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Edwardsville Bulletin

To the Faculty and Staff of Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville

Vol. 17, No. 10

June 16, 1986

MEMO TO: The University Community
FROM: Earl Lazerson
SUBJECT: NCA Visiting Team Report

The University has received the final report of the North Central Association visiting team. The report represents a preliminary step in the accreditation process, which is not complete until action is taken by the NCA Commission on Institutions of Higher Education. However, I want to summarize the findings of the report and the recommendations it contains.

First, and most important, the report recommends the continued accreditation of the University at the "Doctor's (research and professional curricula) degree-granting level."

In addition, the report recommends that the next comprehensive evaluation occur in 1992-93 and that a visit be scheduled in 1988-89 focused on administrative organization and structure and on doctoral level programming.

The team reports that the University remains in compliance with the 13 General Institutional Requirements basic to NCA accreditation. Moreover, the team stipulates that the four Evaluative Criteria--

- (1) The institution has clear and publicly stated purposes, consistent with its mission and appropriate to a postsecondary educational institution.
- (2) The institution has effectively organized adequate human, financial, and physical resources into educational and other programs to accomplish its purposes.
- (3) The institution is accomplishing its purposes.
- (4) The institution can continue to accomplish its purposes.

--"are satisfied to the extent that basic accreditation standards are met. The team believes SIUE has made improvements in the fulfillment of these four Criteria. However, while recognizing improvements, the team believes there are parts of the Criteria which require continuing attention so that the call to high service to which SIUE responds may more completely be fulfilled." For example:

*While commending the University for "resilience and fortitude exemplified during a period of documented adversity," the report emphasizes the importance of "mutual trust" and mutual appreciation among all members of the University community.

*Citing several "unusual reporting lines at SIUE," the report emphasizes the importance of "adequate communication among related functional areas," i.e., "regular lateral communication in the administrative matrix."

*The report states a concern that the one doctorate currently offered by the University "has and continues to be free standing without the dynamic of surrounding doctoral programs." At the same time, the report urges that the University monitor more closely the quality of doctoral dissertations.

*The team observed space limitations with which the School of Engineering and the School of Fine Arts and Communications must contend, the effect of inflation upon the buying power of the School of Sciences, the need for a new language laboratory, the importance of "new blood" in the faculty, and the necessity for a decreased reliance on part-time faculty.

The report of the visiting team also identifies a number of University strengths. A few examples:

*The new Statement of Mission "is brief as well as comprehensive. Clear and distinct priorities are delineated in a manner that should serve as a guide for future actions."

*"The institution appears to have achieved fiscal stability after a period of major income reduction. Budgeting controls that allow for flexibility in responding to changing needs, and an allocation system that places financial resources into activities consistent with the overall mission are now operating."

*"By almost all accounts, the faculty . . . is said to be strong, dedicated, and effective in the classroom. Faculty members certainly possess credentials and experience appropriate to realization of institutional programs."

*The effort within the University "to create opportunities for involvement in budget, planning, and other management matters on campus deserves praise."

Because no brief summary can encompass the 59-page report, I urge you to read it in its entirety. Copies are located in Lovejoy Library and in the offices of all deans and department chairs.

In closing, I again stress the preliminary status of the visiting team report. The accreditation process will not be complete prior to action by the NCA Commission on Institutions of Higher Education. Nevertheless, I believe we can conclude that the process will strengthen the University. I thank you for helping to make it so.