic performance of student-athletes is impressive with first to second year retention of freshmen exceeding the general cohort (92%). SUNY Oneonta prides itself
in developing exemplary scholar athletes and has worked to develop effective programming to sustain strong retention rates.

- Assessment of student success and student services is extensive, beginning with new student orientation and continuing through and after graduation. Surveys include:
  - New Student Orientation Survey
  - New Student Six-Week Survey
  - SUNY Student Opinion Survey (SOS)
  - National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)
  - Campus Climate Survey
  - Customer Service Surveys administered by individual student services areas

As noted in Oneonta’s self-study, survey results have improved, in some cases dramatically. For example, the 2012 SUNY Student Opinion Survey showed Oneonta to be a clear leader in student satisfaction rankings among all thirteen comprehensive SUNY colleges, ranking first of 13 in 103 areas surveyed and in the top three in 38 of 103 areas.

- Students voiced their satisfaction with the Career Development office and expressed that the Center has a strong visible presence on campus. During the 2011-2012 academic year, an Internship Coordinator was created.

- Student Development units have done a good deal of assessment and have revised their practices based on their assessment of student learning outcomes. Although at differing levels of sophistication, each area within student development completed some type of student assessment document.

- The Center for Multicultural Experiences has worked hard to promote an intellectually challenging multicultural environment for all members of the campus community. During the 2011-2012 academic year, the Center developed a significant number of social and academic events that celebrate knowledge and understanding of individuals and diverse groups.

Suggestions:

- SUNY Oneonta should develop a student ad-hoc group to discuss institutional needs as it relates to Student Health and Counseling Services. Students at SUNY Oneonta do not feel confident in current services offered through these venues.

- If SUNY Oneonta’s stated goal is to recruit and enroll 50 international students per year beginning in 2014, additional attention needs to be made with regards to support for International Students.

Faculty and Academic Programs (Standards 10, 11 and 12)

The Evaluation Team is pleased that the College is able to shift more resources to the academic area. This will help to reach the goals of the strategic plan to offer greater development opportunities to faculty and to strategically hire additional full-time tenure track faculty. This
will also reinforce the strong commitment of the faculty to develop curricula that can be shown to optimize student learning.

**Standard 10: Faculty**

The institution’s instructional, research, and service programs are devised, developed, monitored, and supported by qualified professionals.

**Summary of Evidence and Findings:**

Based on the University self-study document, other institutional documents and interviews with the faculty

- SUNY Oneonta considers the quality of its academic programs to be a distinguishing feature of the institution and strives to maintain high standards for them and the institution’s instructional, research, and service programs are devised, developed, monitored, and supported by qualified professionals. Although evaluation of full time faculty occurs, it is not applied consistently across all departments. This inconsistency is coupled with inconsistency in application of the tenure and promotion process across divisions. There appears to be no evidence of the evaluation of adjunct faculty. This is of great concern in light of the high percentage of courses being taught by adjunct faculty.

**Significant Accomplishments, Significant Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices:**

- Many current instructors have been recognized by the State University of New York through its faculty recognition program, with five promoted to the University-wide rank of Distinguished Teaching Professor and four designated as Distinguished Service Professors.

**Suggestions:**

- Implement the tenure and promotion process with consistency across the College.

**Recommendations:**

- Institute a structured evaluation process for adjunct faculty, applied with consistency across the institution.

**Standard 11: EDUCATIONAL OFFERINGS**

→ The institution’s educational offerings display academic content, rigor, and coherence appropriate to its higher education mission. The institution identifies student learning goals and objectives, including knowledge and skills, for its educational offerings.
Summary of Evidence and Findings:

- Overall, SUNY Oneonta remains an institution dedicated to offering undergraduates an excellent liberal arts foundation with a diverse variety of courses, majors, and minors, delivered by highly qualified faculty.
- Teaching and learning remains the central focus of faculty and student service units directly involved in offering students non-traditional educational experiences.
- Transfer policies are clearly communicated, with course equivalencies for other SUNY-system and non-system institutions available on the Academic Advising website.
- All academic programs specify program objectives in the Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs. Syllabi vary widely in their inclusion of measurable learning outcomes.
- Library personnel and technological resources are sufficient to support student learning in general and informational literacy in particular, and to support the work of faculty in their courses.

Significant Accomplishments, Significant Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices:

- The Academic Team Member (ATM) program makes excellent use of student serving as mentors to residential students.
- SUNY Oneonta offers a variety of experiential learning opportunities to students, including internships, teaching assistantships, exchange and study abroad, independent research, and collaboration with faculty. Based on the 2011 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), seniors at SUNY-Oneonta have a significantly higher mean score on “active and collaborative learning” than peers. A majority (59%) of seniors in 2011 have participated in some form of experiential learning.

Suggestions:

- Review institutional data (enrollment patterns; six-year graduation rates and average time to degree by major) to assess ability to offer sufficient sections of high-demand courses / majors with current staffing and resources.
- Explore nontraditional delivery methods for courses and programs to expand accessibility and revenue (SUNY Learning Network / Open SUNY).
- Explore the feasibility of reviving the College Honors Program.
- To improve assessment, maintain open lines of communication between the College Curriculum Committee and APAC, and continue to develop clear student learning outcomes (SLOs) for all courses.
- Archive curriculum committee documents electronically, to increase transparency of course and program approval process.
Recommendations:

- Conduct a systematic review of existing graduate programs and their impact on institutional resources, as well as considering the impact of and demand for future graduate programs.

Standard 12: GENERAL EDUCATION

The institution’s curricula are designed so that students acquire and demonstrate college-level proficiency in general education and essential skills, including at least oral and written communication, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis and reasoning, and technological competency.

Summary of Evidence and Findings:

- Operational / working definitions of the General Education outcomes exist and are well articulated, aligned to the SUNY system.
- Current general education requirements are exceptionally well stated; clearly articulated; widely available and include defined learning outcomes that are helpful to general understanding and assessment.
- Oneonta has retained the requirement that students take coursework in all 10 of the general education attribute areas; vs. electing to adopt the SUNY allowable flexible standard of 7 of 10 attributes. This decision speaks to Oneonta’s efforts to continue to expose students to experiences and ideas outside of their major or intended areas of study.
- Many (but not all GEN ED) course syllabi indicate a combination of the GEN ED attribute tag and/or the desired outcome.
- Assessment of the GEN ED learning outcomes is embedded in-course when conducted with Senate approval and endorsement of the process. Variance of assessment methodology exists, which may make comparisons more difficult in deeper analysis and constrains the institution’s ability to make changes beyond the individual course level.
- There is a reasonable cyclical nature of attribute assessment; 1/3 per year vs. ALL per year. The sampling approach for the use of student artifacts is innovative and rigorous yielding sufficiently large samples for potential macro analysis while also providing specific faculty with an opportunity to assess pedagogy and learning outcomes for a specific enactment of a course.
- The last review of the General Education curriculum was more than ten years ago. The Ad Hoc Committee looking at General Education is focused on three distinct tasks (1) Transfer of Credits; (2) Establishing a standing GEN ED committee; and (3) Proposing some new models for General Education.
- While requirements are clearly stated, the current GEN ED program acts more like disparate parts vs. an integrative whole.
• Some faculty expressed skepticism for finding “meaningful” or “actionable” information from General Education assessment activities in a way that would render informed changes to the General Education program.

**Significant Accomplishments, Significant Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices:**

• The Ad Hoc Gen Ed Review Committee articulating three specific proposals for further consideration.
• The committee’s recognition of the need for a standing review body for General Education experience.
• GEAC’s creation of an innovative approach to sampling for General Education outcome assessment activities.

**Suggestions:**

• Consider using the Banner attribute to identify the intended general outcomes. General Education course syllabi should also clearly carry the GEN ED attribute tag AND the desired student learning outcome(s) for a given course. Articulate the outcome as the “why” for taking a course, particularly for courses outside the student’s desired major or area of study.

• Provide for a librarian to serve on the standing General Education committee, since an essential component of General Education is learning how to access, utilize and evaluate on-line sources and more generally information sources.

**Recommendations:**

• Improve General Education curriculum assessment by using a standard framework such as the AAC&U Value rubrics.

**STANDARD 13: RELATED EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES**

→ The institution’s programs or activities that are characterized by particular content, focus, location, mode of delivery, or sponsorship meet appropriate standards.

**Summary of Evidence and Findings:**

• The Center for Academic Development and Enrichment (CADE) is a “full service” tutoring and learning assistance center. CADE includes both professional and peer tutoring, administers placement testing for mathematics, reading, and writing. CADE also administers the College Writing Exam and the Supplemental Instruction program.
(peer models in the classroom). CADE also offers one semester-hour remediation courses for select high needs students.

- The Museum Studies program at Cooperstown has been and remains “a national model” for training museum professionals with a recently renovated top-notch facility, curriculum and hands on learning experience. The Lakes Management graduate program laboratory space is also housed in the lower level of the same facility. Modern facilities with exceptional access to field conditions support student learning.

- The administration and graduate faculty are engaged in a serious re-examination of graduate programs at the College and beyond and are exploring what it will take to create needed programs that can be sustained for the long haul. The discussion also reflects the likelihood in many cases of an entirely / mostly online format except for those cases where physical conditions (example: biological field station) are required.

**Significant Accomplishments, Significant Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices:**

Consideration of new programs such as a “Science Museum” program is an example of a strategic shift in thinking about unique and complementary graduate programs. This kind of thinking focusing on the growing interest and need for trained professionals holds promise of orderly and sustainable growth in graduate enrollments.

**Suggestions:**

- The College should consider moving the nearly full time tutors to actual full time in the Center for Academic Development and Enrichment [CADE]
- The College should consider the implications of making mandatory completion of the College Writing Exam something other than a graduation requirement.
- In the context of distance education and/or hybrid offerings, review with extreme diligence the feasibility of new graduate programs.
- Continue the investigation and analysis of demand for graduate / executive programs.
- Continue on path to join SUNY Learning Network to support distance / hybrid education models.

**Recommendations:**

- The College should engage in a review of the students that CADE serves, including analysis of placement, policy and impact.

**Standards 7 & 14: INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT & ASSESSMENT of Student Learning**

→ The institution has developed and implemented an assessment process that evaluates its overall effectiveness in achieving its mission and goals and its compliance with accreditation standards.
Assessment of student learning demonstrates that, at graduation, or other appropriate points, the institution’s students have knowledge, skills, and competencies consistent with institutional and appropriate higher education goals.

Summary of Evidence and Findings:

- In response to the suggestion made by the 2003 MSCHE visiting team that additional resources be provided for planning and assessment, the College created the position of Associate Provost for Institutional Assessment and Effectiveness.
- The office oversees Institutional Research and disseminates professional development opportunities in assessment to both, faculty and staff.
- Review of the following documents and conversations with representative stakeholders revealed a meaningful organizational commitment to the practice of assessment:
  - Mission, Vision, and Strategic Plan 2010-15, focusing on six pillars of Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship; Student Engagement; Global Connectedness; Diversity; Community Partnership; and Sustainability.
  - SUNY, Oneonta Institutional Assessment Plan – Analysis and Action Plan for Planning and Assessment at SUNY Oneonta (and relevant assessment documents).
  - Representative sample of plans, reports and evaluations across administrative and academic units.
- Since 2008, the college developed and implemented sound assessment protocols for the purpose of institutional effectiveness (academic and administrative). The Office of Institutional Assessment and Effectiveness has designed a flexible framework that encourages units, programs and departments to select a variety of approaches with respect to the specificity of assessment outcomes and techniques:
  - The strategic plan, focusing on six pillars (and its performance indicators);
  - A 3-year cycle of assessment in administrative units;
  - A 3-year cycle of assessment in academic departments/programs;
  - A 3–year cycle of assessment of the general education curriculum;
  - A 7-year cycle of program review;
  - Independent accreditation processes for Education, Economics and Business, etc.;
  - NSSE, WABASH, and SOS; and
  - SUNY Scorecard Report.
- Review of assessment plans and reports indicate considerable variation with respect to quality.
  - Assessment plans/reports in the administrative units focus mostly on operational (day-to-day) activities.
  - Assessment plans/reports in the academic departments/programs vary with respect to the way learning outcomes are defined and assessed.
- The College has come a long way in strengthening collaboration between the Office of Institutional Assessment and Effectiveness (OIAE) and faculty-led APAC and GEAC assessment committees. Self study references, documents in evidence and site
interviews confirmed that a history of difficult relationships preceded the structures that are currently in place. By continuing to strengthen trust, collaboration and productive relationships between OIAE, APAC and GEAC, the College will continue to make good progress in its vital work on assessing student learning outcomes in compliance with Standard 14. Faculty who are overcoming past struggles and historical divides between faculty and administration that preceded these current struggles are to be commended for their leadership. The team can see great potential among the faculty to continue in this direction, and strongly encourages more faculty members to work collaboratively with OIAE to support the use of student learning outcomes results for continuous improvement of instruction.

- In 2011-12, the College implemented a new Institutional Strategic Allocation of Resources model (Star) to facilitate evidence-based practice across administrative and academic units.

**Significant Accomplishments, Significant Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices:**

- The College is commended for its investment and energy in developing institutional assessment protocols and processes in academic and administrative domains.
- The Office of Institutional Assessment and Effectiveness is commended for its success in developing sound and transparent assessment protocols.
- Well-documented and faculty/staff-driven planning processes are in place to promote the culture of assessment across the institution in a potentially sustainable manner.
- Striving for transparency and inclusion seems to be a common practice with respect to requirements of standard 7 and 14. Appointment to assessment committees (APAC, IAC, GEAC) is a shared responsibility between the senate and the administration.

**Suggestions:**

- With respect to standard 7:
  - Optimize operational efficiency and simplify reporting across administrative units by encouraging IAC to assist units in developing/implementing a standard assessment template for multiple reporting requirements.

**Recommendation:**

- With respect to standard 7:
  - Provide necessary support and resources (organizational and fiscal) to expand IAC to assist administrative units to move beyond assessment of operational activities and to focus on more strategic objectives. For example, use of an assessment planning and reporting application can simplify the process and make it more efficient and effective.
- With respect to standard 14:
  - To significantly improve the practice of assessment across departments, the College should dedicate substantial additional support and resources (organizational and fiscal) to the OIAE.
O APAC and GEAC committees should continue working with the College Senate and OIAE to strengthen the assessment of student learning outcomes and attributes across disciplines.

Summary of Recommendations for Continuing Compliance and Requirements

The Evaluation Committee has several recommendations listed below and articulated above. But we are not issuing any requirements.

Standard 10:

- Institute a structured evaluation process for adjunct faculty, applied with consistency across the institution.

Standard 11:

- Conduct a systematic review of existing graduate programs and their impact on institutional resources, as well as considering the impact of and demand for future graduate programs.

Standard 12:

- Improve General Education curriculum assessment by using a standard framework such as the AAC&U Value rubrics.

Standard 13:

- The College should engage in a review of the students that the Center for Academic Development and Enrichment [CADE] serves, including analysis of placement, policy and impact.
Standard 7:

- Provide necessary support and resources (organizational and fiscal) to expand IAC to assist administrative units to move beyond assessment of operational activities and to focus on more strategic objectives. For example, use of an assessment planning and reporting application can simplify the process and make it more efficient and effective.

Standard 14:

- To significantly improve the practice of assessment across departments, the college should dedicate substantial additional support and resources (organizational and fiscal) to the OIAE.
- APAC and GEAC committees should continue working with the College Senate and OIAE to strengthen the assessment of student learning outcomes and attributes across disciplines.