

## **FINAL REPORT**

Faculty, Administration, Trustees, Students

Of

MARYWOOD UNIVERSITY

2300 Adams Avenue  
Scranton, Pennsylvania 18509

by

An Evaluation Team representing the

Middle States Commission on Higher Education

Prepared after study of the institution's self-study report

and a visit to the campus on April 2-5, 2006

The members of the Team:

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*This report represents the views of the evaluation team as interpreted by the Chair; it goes directly to the institution before being considered by the Commission. It is a confidential document prepared as an educational service for the benefit of the institution. All comments in the report are made in good faith, in an effort to assist Marywood University. This report is based solely on an educational evaluation of the institution and of the manner in which it appears to be carrying out its educational objectives.*

MARYWOOD UNIVERSITY

2300 Adams Avenue  
Scranton, Pennsylvania 18509

AT THE TIME OF THE VISIT

President: Sister Mary Reap

Chief Academic Officer: Sister Patricia Ann Matthews,  
Vice President for Academic Affairs

Chair of the Board of Trustees: Michael Insalaco

## **I. Context and Nature of the Visit**

Marywood University, Scranton, Pennsylvania, a private, coeducational university in the Catholic tradition, provides both undergraduate and graduate degrees. The University offers 56 undergraduate major programs, 33 masters programs, one Educational Specialist degree, and two doctoral degrees with five Ph.D. tracks. The University is organized into four colleges: Liberal Arts and Sciences, Health and Human Services, Creative Arts and Management, Education and Human Development, and a School of Continuing Education.

The University engaged in developing the Basic Comprehensive Time Self-Study viewed through the lens of “becoming a University.” Over an 18 month period there was wide participation in the evaluation of all components of the University. The steering committee involved the faculty, students and administration in eight study groups. Drafts of the self-study were posted for campus community input. The study clearly articulates the adherence to the Middle States Standards while at the same time it offers an evaluation of the Strategic Plan crafted in 2002-2006.

## **II. Affirmation of Continued Compliance with Eligibility Requirements**

Based on the review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews, the team affirms that Marywood University continues to meet eligibility requirements 1-7. (*Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education*, p. xi.)

## **III. Compliance with Federal Requirements; Issues Relative to State Regulatory or Other Accrediting Agency Requirements**

Based on the review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews, the team affirms that Marywood University’s Title IV cohort default rate is within federal limits.

## **IV. Evaluation Overview**

Marywood University deserves commendation for its successful re-organization of the University into four colleges and a School for Continuing Education. This accomplishment is noted several times in the report. The main work of growing into this new reality is the work of becoming the premier university in the region that is the goal of Marywood.

The attention to the mission and values of the Congregation of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary is central to planning and certainly enhances Marywood’s ability to successfully attract students and raise resources. The development and assessment of the general education curriculum is integral to Marywood’s fidelity to living out its core mission and values.

Outcomes based assessment of the general education and of all programs of the University is a major goal for Marywood in the future. While the 14 other accreditations held by various colleges and departments of the university facilitate this comprehensive goal, the assessment of general education requires some focused attention as it is critical to the mission of Marywood.

## V. Compliance with Accreditation Standards

This report will present each standard individually.

### Standard 1: Mission, Goals and Objectives

Marywood University meets this standard.

➤ *Summary of evidence and findings:*

Based on a review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

There is clear evidence that the university's mission defines its purpose and explains whom the institution serves, how they do it and what makes the institution distinct. The values expressed in the mission enter into every aspect of university life from promoting a culturally diverse and global educational experience to welcoming persons from both the internal and external communities.

The mission concepts of global citizenship and living responsible lives are integrated throughout the academic programs by means of courses, guest speakers, and faculty research. A liberal arts core provides students the opportunity to explore and discuss ethical and moral issues that impact their lives, their field of study and ultimately their future profession.

The university has clearly articulated core values and institutional goals and objectives that are consistent with its mission. There is a concerted effort to promote the mission and goals in university publications, through formal and informal meetings, through campus ministry and through numerous clubs and organizations.

➤ *Significant accomplishments:*

- Continued efforts to create a culturally diverse and global educational experience.
- Establishing a welcoming community.
- Restructuring the university to create four bi-level colleges.
- Reviewing and updating the university mission, goals and objectives in this process.
- Promoting the mission both internally and externally.

➤ *Suggestions:*

- Continue to investigate how best to incorporate service-learning into the undergraduate curriculum.
- Further develop a shared responsibility model for service-learning between the Campus Ministry staff and faculty to enhance the important aspects of student learning.
- Find ways to include graduate students in assessment surveys.
- Let the mission clearly state that both graduate and undergraduate students are empowered by education.

➤ *Recommendations:*

Develop a formal process for assessing university goals and objectives (repeated in Standard 9).

## **Standard 2: Planning and Resource Allocation, and Institutional Renewal**

Marywood University meets this standard.

➤ *Summary of evidence and findings:*

Based on a review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff students, and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

The University uses each of the four colleges to link the planning process to the operational budgets.

Every member of the Marywood community has the opportunity to participate in the planning process through formal and informal means including the web site.

The President and the Cabinet are responsible for identifying problems, proposing changes and implementing and evaluating the effectiveness of the planning process.

Periodic assessment of the effectiveness of planning, resource allocation and institutional renewal is rooted in the current mission statement with delineated goals and objectives.

➤ *Significant Accomplishments:*

- Marywood University should be recognized for completing the reorganization into a University with four distinct colleges.
- The allocation of resources is linked to the strategic and campus master plan.
- The institution has responded to unexpected opportunities in a very imaginative and creative way.

➤ *Suggestions:*

- The visiting team agrees with the suggestion that each college be required to submit a college level mission statement and tactical plan that reflects the University mission statement and is tied to the annual budget cycle.
- The team concurs with the intent to develop a financial model to determine priorities regarding faculty workload, benefit increases, salary increases, capital expenditures and student faculty ratios.

➤ *Recommendations:*

None

### **Standard 3: Institutional Resources**

Marywood University meets this standard.

➤ *Summary of evidence and findings:*

Based on the review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with the faculty, staff, students and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

The University uses a wide variety of benchmarks and ratios to compare their resource allocation to like institutions.

A process for budgeting over a three to five year period that includes the capital budget and the campus master plan allows for year to year adjustments to align the allocation of resources to the goals and objectives.

A Budget Committee representing various levels of the University consists of the VPBA, Director of Fiscal Affairs, Budget Manager, a representative from the Academic Council, Dean of Students and two representatives from each senate.

The annual audits confirm that there are no internal control issues. The audits also confirm there are adequate institutional controls to deal with the financial management of the University.

The keystone to the facilities master plan is to provide adequate facilities to assure an appropriate learning and teaching environment consistent with the mission of the institution.

There is strong evidence of the institution's awareness of environmental issues confronting them, such as the impact of 9/11 on their international recruiting.

Development activities have generated significant contributions to the institution (\$15,786,180) from July 2002-June 2005.

➤ *Significant Accomplishments:*

- The University should be commended for the financial turnaround and the progress made with regard to lowering expenses and increasing revenues to balance the operating budget.
- The campus has little deferred maintenance and the buildings and grounds are attractive and very presentable.

➤ *Suggestions:*

- Start the budget process in early fall to allow more time for the members of the Budget Committee to understand the trade offs necessary to adjust resource allocations to the strategic plan for the current and future years.

➤ *Recommendations:*

The institution has a relatively small endowment and it is important that the next fund raising campaign emphasize building the endowment to ensure support for future growth plans.

#### **Standard 4: Leadership and Governance**

Marywood University meets this standard.

➤ *Summary of evidence and findings:*

Based on a review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

The clear delineation of governance responsibilities of the two tiered governing administration body composed of the Board of Trustees and the members of the Marywood corporation are contained in the by-laws. The list of reserved powers of the members does not diminish the role of the Board of Trustees to set policy and direction necessary to the administration and development of Marywood.

The Board of Trustees includes a mix of business and community leaders, IHM Sisters and alumni from a geographical spread, assuring a knowledge base to adequately oversee critical areas of the University. Reports and proposals to the Board from the administration and faculty provide essential information about the University.

The collegial governance of Marywood is clearly exhibited through the formal establishment of three senates relating to the administration: the Faculty Senate, Support Staff Senate and the Professional Staff Senate. The faculty handbook, employee

handbook and other documents define the structures and lines of authority as well as the development of policy (Faculty Handbook, p.11-12 # 1.9.2.2-1.9.4 ).

There is a defined policy on “Conflict of Interest for Trustees.” It is found in the Board of Trustees Manual (#3.04).

There is a yearly review of the executive performance in light of articulated mutual goals which the president holds with the trustees. The process for annual review is outlined in the Trustee Manual (#4.02-4.03).

The organization of governance and administration at Marywood is outlined in the Faculty Handbook (p.4-12). There are complete lists of members of administrative areas in the Self-Study Appendices (p.43-60).

There is a clear schedule for orienting new trustees to Marywood outlined in the Trustee Manual.

➤ *Significant accomplishments:*

- The Trustees have worked with the President to effectively raise the resources needed to significantly change the infrastructure of Marywood with new and renovated space. The commitment of the Board signals that the future vision of Marywood will be successful.
- The re-organization of the University into four bi-level colleges.

➤ *Suggestions for Improvement:*

Consider greater and consistent involvement of students in Trustee and University committees where appropriate.

➤ *Recommendations:*

None

### **Standard 5: Administration**

Marywood University meets this standard.

➤ *Summary of evidence and findings:*

Based on a review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

The institution has a clearly identified chief executive officer whose defined responsibilities are consistent with the standard.

The *Faculty Handbook* and the *Personnel Handbook for Salaried & Hourly Employees* provide adequate information concerning the administrative organization and division of operational authority across the areas of the institution. There is considerable uncertainty among many members of the university community, however, concerning the significance and centrality of some committees in administering the university.

The administrative leaders generally have appropriate credentials, and staffing seems generally appropriate to the goals, type, and complexity of the University.

There is discussion in the narrative about assessing the effectiveness of administrative units and services. The regular review and assessment of the president's office is outlined in the Trustee Manual. Evidence concerning assessment of other administrative units, and the institution's response to this, was not as clear.

➤ *Significant accomplishments:*

- The recent reorganization is a substantial step toward improved institutional effectiveness and as stated in planning documents will be fully implemented and regularly assessed.

➤ *Suggestions for Improvement:*

- The Self-Study includes a recommendation that the university should establish a “long-range strategic plan ... which focuses on hiring priorities and personnel development priorities.” The team endorses this recommendation as an important suggestion for improvement.
- The process for assessing the effectiveness of administrative structures and services, and responses to lessons learned through this process, should be made more transparent and public.
- It would help in the continuing education of the university community if documents made a clearer distinction between committees critical to shared governance (including but not limited to the Curriculum, Rank and Tenure, and Policy committees) and operational committees, as well as the administrative role of each committee.

➤ *Recommendations:*

The team strongly endorses the recommendation from the self-study, that “Clear benchmarks should be developed to monitor the progress of the new structure,” including clear identification of goals, metrics for assessment, and identification of the criteria for successful attainment of these goals.

## Standard 6: Integrity

Marywood University meets this standard.

➤ *Summary of evidence and findings:*

Based on a review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

The institution demonstrates integrity through its understanding of Catholic identity in higher education. Externally, signs of the Catholic tradition abound on campus, while concepts of truth, peace, and justice are integrated into the curricular and co-curricular experience.

There has been a concerted effort to maintain integrity with internal and external audiences by projecting a single public image in its publications, stationery and web site. The positioning statement, "Where Learning Becomes Leading," appears in almost all publications and on the web site.

Ongoing assessment of the integrity of the university is monitored by the institutional Policy Committee. All faculty and staff receive policy specific handbooks regularly and faculty, professional staff and staff each has a senate to represent their respective concerns.

➤ *Significant accomplishments:*

- Consistent attention to diversity at every level and in every area of the university.
- Establishing a unified public image.
- Employment evaluation and performance development for all employees.

➤ *Suggestions:*

- Promote a dialog between the Benefits Committee and employees regarding benefits.
- Revisit the position of the director of Core Curriculum given other work in this area by the faculty,
- Consider periodic assessment of institutional policies.

➤ *Recommendations:*

Continue the development of an Intellectual Property Rights Policy.

## Standard 7: Institutional Assessment

Marywood University meets this standard.

➤ *Summary of evidence and findings:*

Based on a review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

Marywood has undergone extensive mission development and strategic planning endeavors.

Marywood's externally accredited programs are well-versed in outcomes assessment and accountability.

Marywood includes representatives from many constituencies in its budgeting and planning processes, including the budget committee and employee benefits committee, which appear to be data driven in their decision making.

The institutional research office provides competent support to campus constituencies regarding available data in support of campus decisions.

Some faculty shared that individual programs have been receptive to course development in support of upperclass program needs; for example, a medical ethics course is offered in philosophy, which helps students fulfill requirements in core and their majors.

Marywood seems to have just begun the process of programs stating their learning outcomes at the program level. It appears that assessment plans for externally accredited programs are well on their way, but other programs have not made such progress.

Learning outcomes seem to be assessed using survey data (NSSE in particular), with a brief mention of grades in core courses, and one administration of the CLA. Middle States expects that learning outcomes are assessed using both direct and indirect measures; it appears that Marywood's non-externally accredited programs have not addressed this adequately.

➤ *Significant accomplishments:*

- The mission of the institution, strategic planning, and subsequent university goals permeate all referenced documents in a consistent manner. The rewriting of the university's mission statement included focus groups and extensive meetings to determine the fit of the document with the university's culture.
- Undergraduate courses must now list their goals and be consistent with Marywood's goals. Faculty must report how their activities reflect the core values of the institution.

- Colleges are developing college mission statements and stating their unique objectives.
- Marywood utilizes survey assessment data extensively, especially in the student arena. Benchmarking with NSSE and other instruments provides clear direction for both academics and student services.

➤ *Suggestions for improvement:*

- The team suggests that Marywood continue to explore communication issues among all campus constituents, which would allow for the more seamless sharing of institutional assessment procedures and results.
- The team concurs with the self-study's suggestion that Marywood articulate a protocol to evaluate the planning process at all levels.
- The team concurs with the suggestion to review the program review process in light of data recently available through available studies, and develop an ongoing and vital process.
- The team supports Marywood's recommendation to develop an office of outcomes assessment that would coordinate activities and resources across campus, and further suggests that this office coordinate faculty involvement in the assessment activities. This office could also coordinate in-service training provided to faculty and departments unfamiliar with outcomes assessment, as suggested in the self-study.

➤ *Recommendations:*

Marywood's self-study recommended that strategic planning and goal setting reach the department and faculty level, and be clearly linked to the University Strategic Plan, and the team endorses this recommendation. We further recommend, as recommended also for Standards 12 and 14, "with faculty involvement, create a comprehensive, student outcomes-based general education assessment plan."

### **Standard 8: Student Admissions**

Marywood University meets this standard.

➤ *Summary of evidence and findings:*

Based on a review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

Admissions policies support and reflect the mission of Marywood University. The essence of the mission is communicated to prospective students in promotional materials. Matriculated students can articulate the institutional mission (self-study, undergraduate and graduate catalogs, view book, website, interviews).

Admissions criteria are clearly defined. Admissions policies, including comprehensive information regarding academic programs, are available to prospective students both in print (catalog, mailings and view book) and electronic (Web) forms. Furthermore, students have personal contact with admission counselors and student admission ambassadors. The institution is also proactive in providing this information to guidance counselors at the University's feeder schools.

Undergraduate prospective students have access to information regarding the learning outcomes of various majors via the Web and catalog. Prospective graduate students currently do not have the same seamless access to program-specific information and learning outcomes (self-study, interviews, external accreditation reports).

Also available is comprehensive information and advice regarding financial aid, scholarships, grants, loans, and refunds through the Web, in print form (catalog) and through personal contact with financial aid advisors (self-study, interviews). The University distributes a significant amount of its own money (interviews, external audit reports).

Students can access published and implemented policies and procedures regarding transfer credit and credit for extra-institutional college level learning in the college catalog, on the college Website, and through individual meetings with the Coordinator of Prior Learning Assessment. Marywood adheres to accepted principles of awarding transfer credit (self-study, interviews).

Student retention is monitored and retention rates have improved over the years until 2004. The drop in retention for 2004 has been studied and is attributed to a combination of events, most notably a change in tuition and financial aid awarding policies. The institution monitors attrition data, which is used to ascertain a profile of students who succeed (or fail) to inform practice (self-study, interviews, retention reports).

➤ *Significant Accomplishments:*

- Marywood's low loan default rate is impressive as is the institution's compliance with state, federal and NCAA standards regarding financial aid distributions.
- Marywood has systematically increased the number of students at both the undergraduate and graduate level and has a clear and achievable future goal.

➤ *Suggestions for Improvement:*

- The institution should address the recommendations made in the self-study regarding student admissions.
  - Perform a comprehensive resource assessment for management decision analysis with respect to personnel, financial resources, printed materials, organization, automation, and storage space necessary for Undergraduate Admissions and Graduate Admissions to meet projected enrollment goals.

- Institute web site development protocols that increase the efficient dissemination of useful information to current and prospective students and include the establishment of separate and distinct linked web pages for the Cashier's Office and the Financial Aid Office; institute a periodic review process to ensure all academic department web pages contain complete and accurate information; create accountability performance measures for pagemasters.
- Develop outcomes assessment research products to assist the Graduate Admissions Office in managerial decision analysis such as requiring each academic department with graduate programs to submit an annual report that analyzes the relationship between student outcomes and the attributes of admitted students as justification for modifying admissions criteria. Also, fund a non-matriculation study for the Graduate Admissions Office.
- Marywood should consider creating a comparable retention program for upperclass and graduate students as is used for first year students.

➤ *Recommendations:*  
None

### **Standard 9: Student Support Services**

Marywood University meets this standard.

➤ *Summary of evidence and findings:*  
Based on a review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

The College offers student support services which are reflective of the institutional mission of providing a holistic education to empower and equip students for lifelong learning. As part of the last Strategic Plan, student affairs staff has been added; new physical space has been built and existing space upgraded; and services and hours expanded to meet the growing needs of students. (Self-study, calendar/student handbook, catalogs, interviews and organizational chart)

Qualified professionals are now in place to supervise and provide student support services and programs. Various departments providing student services have expanded (e.g. Counseling/Student Development and Health Services); added staff and realigned (e.g. Dean of Students area) in an attempt to provide better delivery of student support services. Staff members are adequately credentialed and participate in ongoing professional development. (Interviews, self-study, organizational chart)

Student needs are addressed by a comprehensive array of professionally managed procedures and services. These procedures and services across the College appear to be especially strong both in substance and student satisfaction. Many programs are in place

to welcome and support diverse populations on campus. There is limited student support at off-site locations; however, there is low student demand for this. (Self-study, interviews, catalog, Web, calendar/student handbook)

The academic excellence center is a comprehensive resource for students, which was established as the direct result of student needs assessment. There are numerous specialized advisors (e.g. Honors, Diversity, Act 101, and Disabilities) available to assist special populations. Undeclared students receive targeted advisement. Graduate advisement is performed by graduate faculty, which presents time allocation challenges. (Self-study, interviews, calendar/student handbook, web, and catalog).

The twelve-sport (with 2 additional planned), Division III athletic program is administered by the same academic, fiscal, and administrative principles, norms, and procedures that govern other institutional programs. The on-field/court and academic success of student athletes is admirable. The athletic GPA average is higher than that of the general student body and the graduation rate of 95% is impressive by all measures. (Self-study, Web, interviews, external audit reports, fact book)

Procedures for addressing student complaints or grievances are distributed via the Calendar/Student Handbook and can be found on the Web. The records of student complaints or grievances are maintained by the Dean of Students or appropriate Academic Dean. A comprehensive procedure for adjudicating social misconduct is found in the calendar/student handbook as well as in various department handbooks.

Written policies explaining procedures for maintenance of student records are published in the catalogs, as are policies for the release of student information. The student calendar/student handbook is much more detailed and information regarding student records is discussed at orientation. (Interviews, self-study, Web, catalogs)

Ongoing evaluation of all student support services is done through annual reports, staff and student feedback and the use of outcomes assessment tools (both home grown and national benchmarking tools are used). In particular, student satisfaction surveys are conducted in order to gauge the perceived success of various programs and services. The results of the surveys are used to improve services. (SSI results, interviews, self-study)

➤ *Significant Accomplishments:*

- The recent institutional commitment to professionalize the staff and raise the quality of all student life facilities, services and programs is to be applauded. The University has demonstrated a real commitment to improving student life.

➤ *Suggestions for Improvement:*

- Provide greater outreach to students regarding available services, especially graduate students. Intramural and club sport offerings should be reviewed to provide non-varsity athletes more opportunity for activity.

- Enhance collaboration between academic and student life. For example, the creation of learning communities in the new residence hall and service learning provide excellent opportunities for this collaboration.
- All student handbooks should be reviewed to ensure policies and procedures do not conflict.
- Improving the use of the co-curricular transcript could be a powerful method for students to reflect on their college experience.

➤ *Recommendations:*

To address the recommendation given for Standard 1, “Develop a formal process for assessing university goals and objectives.” With regard to Standard 9, regarding Student Support Services, student services need to be operationalized into intentional student learning outcomes and given priority in a coordinated divisional strategic plan.

### **Standard 10: Faculty**

Marywood University meets this standard.

➤ *Summary of evidence and findings:*

Based on a review of the self-study, the other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

97% of graduates (1997) are satisfied with their education. (pg. 97 SS) This was borne out, as well, by the sample of current undergraduate and graduate students interviewed by the committee.

A large percentage of University professors are generally satisfied with their work and working conditions. (p.15 SS)

Faculty salaries are at the AAUP 50<sup>th</sup> percentile for Master’s institutions. (p. 68 SS)

➤ *Significant accomplishments:*

- The faculty and the University should be commended for their teaching effectiveness as witnessed by the very positive student ratings given to faculty/student interactions. (CSS and NSSE surveys. p.115 SS)
- The University has identified faculty scholarship as an area in need of support. The University has undertaken a variety of initiatives to move scholarship forward.
  - Funds for travel to conference presentations and study outside the continental U.S. increased from a maximum of \$1,000 to \$1,500 per funded request. (p. 4 SS)

- The University has established an Office of Research and Community Collaboration to facilitate “increased and enhanced faculty research and community collaboration.” This office has encouraged grant writing by faculty and has seen success in this area. (p. 44, 68 SS)
- The University has begun collaboration with the University of Scranton and hired a lobbyist to expand research and grant opportunities. (p. 103-4 SS)
- Faculty demonstrates understanding and appreciation of these initiatives as shown, in Appendix D survey.

➤ *Suggestions:*

- Faculty have identified workload as an area of concern. The team concurs. They should continue to work on defining the nature of the concern and identify possible solutions.
- The University has recognized that recruitment of new faculty can be negatively impacted by salary issues. The team concurs with the recommendation “that the University looks carefully at reallocating the resources necessary to compete with peer institutions.” (p. 104, 118 SS)
  - The Boyer model of scholarship needs to be fully integrated into the guidelines for tenure and promotion, the Faculty Handbook, and the FAR.

➤ *Recommendations:*

None

### **Standard 11: Educational Offerings**

Marywood University meets this standard.

➤ *Summary of evidence and findings:*

Based on a review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to the standards:

Clear statement of goals in terms of student learning outcomes for each of the programs described in the Undergraduate Catalog.

Restructuring of the University into four colleges with graduate and undergraduate programs in each college.

Design of a core curriculum integral to all baccalaureate programs.

Provision for well designed, sequenced, supervised fieldwork as an integral component of professional preparation programs.

Accelerated programs designed with appropriate internal University guidelines or adherence to the directives of the appropriate accrediting agency.

Transfer credit practice in accord with the principles of the appropriate accrediting agency.

Demonstrated commitment to the assessment of student learning and growth at Marywood University is attested to by the planned, consistent administration of varied survey assessments. Multiple aspects of student life and student learning are assessed.

➤ *Significant Accomplishments:*

- External accreditation of professional programs by 14 professional accreditations.
- Policy and practice designed to support the life and learning challenges of the adult student returning to formal study.

➤ *Suggestions:*

- The team supports the self-study suggestion that the University further develop standardized assessment protocols, other than surveys, for identifying learning goals and tracking learning outcomes in core, graduate and professional programs.
- The team agrees with the self-study recommendation which suggests a stronger emphasis be placed on enhancing both information competencies and the expanded availability of technology especially within some instructional spaces.
- Given the emphasis on global education the team suggests consideration of the most appropriate structure(s) to provide for international study opportunities for students and faculty.
- Given the effectiveness of administration and faculty in the four colleges to increase coordination and collaboration among undergraduate and graduate programs, and the growing emphasis on research in the University, the team suggests inclusion of research in the mission and goals of the University and direction of faculty and administration attention to research and teaching in their coordinating efforts.

➤ *Recommendations:*

None.

## Standard 12: General Education

Marywood University meets this standard.

➤ *Summary of evidence and findings:*

Based on a review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to the standards:

The general education requirement for the Marywood University undergraduate consists of 51 credits of liberal arts and 13 credits of electives, seven credits of which are in speech, writing, and physical fitness. The total credit content for the general education program is 64 credits.

The six goals and objectives of Marywood University provide students with learning opportunities that make them sensitive to their ethical and spiritual environment, provide an understanding of democratic principles and social justice, and allow the student to understand the importance of diversity.

There are five categories in the liberal arts requirement. The liberal arts component reflects the six goals and objectives of Marywood University. The general education categories include courses which help students understand themselves and their responsibility to relationships, to the physical environment, to society and to diverse cultures and ideas.

Each course in the general education program addresses at least three core skill areas. The core skill areas provide students a chance to improve their critical thinking, information processing, technology use, writing ability, sensitivity to issues of diversity and culture, speaking skills, citizenship and understanding of diversity, religious and philosophic issues.

The general education requirements are published in the undergraduate catalog. The requirements are listed as mandatory for all students. Degree requirements for all programs show the link between the knowledge and skills learned through the liberal arts, general education and competencies and the professional degree-related standards.

The assessment of the general education program is a work-in-progress. Some faculty, especially in the Science department, report the use of a variety of assessment strategies to measure student learning, including research participation, tests, lab performance, and written lab reports.

In response to the Core Assessment Committee's 2003-04 report on the writing skills of students, the faculty in the English department has initiated several strategies to measure the quality of student writing before and after the required English composition course.

➤ *Significant accomplishments:*

- Starting in the 2000-01 academic year, Marywood faculty increased the emphasis on developing students' sensitivity to diversity issues. Courses have been developed and modified to provide students with a chance to understand diversity from the cultural, socioeconomic, gender, religious and other forms of uniqueness. Financial resources have been allocated to make the study of diversity a key element of the undergraduate's education.
- Since 2002-03, the college has begun a systematic assessment system for the study of the effectiveness of the general education requirements. Assessment of student learning has been measured with the use of several different student survey instruments including the College Student Survey (CSS), the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) and the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). This work has been the responsibility for the core subcommittee of the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee. This assessment system has approved twelve core curriculum goals that are stated in measurable terms.

➤ *Suggestions:*

- The team concurs with the University's plan to create an office or role to coordinate assessment.
- The team restates its suggestion in Standard 6 to revisit the position of a director of Core Curriculum given other work in this area.

➤ *Recommendations:*

With faculty involvement, create a comprehensive, student outcomes-based general education assessment plan (as recommended in Standards 7 and 14).

### **Standard 13: Related Educational Activities**

Marywood University meets this standard.

➤ *Summary of evidence and findings:*

Based on a review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

The self study provided examples of different types of educational activities including courses and programs for Underprepared Students, Experiential Learning, Study Abroad, non-credit courses, and Distance Learning.

- Underprepared students, as identified by standardized test scores and/or class rank, are placed in programs specifically designed to help them reach the level needed for work at the University level. Both the programs and rationale for them

fit well into the University mission (Goal 3) of welcoming and educating a diverse group of students.

- Experiential Learning - The University identifies two different sorts of experiential learning and sees it as part of the University Mission.
  - ✓ Incoming students can receive credit for prior academic work and/or prior learning of various sorts. The University has clear procedures in place for evaluating these prior experiences.
  - ✓ Currently enrolled students can receive credit for “service learning” undertaken through Marywood University classes. This fits with the University mission of “living responsibly in an Interdependent World.”
  - ✓ Distance Learning. Marywood University has used distance learning to focus on Mission goal 3 to provide a supportive and welcoming environment to a diverse academic community. To this end there is an Office of Distance Education.

➤ *Significant Accomplishments:*

- The School of Continuing Education is a dynamic and vital part of the University and contributes to the diversity of campus life. The SCE is agile at meeting the unmet educational needs of the local area as well as serving current undergraduates with on-line courses and off campus study opportunities.

➤ *Suggestions:*

- The School of Continuing Education should be highlighted on the homepage of Marywood University so that enrolled and potential students are able to easily access the many offerings.

➤ *Recommendation:*

None

### **Standard 14: Assessment of Student Learning**

Marywood meets this standard.

➤ *Summary of evidence and findings:*

Based on a review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

The self-study describes the assessment that has taken place for the general education program and for the undergraduate, graduate, continuing education and certificate programs. A description of a systematic and on-going assessment plan is described in the self study for many of these programs.

The general education assessment includes the naming of twelve core goals stated in measurable terms as the basis for the evaluation of the revised general education program. The self-study describes the use of several national surveys that have been conducted for indirect measures of the effectiveness of the general education program. The results of these national surveys have pointed out useful trends that faculty have been made aware of during a fall 2003 meeting of the University Curriculum Committee (UCC) Subcommittee meeting.

The assessment plans are unique to each of the College programs even within the same department. Course assessment includes many forms of evaluation of student learning. Activities including exams, evaluations of student research and fieldwork experiences, exhibits, and portfolios are listed in the self-study as forms of evaluation of students' mastery of knowledge and skills. Assessment of student learning is done throughout the duration of a course.

The course assessment culminates with a campus wide student evaluation survey. The survey solicits students' evaluation of the faculty, the course organization, and the atmosphere of learning. Data from the 1999-2004 student evaluations are presented in Appendix E of the self-study.

➤ *Significant accomplishments, significant progress or exemplary/innovative practices:*

- Marywood University has fourteen professional accreditations that have provided guidance for the assessment of student learning. Examples of the accrediting organizations include the American Dietetic Association, Council on Social Work, and the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education. These professional accrediting agencies require that measurable, clearly defined student learning outcomes form the backbone of the assessment process for programs and courses.
- The restructuring at Marywood in 2003 established four colleges. Each college has its own mission consistent with the University's vision, mission and goals and objectives.

➤ *Suggestions:*

- We endorse the faculty request that standard procedures and survey instruments across the University be developed, including protocols for assessing the success of graduates, employer evaluations of graduates, reporting of outcomes-based assessment, general education, and core competency assessment.

➤ *Recommendations:*

With faculty involvement, create a comprehensive, student outcomes-based general education assessment plan as recommended in Standards 7 and 12.

## **VI. Summary of Recommendations for Continuing Compliance and Requirements**

The team concurred with Marywood's desire to continue their strategic planning and integrate assessment in all aspects of the university.

Marywood should be commended for creating a culture of assessment through its 14 outside accreditations, which assures ongoing success in this area.

Marywood University distinguishes itself by mission and proudly claims "Marywood - Where Learning Becomes Leading." The Marywood community continues to learn as it implements a new structure and becomes a leading University in the region. This Middle States visit and the process of self-study position Marywood to continue this vision of learning and leading.