REPORT OF THE WSCUC TEAM
SPECIAL VISIT

To Holy Names University

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The team evaluated the institution under the 2013 Standards of Accreditation and prepared this report containing its collective evaluation for consideration and action by the institution and by the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC). The formal action concerning the institution’s status is taken by the Commission and is described in a letter from the Commission to the institution. This report and the Commission letter are made available to the public by publication on the WSCUC website.
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SECTION I – OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT

A. Description of the Institution, its Accreditation History, as Relevant, and the Visit

Holy Names University (HNU) was founded in 1868 by the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary (SNJM), a Roman Catholic religious order. HNU was originally situated on the shores of Lake Merritt in Oakland, California and focused on the preparation of young women to meet the congregation’s need for qualified teachers for the schools under its jurisdiction.

Although a charter authorizing the granting of degrees was obtained from the State of California as early as 1880, secular students were first admitted to college classes in 1916. Holy Names Junior College was accredited in 1920, and in 1927 the College was recognized as a four-year degree granting institution. In 1952 the Provincial Administration and Novitiate, which had been at the Lake Merritt site, moved to Los Gatos. The College, however, continued to direct the program of collegiate studies followed by the Sisters, making the Los Gatos campus an integral part of the college organization. Another advance in academic development was made in 1955 when the College established the graduate division and inaugurated the Master of Arts program. In 1956 the college was separately incorporated from the convent as College of the Holy Names.

HNU became a charter member of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) in 1949. In 1957, the college relocated to its present sixty-acre site in the Oakland Hills about 2.5 miles southeast of the Montclair district. In 1971 the college became co-educational and shortened its name to Holy Names College, and finally Holy Names University in 2004.
Among the staff and faculty there are several sisters who teach, serve in administration, or volunteer their time to work with students. The involvement of the sisters helps to maintain the presence and the values of the founding congregation. According to the mission statement the university is rooted in the Catholic tradition and guided by the core values of the founding congregation. The vision statement encourages responsiveness to opportunities and challenges through an ongoing commitment to the liberating action, courage, and integrity characteristic of the SNJM charism. Plaques identifying SNJM values are displayed throughout the campus as visible reminders of the genesis of the core values of HNU.

HNU has experienced significant changes since its last WSCUC accreditation reaffirmation in 2016. As is detailed further in Issues 5 and 6 below, the president in 2016 left the university shortly after the reaffirmation. He was succeeded by an interim president who left in October 2017. Her successor as president was the Vice President for Finance and Administration and chief financial officer (CFO) who was moved into the role as interim president. At the time of this transition the Associate Vice President for Finance and Controller was promoted to the CFO position vacated by the interim president. In addition, the former provost and vice president of academic affairs (VPAA) left the institution at the end of the spring 2018 semester; an interim provost was appointed for a one-year contract while a search for a permanent provost and VPAA was initiated in January 2019. There was also turnover in Student Affairs, with its vice president leaving HNU in the summer of 2018. He was succeeded by the executive director of advising and learning resources.
Since 2016 there have been additional key leadership changes. The board of trustees selected a new chairman. The Office of Institutional Research was established in 2016 with the hiring of a director of institutional research. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness was formed in July 2017 with the hiring of an associate dean who also serves and the WSCUC accreditation liaison officer (ALO). It should be noted that the associate dean has been promoted to chief of staff and will continue to serve as ALO. The university is currently recruiting for a new associate dean for institutional effectiveness.

There is only one cabinet member who remains from the 2016 comprehensive visit; as previously mentioned, there is a new CFO, vice president for student affairs, and an interim provost. Further, there is a new vice president for enrollment management, and the director of advancement was added to the cabinet, as was the chief of staff. The impact on the institution of the executive leadership turnover will be addressed in Section III of this report.

The institution’s academic structure was reorganized in summer and fall 2017 and the faculty finalized the transition to the new institutional structure in spring 2018. This resulted in the establishment of four schools: The School of Liberal Arts, the School of Nursing, Health and Natural Sciences, the School of Education, and the School of Business and Applied Social Sciences. Each school is led by a dean (newly created positions). The current deans were selected from fulltime faculty in the respective academic disciplines comprising the new schools. In two of the schools, nationwide searches were initiated with new hires planned to assume those roles in July 2019.
The university currently offers 15 baccalaureate degree programs, 5 adult baccalaureate degree completion programs, 11 minors, 8 certificate and credential programs, and 6 graduate programs in weekday, weekend, and evening schedules. A limited number of distance education degree programs are also available. The university boasts of its small class sizes, varied course formats and schedules to meet the needs of adult learners, and a personalized culture. The most popular undergraduate programs are business administration, psychology, and nursing. In May 2018, HNU conferred 104 bachelor’s degrees, 97 master’s degrees, and 31 credential/certificates.

HNU attracts a very diverse student population. In 2017-18, roughly 80% of HNU’s undergraduates were from underrepresented populations. In the same year there were 22 nations represented in the student body. Of the 957 students in the 2018 class, 34% were first generation college students. Among the undergraduate population 46% live on campus.

Accreditation History

HNU has been accredited by WSCUC since 1949. WSCUC most recently reaffirmed HNU’s accreditation in 2016 for eight years. At that time, the Commission asked for this Special Visit to address issues related to retention planning, the creation and use of institutional data, educational effectiveness, assessment of core competencies, general education, and program-level learning outcomes, financial stability, and evaluation of the president and succession planning.

In response to HNU’s 2016 report, the Commission received the report, proceeded with the reaffirmation cycle and commended HNU for its social justice and outreach mission,
commitment to providing equitable access for a diverse student body, application of institutional learning outcomes, use of environmentally responsive energy sources, faculty and staff commitment to the values and mission of the university, and transparency regarding the institution’s financial standing. It also recommended that HNU develop: (1) an appropriate structure and processes to ensure the generation, reporting, and analysis of meaningful data to inform decision-making (CFR 4.1, 4.3, 4.7); (2) clear and sustainable methods of assessing student achievement with respect to the core competencies, general education, and program-level learning outcomes (CFR 2.2a, 2.2b, 2.3, 2.4); (3) continued coordination of efforts across HNU’s academic departments and student service divisions to improve the educational effectiveness of the university’s academic and co-curricular programs (CFR 2.3, 2.4, 2.6, 2.7, 2.11); (4) a comprehensive Retention Plan that defines student success and articulates the means by which to evaluate the effectiveness of retention strategies (CFR 2.10, 3.4); (5) a stable financial base, including strategic enrollment goals (CFR 3.4); and, (6) regular evaluation of the university president and succession planning for key university leaders by the board of trustees (CFR 3.9).

B. Description of Team’s Review Process

The WSCUC Special Visit team held a conference call in January 2019 to discuss the issues in the Commission Action Letter that are the focus of the Special Visit. The team reviewed the documents provided by HNU, determined what additional information to request, discussed the schedule for the visit, and developed a plan for writing the report. In February 2019, the team visited the HNU campus over the course of three days. The schedule included
meetings with all key groups and individuals, each carefully selected to provide insights on each of the six issues that were the focus of the Special Visit.

C. Institution’s Special Report: Quality and Rigor of the Report and Supporting Evidence

Overall, the institutional self-study report was well written and easy to navigate. However, the team found that the optimistic tone was not entirely reflective of the serious nature of the financial issues and enrollment trends. In particular, with issues 5 (stable financial base) and 6 (evaluation of the president and succession planning), the team found the evidence was lacking and would have liked to see more rigorous analysis of data along with better substantiated conclusions.

In terms of institutional involvement in the report preparation, an Institutional Planning Council (IPC) oversaw the final approval of the report. The IPC consists of the president’s cabinet, three faculty members (faculty senate chair, Immediate past chair, and chair-elect), two staff (staff senate chair and vice-chair), and two students (student government president and vice president). This broad representation of all campus constituencies is evidence of HNU community-wide involvement in creating and reviewing the report.

SECTION II – EVALUATION OF ISSUES UNDER THE STANDARDS

A. Issue 1: Development and implementation of processes to generate, report and analyze data

The team reviewed the following evidence to evaluate HNU’s progress on this issue: institutional surveys, Academic Affairs Assessment Plan, organizational unit analyses, data reports and summaries, HNU Institutional Strategic Plan, HNU 5-year Strategic Business Plan,
HNU Retention Plan and HNU Management and Recruitment Plan. In addition, the review team conducted interviews with the associate dean for institutional effectiveness, director of institutional research, Academic Program Review Committee, Retention Committee, vice-president for student affairs, Institutional Planning Council, and faculty.

Based on this evidence, the team concluded that, after an initial lag due to staff transitions, HNU has put significant work into improving its institutional data reporting structures and processes in order to establish a culture of assessment since the 2016 reaffirmation of accreditation visit. To support its efforts the institution increased its institutional research capacity by hiring a director of institutional research in 2016. The office also has a part-time analyst for a staff fulltime equivalent (FTE) of 1.5.

The university hired a new highly competent associate dean for institutional effectiveness in July 2017. Faculty and staff members specifically noted the associate dean’s contributions in organizing and simplifying assessment processes. The associate dean was appointed to the president’s cabinet in fall 2018 where he consistently supplies data and research. He is transitioning to chief of staff overseeing strategic planning efforts and HNU intends to hire another person as associate dean for institutional effectiveness to complete this transition. HNU also reorganized its research functions so that both the institutional research director and associate dean for institutional effectiveness report to the provost and work closely together. The current staffing level and expertise are sufficient to meet the institutional research needs of the university (CFR 4.2).
A data governance committee was established to standardize data consistency, producing a draft Institutional Data Governance Policy. Formerly, HNU’s data efforts focused on external reporting to such agencies as the U.S. Department of Education, California Bureau of Private Post-Secondary Education (BPPE) andWSCUC. With the establishment of the Office of Institutional Research, HNU is now able to meet requirements for both external and internal institutional research and analysis. Whereas data generation and reporting had been dispersed among various departments including the registrar, financial aid, and enrollment, with the hiring of the director of institutional research and development of the Institutional Data Governance Policy, HNU is moving toward a more centralized structure with institutional research overseeing the compilation and provision of institutional data.

The institution is making progress toward, but is still lacking, a comprehensive written institutional assessment plan incorporating academic and co-curricular assessment instruments and processes to guide faculty, staff, and administration in systematic ways to use data for continuous improvement (CFR 4.1). The Special Visit report cites the Academic Affairs Assessment Plan in response to this need, but it is not a comprehensive plan as it only mentions four assessment processes and does not reference numerous assessment instruments described in other portions of the institutional report and supporting materials. The Data Governance Committee recognizes this and intends on creating an institution-wide plan that includes academic affairs, student affairs, and other assessments as well as a completed data governance policy and an institutional dashboard by fall 2019.
HNU is generating data through surveys on enrollment and retention, financial data, national trends, peer comparisons, and initial program learning outcome assessments. The Academic Affairs Assessment Plan identifies four processes for generating, reporting, and analyzing data using direct and indirect evidence of student learning, satisfaction, and attitudes. These processes are the annual academic program review, five-year academic program review, Higher Educations Data Sharing Consortium (HEDS) Senior Survey, and a student experience survey (graduate & undergraduate). One of the observations from the 2016 team report was the reliance on survey data as assessment evidence and the very low survey response rates. While reliance on indirect assessment survey data remains high, HNU has implemented mechanisms to improve response rates. For example, in 2016-2017 the undergraduate student experience survey had a 40% response rate, the graduate survey a 30% response rate, and the HEDS senior survey a 93% response rate.

The Office of Institutional Research has established effective processes for disseminating data to constituents (CFR 4.2). Faculty and staff report that data relevant to topics presented in monthly forums are provided and explained. For example, the institution used an open forum to present student survey results. In addition, the Marketing and Student Recruitment Plan and the 5-year Strategic Business Plan relied on the data provided by the Office of Institutional Research. Another example of the use of data is the program review data packets provided faculty that include data supporting decisions on academic programs such as, enrollment trends, program costs, retention and other relevant program and institutional data. The institutional research webpage provides information to constituents and the public through
annual fact books and executive summaries of student surveys. The Special Visit report references campus dashboards but only provided data reports on financial aid awarding and summer student admits dated 2016 rather than a current and fully developed dashboard. A comprehensive institutional dashboard providing the board, administration and others quick access to institutional data and key performance indicators is under development and should be completed in fall 2019.

HNU is in the emerging stages of producing in-depth analysis of its data (CFR 4.2). Presentations of student survey data demonstrate analysis supported by thorough executive summaries available on the website. The Retention Plan provided retention and graduation data with minimal analysis although the institution did provide retention reports from 2016 and 2017 that fed into the development of the plan. The 2016 documents provided very little analysis beyond data presentation. The 2017 documents included some thoughtful reflection on the data particularly regarding the poorer than average retention in the 2014 cohort and the effect of high school grade point average (GPA) on retention. However, there is no evidence of data being used to identify why students leave HNU and the poor retention of students between the second and third year is not addressed. Institution-wide organizational unit analyses were conducted for administrative units in fall 2017 to help inform the Strategic Business Plan. Each analysis includes a summary of the department’s purpose, financial impact, current and future needs of personnel, peer comparisons with equivalent departments at other institutions, and an inventory of programs and services.
HNU is using the data it generates and subsequent analysis to improve programs and services as well as informing planning efforts (CFR 4.3). Examples of closing the loop include the creation of a food pantry and a bias response protocol resulting from diversity survey results. HNU engaged an external company for market analysis in 2017 to identify potential new majors and increase enrollment. This analysis informed the Strategic Marketing and Student Recruitment Plan which also references a significant amount and variety of data from trends in the student admission’s funnel, enrollment, retention, and financials, as well as student surveys, the organizational unit analyses, external consultant reports, and national projections on high school graduation trends.

HNU’s revised program review process expects faculty to review enrollment trends, credit hours taught, program retention, graduation, and job placement rates, resources and budgets, faculty demographics and qualifications, and student perceptions from surveys. Much of these data are provided by the Office of Institutional Research. However, a review of the submitted program review drafts showed inconsistent use of these data; the revised process is in its first year of implementation.

HNU’s planning processes have been in progress since the 2016 visit (CFR 4.6). The university engaged in a year-long process in the fall 2016 to develop a Strategic Actions and Positioning Plan in light of enrollment declines and fiscal challenges. This planning effort suffered due to the large-scale changes in administration and personnel turnover. The Institutional Planning Council (IPC), which includes the cabinet, faculty and staff senate representatives, and students, continues to develop the strategic plan. The IPC recognized
weaknesses with the prior plan and re-engaged the process in spring 2018 producing six goals with connected plans to operationalize each goal. The goals focus on academic scholarship, multicultural competency, educational practices and technology, community and global engagement, institutional identity, and student enrollment for financial viability. Sub-committees are working on each goal by developing action plans, anticipated outcomes, indicators, responsible personnel, timelines, and costs; their work is to be completed in spring 2019. The IPC stated that data was used to develop the plan including student surveys, enrollment trends, program reviews, market studies, and learning outcome assessments. Sub-committees are working with the institutional research office to identify assessment tools to gather the necessary data to evaluate progress on the plan.

Due to the financial challenges facing HNU, the institution created a 5-year Strategic Business Plan (SBP) that elaborates on the Strategic Plan’s goal related to financial viability (goal 6). A number of data pieces informed the SBP including student surveys, program enrollment and financial margins, market studies, inquiry and applicant numbers, and the organizational unit assessments. This plan was primarily the work of the cabinet and went through numerous drafts with feedback from the board and selected internal stakeholders. The board insisted on key performance indicators and clear action plans on how the 5-year SBP will be operationalized and assessed as well as personnel lines of accountability.

As the above indicates, the team found evidence that HNU has prioritized improving its use of data for decision-making by hiring qualified staff and developing improved processes to strengthen data generation, dissemination, and analysis. The research functions have worked
to create an institutional culture that values assessment by emphasizing the meaning of data generated and how it can be used to improve student success. The institution is still in the early stages of developing a culture of continuous improvement and much is still in the “plan to do” phase. It will be important for HNU to maintain the momentum created by its response to the WSCUC recommendation by consistently applying assessment instruments and conducting deeper analysis of the data generated, then, tying analysis to planning.

B. Issue 2 – the assessment of core competencies, general education, and program-level learning outcomes.

The team found that since the last WSCUC visit in 2016, HNU has made progress in building the educational effectiveness infrastructure. Specifically, there is a good start on a program review process, the creation of an annual assessment template, and the adoption of Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) VALUE rubrics for the assessment of student learning in general education (GE) and the core competencies. However, the team found that these efforts are in very early stages, thus not yet embraced consistently across the campus. The extent to which assessment is consistent and embedded in the institutional culture is a concern.

There is promising work on the program review process with the creation of the new five-year program review guidelines. It involves the program faculty doing an in-depth look at their mission, faculty, curriculum, resources, including a summary of the previous five years’ annual assessments. Further, as mentioned above in Issue 1, the program faculty utilize institutional research data on student success that informs the self-study report. The program
review process also includes an external reviewer with subject matter expertise who reviews the self-study report and supporting documentation. The Program Review Committee developed a rubric that is used to evaluate each stage of the program review process to provide feedback to the program faculty (e.g. mission, curriculum improvement and outcomes, resource management, external review). The department faculty and staff use program review self-study and the feedback from the external reviewer and Program Review Committee to develop future goals and action plans.

The program review future goals and action plans are reviewed and approved by the vice president for academic affairs (VPAA), who then reports the program review plan and findings to the Academic Affairs Committee and the board of trustees. One year after the program review there is a follow up meeting between the program’s leadership and VPAA. This helps ensure the process is meaningful and gauges the impact on resources, enrollment and other key metrics.

While there are only two programs that have undergone a full program review under this new policy, there is a schedule for all departments to go through the program review process. Once the first full cycle of program review has been completed by all academic programs, the program review process should become institutionalized and thus provide valuable information for the continuous improvement of all academic programs.

The faculty have also initiated a process for annual program level assessment including the creation of a detailed template for assessment plans. The evidence provided shows that all academic programs turned in assessment plans for 2017-18. Furthermore, the AAC&U VALUE
rubrics are being implemented to provide a basis for evaluating student work. In terms of
general education and core competencies assessment both are in very early stages of being
assessed. For example, quantitative reasoning has only recently been defined, thus not yet
assessed. Further, while the institutional report says “the institution has now established the
expectation that all learning outcomes (both institutional and WSCUC Core Competencies)” will
be assessed, but at the time of the Special Visit there is little evidence this is being done
consistently across all undergraduate academic programs.

Thus, while the associate dean for institutional effectiveness has provided tools to
increase faculty awareness of program learning outcomes, core competencies and GE
assessment what is needed is the implementation and follow through by faculty in measuring
these student learning outcomes across all academic programs. An educational effectiveness
culture of continuous improvement through assessment of student learning outcomes, analysis
of results and program improvement is still in the early stages of development.

C. Issue 3: The coordination of academic and student service programs to improve
educational effectiveness, including the results of the assessment of student success
efforts

The team reviewed evidence from the Student Affairs Assessment Plan, various student
affairs assessment instruments and artifacts, and interviews conducted with the associate dean
for institutional effectiveness, director of institutional research, vice president for student
affairs, and student affairs personnel to evaluate HNU’s progress on issue 3.
HNU has made significant progress on the assessment of student services that will lead to improvements in student success and the student’s educational experience. The institution has identified and improved upon existing practices, putting appropriate procedures in place with an annual assessment plan that leads to evaluation across student affairs offices and programs (CFR 2.11, 4.3). The assessment plan identifies the mission, initiatives, key indicators, and assessment tools used for multiple areas within student affairs.

HNU is drawing from the Council for Advancement of Standards (CAS) framework which provides national standards and benchmarks in its approach to this process. The Special Visit report provided numerous examples of assessment related to student services conducted mostly during the Academic Year (AY) 2017-2018 and identified improvements already made or to be implemented. The various assessments display an understanding of effective assessment processes, data analysis, and connecting assessment to action plans. Many of the assessments rely on survey data of student perceptions and satisfaction, but measures of direct evidence such as student participation numbers are also referenced.

Coordination between academic and student services has primarily focused on the first-year experience course which includes a Connections Project Lab (CALP 97). This is a required first-year course managed by both academic affairs and student affairs. The course includes a final project where students reflect on their learning gained through a volunteer service experience, identifying a personal mission and their commitment to the community service values of HNU. HNU’s Center for Social Justice and Civic Engagement began partnering with academic affairs in the assessment of the HNU civic engagement and social justice institutional
student learning outcomes within the CALP 97 course in the fall 2018 semester. Using the AAC&U’s VALUE rubrics, evaluators are treating these freshman assessments as a baseline measurement of student performance and identifying value added changes in curriculum and co-curricular programs to help students achieve intended outcomes by graduation. HNU will begin assessing these outcomes at the senior level to measure students’ growth (CFR 2.4, 2.6).

In addition to the CALP 97 course the Center for Social Justice and Civic Engagement has collaborated with faculty to create service learning opportunities for HNU students in Mississippi and Mexico City. The related courses for these learning opportunities embed and assess civic engagement and social justice student learning outcomes. HNU anticipates its academic reorganization under the new administrative dean structure will continue to improve communication and coordination between the academic affairs and student affairs services.

D. Issue 4: Comprehensive retention plan with enrollment data

The team reviewed evidence from the HNU Retention Plan, retention data and analyses, and conducted interviews with the associate dean for institutional effectiveness, director of institutional research, and retention committee to evaluate HNU’s progress on this issue.

HNU began work on its Retention Plan in summer 2016 in response to the WSCUC recommendation and completed the plan during the 2017-2018 academic year. The plan is well-developed and should serve the institution as it is implemented (CFR 2.10). The Retention Plan is the work of the Retention Committee and involved many stakeholders. The Retention Committee work is done primarily by the four subcommittees - academic affairs, admissions, financial services, and student experiences. It defines student success for HNU’s context,
includes goals to be achieved, and charts each subcommittee’s action plans. The action plans address substantive issues related to student success and lay out appropriate and thoughtful approaches. For example, the Retention Committee recognized development math and subsequent courses resulted in lower retention and barriers to student success. Faculty have been working with the Retention Committee to redesign the courses.

Each of the subcommittees identifies barriers and challenges to student success and these form the basis of the committee’s interventions to alleviate barriers to student retention. Many of the initial actions that were identified by the subcommittees during the creation of the Retention Plan have been examined and steps taken to assess, analyze and make improvements. Through this process the Retention Committee has identified demographic populations they missed, such as transfer students, and areas that were not originally identified as areas needing improvement. The next step is to assess the early data on these initial improvements that have been made to determine whether these actions have yielded the intended results. The subcommittees remain active and are continuing their work tracking progress on the strategies and identifying new actions to take. The Retention Committee acknowledges the need for the plan to evolve based on the student population as HNU increases its focus on transfer, commuter, and adult students.

The Retention Committee reviewed numerous data pieces, both internal institutional data and comparison data from peer institutions, in developing the plan (CFR 4.2). These data were used to identify trends and inform institutional retention and graduation goals which increase over time. Institutional data includes retention and graduation rates for freshman
cohorts disaggregated by four categories – Pell Grant recipients, first generation, athletic scholarship recipients, and underrepresented racial minority (CFR 2.10). Additional disaggregation will be helpful in the future, especially rates for transfer students since the institution is targeting this population in its recruitment strategy. In interviews, subcommittees reported referencing additional data such as student surveys and research on courses with high failure rates (i.e. students receive grades of D, F, or W) to develop action plans.

The plan also provides data covering fall cohorts from 2009 to 2016 and tracks retention up to five years and graduation rates that provided baselines for the committee. Year one to year two retention rates for most freshman demographics ranged between low sixties to high seventies percentages averaging 72% with no discernable trend. The rate for the most recent cohort included in the Retention Plan (2016) is 81%, markedly higher than the prior year. However, data provided just before the visit shows a decline in freshman retention down to 67.6% for the 2017 cohort.

It must be noted that many of the graduation rate figures in the document provided just prior to the visit did not agree with the data in the Retention Plan. According to the most recent report, the average of 6-year graduation rates from 2009 to 2012 cohorts is 45.3%. According to the Retention Plan, the average of 6-year graduation rates from 2009, 2010, and 2011 cohorts was only 34%. It is unclear whether this inconsistency is due to inaccuracies, differing definitions, or exceptions of some students in one of the reports. In any case, it is important for HNU to ensure consistency and accuracy of data in its reports as it grows the institutional research function.
Missing from the Retention Plan is an in-depth breakdown of the data. The retention data continues to show significant attrition of second year students; this issue is not reported or addressed in any of the reports or plans the team reviewed. In interviews, members of the retention committee communicated awareness of this concern and have begun identifying reasons such as students not yet selecting a major, no longer a part of the intensive year one focus, and the need for earlier faculty mentoring.

HNU presented a number of supporting retention and graduation analyses conducted in 2016 and 2017 breaking the data into segments such as ethnicity, gender, housing status, high school GPA, and major (CFR 2.10). These data analyses reviewed 2009 to 2015 cohorts. The 2017 analysis was much more thorough than 2016 which only looked at retention and provided minimal reflection on the meaning of the data. The 2017 analyses identified demographics that are more successful such as international students, athletes, students with a high school GPA above 3.0, and those living in residence housing, as well as groups less successful including Asian students and commuters. The 2017 report demonstrates thoughtful consideration of some data elements such as the poorer than average retention in the 2014 cohort (perhaps tied to late application dates), and high school GPA. Similar analysis was not conducted in 2018, but the institutional research office is planning on taking over the creation of an annual examination of these key metrics. It is important for HNU to establish processes for continually updating and thoroughly analyzing data as it implements its plan in order to determine the effect of the various initiatives related to student success (CFR 2.10, 4.2).
Since HNU only recently completed its Retention Plan, there is a limited track record of results to analyze. HNU’s Special Visit report and interviews with the retention committee did highlight numerous actions the institution has taken to improve student success. The university joined the “Yes We Must Coalition” which focuses on how to support low-income students by strengthening early warning processes to identify and intervene with at-risk students and conducting exit interviews with departing students to collect information on reasons for their decision to withdraw. The academic subcommittee, based on its review of courses with high D, F, W rates, led to changes in the curriculum such as the physical science for non-science majors’ course and the developmental math course by adopting the Carnegie Math Pathways. The student experiences subcommittee and student affairs have increased student voice and involvement through student representation on most institutional committees. These and numerous other actions demonstrate HNU’s institution-wide renewed focus on examining and improving student success.

E. Issue 5 – Evidence of an improved and stable financial base reflected, in part, in the achievement of strategic enrollment goals

Because the Special Visit report did not provide sufficient evidence to judge financial stability, the team requested numerous documents both before and during the visit. The information provided confirmed that this issue remains critical for HNU.

For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2018 HNU had total revenue of $29,414,042 and total expenses of $30,645,477. The total loss from operations (unrestricted) was <$7,795,758>, while the net loss, including restricted funds, totaled <$1,231,435>. HNU’s expenses have
exceeded revenue in four of the last five years with the one exception of fiscal year 2015-2016 when HNU received total contributions of over $34 million, most of which were restricted funds. HNU’s total assets at the end of fiscal year 2017-2018 were $70,601,687 and debt of over $14 million. At the end of fiscal year 2017-2018 the statement of financial position showed temporarily and permanently restricted funds were $54 million while the operations (unrestricted funds) had a negative balance of <$2,607,947> (see Appendix A for a statement of activities trend).

During the prior WSCUC review in March 2016, the HNU administration, at that time, had indicated that a Strategic Business Plan (2016) was being implemented and would address HNU’s identified needs for a revised overall strategic budgeting process aligning HNU’s limited resources to their immediate strategic goals of increased enrollment and creating increased cash flow. According to the current HNU administration, the earlier SBP, as developed by the previous administration, included enrollment numbers that were over estimated by approximately 50%, resulting in a loss of <$6.3M> in operations and largely depleting cash needed for the day to day operations through the year ended June 30, 2016.

When the newly installed HNU administrative team uncovered this serious issue, they began development of both a new institutional Strategic Plan (SP) and a 5-Year Strategic Business Plan (SBP). The SBP can be characterized as a turnaround plan focusing on enrollment and financial sustainability. While great strides have been made by the new administration in this area, HNU remains in a serious and precarious financial position due to the previously over inflated enrollment goals and overall poor budget planning. The current administration must
execute on its new and current 5-year SBP in order to bring the university back into a healthier financial state.

Additional information provided to the Special Visit team illustrated the fragile cash position that HNU was struggling with during 2016, as it was determined that sometime during the period of June to December of that year there would not be sufficient cash to cover the cost of operations. Efforts were made to immediately establish a line of credit in order to cover the projected cash deficits.

Since the WSCUC site visit in March 2016, HNU has continued to incur losses totaling <$14.6M> from its day to day operations (unrestricted) for the three-year period covering fiscal years ending June 2016, June 2017, and June 2018. In addition to this amount, another operations loss of approximately <$5.8M> is projected for the current year ending June 30, 2019 by HNU. This translates to total cumulative losses from operations of approximately <$23.4M> over the past 5 years. This is a significant amount considering HNU’s total annual budgeted revenues for a single year, 2018-2019, total $25.6M. The result of these repeated and extensive losses has meant the erosion of the entire unrestricted fund balance, now in a negative position totaling <$2.6M> at year end June 30, 2018 (see Appendix B for a statement of financial position trend). If the projected loss of <$5.8M> in the current year occurs, it would create a total negative unrestricted fund balance of approximately <$8.4M> on June 30, 2019. Unrestricted fund balance or “operations” represents the primary measurement of fiscal health and is the driver for the key ratios used by the Department of Education to determine the continued awarding of federal financial aid, banking and loan covenants, and finally to the
readers of the financial statements when determining the overall financial stability of the university.

Further clarity regarding HNU’s urgent financial challenges is provided in the disclosures from HNU’s independent audits for the last three years. These disclosures describe the institutions overall standing, along with the primary cause of HNU’s fiscal instability, and the plan moving forward to bring HNU back into solid fiscal standing. For example, Note 2 in the Audited Financial Statements for the years ended June 30 2016, 2017 and 2018 reference the, “significant decline in new enrollments and student retention causing a substantial loss from operations and negative cash flow from operating activities for the years ended June 30, 2017 and June 30, 2018.” It also describes the Strategic Business Plan and measures taken to improve liquidity such as the $16M loan in the form of a line of credit using endowment investments as collateral.

The line of credit mentioned in Note 4 of the Audited Financial Statements, listed an outstanding balance owed at June 30, 2018 of $14,317,978, which would have been due in December of 2018. However, HNU secured an extension on this line of credit with a new due date of December 2019, and increased the line of credit loan amount to $20M. Per the “HNU Line of Credit” worksheet, nearly the entire $20M is forecasted to be drawn down by July 2019. HNU expects to use these funds for operations through December of 2019. The institution, as it is currently operating, is fully dependent upon this line of credit to meet its monthly operating needs. Drawdowns from the line of credit have been made every month since April 2017. Draws each month have ranged from a minimum of $42K in October 2017, to a maximum thus
far of $2.6M in June 2017. The full $20M line of credit will be due to the issuing bank at the end of this calendar year, in December 2019.

Evidence from the Special Visit report and interviews indicates the plan for managing the payoff of the line of credit, funding future operating cash needs, and implementing the current SBP is to take on additional debt in the form of long-term financing, in the approximate amount of $45M. The Special Visit report details that the president and vice president for finance and administration have been working with Prager & Co., a full-service investment banking and bond trading firm, to find potential lenders. The intent is to acquire the financing for 30 years, with interest-only payments for the first three years. The collateral for this financing is the 60 acre, unencumbered, HNU campus, recently appraised during this due diligence phase for securing a long term loan.

These funds will be used to pay off the line of credit, provide $9.65M in new program investment, and provide additional operating cash designed to help meet the goals in the SBP. Further activities to ensure the success of the SBP include:

- Expanding online courses & programs within the next 1-2 years.
- Resourcing faculty to work on adding new programs (e.g. Master of Social Work (MSW), Master in Business Administration (MBA) with an accounting concentration, Bachelor of Science (BS) with a health science track.).
- Creating a fully staffed advancement team that works to secure government, foundation and major donor gifts and grants.
- Working with third-party developers on renovation, replacement or additions to
residential housing facilities to better accommodate needs of a growing student body.

The institution complied and voluntarily ranked itself through the use of the Composite Financial Index (CFI) tool (unrelated to the Department of Education Financial Responsibility Composite Score,) which measures the financial stability of the institution based upon four key calculations with various weightings. A CFI score of 3 is the minimum threshold of institutional financial health, while a score of less than 3 indicates a need for serious attention to the institution’s financial condition. For the past five years HNU has been below the minimum threshold of 3, with scores as follows; 0.6, 0.5, 0.1, 0.5, and 0.3 for the years 2013-2014, 2014-2015, 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and 2017-2018 respectively. A score in the range of 1.00 to 2.00 is classified as “Re-engineer the Institution,” while the scores posted by HNU for the past 5 years fall into the range of 1.00 to 0.00 and the corresponding classification of “Assess Viability to Survive.” Due to the additional <$5.8M> decrease projected, the projected CFI score will place HNU within this same range for the 6th year in a row by June 30, 2019.

Another ratio, the Department of Education Financial Responsibility Composite Score (different from the CFI Score discussed above) which the Department of Education calculates for all institutions also points to lack of financial stability. Due to the large loss projected for June 30, 2019, and the growing negative unrestricted/operations fund balance, HNU’s score is projected to be below the threshold of 1.5, with a current estimate of 1.3. This will most likely require HNU to be put on notice with the Department of Education and require them to comply with the federal cash monitoring process. HNU has been below this threshold previously during
of education and required them to follow the prescribed federal cash monitoring process until their score came back above the 1.5 minimum requirement due to the receipt of a $7M unrestricted gift to HNU. In order to meet the score requirements and stay above or at 1.5, the day to day operations of HNU will need to reverse dramatically and begin returning significant operational increases for several years in order to offset the increasing negative fund balance and stay above the minimum requirements as outlined by the Department of Education.

F. Issue 6: The regular evaluation of the president and succession plans for all key university leaders

The board of trustees reports that they are conducting annual reviews of the president and have created policies and procedures for the performance review process. The Special Visit report describes the turnover in the role, indicating that the president in 2016 was evaluated and subsequently chose to end his tenure at the institution. An interim president served during academic year 2016-2017, and went through a full review by the board. Following the review the president decided to resign in 2017. The current president, who was the vice president of finance, was then appointed as interim president. He has served since November 2017 and has undergone a full performance evaluation by the board of trustees. Another full review is scheduled for fall 2019. (CFR 3.9)

While there does seem to be progress in the area of performance evaluation, it appears that succession planning is only now being addressed by the current administration, and thus not completed as requested in the previous WSCUC accreditation reaffirmation (2016).
Turnover in every administrative position, with the exception of one, has made this difficult, but in fact supports the need for succession planning as recommended by the Commission. The Special Visit report describes how individuals in other executive positions were identified to succeed former cabinet members. It also asserts that regular performance evaluations of staff and cabinet members ensure that there are qualified personnel from which to choose should there be a cabinet level opening. While the process used to deal with the high level of turnover in the cabinet focused on obtaining the best individuals for the positions, there is not sufficient evidence of effective succession planning. It is important for HNU to create more purposeful succession plans to guard against loss of forward progress should key executives leave the institution. (CFR 3.2)

SECTION III – OTHER TOPICS, AS APPROPRIATE

The review team noted that in addition to the six Special Visit issues there were two additional themes running throughout the Special Visit review process that should be acknowledged: 1) executive leadership turnover, and, 2) effective academic leadership. (CFR 3.6, 3.7 and 3.10)

A. Executive Leadership Turnover

As mentioned above in Issue 6, since the last WSCUC comprehensive review in 2016, HNU has experienced significant turnover in key leadership roles. Because of the instability in executive leadership the university has not had the momentum to make significant progress in several key areas required for sustaining institutional capacity and educational effectiveness. Since the 2016 visit there have been two presidential changes and the president leading the
institution during the Special Visit was interim. However, it should be noted that on March 22, 2019, following the Special Visit the board of trustees announced the selection of the interim president as the new full-time president. The provost has also changed, and the current provost was brought to HNU on a one-year contract while a search for a new provost is conducted. (CFR 3.6)

The chief financial officer (CFO) has changed twice. The first change occurred when a new and experienced CFO was brought in to handle the financial crisis. Quickly following his arrival he was moved into the interim president position when the former president resigned. The CFO role is currently held by a recently hired associate vice president and controller who has some but limited higher education experience. There have also been leadership changes in the key roles of student affairs and enrollment management. (CFR 3.8)

Further, the board of trustees is preparing for significant changes designed to increase the professionalization and effectiveness of the board. The board currently has thirteen members with a very limited range of skills. The board recognizes the improvements that must be made both in terms of membership and oversight responsibilities. The board has designed a membership rubric that identifies the professional skills, experience and networks needed to guide the university to a more financially stable future. The board is actively recruiting new members and updating policies and procedures. (CFR 3.9)

HNU faculty and staff indicate that changes have been positive. However, there are more personnel changes coming to a community already exhausted by administrative and staff turnover. This includes the selection of a new provost and some key personnel will be changing.
roles or accepting additional leadership responsibilities. For example, the individual who has
been leading the faculty in building the educational effectiveness infrastructure is being moved
to the chief of staff position to monitor and guide the implementation of the Strategic Business
Plan. While both roles are crucial it is important that the new provost is able to maintain
momentum on the excellent work begun in the area of assessing educational effectiveness.

B. Effective Academic Leadership

Another area that must be addressed is the necessity of faculty reestablishing effective
academic leadership. When the depth of the financial crisis came to light in 2016, several cost
savings decisions regarding academic programs were made. Faculty believe they were not given
an opportunity to participate during this important period of decision-making. It was noted in
the Special Visit open faculty forum that in 2016 the previous provost commented, “Faculty
consultation is being suspended.” This was in reference to decisions regarding some academic
programs being eliminated and the initiative to reshape the remaining academic programs into
four new schools overseen by deans. (CFR 3.10)

Some of the faculty believe that they have not been able to reestablish a faculty voice
on campus and key decisions are still being made without significant faculty input. For example,
the review team asked the faculty if they were aware of the current financial condition of the
institution. Some faculty indicated that they knew the university was operating in a deficit but
did not seem to understand what this means in terms of financial viability of the institution. The
faculty indicated that the current president’s forums and emails regarding the state of the
university were much appreciated but that the time has come for faculty to re-engage in institutional decision-making. (CFR 3.10)

SECTION IV – FINDINGS, COMMENDATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Following the review of HNU’s accreditation history, Special Visit report and supporting documents, supplemented by a campus visit to meet with the board, administrators, faculty and staff, the review team has developed the following commendations and recommendations.

Commendations

The team commends HNU in particular for the following:

1. Significant improvement in the institutional research function since the 2016 WSCUC reaffirmation of accreditation review. This includes the formation of and resource support for an office of institutional research and progress in moving toward a data driven culture and evidence based decision-making.

2. Creative approaches by the leadership of student affairs to assess educational effectiveness and the quality of the student experience including a wide range of surveys and adoption of CAS standards.

3. The collaboration between academic and student affairs linking curricular and co-curricular experiences in a purposeful way in the First Year Experience course.

4. The thoroughness and quality of the HNU Retention Plan which forms the basis of a robust action plan for monitoring and improving student retention.

5. Program review and assessment templates and formalized processes and policies forming the basis of a continuous improvement academic culture.
Recommendations

The team recommends that HNU address the following:

1. Promote shared governance whereby institutional leadership increases and improves communication to and decision-making with its faculty regarding the complexity of the strategic and financial challenges facing the university. (CFR 1.7, 1.8, 3.4, and 3.10)

2. Create a contingency plan in the case that the long-term financing cannot be secured prior to the expiration of the current line of credit in December 2019 and/or the cash projections in the Strategic Business Plan are not met. Institution leadership and the board of trustees are to consistently monitor key financial and enrollment metrics. (CFR 3.4, 4.2, 4.3, 4.5 and 4.6)

3. Urgently operationalize the HNU Marketing and Recruitment Plan and branding initiative and acquire/develop internal marketing competency to assess the effectiveness of the marketing efforts. (CFR 3.4, 3.7, 4.5 and 4.7)

4. Structure a board of trustees that reflects broader expertise and greater diversity. The board should exemplify governance best practices including presidential evaluation and succession planning, board self-evaluation, fiduciary oversight responsibilities, risk management, policies and procedures, and monitoring changes in the higher education environment. (CFR 3.9, 4.3, 4.6 and 4.7)

5. Complete development of an institution-wide assessment plan and processes. Ensure sustainable implementation of assessment of institutional performance and educational
effectiveness that reflects a culture of continuous improvement and data driven
decision-making (CFR 2.2, 2.3, 2.6, 2.7 2.11, and 4.1)

6. Determine and address the causes of administrative, staff and faculty turnover to retain
qualified personnel. Develop succession plans for key administrative, staff and faculty
positions to ensure continuity with ongoing operations. (CFR 3.2, 3.4, 3.8, and 4.6)

7. Empower the new academic leadership during this period of transition to resource and
shape the academic administration to operationalize the Institutional Strategic Plan and
the Five-year Strategic Business Plan while fostering a culture, policies and practices
involving faculty in shared governance. (CFR 3.4, 3.6, 3.10, and 4.6)
### Holy Names University

**Statement of Financial Position Trend**

(created by Special Visit team)

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<td>Investments</td>
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<td>51,623,602</td>
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<td>Intangible Assets</td>
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<td><strong>Total Assets</strong></td>
<td>29,391,205</td>
<td>31,126,901</td>
<td>30,178,880</td>
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<td>34,360,470</td>
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<th>Liabilities</th>
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<td>Accounts Payable</td>
<td>890,840</td>
<td>920,793</td>
<td>1,420,737</td>
<td>1,346,400</td>
<td>1,305,955</td>
<td>1,489,792</td>
<td>1,171,146</td>
<td>1,489,093</td>
<td>1,548,149</td>
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<td>Deferred Revenue</td>
<td>1,060,491</td>
<td>1,108,584</td>
<td>802,713</td>
<td>819,942</td>
<td>1,010,025</td>
<td>1,460,612</td>
<td>2,359,864</td>
<td>2,073,500</td>
<td>2,045,294</td>
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<td>Tax Exempt Bond Liabilities</td>
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<td>3,850,000</td>
<td>3,615,000</td>
<td>6,649,929</td>
<td>6,221,213</td>
<td>5,499,698</td>
<td>4,704,735</td>
<td>10,625,213</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>Secured Mortgages &amp; NP to unrelated 3rd parties</td>
<td>2,515,300</td>
<td>2,785,346</td>
<td>1,643,075</td>
<td>154,166</td>
<td>129,166</td>
<td>104,166</td>
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<td>14,297,978</td>
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<td>Other Liabilities</td>
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<td>727,280</td>
<td>683,999</td>
<td>600,083</td>
<td>633,869</td>
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<td>8,254,971</td>
<td>9,697,717</td>
<td>9,350,358</td>
<td>9,154,351</td>
<td>8,869,614</td>
<td>14,636,831</td>
<td>18,623,922</td>
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(Information for Revenues/Expenses obtained from 990's)
## Holy Names University
### Statement of Activities Trend
#### Special Visit Follow Up (created by Special Visit team)

### Revenues 2010/2011

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gross Tuition and Fees</td>
<td>23,436,206</td>
<td>34.3%</td>
<td>27,990,457</td>
<td>32.5%</td>
<td>29,640,680</td>
<td>31.4%</td>
<td>30,522,622</td>
<td>32.8%</td>
<td>27,792,631</td>
<td>36.6%</td>
<td>25,268,789</td>
<td>32.8%</td>
<td>27,792,631</td>
<td>42.8%</td>
<td>10,173,349</td>
<td>43.9%</td>
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<td>Scholarships/Aid</td>
<td>(8,038,496)</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
<td>(9,092,115)</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
<td>(9,307,234)</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
<td>(10,015,227)</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
<td>(10,174,621)</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
<td>(10,816,577)</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>(10,173,349)</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
<td>(10,173,349)</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Net Tuition and Fees</td>
<td>15,397,710</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
<td>18,898,342</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
<td>20,333,446</td>
<td>21.6%</td>
<td>20,507,395</td>
<td>22.1%</td>
<td>17,618,010</td>
<td>23.9%</td>
<td>14,452,212</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
<td>12,991,996</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
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<td>Education Activities</td>
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<td>3.5%</td>
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<td>2.7%</td>
<td>2,474,791</td>
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<tr>
<td>Auxiliary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Revenue</td>
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<td>100%</td>
<td>26,677,521</td>
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<td>31,961,785</td>
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<td>28,798,365</td>
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<td>29,212,938</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>29,414,042</td>
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### Expenses 2010/2011

|                        | % of Total Exp | % of Total Exp | % of Total Exp | % of Total Exp | % of Total Exp | % of Total Exp | % of Total Exp | % of Total Exp | % of Total Exp | % of Total Exp | % of Total Exp | % of Total Exp | % of Total Exp | % of Total Exp | % of Total Exp |
|------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Personnel Costs & Benefits | 13,789,359 | 59.7%          | 16,108,503 | 62.2%          | 18,568,072 | 60.6%          | 19,711,186 | 61.3%          | 19,742,699 | 58.7%          | 18,226,735 | 59.9%          |                |                |                |                |
| Professional Services  | 172,837       |                | 139,277     |                | 104,148      |                | 189,418      |                | 317,115      |                | 332,186      |                |                |                |                |                |
| Supplies & Printing    | 1,429,027     |                | 1,567,036   |                | 1,942,546    |                | 2,238,443    |                | 1,715,831    |                | 1,522,641    |                |                |                |                |                |
| Travel                 | 809,841       |                | 975,036     |                | 1,338,998    |                | 1,522,990    |                | 1,615,750    |                | 1,157,959    |                |                |                |                |                |
| Advertising & Promotion| 289,824       |                | 342,938     |                | 560,295      |                | 571,658      |                | 345,087      |                | 715,730      |                |                |                |                |                |
| Information Technology | 265,045       |                | 379,446     |                | 470,521      |                | 502,240      |                | 464,081      |                | 605,396      |                |                |                |                |                |
| Facility Rental & Maintenance | 1,883,963 |                | 2,267,192   |                | 2,139,185    |                | 2,065,498    |                | 1,963,889    |                | 1,891,634    |                |                |                |                |                |
| Taxes, Insurance & Bad Debt | 595,651    |                | 736,660     |                | 955,411      |                | 243,798      |                | 145,150      |                | 996,992      |                |                |                |                |                |
| Auxiliary              | 944,087       |                | 1,029,336   |                | 1,223,271    |                | 0             |                | 1,253,339    |                | 1,123,535    |                |                |                |                |                |
| Debt Service           | 321,061       |                | 301,978     |                | 238,411      |                | 226,017      |                | 201,400      |                | 260,422      |                |                |                |                |                |
| Depreciation & Amortization | 1,498,498 |                | 1,568,156   |                | 1,734,766    |                | 2,164,109    |                | 2,151,177    |                | 2,091,603    |                |                |                |                |                |
| Other Expenses         | 1,103,966     |                | 475,871     |                | 1,370,012    |                | 2,724,290    |                | 1,448,361    |                | 1,662,068    |                |                |                |                |                |

### Overall Net Increase/(Decrease)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>154,356</th>
<th>(197,862)</th>
<th>(2,565,514)</th>
<th>26,295,154</th>
<th>(1,210,873)</th>
<th>(1,231,435)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall Net Increase/(Decrease) Unrestricted Funds/Operations</td>
<td>769,417</td>
<td>331,149</td>
<td>874,908</td>
<td>852,060</td>
<td>(3,092,442)</td>
<td>(6,392,588)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall Enrollment History</td>
<td>617</td>
<td>603</td>
<td>598</td>
<td>559</td>
<td>530</td>
<td>456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>291</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult</td>
<td>495</td>
<td>463</td>
<td>454</td>
<td>438</td>
<td>393</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>1331</td>
<td>1353</td>
<td>1343</td>
<td>1187</td>
<td>1049</td>
<td>866</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Information for Revenues/Expenses obtained from 990's, with the exception of 18/19, which the totals were taken from the audited financial statements since 990 wasn't available)