

ASSURANCE SECTION

REPORT OF A COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION VISIT

TO

Missouri State University
Springfield, MO

November 7-9, 2005

FOR

The Higher Learning Commission
A Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools

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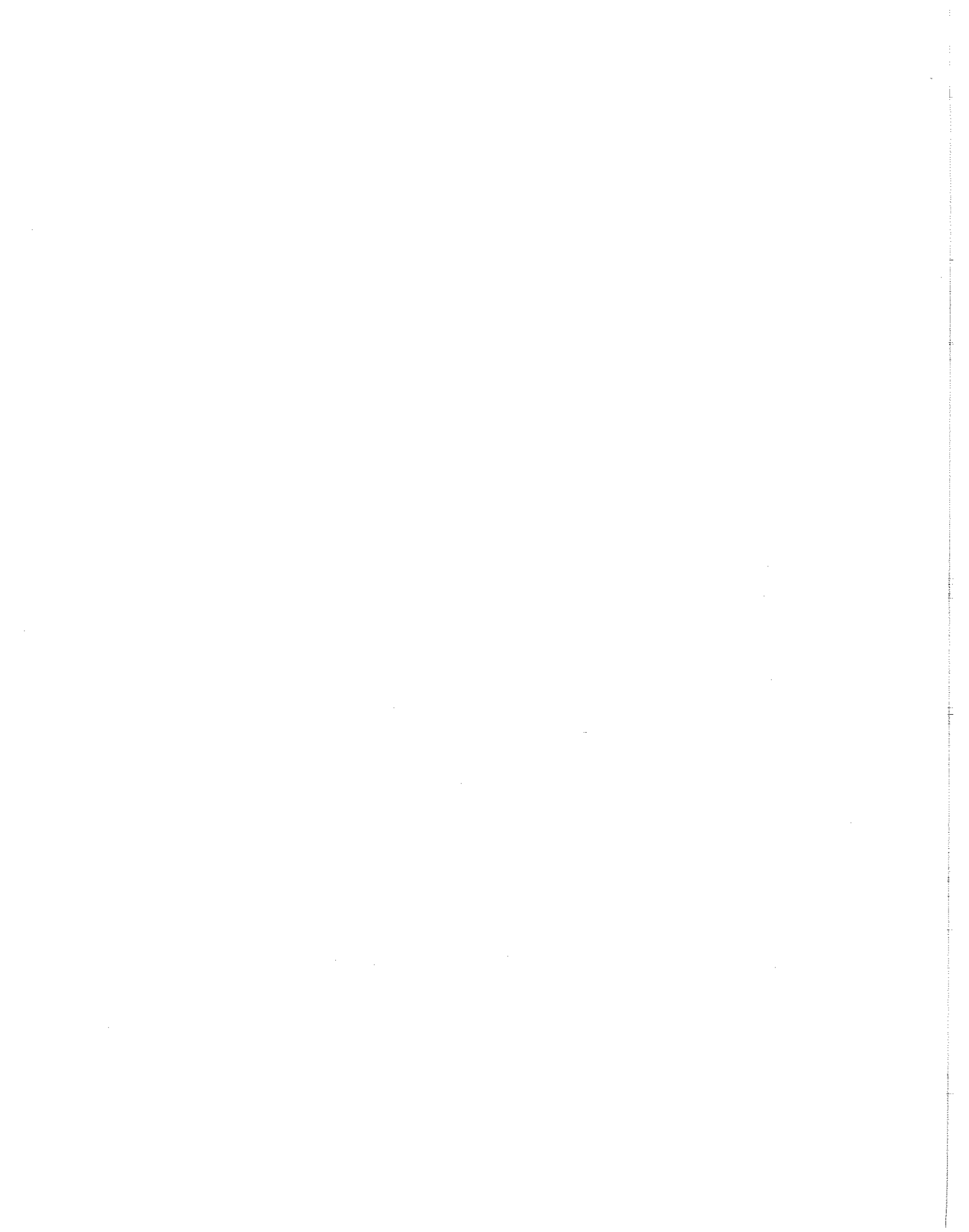
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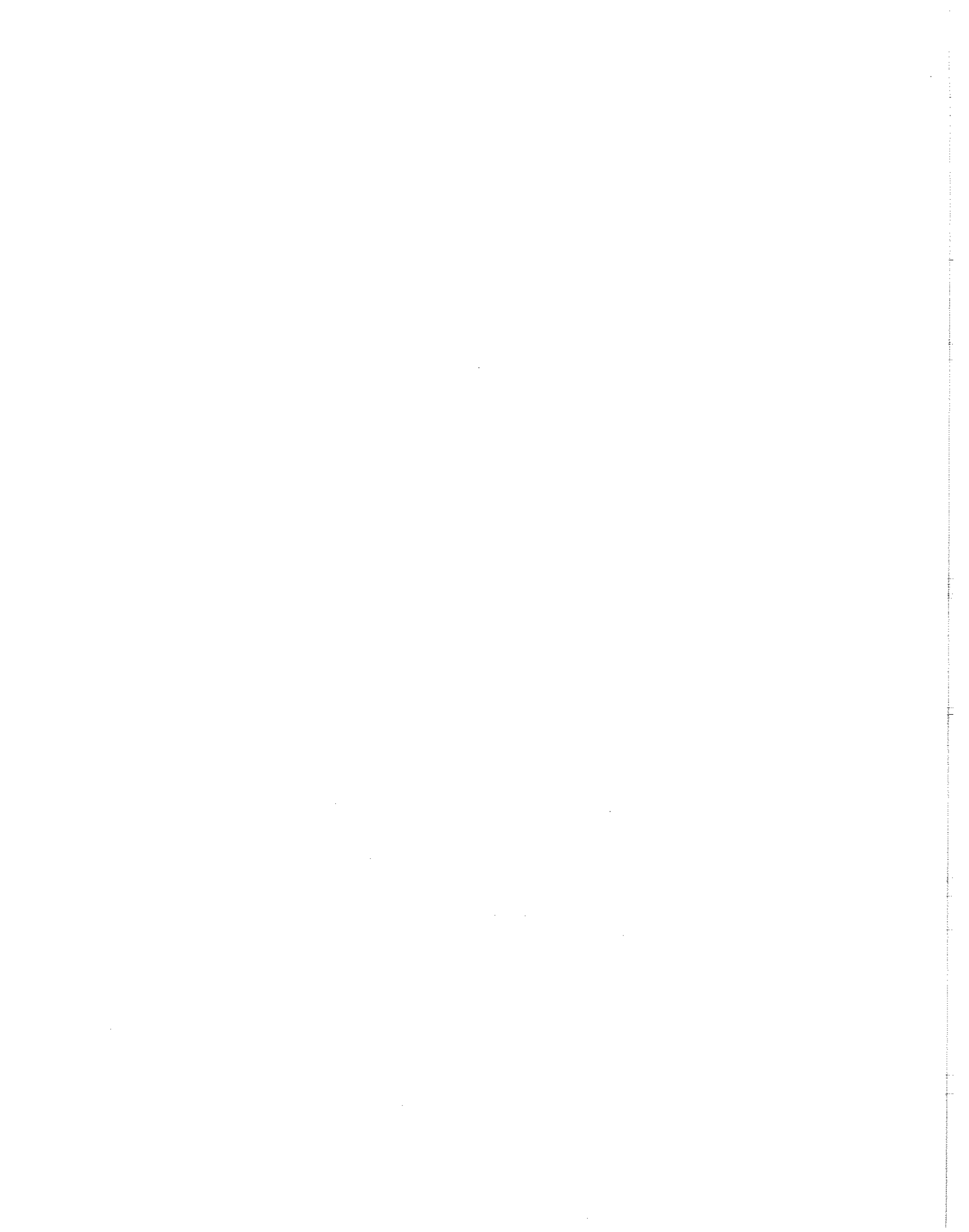
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Contents

I. Context and Nature of Visit	3
II. Commitment to Peer Review.....	9
III. Compliance with Federal Requirements.....	10
IV. Fulfillment of the Criteria	
a. Criterion One	11
b. Criterion Two	12
c. Criterion Three.....	15
d. Criterion Four.....	16
e. Criterion Five	18
V. Affiliation Status	20
a. Organization Change Request	21



I. CONTEXT AND NATURE OF VISIT

A. Purpose of Visit

The purpose of this team visit was to conduct a comprehensive evaluation site review for continued accreditation, with an additional review of an institution-requested change to approve institutional offering of a Doctorate in Physical Therapy.

B. Organizational Context

Since the last comprehensive evaluation the institution has emerged as a multi-campus university system with a new name and a statewide mission reflecting its focus on five interdisciplinary themes within the context of public affairs. Initiating the third in a series of five-year strategic plans, Missouri State University has a new president, new programs and academic facilities, including a recently expanded and innovative library, and an invigorated sense of purpose. Beginning with its undergraduate programs, extending through a growing number of graduate programs, MSU infuses its mission into each of its efforts to meet the needs of its region and throughout the state. At the time of the site visit, the transformation into a state-wide university with a similarly constituted Board of Governors was not complete, with several vacancies tht need to be filled.

Over the past ten years student enrollment has grown, especially graduate enrollment, and the demographical distribution of students has similarly grown—reflective of the statewide focus. One graduate program was relocated to a site just outside Washington, DC, to take advantage of the governance and political policy leadership opportunities available there. Beyond the state of Missouri, the University has entered into a partnership that includes its regional campus in West Plains and educators in China to establish a campus in Dalian offering a business degree curriculum, and has other relationships with educators and students in India and elsewhere. In addition, the focus on scholarly research has increased with the establishment of additional research centers including, for example, the Center for Applied Science and Engineering, the Ozarks Environmental and Water Resources Institute, and the Mid-America Viticulture and Enology Center.

C. Unique Aspects of Visit

The institution requested approval for offering the DPT degree, extending their current offering of a Master's degree in Physical Therapy to the doctoral level

D. Sites or Branch Campuses Visited

The comprehensive visit included a site visit to the MSU-Mountain Grove campus location where graduate courses are offered and where substantial externally-funded research occurs. The MSU-West Plains campus is separately accredited; the MSU-West Plains Chancellor was interviewed as a part of this site visit.

E. Distance Education Reviewed

Missouri State University offers an array of distance education courses and programs at the undergraduate (a Bachelor of Applied Science in Technology Management and a Manufacturing Management certificate) and graduate levels (Master's programs and courses in a variety of areas including Administrative Studies, Computer Information Services, foundation courses for the MBA, and certificate programs in Instructional Technology, Post Master's Nurse Educator, Project Management, and Sports Management). The institution also provides distance-learning options for pre-college students through the Missouri Virtual School programs. Baccalaureate completion for Dalian campus students is supported through distance delivery. The team reviewed materials associated with these distance education programs and the technological infrastructure supporting them.

F. Interactions with Constituencies

Academic Advisement Center, Director
 Also: Transfer Advisor and Academic Advisors (3)
 Academic Development Center, Director
 Academic Outreach, Director
 Administrative & Information Services (CITO), Vice President
 Administrative Council members (5)
 Admissions, Director and Assistant Vice President for Enrollment Management and Services
 Adult Student Services staff (4)
 Alumni Affairs, Director
 Athletics, Associate Director and Compliance Officer
 Board of Governors, members (4)
 Board of Governors, secretary
 Broadcast Services, Director
 Campus Volunteer Center, Coordinator
 Career Services, Director
 Center for Assessment, Director
 Chief Financial Officer
 Citizenship and Service Learning, Associate Director
 Citizenship and Service Learning, Program Coordinator
 College of Continuing Education and Extended University, Dean
 College of Education, Dean and Associate Dean
 Educational Administration representative
 Head of Counseling
 Lab School representative
 Learning Service Coordinator
 Development Office representative
 Special Programs and Accreditation head
 Student Services representative
 Teacher Education representative
 College of Health and Human Services, Dean and Associate Dean
 College of Humanities and Public Affairs, Dean and Associate Dean
 College of Natural & Applied Sciences, Dean
 Counseling Center, Director
 Dean of Students
 Department Heads, various academic departments (19) including the following:
 Acting Department Head, Physical Therapy

Faculty, Physical Therapy (6)
Students, Physical Therapy (3)
Department Head and Program Director, Physician Assistant Studies
Department Head, Biomedical Sciences
Department Head, Communication Sciences and Disorders
Department Head, Nursing
Department Head, Psychology
Directors of Development, Liaisons to Divisions, (4)
Duane G. Meyer Library, Dean of Library Services and staff (3)
Educational Technology Center, Director
Enrollment Management, Assistant Vice President
Evening College, Director
Faculty, various academic departments (37)
Financial Aid, Assistant Director
Financial Aid, Director
Graduate College, Dean and Associate Dean
Graduate Council members (4)
Human Resources, Director
Intercollegiate Athletics, Director
Intersession Programs, Director
ITV, Associate Director
Missouri Virtual School staff (3)
MSU-West Plains, Chancellor
Mt. Grove campus staff (10)
Multicultural Affairs, Director
Multicultural Student Services, Director
Office for Equity and Diversity, Equal Opportunity Officer and Assistant Equal
Opportunity Officer
Office of Admissions, Director
Assistant Director of Admissions and Transfer Coordinator
Associate Director of Admissions
Office of Records and Registration, Registrar
Degree Analyst
Office of the Provost, Acting Provost and Associate Provosts (3)
Performing Arts Center, Director
President's Commission on Diversity, Co-Chairs
Research and Economic Development, Vice President
Residence Life, Director
School of Agriculture Sciences & Director, State Fruit Experiment Station,
Associate Dean
School of Social Work, Director
Sponsored Programs and Research, Director
Springfield Chamber of Commerce, Executive Director and members (3)
Staff Senate Leadership (6)
Student Academic Support Services, Acting Assistant Vice President
Student Activities, Associate Director
Student Affairs, Vice President
Student Government Association Leaders (7)
Students (unscheduled, informal conversations) (23)
Students of Color (2 graduate; 3 undergraduate)
University Accounting, Director
University Advancement, Vice President
University Controller

University Counsel
 University Self-Study Steering Committee
 University System, President

G. Principal Documents, Materials, and Web Pages Reviewed

1995 NCA Evaluation Report
 Academic Advising web site: <http://www.missouristate.edu/advising/>
 Academic Development Center web site: <http://adc.missouristate.edu/>
 Academic Program Review Committee reports
 Admissions web site: <http://www.missouristate.edu/admissions/>
 Affirmative Action Plan for Springfield Campus
 Alternative Admission Program Policy
 Alumni and Alumni Association web sites:
 <http://www.missouristate.edu/alumni.htm>
 Athletics web site: <http://www.missouristatebears.com/>
 Broadcast Services web site: <http://broadcasting.missouristate.edu/>
Building on Excellence: Missouri State University (MSU) Self Study
 Campus Volunteer Center web site:
 http://www.missouristate.edu/studentemp/campus_volunteer_center.htm
 Career Services web site: <http://careercenter.missouristate.edu/>
 Center for Assessment and Instructional Support web site:
 <http://www.missouristate.edu/assessment/>
 Change Requested in Affiliation Status of Southwest Missouri State University
 (1996)
 Citizenship and Service Learning web site: <http://www.missouristate.edu/casl/>
 Counseling web site: <http://counselingandtesting.missouristate.edu/>
Countdown to the SMSU Centennial and Six-Year Plan (2000-2006)
 Enrollment Management Report
Daring to Excel: Long Range Vision and Five-Year Plan, 2005-2010 (draft,
included spreadsheet)
 Duane G. Meyer Library Welcome info
 Evening College Catalog
 Fact Book 2004-2005
 Faculty credentials and portfolios
 Faculty Handbook web site:
 <http://www.missouristate.edu/provost/handbooks.htm>
 Financial Reports (2002; 2003)
 Focused Visit to Southwest Missouri State University (2002)
 Foundation annual reports and marketing materials
 General Education web site:
 <http://www.missouristate.edu/ucollege/General%20Education/GenED.htm>
 Geology Field Trip of MSU campus flyer
 Greek Life web site: <http://www.missouristate.edu/activities/greeklife/>
 Health Center web site: <http://health.missouristate.edu/>
 Institutional Priorities and Rewards Surveys (Diamond reports)
 Just for Seniors Adult brochure
 Long Range Planning web site: <http://www.missouristate.edu/longrangeplan/>
 Master Advisor Workshop Training Materials (binder)
 Minority Enrollment Report (Fall 1996 – Fall 2005)
 Missouri State University Self-Study (2005)
 MSU Self-Study Portfolio website: <http://accreditation.missouristate.edu/>
 Missouri Virtual School web site: <http://mvs.missouristate.edu/>

MSU "non-traditional" letter for returning students
MSU 2005-2006 Graduate Catalog
MSU 2005-2006 Undergraduate Catalog
MSU Campus maps
MSU Change Request Report
MSU Checklist for Adult Students
MSU Fact book: <http://www.missouristate.edu/oir/factbook/default.htm>
MSU System Fact Book 2004-2005
Multicultural Leadership Scholarship/Application
Multicultural Student Services Brochure
Multicultural Student Services web site: <http://multicultural.missouristate.edu/>
Newcomer's Guide to Mountain Grove
Office of Equity and Diversity web site: <http://www.missouristate.edu/equity/>
Office of Multicultural Student Services Goals and Objectives for 2005-06
Office of the President web site: <http://www.missouristate.edu/President/>
Performance Measures
Plan for Improved Student Learning and Assessment: (online)
http://www.missouristate.edu/assessment/Academic_Quality/Assessment_Plan.htm
President's Commission on Diversity documents (including membership and minutes of first meeting)
Professional Education Unit Assessment System
Public Affairs Journals
Report of a Visit to Southwest Missouri State University (1995)
Residence Life web site: <http://www.missouristate.edu/reslife/>
Sample Course Syllabi
Semester Course Schedules
Student Activities web site: <http://www.missouristate.edu/activities/>
Student Affairs web site: <http://www.missouristate.edu/StudentAffairs/>
Student Government Association web site: <http://sga.missouristate.edu/>
Student Handbooks (various, including Disability Services and Physical Therapy Department)
Student Information Reports
Student Organizations web site:
<http://studentorganizations.missouristate.edu/guide/>
Student Satisfaction Surveys (Noel-Levitz reports)
Summary of Complaints/Grievances from Office of Equity and Diversity
Third-party comments (2)
Updates to the 2005 Self-Study Report
Welcoming the 21st Century: Long Range Vision and Five-Year Plan (1995-2000)
Enrollment Management Report

Additional documents specifically related to the change request:

Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE)
accreditation reports books 1-3
CAPTE letter
CAPTE progress report 2004
CAPTE visit survey 2003
Higher Learning Commission Change Request Report
Higher Learning Commission Response with panel report forms
Higher Learning Commission site visit report
MSU financial report
MSU self study

MSU statistics report
Physical Therapy Curriculum
SMSU Physical Therapy Clinic brochure
Texas State University letter (from CAPTE site visitor)

II. COMMITMENT TO PEER REVIEW

A. Comprehensiveness of the Self-Study Process

Missouri State University actively monitored its progress in meeting the challenges identified in the 1995 comprehensive team report, beginning with the creation of a North Central Review Committee in 1997. The Self-Study process for the 2005 comprehensive evaluation built on this prior monitoring process and extended it with the creation of a Steering Committee for the institutional self-study in 2003. Over the two years of operations the MSU self-study involved all components and stakeholder groups of the University. The data collected included both quantitative materials for trend analysis and qualitative measures to examine satisfaction with institutional processes. The result is a documented process that provided an open and honest forum with input provided by students, faculty, staff, and public stakeholders.

B. Integrity of the Self-Study Report

Missouri State University chose to organize the self-study around the interdisciplinary themes associated with the five accreditation criteria, writing to discuss the evidence that the institution acts as a "future-oriented organization," as a "learning-focused organization," as a "connected organization," and as a "distinctive organization." This approach was seen as appropriate for its distinctive characteristic as a university whose public affairs mission is expressed through five interdisciplinary themes including professional education, health, business and economic development, creative arts, and science and the environment. Supporting this structure, the University and its Self-Study Steering Committee created a matrix to indicate which Criterion and Core Component is being addressed by specific areas of the documentary materials. The declared goal of this process was to show the interrelated characteristics of the activities of the University and their alignment with accreditation expectations and institutional mission. The comprehensiveness, breadth of input from all stakeholder categories, and the openness of the process provide a high level of confidence in the University's inclusive self-study process. In addition to descriptive material, the Self-Study document incorporates effective self-evaluation that assisted the visiting team in focusing on key areas where the team would be able to provide advancement advice and in making requisite judgment about the effectiveness of the institution in its fulfillment of accreditation criteria.

C. Adequacy of Progress in Addressing Previously Identified Challenges

The team considers the response of the organization to previously identified challenges to be inadequate.

The 1995 evaluative report identified as an institutional challenge two items related to diversity: Diversity among Faculty and Staff, and Diversity among Students and within Curriculum. An evaluative explanation of the ongoing

challenges related to diversity is included in items noted for Criterion One, Criterion Two, and Criterion Four.

- D. Notification of Evaluation Visit and Solicitation of Third-Party Comment**
Requirements were fulfilled.

III. COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS

The team reviewed the required Title IV compliance areas and the student complaint information.

IV. FULFILLMENT OF THE CRITERIA

CRITERION ONE: MISSION AND INTEGRITY. The organization operates with integrity to ensure the fulfillment of its mission through structures and processes that involve the board, administration, faculty, staff, and students.

1. Evidence that Core Components are met

- Missouri State University demonstrates a strong commitment to effective planning processes that inform and establish practice throughout the organization including areas as different as facilities management, strategic planning, financial priorities development, and library usage. Planning priorities are referenced consistently throughout most institutional decision making processes. The Board of Governors, public constituencies, administrative units, faculty, support staff, and students have access to common planning data and documents. This internal consistency in the development and implementation of planning processes enables the institution to better understand various strategic options as it responds to and reflects the changing environment of higher education.
- Missouri State University discloses its financial data and related analyses via public financial statements, schedules, and explanatory comments, enabling its key stakeholders access to regularly updated information regarding the status of the institution and its fiscal status. Public documents, widely distributed or available, provide assurance that the institution engages in open decision making processes and builds confidence in the University's commitments to public accountability.
- The institution's publicly declared, statewide mission in public affairs—described as including a focus incorporating five interdisciplinary themes: professional education, health, business and economic development, creative arts, and science and the environment—positions the University for an increased leadership role at the local, state, and national levels. There is convincing evidence that this distinctive mission informs and is reflected in both planning and operations at all levels of the University. The high level of campus engagement around a well-integrated and deployed mission helps build institutional identity, consistency of purpose, and community.

2. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention

- There is evidence that the University sees its educational role as extending beyond the local level to the state and national levels. Within the context of its mission the University expects to serve as a catalyst for building an educational community reflective of what it means to be an educated person in the 21st century. Despite this transformative vision and mission, the institution and its campus communities do not adequately reflect the racial, ethnic, cultural, or other dimensions of demographic diversity important to fulfilling this educational vision. The extent to which the institutional mission and vision can be realized is dependent upon the University developing

effective processes to address and resolve long-standing deficiencies in the diversity of its several communities of faculty, staff, and students.

3. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require Commission follow-up.

N/A

4. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components are not met and require Commission follow-up. (Sanction or adverse action may be warranted.)

N/A

Recommendation of the Team

Criterion is met; no Commission follow-up recommended.

CRITERION TWO: PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE. The organization's allocation of resources and its processes for evaluation and planning demonstrate its capacity to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its education, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

1. Evidence that Core Components are met

- Missouri State University demonstrates that it has embraced a culture of effective planning and budgeting aligned with institutional mission. Planning statements and activities are directed toward improving institutional processes (such as through the Process Improvement Committee) including, for example, community outreach or enrollment management. Recruiting highly-qualified students using a selective admissions process, increasing the number of transfer students and serving their unique needs, and budget planning related to limiting tuition and fee increases, the University targets its resources effectively and positions itself to address future challenges.
- The University recognizes the need to plan for and anticipate future changes in learning technologies through revenue-enhancement mechanisms such as the Student Computer Usage Fee (SCUF), used for hardware, software, support staff, and assistive technologies. The institution focuses on the impact of changing standards in learning technologies by coordinating planning with the budgeting processes through the use of life cycle budgeting for technology equipment.
- The University's various planning processes are future-focused while reflecting a keen understanding of declining state legislative support for higher education funding. The combination of reality based assumptions and future orientation helps to position the institution to respond and plan effectively. Planning at MSU works to improve internal operations management while supporting public relations efforts focusing attention on

the public and civic benefits of a highly educated citizenry. The Information Technology Council, Process Improvement Committee (PIC), the University Advisory Planning Committee (UPAC), and the Executive Committee for Enrollment Management deal with a broad range of internal as well as external policy issues impacting the quality of their educational mission. The President is active in making presentations that argue for increased recognition of public impact by higher education and Missouri State University. These efforts help the institution to gain increased public awareness and support for its mission and programs while providing vital public information to the institution.

- The institution's ongoing evaluation and assessment processes provide reliable evidence of institutional effectiveness while also suggesting strategies and direction for continuous improvement. The Center for Assessment and Instructional Support, UPAC, Executive Committee for Enrollment Management, Institutional Research, and other similar administrative programs support institutional commitments for assessment and improvement. Having effective internal processes for evaluation supports the institutional commitment for improvements and positions MSU for being able to respond appropriately to future challenges.

2. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention

- The University's resource base supporting educational programs and plans for strengthening quality performance indicators is stretched thin. While it is important to budget efficiently, the current level of resources available will challenge the University's capacity to respond effectively to any additional cutbacks in public and private revenue support. Missouri State University continues to adjust to the changing economic and political realities in public higher education, but the budget remains one of the most pressing concerns influencing long-range planning. There has been a reduction in state support for the University of nearly 10% during the 2000-2004 fiscal years. While there are indications that the institution has managed to maintain quality in its educational programs during this period of time, additional attention to developing multiple additional sources of support would provide a greater assurance of stability and quality maintenance for the University.
- As the University develops planning priorities, support for creating a more diverse community of students, faculty, and staff has not risen to a priority level of urgency for the institution. While there are understandable difficulties in being able to diversify its personnel, these are surmountable if the institution places them at an appropriate priority level. There are initial efforts to address shortcomings in this area through increased recruitment of students in the St. Louis and Kansas City metropolitan areas but the opportunities to address the lack of a diverse faculty and staff have not been created or developed. Continued resistance for elevating this issue to a higher priority will inhibit the ability of the institution to meet the educational needs of its students, as well as its several internal and external communities.
- The recognition that assessment and evaluation is vital for continuous improvement, and which has informed the academic divisions' planning processes, has been unevenly applied in non-instructional and academic

support areas across campus. The successful implementation of improvement strategies in the assessment of student learning outcomes, seen as a model for institutional improvement, could be deployed throughout the system. System-wide structures for improvement would help the University sustain and encourage continuous improvement.

3. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require Commission follow-up.

N/A

4. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components are not met and require Commission follow-up. (Sanction or adverse action may be warranted.)

N/A

Recommendation of the Team

Criterion is met; no Commission follow-up recommended.

CRITERION THREE: STUDENT LEARNING AND EFFECTIVE TEACHING. The organization provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission.

1. Evidence that Core Components are met

- Since the last comprehensive visit, a new general education curriculum has been developed and implemented. The structures and processes of this new curriculum are intended to ensure that students are able to meet the eight general education goals established by the State of Missouri and the distinctive mission of MSU. There is an effective curricular process for review, evaluation, and improvement of general education courses. The current program provides an exemplary model of general education that effectively provides for student learning outcomes while assuring that the regular improvements are made to specific courses and programs.
- The University provides well-designed learning environments including library, classroom, and laboratory spaces that incorporate appropriate technologies to assist in the instructional mission of the institution. In addition, there are multiple programs and opportunities for professional development, collegial interaction around the interdisciplinary themes of the institutional mission, and effective instructional support to enhance the learning environment. This attention to the environmental systems supporting teaching and student learning provides clear evidence of the institution's commitment to live out its educational mission.

- The assessment of student learning outcomes is provided in multiple modes across all divisions, programs, and course types at the University. Students, faculty, and staff regularly engage the challenges of effective teaching and improving student learning. There is a clearly developed educational culture that supports and expects outcomes assessment positioning the institution and its educational processes for ongoing improvements.
- 2. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention**
- While there is a process for academic program review, providing a systematic process of program assessment at the department, college and university levels, these processes are not sufficiently rigorous or regular. The current system does not provide effective mechanisms for external review and does not engage departments or programs in positioning the evaluated academic program in the larger context now claimed by the renamed Missouri State University. Without a reinvigorated academic program review process the University will be less able to make effective improvements to its academic programs or benchmark them with peer programs.
 - Within the context of faculty evaluation processes leading to tenure, there is little evidence that evaluative decision-making incorporates external reviews from cognate areas or academic reviewers at other institutions. Without an external review process it will be difficult for MSU to effectively position or benchmark its academic programs and faculty with those of peer institutions with the breadth and scope MSU's interdisciplinary mission expects.
- 3. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require Commission follow-up.**
N/A
- 4. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components are not met and require Commission follow-up. (Sanction or adverse action may be warranted.)**
N/A

Recommendation of the Team

Criterion is met; no Commission follow-up recommended.

CRITERION FOUR: ACQUISITION, DISCOVERY, AND APPLICATION OF KNOWLEDGE. The organization promotes a life of learning for its faculty,

administration, staff, and students by fostering and supporting inquiry, creativity, practice, and social responsibility in ways consistent with its mission.

1. Evidence that Core Components are met

- A culture of continuous learning is valued at Missouri State University, demonstrated through the many support mechanisms provided for the University academic communities. For faculty members there are numerous professional development opportunities through the Academic Development Center, including small grants, a teaching fellowship program, and the teaching showcase. Students benefit from the master advisor training completed by more than 800 faculty. The multiple methods for engaging, supporting, and stimulating the improvement of teaching and learning strongly suggests the University sees itself as a learning organization.
- While maintaining an institutional emphasis on the primacy of teaching, faculty are increasingly engaged in scholarship and productive research in a wide variety of fields. In the sciences one emphasis includes applied research in areas such as water quality, material science, fruit production, and biotechnology. A Center for Applied Science and Engineering (CASE) has been created with space to develop externally patented ideas. In other divisions, such as the College of Arts and Letters, the faculty are highly productive in creative performance and scholarly work, often including students as co-researcher roles. The increased focus and visibility of scholarly productivity will ensure that the University's educational and research role informs praxis and ensures that the content of its educational programs is appropriate for the changing world environment.
- Students have multiple avenues beyond the classroom for knowledge and skills mastery, and for independent learning in programs of applied practice. Extensive internship and service learning opportunities allow students to convert didactic information into on-going whole-person growth. These applications provide educational program richness while providing important services to the communities served by the University.
- Curricular and co-curricular activities such as "Forever Free" to "Banned Books Week" to guest speakers on a variety of civic and public affairs topics work in concert to prepare students to practice social responsibility and to demonstrate effectively the ways in which the institution lives out its distinctive mission.

2. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention

- MSU regularly reviews its general education curriculum in light of its specified state and University goals for general education. It is less clear that the broader implications of the institutional public affairs mission are a part of this assessment. While the institution can be assured that much of the content expectations of general education are met, additional areas directly related to general education are being overlooked. For example, it is unclear how or if the University assesses the implications of what it means as an educated

citizen to live in an increasingly diverse, multicultural, and global society. Without specifically evaluating this component of its mission, the University is unable to demonstrate how it assures that it is effectively educating its students in all dimensions of its declared mission.

3. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require Commission follow-up.

N/A

4. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components are not met and require Commission follow-up. (Sanction or adverse action may be warranted.)

N/A

Recommendation of the Team

Criterion is met; no Commission follow-up recommended.

CRITERION FIVE: ENGAGEMENT AND SERVICE. As called for by its mission, the organization identifies its constituencies and serves them in ways both value.

1. Evidence that Core Components are met

- There is clear evidence the Missouri State University effectively identifies its internal and external constituencies. Internal constituencies are defined to include students, faculty, and staff who are part of the MSU system and in a wide variety of contexts. External constituencies are defined to include a wide range of public entities, the general public in the broader Springfield area as well as the region and the state, the business, agricultural and industrial community, and potential students in high schools, community colleges, professional groups, and other adult and non-traditional student markets. Interactions with both types of constituencies include developing a knowledge base regarding stakeholder and community needs. There are regularly used mechanisms to gauge emerging and present constituent needs, informing institutional planning processes and academic program developments. The identification and assessment of stakeholder needs enables the University to target valuable resources effectively and to meet its civic and educational responsibilities.
- Programs developed in response to community needs include such varied components as service learning, public radio and television, Friday night

walks through gallery spaces, well-attended theatrical and musical productions, and public educational programming that addresses current issues in civic and political affairs. The College of Education produces sophisticated telecourses through the University's television studio to serve non-traditional students throughout the broadcast area. Working in conjunction with local businesses and the greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce, the Jordan Valley Innovation Center is a major initiative for technology transfer and industrial development and can provide major support for the research function of the university. The university participates in the national program, Campus Compact, to encourage civic engagement among students and the Campus Volunteer Center provides unique opportunities for students to help their community and provides needed services to the community. Each of these, and more, provide clear evidence of invaluable service and community engagement at the heart of the practice of the University.

- The University has developed well-designed distance education programs to provide its academic programs and support services to students beyond the reach of the Springfield campus. These programs effectively serve students throughout the state while also extends specific academic courses and programs to students in India and China. The Missouri Virtual School provides pre-college academic courses and support to secondary students while opening additional avenues for dual enrollment. The breadth and quality of MSU's online distance education programs demonstrate a strong commitment to outreach and service.

2. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention

- The self-study does not identify as a constituent the students in other institutions who will be transferring to MSU. In the self study discussions of advising, career advising, and even in the discussions of distance and off-campus instruction, there is no comment about "pre-advising" or 2+2 advising guides. However, in discussions with administrative staff in varying areas and reviewing the current draft plan for the 2005-2010 strategic plan, the institution has plans to identify and analyze these constituencies very clearly. Retaining these approaches in the final long-range plan will ensure a more inclusive planning document.

3. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require Commission follow-up.

N/A

4. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components are not met and

require Commission follow-up. (Sanction or adverse action may be warranted.)

N/A

Recommendation of the Team

Criterion is met; no Commission follow-up recommended.

V. STATEMENT OF AFFILIATION STATUS

A. Affiliation Status

No change.

B. Nature of Organization

1. Legal status

No change.

2. Degrees awarded

No change.

C. Conditions of Affiliation

1. Stipulation on affiliation status

No change.

2. Approval of degree sites

No change.

3. Approval of distance education degree

No change.

4. Reports required

None.

5. Other visits scheduled

None.

6. Organization change request

Missouri State University requested approval to offer the Doctorate in Physical Therapy. In the judgment of the team, MSU has not demonstrated its readiness, capability, or capacity to offer the DPT practitioner program at this time. In coming to this recommendation the team examined institutional and programmatic (departmental) readiness, capability, and capacity related to the offering of the DPT.

Rationale:

As an institution, MSU has experienced an ongoing period of challenge related to but not limited to declining state support for higher education. This challenge is manifested in uncompetitive faculty salaries, and by academic programs and facilities that need reinvestment and close attention to ensure that they exemplify the excellence demanded by institutional stakeholders. Even though the University has expanded its graduate programs and enrollments in recent years there is a lack of policy recognition for differential faculty workload for those engaged in many areas of graduate teaching. The totality of these institutional challenges suggests to the team that support for a new doctoral program may not be the highest priority for the University.

Given our examination and evaluation of the evidence provided for this change request, the Team does not recommend approval of the DPT program at this time. We recommend that as soon as the University and the academic department involved address the challenges noted, that a change request be forwarded to the HLC for approval and validation by a future Focus Visit.

Within the academic department originating this change request, a Master's program in Physical Therapy has been established in recent years, with the clear expectation that it would grow toward the offering of a doctoral program. The team has identified specific challenges that, if effectively addressed, would provide the necessary level of confidence that this higher-level degree in Physical Therapy would be possible.

The leadership of the affected academic program needs to be resolved with a permanent hire. Once this leadership is in place, the department needs to address the following planning and implementation elements:

1. An effective and comprehensive budgeting plan (a business plan containing market/needs analysis, an operations structure and curriculum, and a financial analysis) would provide the assurance that a basis for program implementation has been planned effectively.
2. A comprehensive plan for marketing the proposed program would help to ensure future viability and applicability of the DPT academic program.
3. Increased attention to the level of faculty scholarship that includes effective external validation of scholarly work would provide assurance of the rigor and capability of the practitioner-oriented program to incorporate an appropriate understanding of research knowledge and literature.
4. Additional refinements to the doctoral curriculum (including the capstone component activity) and the transition from the post-professional level would help to align the curriculum with peer DPT curricula and ensure that the program, as a whole, is fully planned and understood by all stakeholders.

E. Summary of Commission Review

Timing for next comprehensive visit (academic year – 2015-2016)

Rationale for recommendation:

Missouri State University has demonstrated that it meets all of the Criteria for Accreditation as established by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. As an institution of higher

learning in the state of Missouri, MSU is well positioned to continue to meet its educational obligations and other distinctive goals encompassed by its mission..

ADVANCEMENT SECTION

REPORT OF A COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION VISIT

TO

Missouri State University
Springfield, MO

November 7-9, 2005

FOR

The Higher Learning Commission
A Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools

EVALUATION TEAM

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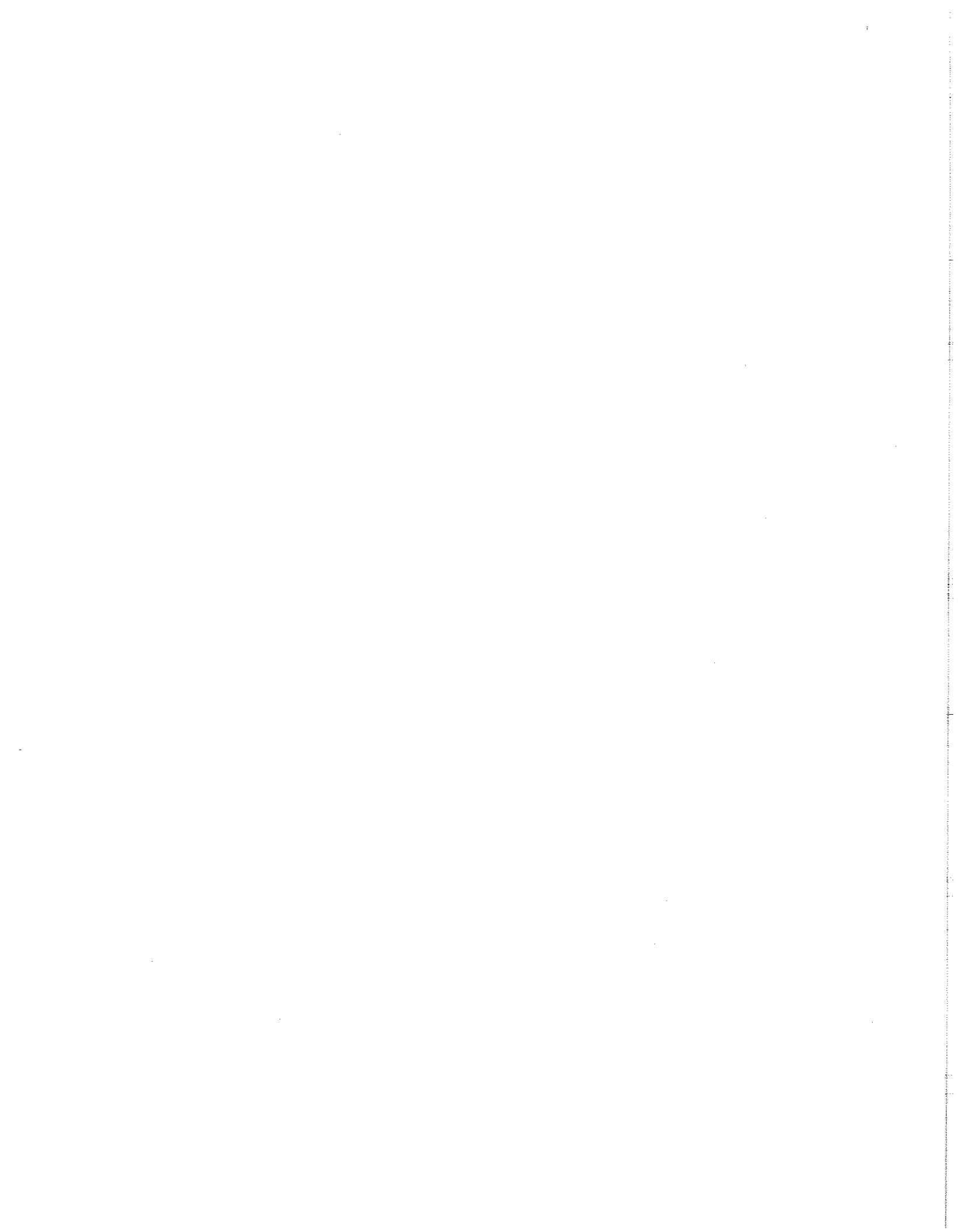
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Contents

I. Overall Observations about the Organization	3
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II Consultations of the Team

A.	Topic One: Finance and Administrative Structures	3
B.	Topic Two: Diversity	5
C.	Topic Three: Targeting Transfer Students	7
D.	Topic Four: Dual Credit/Dual Enrollment	7
E.	Other Topics	8

III. Recognition of Significant Accomplishments, Progress, and/or Practices... 9

I. OVERALL OBSERVATIONS ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

Missouri State University's Self-Study focuses on its emergent identity as an institution that is evolving from a regional university into one that has a statewide mandate and belongs in the class of comprehensive metropolitan universities. The name change that took place in late August 2005 capped more than a decade of deliberate change that broadened the institutional focus on high-quality undergraduate teaching to incorporate an extensive array of master's level graduate programs (with a beginning interest in expanding doctoral programs) and a faculty increasingly focused on research and creative productivity. MSU has evolved into a university system with branch campuses (West Plains and Mountain Grove, Missouri and Dalian, China) and an extensive array of distance delivered courses and programs.

Reading the institutional self-study and visiting the campus made it clear that this is a high-performing institution that takes planning and assessment of student learning seriously. Now in the third in a series of multi-year strategic plans, the University takes the complexities of inclusive planning in stride. Effective processes for ensuring the continuous improvement of student learning are in place. The outcomes of investment in research and pursuing external funding sources are showing results as the amount of externally sponsored scholarship is growing. The Office of Advancement and the University Foundation demonstrate sophisticated professionalism as they work in support of the University. Overall, Missouri State University has become a stronger institution with a renewed sense of purpose and vitality.

The University will need every bit of the public understanding and its own resources as it positions itself for continuing change in a state environment decreasingly supportive of higher education and an increasingly competitive higher education market.

II. CONSULTATIONS OF THE TEAM

(A) Finance and Administrative Structures

- Missouri State University's student fee structure appears overly complex. While on the surface it appears that tuition and fees, including the student activity fee, are based on the number of credits the student is taking, the whole is not that simple to determine. In addition, there are multiple special student fees and other costs charged based on the courses in which the student is enrolled. Students are not easily able to calculate or estimate their total costs for tuition and fees each semester. A fee system that provides an understandable (simple) process for cost calculations and predictions would benefit students while demonstrating a greater level of financial transparency to the general public, increasing confidence that the

institution provides its key stakeholders appropriate information during the registration and fee calculation process.

- The MSU fiscal system is based on a complex committee structure, each having a small piece of information and decision-making authority. While there are multiple checks and balances in the current system, it may be helpful to review how committees develop budgetary assumptions and allocations. For example the Student Computer Usage Fee (SCUF) committee also established expenditure policies such that SCUF funds can only be used to purchase items when it can be established that students will directly use (touch) the purchased item. While this may be a straightforward policy, those interviewed by the team suggest variant interpretations, some quite different. Nearly all recognized that the current policy is the cause of confusion. As the institution begins to implement a Provost model of administration, attention to clarifying confusing policies, including the SCUF expenditure policy, would advance institutional efficiency and satisfaction.
- Recognizing the continuing nature of cutbacks in state funding and general support for higher education suggests that additional efforts are needed to counter the impact this has on the institution. It may be that the public understands the message showing the benefits of higher learning on individuals (increased lifetime earnings, for example) but are not recognizing the broader social benefits of an educated citizenry to the city, region, state, and nation. The Missouri State University System President has begun to speak to this message. Other senior administrators and faculty could be enlisted to expand the reach of the message—embedded in the distinctive mission statements of the University. Similarly, the search for a permanent Provost is an opportunity for additional focus on the public policy implications of higher learning support.

(B) Diversity

Missouri State University struggles with issues of diversity. While Springfield and the surrounding area are not racially diverse, other parts of the state (e.g., Kansas City and St. Louis) are more diverse regarding race and ethnicity. Recruiting and retaining students, faculty, and staff of color continues to be a substantial, ongoing challenge for the university. Although the university articulates a commitment to diversity through its mission statement, planning processes and publications, as noted in the Assurance section of the team report, interactions with people on campus suggest that this is more rhetoric than action. It is unlikely that the status quo will be altered substantially unless the institution adopts diversity as a higher priority and engages in creative thinking as effective strategies are formulated and implemented.

A lack of a “critical mass” community of students, faculty, and staff of color contributes both to the difficulty the university experiences in recruiting people of color and to an ongoing challenge in retention of people of color. Additionally, this creates a climate on campus that is perceived by people of color not to be very welcoming to them—although it is not reported as hostile either—apathy and

inertia appear to be the descriptors that best reflect attitudes of the majority on campus regarding diversity.

To change this climate, the university might consider adapting some of the following strategies:

- Develop a web page that addresses issues that faculty and staff of color have regarding how the institution and local community support diversity. This might include information about housing, churches, cultural events, and opportunities for new faculty and staff of color to connect with other professionals of color both on campus and in the local community. This web page address could be included in advertising related to all searches.
- Develop a specific number (e.g., five) of faculty lines each year that the Provost can assign to any academic department that identifies a faculty candidate of color that the department wishes to hire. This encourages deans and faculty in every academic area to become recruiters for prospective faculty colleagues of color. Also, current faculty of color can be important resources to connect with prospective candidates of color around the country. If this is done over a period of years along with rigorous efforts to recruit candidates of color in all other faculty searches, the university will increase the number of faculty of color on campus.
- Develop a Faculty/Staff of Color Network on campus, if one does not exist, that enables faculty and staff of color to interact and socialize regularly. Faculty and staff of color often feel very isolated and "alone" on a predominately white campus so it is important for them to have ways to provide support and mentoring for each other and for new faculty/staff of color.
- Reaching out to the growing Hispanic/Latino community in the greater Springfield area and developing programs to serve their needs would help to bring this important constituency into the sphere of the University. Look for opportunities to feature the diverse cultures that exist within the area. Similarly, including more opportunities for foreign students to interact visibly with others on campus would help to build a greater understanding of globalization and a recognition of the many applications of the University's public affairs mission.
- In order to recruit more students of color, the university may need to develop some very attractive financial aid packages that are largely grants in aid rather than loans. On campus employment for new students of color in offices that will provide a caring, supportive environment can assist in retention efforts. If the university makes a concerted effort to connect with alumni of color in the Kansas City and St. Louis areas along with other areas where alumni of color are clustered, there will be new opportunities to develop networks to recruit students of color to Missouri State. While all of this will necessitate increased expenditure of resources, the university will need to do this consistently over many years to have a positive impact on enrollment.
- Develop (or expand) attractive financial aid packages for community college transfer students of color especially from Ozarks Technical College or other community colleges in the state that enroll numbers of students of color. Developing a close relationship with OTC and other community or technical

colleges to recruit students of color should be an important long-term strategy for the university.

- Develop a collaborative relationship with appropriate staff at OTC and Drury to plan and implement events/activities that will be attractive to students of color at all three institutions. This will enable each institution to maximize resources and it will enlarge the network of students of color that can support each other. Both Missouri State and Drury can benefit from this type of collaboration since students of color at OTC may be more likely to transfer to these institutions.
- Develop a “Diversity in the United States” course that could be added to General Education offerings. The university might consider making this a required course so that all students are exposed to diversity issues related to American society. If Missouri State University is going to achieve its Public Affairs mission, providing students with effective learning experiences that enable them to grapple with intercultural issues and to learn intercultural competencies both in and out of the classroom is essential.
- A concerted effort to employ students of color on campus in residence life, student activities, the student union, and a variety of other well used offices and facilities on campus will enhance the environment on campus relative to diversity. Additionally, it will enable students of color to connect with various faculty and staff outside of the classroom in a way that can be beneficial to them and it will encourage other students of color to use these offices and facilities.
- The Office of Multicultural Student Services provides a variety of programs and support services for students of color. However, this office should not be the only office that focuses attention on students of color. Additional programming resources for this office would enable staff to “reach out” to other areas of the university to encourage and to collaborate on programs and activities that will be of interest to students of color and that will expose majority students to diversity issues. Special diversity programming funds might be provided to several other departments at the university to encourage collaborative efforts in programming for the campus community that will expose all students to intercultural issues. If this notion is pursued, funds should be allocated “strategically” to provide the best return on the investment for the university community.
- Develop an “early connection” with area schools to identify students of color that could be invited to attend various programs and activities at the university throughout their middle/high school careers. Additionally, scholarships for students of color to attend summer programs (e.g., leadership, athletic camps, etc.) that are offered for high school students could be an effective way to enhance student recruitment if the university maintains these relationships.

(C) Targeting transfer students

- The transfer advising staff is in the early stages of developing and implementing models of transfer pre-advising and 2+2 advising guides. These efforts reflect a major initiative that targets transfer students as junior year recruits, and will involve close coordination and information sharing with designated feeder community colleges. This type of approach to non-traditional recruiting and services, not only with community college transfers but also many other types of

non-traditional and place-bound students, is necessary to maintain enrollment and to serve the state effectively. It is important to include these initiatives in the new long-range plan, as proposed.

(D) Dual credit and dual advising

- As the dual enrollment and dual credit programs continue to grow, it will be more important to enforce the eligibility rules equally among all the various programs for high school students. Current practice and understanding among the various offices that interact with dual enrollment/ dual credit students does not appear as consistent as might be desired. Improved understanding and eligibility enforcement would clarify rules for area schools and secondary level students.
- The difference in price structure between dual enrollment and dual credit might create an unintended perception of difference in quality between the two programs. We suggest that the price structure be examined to find ways of avoiding such perception. It is possible that citizens could interpret the existing price differential as implying that high schools are helping to fund the dual-credit pricing structure. Consistency in pricing (see also earlier advice on simplifying the student fee structure) would improve public and student perception of the fairness of credit pricing structures.
- It does not appear that the University has enough information about the efficacy and impact of the dual enrollment and dual credit programs. An assessment process that examines student learning and other developmental impact of these programs might provide useful data for University planning. The goal of such an assessment process would be determining the effectiveness of the various advanced standing programs that are offered to high school students. Any results from the assessment, used to make decisions pertaining to student eligibility and improved coordination between the programs, would enable the University to improve its offering of dual credit and dual enrollment programs and their alignment with the broader academic goals of the institution.

(E) Other items

- Current practice does not appear to feature institutional accreditations and affiliations with much visibility or prominence. Undergraduate and graduate catalogs note accreditation information but this information is not as easily noted as it could be. A lack of visibility of affiliation information may cause confusion or uncertainty for some students and other public stakeholders. Conversely, ensuring that information is developed, supporting and validating institutional academic efforts, as accreditation information does, would provide a benefit for Missouri State University and increase public recognition of quality assurance.
- The culture of assessment that informs much of the understanding in the academic affairs area does not appear to extend to the assessment of whether

the institutional mission (public affairs as expressed in five thematic areas) is being accomplished effectively. Assessing each of the parts may provide hints regarding the effectiveness of the whole, but it would strengthen the institution and increase internal and external understanding of institutional mission if a concerted effort was mounted to assess the degree to which the institutional mission is being accomplished. Understandably difficult as such an effort might be, the information gleaned would strengthen institutional purpose while providing more effective public recognition of the centrality of institutional mission.

- The two processes that serve to assess quality and assure continuing alignment with public standards of excellence, MSU's Academic Program Review and its review of faculty for promotion and tenure do not feature the input of external constituencies. Having outside consultations and reviews for both processes would provide Missouri State University and its planning groups a measure of assurance that its quality standards are aligned with those of constituent workforce needs and of professional judgment.

III. RECOGNITION OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS, PROGRESS, AND/OR PRACTICES

- (1) Taken as a whole, the College of Arts and Letters and College of Business Administration are clearly centers of excellence for Missouri State University. The cultural and civic engagement fostered by the various departments within Arts and Letters provide an invaluable lesson in the application of the public affairs mission of the University. Sponsored programs like "Project Odyssey" that bring engaging presentations and discussions to the campus community (e.g., "Exploring Social Responsibility in the Arts and Letters" and "Democracy, Dissent, and the University"), the division's affiliated activities with other programs, such as the Ozark Studies Institute, the many cultural programs provided to the greater Springfield area, and the high level of faculty and student productivity in this division demonstrate the degree to which MSU is able to provide benefit to the citizens of Missouri.

Similarly, the College of Business Administration provides important leadership in the area of entrepreneurial leadership within the institution. Many key institutional developments, such the international efforts in India and China, are happening because of the stimulation of this division. Additional outreach is accomplished by the activities of the Center for Business and Economic Development in support of small business and management. While COBA is an academic division pushing forward with graduate programs—and here there is a caution about overextending the capability of current resources—its focus on high quality undergraduate teaching is supported by its Business Advisement Center and its

clearly defined goals for student learning achievement. The breadth and depth of activities for external outreach and the division's attention to internal stakeholders provide a model of creativity and civic engagement.

- (2) The Center for Applied Science and Engineering and its Jordan Valley Innovation Center exemplifies the impact possible with a university–community partnership. This Center is a joint project of the University and the City of Springfield to renovate industrial property and reinvent an old feed mill as an applied science incubation and economic redevelopment center. To be used by University and industry researchers, the Center demonstrates the value of combining public and private efforts in reinvesting in a common future.

*Team Recommendations for the
STATEMENT OF AFFILIATION STATUS*

INSTITUTION and STATE: Missouri State University , MO

TYPE OF REVIEW (from ESS): Continued Accreditation

DESCRIPTION OF REVIEW: This visit also includes the University's request to offer programs via distance delivery methods and to offer the Doctor of Physical Therapy

DATES OF REVIEW: 11/7/05 - 11/9/05

Nature of Organization

LEGAL STATUS: Public

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: no change

DEGREES AWARDED: B, M, S, D

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: no change

Conditions of Affiliation

STIPULATIONS ON AFFILIATION STATUS: Accreditation at the Doctor's level is limited to the Doctor of Audiology. International offerings are limited to the Bachelor of Science in General Business in Dalian, China. The M.S. in Defense and Strategic Studies is limited to delivery in northern Virginia (Washington, D.C. area.)

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: no change

APPROVAL OF NEW DEGREE SITES: No prior Commission approval required for offering programs in the institution's service area in Southwestern Missouri.

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: no change

APPROVAL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION DEGREES: Prior Commission approval required for distance education programs other than Administrative Studies and Computer Information Studies.

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: no change

REPORTS REQUIRED: None

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: no change

OTHER VISITS REQUIRED: None

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: no change

Team Recommendations for the
STATEMENT OF AFFILIATION STATUS
Summary of Commission Review

YEAR OF LAST COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION: 1995 - 1996

YEAR OF NEXT COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION: 2005 - 2006

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: 2015-16

ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE

INSTITUTION and STATE: Missouri State University, MO

TYPE OF REVIEW:

Educational Programs

	Program Distribution	Recommended Change (+ or -)
Programs leading to Undergraduate		
Associate	0	
Bachelors	83	
Programs leading to Graduate		
Masters	40	
Specialist	1	
First Professional	0	
Doctoral	1	

Off-Campus Activities

In-State:	Present Activity:	Recommended Change: (+ or -)
Campuses:	None	
Sites:	Joplin; West Plains; Neosho; Lebanon; Nevada	
Course Locations:	2	
Out-of-State:	Present Wording:	Recommended Change: (+ or -)
Campuses:	None	
Sites:	Fairfax, VA	
Course Locations:	None	
Out-of-USA:	Present Wording:	Recommended Change: (+ or -)
Campuses:	None	
Sites:	Dalian, China	
Course Locations:	None	

Distance Education Certificate and Degree Offerings:

Present Offerings:

Administrative Studies offered via Internet; Computer Information Systems offered via Internet; Instructional Tech Specialist Post-Baccalaureate Cert. offered via Internet; Manufacturing Mgmt Undergrad. Cert. offered via Internet; Post-Master's Nurse Educator Cert. offered via Internet; Project Management Post-Baccalaureate Cert. offered via Internet; Sports Management Post-Baccalaureate Cert.

offered via Internet; Technology Management Post-Baccalaureate Cert offered via Internet

Recommended Change:
(+ or -)