

## **Statement of Report Preparation**

In January 2005, President Yarosewick called together a campus team that included the campus vice presidents and staff and faculty most closely involved with the areas of special emphasis. These included:

- Stanley J. Yarosewick, President and Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs;
- Corinne Kowpak, Vice President for Student Affairs;
- Jay Kahn, Vice President for Finance and Planning;
- Nona Fienberg, Dean of Arts and Humanities and co-chair of the general education committee;
- Dorothy Bauer, Associate Professor of Early Childhood Education and co-chair of the general education committee;
- Anne Miller, Director of the Elliot Center, which includes the academic advising center;
- Ellen Nuffer, Associate Professor of Education, Director of the Faculty Resource Center, and chair of the assessment committee;
- Cristi Carson, Director of Institutional Research; and
- Julie Dickson, Executive Assistant to the President and editor of the NEASC 5<sup>th</sup> year report.

Responsibility for assembling the document was shared by members of this task force. The committee held campus round-table discussions on the report at the end of the spring 2005 semester to obtain campus input.

## **Institutional Overview**

In June 2005, President Yarosewick retired after serving as president for 11 years. On July 1, 2005, Dr. Helen Giles-Gee became the ninth president of Keene State College.

President Yarosewick's leadership provided enrollment and financial stability, a strong sense of community on campus, and the development of partnerships with area businesses, city government, community organizations, and the region's other educational institutions. Since 2000, the campus has undertaken a facilities master planning process and successfully implemented major physical improvements outlined in its previous master plan, including the renovation and expansion of two key academic buildings, Mason Library and the Science Center. The capital projects that the campus has undertaken reflect skilled campus and University System administrations, as well as strong advocacy for capital improvements from the University System of New Hampshire Board of Trustees. The College successfully completed a \$4-million capital campaign in support of the renovation and expansion of the Science Center, which included the College's first gift of \$1 million from a living donor.

The position of vice president for academic affairs has been vacant since fall 2004. President Yarosewick, with assistance from the deans, covered the VPAA position over the 2004-2005 year while the campus searched for a new president. On May 30, 2005, Dr. Gordon Leversee, Dean of Sciences and Social Sciences, assumed the position of interim vice president for academic affairs, a position he will hold until a new VPAA is appointed.

The College has been actively engaged in discussion and planning for two major curricular initiatives: revision of the general education curriculum and migration to a four-credit curriculum model. In April 2004, the KSC Senate approved the four-credit model and adopted principles and a transition program for General Education.

## **Area of Emphasis**

### General Education

General education has been at the top of the College curricular agenda for the past five years. At the end of the 2004-2005 academic year, Keene State made significant progress on general education and a related proposal to move the curriculum to a predominantly four-credit model. In May 2005, the College Senate approved the General Education program principles and endorsed the proposed structure. The College Senate adopted the General Education program principles and endorsed an administrative structure proposed to oversee General Education. (Attachment A-1, A-2). The General Education program is being designed by a representative General Education committee (Attachment A-2) using (1) assessment data in the College's survey of graduating seniors and the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), (2) information from a wide variety of campus constituencies, and (3) assistance from a consultant from the American Association of Colleges and Universities.

The first step in the transition to a new General Education program will be the implementation of a topical first-year seminar, with pilot sections to be offered in fall 2006. This course will be taught by faculty from across the campus, who will participate in a summer planning and course design process to insure that all faculty members are assessing shared general education learning outcomes. These faculty members will then be resource people for their departments as the first year seminar program is expanded and additional General Education courses are designed.

The College will use the results from the National Study of Student Engagement (NSSE) to assess students' involvement in educational practices. We expect that the data will reflect the learning improvements that are expected from the implementation of the first-year seminar program and the four-credit curricula. The NSSE results from spring 2003 will be used as benchmarks for identifying changes in five domains that are linked to high levels of student learning. In spring 2003, the College's freshmen and seniors scored below the Master's and Council of Public Liberal Art Colleges (COPLAC) comparator groups on all five of these learning domains. The NSSE will be administered in spring 2006, and again in spring 2009—after the General Education curricula changes have been implemented and have had a chance to stabilize.

The College Senate also has endorsed the proposal to move to four credits and has set fall 2007 as the date for a coordinated implementation of departmental four-credit curricula. Several departments, including English, Management, and Film, are already operating on a four-credit model; other departments are preparing the curriculum for the transition. As noted in an internal report from the Four Credit committee, "the general advantage to this model is clearly in the opportunity it presents to improve student learning. Students will generally take fewer (usually four) classes per semester and faculty will teach three, rather than four courses. This will allow students and faculty the opportunity to concentrate more closely on fewer classes, providing greater depth and/or breadth to course work. The move to a primarily four-credit system will contribute to the faculty's and the college's desire to foster a climate of academic rigor and reflection in enhancing student learning. This shift will be an opportunity for faculty to encourage student engagement in courses that are intellectually challenging both inside and outside the classroom."

The relationship between the four-credit model and general education is again articulated in an internal document prepared by the Four Credit committee: “At present, under the three-credit system, there are 14 required general education courses for a total of 43 credits (13 three-credit courses and 1 four-credit course, ENG 101). This is roughly one-third of total credits required for graduation in both BA and BS degrees. Under a four-credit model, the number of general education requirements can remain comparable at either 40 for a total of 10 four-credit courses or 44 for a total of 11 four-credit courses. This is a reduction of four or three general education courses, depending on the final model proposed by the General Education committee.”

### Academic Advising

Throughout the past five years, Keene State College has continued to adjust its systems of academic advising and schedule planning. The advising process now begins by asking all incoming students to identify an area of academic interest on their application for admission. Entering students are referred to the academic departments as soon as possible so the departments can provide the subsequent outreach and advising to students. This strategy is supported by senior survey data: 74 percent of the graduating students either agreed, or strongly agreed, that the advising system in their major served them well.

The information on students’ areas of academic interest is also used to assign incoming students a set of three courses, which are selected by the chair of the department associated with the intended major. This leaves students with the opportunity and responsibility to select two General Education courses to complete their first-semester schedule during their orientation program. This strategy has resulted in a demonstrated decrease in add/drop activity at the beginning of the fall semester. In 2001, the first year this approach was implemented, the number of courses added by first-year students decreased 36 percent from fall 2000 and a 61 percent decrease in the number of courses dropped.

Beginning with the summer 2004 mandatory orientation program, incoming students registered on-line for their two remaining courses using MyKSC, a student information module that gives students access to their transcript, course requirement information for every major and minor, unofficial audits, seat availability, and on-line registration. By providing students with an early introduction to this powerful set of tools, they can be much more knowledgeable about their academic progress and can better prepare for course registration and advising.

At the same time, the College has instituted a rigorous course planning process to improve course availability. This process, initiated in 2001, examines and analyzes enrollment trends and patterns in General Education courses and incorporates this information into the course schedule planning process. The courses proposed for each semester are reviewed against this data and schedule adjustments and changes in enrollment capacities are made. In addition, the College is currently pursuing the 2006 implementation of a computerized space utilization program (Schedule 25), which will help optimize classroom use and event space, further strengthening the course planning process and the availability of seats.

Additional improvements were achieved when the College implemented web registration in fall 2003. The implementation plan required that every department review the pre- and co-requisites for every course offered. Removing unnecessary requirements removed barriers to successful registration and made seats in core courses more accessible. Other improvements included strategies to reserve a certain number of seats in key lower-level courses, periodically releasing them later in the course registration period, and reserving seats for the incoming class.

The on-line degree audit feature available since fall 2003 gives students a significant new on-line tool to learn about course requirements in majors. It helps students make choices about majors they want to consider and highlights the potential delay in progress to graduation that results from repeated or late changes in majors. Student access to degree audit information reduces student reliance on the graduation audit and gives students more timely information about courses they need to take in order to satisfy their degree requirements.

The advising structure has been improved in several ways during the past five years. Students identified for priority registration as determined by the Office of Disability Services (ODS) are now advised, beginning in 2003, by professional advisors rather than by the ODS staff. The Office of Academic Support Services (ASPIRE) and three students from the peer advisor program offer enriched advising for first-generation and/or low-income students. Beginning in 2003, staff members from the Academic and Career Advising Center began offering group advising programs for students who have not identified an intended major. These sessions are also open to students who have indicated an intended major (and are thus eligible for advising from faculty in that intended major) but who need additional support.

The web registration tools described above allow the College to enforce the requirement that students declare a major by the time they have taken 60 credits. We believe that this has resulted in fewer students accruing credits that don't apply to their major and prolonging time to degree. A total of 342 students participating in the May 2005 commencement ceremonies had both entered Keene State as first-time, first-year students and completely finished their degree requirements. Of these students, 80 percent had completed their degrees in four years. Although it is too early to measure the effect of advising improvements on graduation rates, the four-year graduation rates for the classes entering in 1999 and 2000 have improved, to 26.5 percent and 28.7 percent respectively, up from a low of 23.4 percent for the class entering in 1998.

While students feel favorably about the advising they receive in their major, student evaluation of academic advising in general is more ambivalent. At this point, student satisfaction data is drawn primarily from senior surveys. In the 2005 senior survey of students entering in 2001, 50 percent of those who said they had used advising services were satisfied or very satisfied with the services they received. Similarly, the average of the responses from seniors who completed the Spring 2001 and Spring 2003 administrations of the National Study of Student Engagement (NSSE) fell between 'fair' and 'good.' We hope to see improvement in student satisfaction with advising in students enrolling 2003 or later.

Topics for future discussions include the efficacy and feasibility of required advising prior to course registration, updating the college advising plan, evaluation of advising and advisers, and strengthening the examination of enrollment trends and patterns for required courses and applying the findings to the departmental course-planning process. These conversations need to occur in proper relationship to both the development of the new General Education program and the presence of the new president and the new vice president for academic affairs.

### **Progress on Other Issues Identified by NEASC**

#### **Adjunct Faculty**

In the period since the report submitted to NEASC in August 2003, Keene State College and the KSC Adjunct Association have implemented their first collective bargaining agreement,

finalized in July 2003 and covering the period from July 1, 2002, to June 30, 2005. The College and the Adjunct Association are currently in negotiations for a successor agreement.

The contract has changed the relationships between the College and its long-term adjunct faculty in many positive ways. It has clearly resulted in a fuller involvement of members of the bargaining unit in the academic life of the College – a concern of the 2000 visiting NEASC team. The collective bargaining unit includes adjunct faculty in their fifth semester of teaching at Keene State and provides an orderly process for assigning courses to qualified adjunct faculty, tying pay rates to length of service, and defining the grievance process. Significantly, the contract also provides for professional development support for members of the bargaining unit and an orderly evaluation process. The College continues to publish an adjunct faculty handbook and has increased adjunct association representation on such campus committees as the College Budget Council and search committees.

Data on credit hours taught by adjunct faculty and full-time faculty are tracked by the College, and this information is systematically shared with deans and department chairs in developing departmental staffing plans, and the College is working to add full-time faculty in those departments, particularly those with growing enrollments, where adjunct faculty teach a high percentage of courses. New full-time faculty appointments in film, communications, and journalism, and sociology have allowed the College to increase the proportion of credit hours taught by full-time faculty.

### Diversity

While the challenges are many, there is evidence of a growing institutional commitment to diversity as well as grassroots efforts to change the campus climate and curriculum. Using the three-stage model of institutional diversity development presented in *Assessing Campus Diversity Initiatives* by Garcia et al. (2001), which focuses on four areas of campus life – access, education and scholarship, campus climate, and institutional visibility – Keene State is moving toward stage two. This assessment is based on the following changes and initiatives undertaken since 2000:

- A commitment to the principles and practices is evident in the mission statement and campus planning documents and in the leadership statements of the College president.
- An active Commission on Diversity and Multiculturalism advises the campus and President. It has successfully kept diversity issues visible on campus agendas.
- There have been modest increases in the number of racial and ethnic minorities in the student and faculty/staff populations.
- Campus programming around diversity issues has increased.
- There is evidence of new courses that incorporate diversity issues as well as curricular change in several programs, and there is an active dialogue about the role of general education in encouraging students to engage in diversity-related issues.

Challenges remain for the College as it works toward developing a comprehensive diversity plan and incorporating diversity into the College's general education curriculum. The College is especially pleased that President Giles-Gee has made a strong commitment to assist the College with its diversity initiatives.

#### 1. Diversity: Access and Success

To improve access for minority students, the College reorganized the admissions office to include a multicultural student coordinator. This individual works half time recruiting

minority populations and half time supporting their academic and co-curricular success. The multicultural student coordinator has developed a recruitment strategy and initiated minority student outreach strategies. This has resulted in the reversal of declining enrollments of minority first-year students. There were 11 minority students in the class entering in the fall of 2000 and 29 in 2004 plus an additional 12 students who self-identify as multiracial. (The multiracial category was not used until 2003.) Since 2002, the campus has participated in a statewide program coordinated by the New Hampshire College and University Council created to improve New Hampshire Hispanic students' access to postsecondary education opportunities. Overall Hispanic student enrollment has increased by 25 percent in this period.

Student retention studies are difficult to conduct with such small minority enrollments, but aggregated five-year cohorts demonstrate that, overall, KSC retains minority students at the same rate as majority students.

The number of minority faculty and staff has also increased modestly over the same period, from 10 in 2000 to 17 in 2004. In 2003-2004, President Yarosewick established two task forces to look at staff and faculty recruitment and retention issues. Several recommendations of these task forces were implemented and follow-up training for the campus was initiated. In August 2004, all members of faculty search committees participated in workshops led by Dr. JoAnn Moody, author of *Faculty Diversity: Problems and Solutions* (NY: Routledge Falmer, 2004). The workshop provided practical strategies for diversifying the faculty, and several searches were successful in recruiting and hiring minorities. Of 15 new tenure track-faculty hired, one is a domestic minority and six are immigrant minorities from China, India, Jamaica, and Argentina. Of special note, the Office of Human Resources has increased its ability to support staff with visa-related issues.

## 2. Diversity: Education and Scholarship

One of the most visible academic diversity initiatives involved the establishment of a summer reading program for incoming first-year students. Beginning in the summer of 2001, all entering students have been asked to read a text exploring multicultural themes or issues. There are followup discussions in the residence halls and in classes, and, when possible, the author visits the campus during the year to teach and lecture.

Keene State faculty members participate in national conferences related to diversity and the curriculum. Most recently, two faculty members participated in AAC&U Conference on "Diversity and Learning: Democracy's Compelling Interest" in fall 2004, and a team of faculty attended the "Boundaries and Borderlands III" conference, also sponsored by AAC&U, held at Brown University in 2001. In addition, the Commission on Diversity and Multiculturalism has offered summer workshops specifically designed for faculty. Several faculty members engage in research related to issues of diversity, although a formal inventory of such research has not been undertaken.

Since 2000, several additional academic programs have been redesigned to incorporate multicultural themes. Two examples involve the English Department, which has added courses and requires majors to take two courses in the category of multicultural, world or continental literature; and the American Studies minor, redesigned to reflect America's multicultural experience and identity. The teacher education program established the "Diverse Voices from the Field" speaker series, which brings in speakers to address diversity topics within the field of education. The College has established an interdisciplinary Holocaust Studies minor, drawing on the special resources of the Cohen Center for Holocaust

Studies housed on its campus, and the Cohen Center regularly brings in speakers who address issues of religious diversity, racial diversity, and the ethics of diversity.

The Mason Library now houses the Orang Asli Archive, which is a repository of unpublished documents, films, tapes, and other recordings relevant to Orang Asli peoples and cultures. The Orang Asli are the indigenous peoples of Peninsular Malaysia. This is the only archive in the world on the Orang Asli and has served as a catalyst for bringing international scholars to campus to participate in Diversity Commission-sponsored events.

This spring, the College Senate adopted the General Education Program Principles, which includes a commitment that students will develop knowledge and understanding of a diverse world and multicultural perspectives.

### 3. Diversity: Campus Climate

Diversity issues are frequently before the community, in the form of exhibits, films, guest speakers, and campus symposia. In the fall of 2003, the campus organized a successful three-day symposium on *Race in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, which brought nationally recognized speakers to campus and drew many community members. Students participated actively in workshops, and faculty used the symposium to highlight diversity issues within individual course curricula. For a decade, the Commission on Multiculturalism and Diversity has sponsored biweekly luncheons featuring speakers and panels on diversity-related topics. These regular events are lively and well attended by students, faculty, and staff, and they encourage the campus to explore challenging issues.

With support from the Multicultural Student Coordinator, a student club called Common Ground is growing. The Club organizes campus activities around the issues of diversity and multiculturalism, and Club members reach out to enrolled and prospective minority students.

Data obtained from Keene State participation in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) in 2001 and 2003 indicates that KSC student responses diverge from the Master's benchmark group on those items related to interactions with students from ethnic backgrounds other than their own. An encouraging sign, however, is that while Keene State's 2001 students' understanding of people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds was significantly lower than the Master's group, KSC's 2003 student responses were on a par with the Master's level group of benchmark institutions.

### 4. Diversity: Institutional Visibility and Vitality

Keene State adopted a new mission statement in 1999, which states that KSC "prepares students for success in a complex, interdependent world" and values "diversity in our curriculum and in our community." Diversity has been one of 12 major planning themes in the College's strategic plan. President Yarosewick emphasized diversity in his annual addresses to the faculty. Diversity issues were clearly articulated in the challenge document prepared for Keene State College's presidential search. In 2003-2004, the College adopted a comprehensive policy on discrimination and discriminatory harassment and re-wrote its affirmation action statement to reflect a commitment beyond the conventional affirmative action language.

### Assessment

Keene State is developing benchmarks and collecting data to support assessment on multiple levels. At the University System of New Hampshire level, the campus is working with



the Board of Trustees to establish strategic indicators and comparator lists. At the institutional level, the College is making use of internal data and benchmark comparisons to improve learning and institutional effectiveness. The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) has been particularly important since student engagement is fundamental to the College's role as a public liberal arts institution. The NSSE data support assessment of the extent to which students are engaged in their education and, conversely, the extent to which colleges and universities are engaged in good educational practices. The data demonstrate some promising changes. In 2001 KSC students lagged the Master's level comparison institutions in:

- Spending significant amounts of time studying and on academic work;
- Analyzing quantitative problems; and
- Using computer and information technology.

In 2003, these differences were no longer significant.

Assessment is also occurring within each of the College divisions: academic affairs, student affairs, and finance and planning.

#### Academic Assessment Committee

The academic assessment committee membership now includes the associate vice president of academic affairs and the director of institutional research, as well as the deans of the three schools, and the library director. It is chaired by a member of the faculty. Under this structure, the campus has moved from discussing learning objectives, to requiring statements of learning goals for each program, and using the information gathered to improve teaching and curriculum. The Committee considers the results of institutional research activities such as the National Survey of Student Engagement and the KSC Senior Survey in addition to the results of departmental efforts. A number of individuals attended regional and national assessment conferences (NEEAN, AAHE, NEASC, AAC&U, disciplinary association assessment conferences, and others) and brought their expertise back to the campus. The committee engaged Karen and James Nichols as leaders of a workshop for department chairs on the creation and assessment of learning goals and as consultants for the campus. The Committee established a specific form for reporting learning goals and provided feedback to departments about the utility of their stated goals for assessment purposes.

A number of departments were concerned about the Nichols' approach and that their structured format did not allow for the wide variety of learning goals and student assessment efforts already in place. In contrast, consultant Dr. Karen Shilling emphasized faculty-friendly assessment approaches and "closing the loop." Departments were encouraged not to focus solely on the clear expression of learning goals, but also to consider what they would do with the data once they were collected. A fund was established to support departmental efforts to set learning goals, collect evidence about those goals, and to decide what pedagogical, curricular, or assessment changes were needed as a result of careful consideration of results.

The academic assessment committee emphasizes a "consultancy" approach, with committee members meeting with individual departments and deans overseeing the completion of annual assessment reports. An assessment roundtable, at which departments gave reports on their efforts, was established for the week following graduation. The director of institutional research provides faculty with analyses of the data collected from our first year and graduating classes that are relevant to questions regarding the assessment of learning goals and provision of learning opportunities.

Many of these data collected are relevant to the General Education program, such as questions about how KSC contributed to students' ability to write and speak clearly and effectively, and to think critically and analytically. As the new General Education program is implemented, learning goals and accompanying assessment strategies will be pursued. The Academic Affairs Assessment Committee advises departments, approves grants, and plans professional development activities.

Recent examples of specific departmental activities are provided in Attachment B-1. Some departments are engaged in assessment efforts that have garnered national attention (Mathematics); some have used assessment results to revamp their curriculum (Biology). Some have used their assessment work as a springboard to rethink their major (Management and History), and some have used it as a way to showcase student work (Graphic Design). Some departments with national accreditation requirements have managed to meet the reporting standards of those external bodies while engaging in the important conversations that such data engender (Education and Physical Education). Many departments are fully engaged in assessment and have standing assessment committees, regular assessment activities, and student assessment opportunities that are embedded in courses. Other departments view assessment as an activity that takes place once per year, but embrace it as a responsibility to students and an opportunity to improve curriculum and teaching. Still other departments have not yet developed learning objectives that can be assessed or rely on anecdotal information as the sole basis for feedback.

We recognize that the absence of a vice president for academic affairs to lead this effort has slowed Keene State's progress on assessment. With the appointment of an interim vice president and a national search for a new academic leader, we anticipate additional progress prior to the next comprehensive accreditation review.

#### Student Affairs Assessment Committee

The Student Affairs Assessment Committee (SAAC) was formed in 2001. It includes a representative from each of the nine departments in the division. The vice president for student affairs set clear expectations that all departments within this division are responsible for conducting a minimum of one assessment annually.

In February 2002, the Committee worked to develop a comprehensive plan to facilitate assessment for this division. Its goal was to create a plan that would take three to four semesters to implement and would be subject to on-going revisions as circumstances warranted. The members of the Committee met with each department director to collect information about the current assessment strategies used and considered as well as the kinds of decisions for which additional information or evidence could better guide the process. A report was prepared and the plan established.

While the SAAC initially served an educational purpose, teaching student affairs staff about current practices in assessment in the field, the group's role has evolved in the last two years. Currently, the Committee serves in an advisory role to those who are working on assessment through the planning, implementation, and evaluation stages. There has been regular contact with the director of institutional research, although she does not serve on the SAAC.

The mission of the division of Student Affairs is to create a healthy and supportive environment for student success. To fulfill this mission, the Student Affairs division strives to enhance student development by providing appropriate services, encouraging participation, ensuring student rights, and promoting student responsibility. The staff regularly use the data

collected from national surveys (e.g., CIRP, NSSE) to guide the decisions made regarding program offerings and services. Additionally, departments have participated in surveys prepared by professional and/or statewide organizations (e.g. ACHA survey; NHHE Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Survey) as well as instruments developed by or in consultation with the SAAC (e.g., Residential Life's Community Development survey, Campus Safety's Shuttle Utilization Survey, and "customer satisfaction surveys"). The Community Development survey is administered annually to students living in campus residential halls. It has provided positive feedback and helped the Office of Residential Life to identify areas for needed improvement. Most recently, the data were used to identify programming gaps in residential buildings. The Shuttle Utilization Survey has provided data to guide the successful implementation of a new student shuttle service, which was initiated in 2001 and has increased in ridership from 5,772 riders to 10,450 riders at the close of 2004-2005.

SAAC recently purchased a monthly subscription to SurveyMonkey.com, which allows students to complete the instrument with ease from their residence hall room, a computer lab, or their off-campus apartment. The data are tallied immediately and departments have appreciated seeing the students' reactions as the data are collected. Incentives have also been widely used to encourage student participation.

A list of assessment instruments used in Student Affairs in the last year appears in Attachment B-2.

#### Finance and Planning Assessment Committee

The Finance and Planning Division assessment activities focus on best practices and benchmarks with peer campuses and with KSC's prior experience. Peer groups include sister USNH campuses, Council of Public Liberal Arts campuses (COPLAC), USNH Peer Comparators and Moody's A2 public master's comprehensive campuses. The source of comparisons include, the annual COPLAC survey, IPEDS, Moody's ratios for public higher education institutions, USNH performance indicators, Association for Physical Plant Administrators, and Educause Core Data Service. Internal indicators are also relied upon to identify trends in many areas; some with a larger impact include energy consumption; financial aid requested/received/and accumulated debt; accounts receivables, deregistered students and loan default rates; budgeted to actual revenue and expense by year, quarter and month, and expenditures per student and by function; IT Helpdesk calls received, how they were answered and system up-time; and central duplication services and mail service discounts taken. User satisfaction data are gathered through Residential Life survey, the building managers advisory group and IT user survey of students, the annual Senior Survey and NSSE.

#### Facilities

The most apparent physical resource needs identified in FY2000 were the renovation of the Science Center and the expansion and updating of the Mason Library. Both projects were funded in the University System of New Hampshire's FY2002-2007 \$100 million capital budget request called KEEP NH, the Knowledge Economy Education Plan. That legislation provided the core \$19 million required to renovate the Science Center, originally constructed in 1968. An additional \$4 million to complete and furnish the building was raised through a capital campaign. A key component of the program scope was creation of a teleconferencing center in the Science Center's new lecture hall, provided as part of a \$1 million grant from a U.S. Department of Justice grant aimed at training community first responders on handling biohazards. Additional

National Science Foundation-funded equipment in project labs facilitate student and faculty collaboration on research efforts. Labs are sized and configured to allow for presentation, discussion, and experimentation. Common spaces for student interaction are distributed through the building. Spaces such as the courtyard, with its plantings of native New Hampshire plants, and the Ashuelot River Flow ceramic mural invite visitors to enter and explore science in their daily lives. The renovated and expanded Science Center enables the College to advance its mission to prepare teachers and science pre-professionals to meet the region's educational and economic needs.

An expanded, better integrated, and technologically undated Mason Library provides students and the community with access to a greater range of held and electronically accessed materials. The Library also has improved archival storage and access in the College's archives, holding such collections as the Orang Asli Archive and the Cohen Center for Holocaust Studies, the latter one of the ten largest such collections in North America. The renovation nearly doubled the number of seats for students to study, added student conference-room space for group study, and enabled wireless computer use which is facilitated through a front-desk computer check-out program.

The campus engaged in a master plan update during FY2004. Master Plans for all USNH residential campuses were approved by the Trustees in October 2004. Each plan identified the need for additional on-campus housing to alleviate shortages in host communities. Keene State faced the additional problem that its dining facility lacked capacity to serve additional residential students. The current USNH bond revenue plan calls for new financing totaling \$195 million. This has enabled the College to proceed with construction of a new 950-seat Dining Commons to be opened in fall 2005 and two new residence halls, which will house an additional 354 students on campus, bringing total student beds to 60 percent of all full-time undergraduate students. One of these new residence halls has been designed to meet the standards for recognition as a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certified facility, the first at a New Hampshire college or university.

With a new dining facility coming on-line in fall 2005, the College will pursue the recommendation in the Master Plan to convert the old Dining Commons to meet its highest academic need, a facility to unify and promote the College's media arts programs, including the departments of Film; Communications, Journalism and Philosophy; and Graphic Design. The Master Plan is reviewed annually by the Facilities Planning Advisory Committee and the Principal Administrators, who direct the College's operating budget to address repair and renovations to identified deferred maintenance needs and program improvements.

The College has received significant recognition for its attractive facilities and grounds. The campus is a source of pride for the College and greater Keene communities and is a significant factor in attracting students to the College. Facilities lacking recent attention stand in significant contrast to those that have, which places greater pressure on the College to address its deferred maintenance needs through its operating budget. The College also faces significant operating cost increases from its new buildings with central air-conditioning and automated climate control systems.

## **Major Changes**

- Dr. Helen Giles-Gee assumed the presidency on July 1, 2005, following Dr. Stanley Yarosewick's retirement after 11 years in office.
- The College has made significant progress on two curricular initiatives, one to create a new General Education program and the second to move to a four-credit curricular structure. There is an active service-learning initiative, involving important collaborations between the College's divisions of student and academic affairs, as well as with dozens of community agencies.
- The Cohen Center for Holocaust Studies has grown in mission and stature and a minor study in Holocaust Studies was established.
- The University System of New Hampshire worked with the New Hampshire Legislature to change the way capital budgets are funded, moving from a biennial approval process to a six-year planning cycle.
- The College completed the renovation of the Mason Library and the renovation and addition to its Science Center. The Science Center project was completed with funds from the state legislature and a successful \$4 million private campaign.
- The College completed a student recreation center and a new residential apartment complex. Construction is in progress on a new dining facility and two additional residence halls.
- The College implemented Banner for improved financial and human resources management.
- The College and the Adjunct Association successfully negotiated a collective bargaining agreement. Current negotiations for a successive agreement are at an impasse over the issue of health benefits.

## **Efforts to Enhance Institutional Effectiveness**

The College continues to demonstrate progress in using data as the basis for making decisions and improving its effectiveness in achieving its mission.

To assess the College's progress in achieving the goals in its strategic plan, the College completed its second inventory of outcomes identified in Our Plan, the College's strategic planning document (Attachment D) in 2002. In the spring of 2003, there were two follow up large-scale, open space meetings (Speak Out) held to assess the campus climate. One was open to all students, held during the semester; the second was for faculty and staff members, held following the spring 2003 semester. Each raised concerns that have been actively addressed, notably concerns related to the way we recruit a diverse faculty, staff and student body; faculty and staff morale; and the effectiveness of the College's human resources policies and procedures. This information was used to charge a task force with developing the parameters of a human resources master plan.

As part of the University System of New Hampshire (USNH), Keene State College works with the USNH Office of Research and Planning, Plymouth State University, the University of New Hampshire, and Granite State College to define and operationalize the mission, vision, and goals established by the Board of Trustees. This collaboration has produced Strategic Indicators that demonstrate the effective use of resources, the value that USNH adds to the social structure, workforce and economic development, and the quality of life for the citizens of the State of New Hampshire (Attachment E-1). Data collected in 2004-2005 provided a baseline for institutional and System performance on nine Strategic Indicators. This number has increased to twenty for Academic Year 2005-2006. This information will, over time, provide trend lines that will establish that USNH is learner centered, committed to program excellence, a responsible steward, and a valued community partner. All four institutions in the System use peer institutions to provide benchmarks for assessing their performance on the Strategic Indicators (Attachment E-2). Keene State College has identified 12 peer institutions with similar characteristics and a second group with aspirational characteristics.

Keene State College is a founding member of the Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges (COPLAC), whose mission is to identify and support high quality public liberal arts and sciences institutions. Each year the nineteen COPLAC institutions participate in a Data Sharing Project, which provides data on degrees conferred, progress towards degree, post-graduation activity, faculty, staff and students, finances, and institutional resources. This store of information, once compiled, is shared with all of the Council members to be used as benchmark information for institutional planning.

The COPLAC institutions participated as a consortium in the National Study of Student Engagement (NSSE) in spring 2002 and spring 2003. Keene State will once again participate in the NSSE as part of the COPLAC Consortium in spring 2006. Participation as a member of the Consortium provides a useful frame of reference for interpreting what our own students are saying about their engagement in productive learning activities. KSC's continued participation in NSSE will provide institutional-level evidence of changes in student engagement resulting from implementation of the revised General Education curriculum.

In 2004-2005, the College began an effort to assess the effectiveness of its marketing and communication strategies to improve outreach to new students and the consistency of communication about the College from campus departments. The College engaged Carnegie

Communications to conduct a branding study to evaluate how the College is perceived by various constituencies and how to use that information for marketing and assessment. The consultants are working with a task force appointed by the president and representing various areas of the faculty and staff. Focus groups have included faculty and student participants, while a survey has been sent to thousands of high school students in the Northeast to determine not only what they might know about Keene State but also to learn what they find most compelling about the College. Carnegie representatives will return to campus in fall 2005 for large-group meetings to ask similar questions. They will they provide the College with three “branding statements” – language with which we can describe our most distinctive and attractive features to prospective students.

## **Summary Appraisal and Plans**

Keene State College is moving into an exciting era, as it brings together diverse initiatives that reinforce the College's mission and commitment to serve as the state's public liberal arts college. The College's new president, Dr. Helen Giles-Gee, brings significant leadership to this effort, which includes the implementation of a new General Education and four-credit curricular structure and the initiation of a comprehensive and inclusive campus planning process. The new president is committed to reinvigorating a planning process that is continuous, systematic, and tied to outcome assessment.

Dr. Giles-Gee's most immediate priority will be to recruit an exceptional academic leader to serve as the College's vice president for academic affairs. A national search to fill this position will take place during the 2005-2006 academic year.

### **Attachments:**

#### **CIHE DATA FORMS**

- A. General Education
  - 1. General Education Program Principles
  - 2. Draft Proposal for a Permanent Administrative Structure for the General Education Program
- B. Assessment Activities
  - 1. Samples from Academic Departments
  - 2. Samples from Student Affairs Departments
- C. Planning Reports
- D. Institutional Effectiveness
  - 1. Strategic Indicators
  - 2. Peer Institutions