EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Mississippi University for Women is facing many of the challenges common to colleges and universities today. While the University has a reputation for providing outstanding programs that are founded upon the University’s commitment to provide personalized educational opportunities, MUW is currently being asked by its many publics to be more cost-effective, assuring that resources available are being used to maximize educational opportunities for the students served. In this environment, planning is critical. To this end, the University has developed this Academic Master Plan to represent the academic goals of the University within the developing integrated series of plans.

The campus community developed a Mission and a Vision statement which then served as the foundation for a series of Guiding Principles and these were approved in January of 2004 by MUW’s governing board, the Board of Trustees of the State Institutions of Higher Learning. Following from these overarching statements, W-2009: A Strategic Plan for MUW was developed and implemented, establishing a series of goals for the University. The ten goals established are:

- **MUW Goal 1:** Provide high quality, student-centered instructional programs in a personalized learning environment.
- **MUW Goal 2:** Ensure high quality academic and leadership preparation for women.
- **MUW Goal 3:** Provide student life programs that stimulate intellectual, social, emotional, physical, and leadership development.
- **MUW Goal 4:** Increase enrollment through effective recruitment and retention strategies.
- **MUW Goal 5:** Promote effective organizational principles.
- **MUW Goal 6:** Provide programs and services that enhance the cultural, intellectual, social, and professional development of the citizens of our region, state, and nation.
- **MUW Goal 7:** Promote diversity among MUW students, faculty, and staff.
- **MUW Goal 8:** Encourage research, scholarship, and creative endeavors to enhance instruction and professional development.
- **MUW Goal 9:** Provide physical resources, infrastructure, and technology to advance the educational, operational, and public service goals of the University.
- **MUW Goal 10:** Build partnerships and public awareness to support the University’s mission and to promote institutional and economic development.

This Academic Master Plan is a natural outgrowth of these goals and is a statement of the tactical strategies the University should implement if these goals are to be met. This document represents over a year’s efforts by the faculty, staff and students of MUW to define academic priorities, goals, and objectives for the campus. While the process was led by a steering committee, over 50 people took part in the deliberations of the working groups and many others on campus provided information, attended meetings, and provided comments. As a result, this
document, truly a work of the academic community, provides a series of recommendations that are viewed as action items to be accomplished over the next few years. Briefly, these action items are summarized as:

Students: Recognize that the student population is changing and ensure that as enrollment grows, programs and services are offered to meet the needs of all students regardless if they are residential/non-residential, traditional/non-traditional, or full-time/part-time.

Programs: Develop an effective mechanism for evaluation and assessment of continuing and of new programs that recognizes funding limitations as well as the interests of enrolled and of potential students.

Faculty: Continue to recruit and to develop a respected faculty, focusing on competitive salaries and benefits.

Support: Continue to develop and improve traditional teaching methods including increased support for emerging technologies. As funds permit, increase support for the MUW academic community through increased library resources, new technologies, and support staff.

The main objective of all of these recommendations is to increase the effectiveness of Mississippi University for Women as a teaching institution. Quality classroom instruction combined with a range of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities that support this mission are defining characteristics of MUW. As this Plan is implemented, the University will meet the broader goals outlined in W-2009: A Strategic Plan for MUW.

This Academic Master Plan is considered a working document, necessitating action by many different groups on campus. The Plan will be monitored and coordinated by the Academic Council which has assumed responsibility for overseeing implementation. To accomplish this, the Council has agreed that each fall semester a formal review of accomplishments will be completed. Further, the Council will then review these successes in light of the actions called for under this plan and will then establish priorities including budget priorities for all academic and academic support units for the next fiscal year. This shall be completed by the end of the fall semester. These priorities and the integrated budget requests will be forwarded to PIE and to other administrative bodies to be incorporated as budgets are set. While this will be a bit of a departure from practice, it needs to be recognized that class schedules are prepared in January and students register in March. At that time, the University has committed funds for the next fiscal year. The process outlined here allows for the University to realistically discuss instructional budgets.

In sum, it must be recognized that these goals and objectives discussed herein are those established by the academic community of MUW. The actions identified herein or those that may be developed as result of annual reviews of this Plan shall be forwarded as recommendations of the entire academic community to University authorities for consideration within the broader context of overall goals for the entire institution.
1. PREFACE

It is the purpose of this document to establish priorities and directions for the future academic development of Mississippi University for Women primarily to make best use of resources available to maximize the opportunities offered for students as well as the impact the University has on the Golden Triangle, the State of Mississippi and the broader region. It is intended that this document define the primary function of the University. To this end, the proposed Plan focuses on academic activities, distinguishing us from other institutions and identifying areas we see for growth and development in the near future. It is anticipated that this document will give direction to future developmental discussions with the communities and organizations that surround and support the activities of MUW as well with the Commissioner of Higher Education and the members of the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning.

As shown in the section of this document that lists participants, the production of this Academic Master Plan has involved a significant number of people from both inside and outside the University. Not formally listed are a number of faculty and students who were also interviewed regarding their concerns about the institution and its development. All have contributed significantly. The groups primarily responsible for shaping and refining the final Plan are the Steering Committee, the Faculty Senate and the academic leadership of the University. Everyone involved is to be thanked for their thoughtful suggestions that by definition are at the heart of this document.
Mississippi University for Women was chartered in 1884 as the first state-supported college for women in America. The founders had been persistent and tireless in their campaigning in the 1860s and 1870s which resulted in legislative approval, but no appropriations. A decade later, legislators and journalists were lobbied in support of a public women’s college. Originally known as The Industrial Institute and College (II & C), this institution was created by the Mississippi Legislature to combine a high quality collegiate education with practical vocational training for women. In a time when education for women was considered potentially disastrous, the state legislature recognized that Mississippi’s young women needed to learn not only to think for themselves, but also to support themselves.

In October of 1885, the first session began in Columbus, the city that had won the college by virtue of its early interest in women’s education and its willingness to commit financial support to the institution. The city donated the buildings and grounds of the Columbus Female Institute, a private school founded in 1847, and offered city bonds in the amount of $50,000 for any needed improvements on the property. That October, 341 students embarked on a new educational experiment, and four years later, many of those received their diplomas.

The Industrial Institute and College became Mississippi State College for Women (MSCW) in 1920. The new name more clearly reflected the institution’s effort to integrate professional training with the four year baccalaureate degree. MUW has always shown an ability to adapt and change with the times. In 1922, the newly enfranchised II & C graduates campaigned and voted for their former President, Henry Whitfield, in his bid to become Governor of Mississippi. By 1974, as all eight universities in Mississippi began adding and strengthening graduate programs, MSCW became Mississippi University for Women (MUW). While the University has been admitting men since 1982, MUW still maintains a distinct emphasis on professional development and leadership opportunities for women, while providing a high quality liberal arts education for all.
3. PLANNING PERSPECTIVE

As with most institutions, planning has been a part of the culture of MUW. A review of files shows that over the decades, plans have been developed and approved. Although some planning was the result of systematic, on-going efforts, many planning initiatives appear to have been more limited and in most cases were tied primarily to accreditation processes or to Board requests. As a result, while these processes have had immediate impact on the University, there appears to have been limited long-term impact from these plans. To a certain extent, that may be expected. For most of its first century, the University had a clearly established mission which guided the evolution of the institution. However, in the past few decades, this mission has shifted and, at the same time, resources supporting higher education have been limited. As a result, rapid responses to external demands have been required at times during this period. Absent pervasive plans, decisions were made that dealt with current crises with only brief thought given to longer term impacts of these decisions.

However, with recent changes in leadership, integrated planning is becoming a part of the culture of the University. The campus community was engaged in the development of a Mission and a Vision statement which then served as the foundation for a series of Guiding Principles. The Board of Trustees of the State Institutions of Higher Learning, MUW’s governing board, approved these statements in January of 2004. Finally, the campus community engaged further in this process and developed W-2009: A Strategic Plan for MUW which incorporated a series of goals for the University.

At the same time these processes were unfolding, facilities on campus were damaged by a tornado in the fall of 2002. Since significant reconstruction was required, it was agreed that a new, more comprehensive Facility Master Plan needed to be developed. Working with external consultants, this was accomplished and a road map was established that will guide the development of the buildings and grounds of the campus for the next twenty years. This Plan was presented to the campus and to the Board in late 2003. Similarly, campus leadership recognized that the technology infrastructure of the campus was only minimally supporting both the academic and the administrative processes of the campus. As a result, a Technology Master Plan was developed in spring of 2002 and implemented to guide the allocation of resources in this area.

This Academic Master Plan is a natural outgrowth of these efforts, providing the University with prioritization and implementation guidelines for adopted goals and objectives. But this Plan also responds to other developments that have had and will continue to have an impact on the University. MUW is challenged to increase enrollment and will need to accomplish this in an era where additional state support will probably be limited. Reduced state support coupled with ever increasing costs have strained the University’s limited resources to the point where decisions about what can and cannot be accomplished need to be made. Over the years, MUW has been quite frugal with its resources. It has been able to provide its students with a broad array of academic programs and degrees. Now, however, increasing programmatic and technological complexities and costs require that the University more carefully consider how it allocates available dollars in order to maximize its impact on student learning. Difficult choices
that may impact the University’s traditional programs and methods of operation are required. Within this environment, it is important that faculty have the opportunity to shape the future of MUW. At the same time, this Plan should help those who govern understand what distinguishes the University from other Mississippi institutions. Finally, this Plan establishes for all constituents a description of the path the University has set before it.
4. Vision, Mission and Guiding Principles

The following statements were approved by the Mississippi IHL Board on January 15, 2004.

Vision

Building on its long tradition of excellence in liberal arts and professional education, as well as its historic focus on academic and leadership development for women, Mississippi University for Women will continue to be a university that prepares both women and men for successful lives by providing a high-quality education in a personalized learning environment.

Mission

A Carnegie Master’s II public institution, Mississippi University for Women provides high-quality undergraduate and graduate education for women and men in a variety of liberal arts and professional programs, while maintaining its historic commitment to academic and leadership development for women. MUW provides education in Business and Communication, Education and Human Sciences, Fine and Performing Arts, Health and Kinesiology, Humanities, Culinary Arts, Nursing, Science and Mathematics, utilizing small classes and emphasizing a personalized learning environment. The graduates of MUW are prepared for competitive careers and excellent graduate and professional schools. MUW provides educational opportunities throughout Mississippi and the United States while addressing the unique educational and public service needs of northeast Mississippi and adjoining counties in northwest Alabama.

Guiding Principles

MUW provides high-quality instructional programs that emphasize teaching and learning. With faculty and staff of the highest caliber, MUW is dedicated to providing a campus environment for students that encourages lifelong learning, strong career preparation, and personal growth. Graduates are expected to have skills in communication, technology, and critical thinking, as well as an awareness of self, gender-related issues, cultural diversity, and responsible citizenship.

MUW is student oriented. MUW provides small classes and emphasizes personalized student attention, so that each student will have the opportunity to succeed. MUW offers a student-life program that stimulates learning and leadership development.

MUW values research, scholarship, and creativity. While MUW is primarily a teaching institution, the university supports research, scholarship, and creativity to enhance the professional development of faculty and staff in order to better prepare students.

MUW is committed to diversity among its faculty, staff, and students. The faculty, staff, and students of MUW represent the global society in which we live. MUW believes that diversity allows students to grow in their understanding of self and others.

MUW endorses sound organizational principles. MUW is committed to operational efficiency, collaborative strategic planning, institutional effectiveness, and creative problem solving.
MUW meets regional, state, and national needs for higher education. MUW responds to the needs of the local community by providing cultural activities; programs for intellectual, professional, and social development; and by assisting in economic development. MUW extends its outreach to the state and nation using multiple delivery methods, including the internet and other advanced systems.

MUW is committed to public service. MUW forms partnerships with businesses, as well as with educational, governmental, public service, and charitable organizations, to create opportunities that provide economic and social advantages for the institution, community, and region.

**Strategic Goals**

The following overarching goals were approved by the President on March 8, 2004:

**MUW Goal 1:** Provide high quality, student-centered instructional programs in a personalized learning environment.

**MUW Goal 2:** Ensure high quality academic and leadership preparation for women.

**MUW Goal 3:** Provide student life programs that stimulate intellectual, social, emotional, physical, and leadership development.

**MUW Goal 4:** Increase enrollment through effective recruitment and retention strategies.

**MUW Goal 5:** Promote effective organizational principles.

**MUW Goal 6:** Provide programs and services that enhance the cultural, intellectual, social, and professional development of the citizens of our region, state, and nation.

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**MUW Goal 8:** Encourage research, scholarship, and creative endeavors to enhance instruction and professional development.

**MUW Goal 9:** Provide physical resources, infrastructure, and technology to advance the educational, operational, and public service goals of the University.

**MUW Goal 10:** Build partnerships and public awareness to support the University’s mission and to promote institutional and economic development.
5. DEVELOPMENT OF THIS PLAN

To implement the development of this Plan, President Limbert directed Vice President Gingerich to begin the process. She noted that the University needed to develop an Academic Master Plan to complement and to complete other campus planning efforts. Specifically, it was stressed that this Plan should be based on the recently approved mission statement as well as other documents that are integral to the planning efforts underway on campus including those established in W-2009. It was expected that the Academic Master Plan should provide a focus for all institutional academic and academic support activities. While a number of expectations were set, it was clear that this process should establish priorities for activities to ensure that the limited resources available will continue to be used to maximize the benefits provided to constituents. Dr. Limbert added that the priorities established for growth and development needed to clearly articulate the need for resources, both public and private.

From the beginning, it was a clear expectation that in order for this Plan to be effective, the process needed to be open, including as many people as possible. A Master Plan Steering Committee was established with representatives from all parts of the MUW community. This group was expected to oversee and give guidance to the process. The Steering Committee decided that to complete the process four working groups should be established. These groups were created to focus on four key areas: students, faculty, programs, and academic support. These working groups used surveys and other statistical data as well as discussions with faculty, staff and students in order to make their recommendations.

Throughout the process regular updates were provided to the Academic Council, Faculty Senate and President’s Cabinet. These groups all were provided opportunities to review and to direct the findings and recommendations. The original schedule called for completion of the process in a six-nine month period. In order to assure adequate discussion of all points and to give opportunity for all views to be heard the process was extended into the start of a second year.
6. RESULTS

An over arching theme that was evident throughout this process is the commitment of the faculty, students, staff and other constituents to creatively foster learning. As stated earlier, MUW’s vision clearly establishes this with a commitment that the University, “….will continue to be a university that prepares both women and men for successful lives by providing a high-quality education in a personalized learning environment.”

Clearly, the University, at its core, is a teaching institution, dedicated to the advancement of student learning. This Plan reaffirms that purpose and also is developed to flesh out the Guiding Principles and Goals that comprise the University’s strategic plan. The discussion which follows presents the results of this academic master plan analysis in its four planning areas – students, programs, faculty, and academic support. Each section identifies background information with related high priority goals and objectives.

A. Students

Background: This section focuses on the students of MUW, analyzing the demographics of the students served as well as the demographics of the regions these students come from to identify other populations that could be attracted. Additional analyses included the limited data available from retention/graduation analyses. Data from surveys also provided some perspective of how students interact with the University, both academically and in other ways. This section will identify some areas of concern and will make recommendations of how these may be addressed.

An analysis of the students served clearly addresses a number of the University goals and objectives. This Plan recognizes that these institutional goals support the commitment to achieve an enrollment of 3,000 students within the decade. The following two goals are clearly addressed:

MUW Goal 4: Increase enrollment through effective recruitment and retention strategies.

MUW Goal 7: Increase diversity among MUW students, faculty and staff.

A number of readily available data sources were used including the 2000 census data online, IHL reports, MUW fact books and MUW graduating student surveys. In addition, a few specific reports were requested. Primarily, enrollment trends for MUW were reviewed including trends shown based on age, gender, ethnicity, and enrollment status (class level, full-time/part-time, etc). In addition, enrollment patterns were reviewed, including transfer/native, major/minor and other similar common analyses. Finally, survey data were used to determine if reasons could be found to provide a basis for the different patterns of behavior shown between different groups.

Analyses: A review of the data analyzed showed a number of interesting patterns. A summary of the data shows that the minority of students served by MUW are traditional age students who enrolled as freshmen, are pursuing a traditional liberal arts degree, live in the residence halls and graduate in four or five years. Yet this is the group of students most commonly focused on when programming is discussed and implemented. In fact, if there is a “typical student”, it is a non-
traditional transfer student pursuing a professional program who commutes. Specifically, the following points speak to this:

* 59.1% of students completing the Spring 2004 graduating senior survey report that they entered MUW as transfer students. Only 38.3% of our students, according to the Spring 2005 ACT survey, report entering MUW directly from high school. In Fall 2004, 57.2% of new students were transfer students.

* Over 35 percent of our students are non-traditional in age and/or circumstances. (Fact Book 2003). The average age of MUW students is above 25 for both male and female students and has increased slightly over the past five years.

* 53.5% of our Fall 2004 students had declared majors in a pre-professional program. Enrollment in pre-professional programs has remained stable since 2000. Enrollment in liberal arts programs has varied with overall enrollment.

* Over twenty percent of our students are part-time students and this number has been steady over the past five years, particularly after MUW discontinued the practice of offering a large number of for credit, one-hour workshops. (Fact Book 2003)

In addition, a review of data available clearly showed that retention and graduation rates are important issues for the institution. The retention rate for first-time, full-time bachelor-degree-seeking students was 66.15% for Fall 2003 to Fall 2004 and 68.40% for Fall 2004 to Fall 2005. The 2003 six-year graduation rate is 47.1% (28.9% for male students; 50.8% for female students) (http://www.collegeresults.org). Clearly, there is room for improvement. However, in many ways, this ties in with the previous observation that the majority of MUW students do not fit the institution’s perceptions of a very traditional student body. Retention and graduation rates are impacted by the changing characteristics of entering students. According to the Graduating Student Survey, the number of first generation college students is increasing, rising from 17.7% in Spring 2002 to 23.5% in Spring 2004. In addition, enrollment in intermediate classes has increased as have the number of students on academic probation. Clearly, as the institution broadens the student population served, a broader range of services may be needed.

Enrollment of male students during the past decade has remained fairly stable at about 14-16%. However, retention of male students is significantly lower than that of female students. This needs to be studied.

There are a couple of other facts of note. Census data document that a substantial percentage (29.4%) of individuals in Mississippi have some college, but no degree (neither associate nor bachelor). An additional 20.9% of individuals in Mississippi have a high school diploma (or equivalent). Clearly, there is a large pool of individuals who could be targeted. In line with this, based on a report provided by Director Patricia Brock, the number of undergraduate and graduate students enrolling in on-line classes is increasing dramatically (341 in 20 undergraduate courses in Fall 2002 to 984 in 68 undergraduate courses in Spring 2005; 9 in 1 graduate course in Fall 2002 to 117 in 11 graduate courses in Spring 2005[counts are duplicated]). Clearly, working to provide targeted on-line programming is a potential area for growth.
Conclusions and Recommendations:

Traditional/Non-traditional Students: As the institution struggles with recruitment and retention, there is a need to clearly understand the facets of this issue. Reported retention rates are based on a cohort of first-time, full-time, degree seeking students. While a goal may be set to increase enrollment of this cohort so that a population of 300 residential first-time full-time freshmen enroll each year, it must be realized that this group, while important, will never again make up a large percentage of our total student population. In fact, half of this group will probably enroll at MUW because of scholarship offers based on test scores and high school grades, and because of their proximity to our campus. If over two thirds of MUW’s population is coming from somewhere other than this freshmen cohort, more than likely from community colleges, then we must not neglect the recruitment and retention of this larger percentage, and we must begin to collect data to track the specific progress of transfer students (both full and part-time) and other part-time students, particularly non-traditional age full and part-time students.

Residential students do play an important role and specific services need to be provided to support this group. We must be ever conscious of how campus recreational activities and entertainments can be tied to the educational experience, particularly for that fairly small group of resident students we see as the heart of the campus. The current implementation of MUW learning communities, both residential and non-residential, is a good specific way to attract and keep FTFTF traditional age students. The new wellness center will also be an attraction to traditional age students. Parkinson Hall with its laboratories and Nissan Auditorium, the renovation of Martin Hall for Nursing, and the newly renovated South Callaway Hall (for Student Services) show on-campus students that we are interested in providing them with a beautiful, convenient, and well-appointed campus.

However, these spaces cannot be mainly for the benefit of the six to eight hundred students who live on campus, and we should not invest large sums of money in campus “special entertainment,” such as multi-artist concerts, without considering how those events appeal to the entire student body, and how those events could meet the needs of a majority of our students. In fact, given the age of our typical student and the fact that she or he is a commuter with a job and possibly family responsibilities, we must question the necessity of offering “entertainment” or “recreation” at the expense of academic support or even childcare, for example. The fact that MUW’s total enrollment is now around 85 percent female, with the additional information that the female non-traditional population system wide has grown at a much faster rate than the male non-traditional population, helps explain why MUW’s percentage of non-traditional students is the second highest in the system. This also makes our ability to judge the needs of these non-traditional age women especially important. Many may be entering college at a later stage in their life. Indeed, census data confirm that there is a substantial pool of individuals in the local area who may be interested in earning a college degree. In MUW’s defined service area, 27.8% of the population has a high school diploma (or equivalent) as their highest educational level. An additional 22.4% have some college, but no degree, and 5.9% have an associate degree. Recruitment strategies and programming should be implemented to target the significant portion of the population that is shown by the census to have completed some college but who left before earning a degree.
Transfer Students: Although MUW’s image emphasizes first-time, full-time students, it appears that the majority of MUW graduates are transfer students from community colleges. Once students transfer to MUW, they appear to perform as well as native students in MUW classes. As enrollment pressures increase, it will be important to be able to identify the community college students who are most likely to succeed at MUW. In addition, resources may need to be reallocated to better support services to recruit and retain transfer students. In addition, currently, there are no mechanisms in place to track transfer students so these will need to be implemented. In sum, more emphasis in recruiting and serving traditional age students from community colleges is needed as the institution works to meet enrollment goals.

Male Students: While the retention of male students, and the graduation rate of male students have been declining, these analyses have focused only on the cohort of first-time, full-time degree seeking students. It should be noted that the average age of our male and female students is nearly identical. In addition, the average age of both male and female students puts both groups in the “non-traditional age” category. In other words, our male students are more likely to be non-traditional than traditional-age when they enroll at MUW. So in addition to focusing on the freshmen cohort, more attention, funds, and energy should be focused upon recruiting and retaining the non-traditional male student. This recommendation also plays out not only in the overall discussion of non-traditional students, but in relation to male students, where this issue can be especially significant. The older male student is often a very different type of student from the traditional-age student, tied in some way to the area, by family, job, or both. Because of this, these students are more likely to persevere until they complete a degree simply because they choose a college for practical rather than emotional or social reasons.

As a specific sub-set, the University may wish to focus on male community college transfer students. As a group, they are older and more mature than the traditional age freshman male student, are more likely to have clear academic goals including graduating, and are much more likely to have decided on a program of study based on skills and aptitude. In sum, these students bring the aptitudes that will make them successful.

While these views fit with the data, more data need to be collected on male students in these two specific groups. However, it seems sensible to conclude that male students who are choosing a college based on convenience and/or situational reasons rather than on an “idea” of what “college life” should be like, should be easier to retain. Furthermore, male students who are choosing a college based on their previous community college successes and their choice of major would also be much easier to retain. Finally, if our aim is to dedicate scholarship dollars toward male students who are more likely to be happy, successful, and retained to graduation, then we should be looking beyond the “traditional-age” male freshman.

In sum, recruiting male students is necessary, and those students should feel welcome and valued. However, recruiting full-time male community college students could be a better investment than recruiting traditional-age male high school students. Further, the move toward offering a better community living experience for male students is a smart one, but it should be especially attractive to older male students, and even be available in a limited way to part-time students. Making the campus climate more attractive to male students should go beyond the idea that they are teenagers to be entertained and focus more on enhancing personal space and even study space in the library. The welcoming campus climate should be a natural extension of our
“personal attention” goal where we see the real needs of our male students and respond to those needs.

Program enrollment: Although MUW’s image emphasizes liberal arts, the university’s most rapidly growing programs (and programs most resistant to enrollment fluctuations) are pre-professional. Enrollment in our nursing and elementary education programs may soon be approaching capacity. Without a significant commitment of physical and financial resources, additional growth may be limited. In addition, the reputations of these programs are well-established within the state, potentially making extensive marketing efforts less immediate in these areas. At this time, the nursing program can only admit a small number of the students who apply for the program. As a note, this trend toward pre-professional programs reflects student interests. The top five educational majors reported by high-school graduating seniors taking the ACT are health sciences, business and management, engineering, social sciences, and education. While strategies for supporting these growing professional programs should be implemented, there is the potential for increasing enrollment in the liberal arts. The pre-professional programs depend on the university’s maintenance of a strong liberal arts program and faculty. It may be helpful to focus additional resources on the recruitment of liberal arts majors. It may be possible to identify highly talented students (through state theatre, art, math, science competitions) who can be contacted initially by admissions counselors and later by faculty members in their areas of interest.

Summary: The following areas are recommended for action. As a note, the first item reflects the changes occurring in our student population and challenges the campus to begin to address the issues these changes bring. The other items listed are specific areas in which immediate benefit can be gained.

1. Our student population will probably continue the trends evident in the most recent data, including an increase in part-time and non-traditional students and in students who live off-campus. Program offerings and supporting activities will need to be provided for these students. Further, methods will need to be implemented to track the successes of transfer students, first-generation college students, part-time students, and non-traditional college students as well as their satisfaction with services provided.

2. More emphasis in recruiting traditional age residential students from community colleges is needed to maintain our on-campus population.

3. Recruitment efforts may need to target individuals with some college, but no degree as well as non-residential transfer students.

4. It is still very important to maintain a healthy core of traditional-age residential students. While a range of efforts do address this, continued expansion of residential learning communities and of other interest groups are a way to keep on campus enrollment growing.
B. Program Analysis

Background: This section focused on program offerings. Those conducting this analysis quickly recognized the difficulty of this mandate. In particular they were conscious of the difficulty of objectively evaluating program quality. To this end, three sets of data served as the basis for this review: statistics, benchmarks of excellence identified by members of specific programs, and interviews with faculty. It should also be noted that a great deal of information and insight came out of discussion during a plethora of group meetings.

An analysis of the programs offered clearly addresses a number of the University goals and objectives. The following three goals are clearly addressed:

MUW Goal 1: Provide high quality, student-centered instructional programs in a personalized learning environment.

MUW Goal 2: Ensure high quality academic and leadership preparation for women.

MUW Goal 8: Encourage research, scholarship and creative endeavors to enhance instruction and professional development.

Analyses: A number of reports routinely provided by Institutional Research (IR), many of which are published in the MUW Fact Book, were reviewed and analyzed. As expected, an important factor considered was programmatic productivity as measured by credit hours generated, majors enrolled, and graduates produced. Cost data were available as a result of MUW’s participation in the University of Delaware Cost of Instruction study.

In addition to quantitative data, qualitative analyses were also used. Each program was asked to identify “Benchmarks of Excellence.” Representatives of each program were in essence asked “what makes for an outstanding program in your field.” This could include accreditation by an outside body, success of students in certification exams, enrollment in graduate school, presentation of student papers at scholarly conferences, exhibition or performance of student work, employment upon graduation, etc. Nearly all programs presented benchmarks. Many presented extensive lists and, in general the benchmarks presented a thoughtful analysis of what was the mark of a top notch program. However, paralegal, music, and the visual arts did not respond. On several occasions the working group concluded that additional information was needed with regards to a particular program. Often a representative of that program was in the group. In those cases questions could be asked and issues discussed in the context of the working group meeting. If this was not the case, members of the working group conducted individual interviews with program representatives. Often this was done to clarify an issue, gather more information, or ask for reaction to a particular point.

One or a combination of the above techniques is often noted in the program narratives that follow. However, the absence of such a notation does not necessarily mean that a certain technique was not employed.
Several attempts were made to somehow devise a descriptive ranking of these programs. Ultimately, the group developed a rating system that incorporated the following standards:

1. Good strong program – meets or exceeds benchmarks or other measurements
2. Program shows great potential – with additional support, could be a #1
3. Weak foundational program – should receive attention to help it improve
4. Weak supporting program – requires significant attention and possible expenditures to improve

Given these choices, each program was rated and a summary prepared.

At a subsequent meeting, the working group members discussed the results since it was understood that it was important to understand some of the discussion and reasoning that accompanied the rating process. The working group concluded firmly that the goal of the institution should be to have every program at level 1. Level 2 programs were closer to that goal than level 3, etc. As such the ratings were seen in an evolutionary manner. In addition, working group members discussed level 1 programs as programs that would attract the best high school students and junior college transfers. In other words, if a top quality high school student (or junior college transfer) was interested in majoring in ‘X” would the program at MUW be the one they would be attracted to in recognition of its outstanding quality? In contrast, programs that were ranked at level 3 or 4 were in need of significant attention. Working group members clearly considered level 3 programs to be stronger than level 4 programs. However, the key distinction made was in their role within the university. Level 3 programs were considered to be foundational programs—either because of their role in the core, their relationship to other majors (particularly education), or their traditional place in a liberal arts curriculum.

Even though this analysis focused on individual programs, as the process unfolded discussion often times turned to the overall composition of programs at MUW. In particular, discussion often centered on the nature of a liberal arts college and MUW’s role as Mississippi’s public liberal arts college. This analysis and discussion was based in large part upon statistics related to declared majors. In short, the vast majority of MUW’s students are not studying in fields traditionally associated with the liberal arts, but rather in professional programs. Indeed, over half of the university’s students are in just three professional fields: education, nursing, and speech language pathology. It is believed that it is these professional fields that bring MUW’s most public recognition. In addition, as this analysis showed, the top rated programs are generally professional programs. Because of this, MUW must be clear about what type of university it “is” and what it wants to be in the future. Currently MUW is a university that offers predominately professional programs that are build upon a strong liberal arts core curriculum. The central question is whether attention can be directed to traditional liberal arts programs so that they can improve and flourish while maintaining the strength and integrity of MUW’s outstanding professional programs.

The working group noted that there are a number of offerings which were not considered in this rating process: film studies, philosophy, religion, and women’s studies. The University must
consider the future viability of each of these, and must devote dedicated funds to them if they are to continue to evolve into majors. It is not fair to the program being developed, the faculty who are asked to develop them, or the programs from which the faculty are pulled to continue in the current fashion.

Conclusions and Recommendations: The following is a listing of all of the programs reviewed.

Program: Accounting

Dominant Rating: 2

(Note: These comments are provided for both the accounting and the business administration programs.)

Comments: Both the B.S. in Accounting and the B.S. in Business Administration are accredited by the Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP). Faculty are well respected. The subcommittee did note a significant lack of diversity in terms of academic background within the business and accounting faculty. While this is not in and of itself a "bad" thing, students in business and associated fields of study benefit from a breath of academic preparation and professional experience. While many factors may be a reason, the institution should not allow pay to be one of them. The institution and the faculty as a whole should recognize and be willing to support the reality that the programs in business may have to pay a higher premium if they are to attract the best from throughout the region and the country to serve as faculty. The recently renovated Reneau Hall provides an attractive and well-equipped home for the program.

Students have clear standards and have generally excelled. For example, all graduating seniors in business take the Major Field Test in Business (an ETS product). Data are available for the last four years. While not a graduation requirement, it may be so in the future. The CPA examination is an option for accounting students (or other applicants) who have completed 150 credit hours (which can be all undergraduate or both UG and grad). The CPA exam also has additional standards to meet before the individual can receive the designation. Internships are available through BU 400 and a list of sponsors and of placements is available. There has been a good record of students going on to graduate school. However, this program suffers (as do most) from lack of good records in this regard. As with most MUW programs, information on graduate school acceptance and success is mostly anecdotal. The sub-committee found that better record keeping in this regard would be useful for student recruitment. Recruitment brochures were not reviewed by the committee. However, the website lacked any prominent mention of graduate accomplishments in business or graduate school.

Collectively the business programs have experienced low student numbers, especially in comparison to other professional and pre-professional programs at MUW. With other professional programs pushing the limits of their facilities, business provides an important avenue for growth. The subcommittee believes that with some changes and aggressive branding of the program student numbers could double. The subcommittee believes that key to this goal is creating a unique concentration/image/brand that is not found at the larger and better known business programs at Ole Miss, MSU, and Alabama. MUW's program is seen as a quality but a
rather generic "business" program. One suggestion might be the development of an institute for entrepreneurship. This might be along the lines of the highly regarded Weinert Center for Entrepreneurship at the University of Wisconsin.

Program: Art Education

Dominant Rating: 2

Comments: This is a “hybrid” program, combining elements of an already acknowledged strong education program with a not-quite-as-strong art program. It is likely that this program will continue to function well as long as both basic components remain strong.

Program: Biology

Dominant Rating: 2-3

(Note: These comments are provided for all programs in science and mathematics.)

Comments: The programs in math and science presented a challenge to the programs subcommittee. Only one, mathematics, had a clear rating awarded. Others, such as chemistry, had nearly the same number rating it a 1 as a 3. Looking at subcommittee notes, discussing the programs with various individuals, and analyzing the data provide several insights and recommendations.

The programs in science and math are amongst the most academically rigorous. The grade distribution data provided to the subcommittee support this conclusion. Collectively these programs awarded a smaller percentage of “As” than any other program other than Interdisciplinary Studies (and it should be noted that many grades in this field are awarded under the category of “other”). This trend is consistent across years and grading levels.

The faculty are accomplished and highly regarded. Importantly the programs have consistently provided opportunities for their students to engage with their fields of study outside of the classroom. This has included placement in internships, research opportunities, attendance and presentation at scholarly conferences, etc. The newly renovated Parkinson Hall provides a showcase for the programs and is well utilized.

However, the programs are often viewed in the larger structure of the university as supporting programs for the nursing and education programs. The central focus for these programs in the near future should be to carve out a presence and a clear mission separate from this perceived narrow role. Further attention should be given to the recruiting of top science and math students.
Program: Business Administration

Dominant Rating: 2

See general comments for programs in business above under accounting.

Program: Chemistry

Dominant Rating: 1/3

See general comments for programs in math and science above under biology.

Program: Communications

Dominant Rating: 2

Comments: The B.S./B.A. in Communication is not accredited, but at some point in the future should strive to meet that goal. One of the benefits of the reorganization is that the Communication program will be in a better position as a department to seek accreditation, rather than as a program in a division.

Internships are available through COM 460. A list of sponsors and placements is available. The "Spectator" is a consistent award winner and well regarded. The sub-committee believes that the university radio station could have a more visible/audible presence on campus and within the community. This is particularly true given the current popularity of college radio as an alternative to mainstream corporate radio.

Program: Culinary Arts

Dominant Rating: 1-2

Comments: The culinary arts program at MUW is an example of a successful "start-up" program--i.e. a new program that was introduced with the resources, planning, staffing, and execution to make it a quality program academically and a successful program in terms of attracting students. The sub-committee was impressed with the "vision" that the culinary arts faculty had for the program. In particular, there was a clear sense of how this program at a liberal arts university was to be distinguished from other purely vocational programs. Furthermore, there was clear vision of the type of student who would be attracted to this program as opposed to others.

The many accomplishments of the faculty are well known. Students in the program are exposed to top-notch faculty and facilities. Internships are a standard part of the program, and the variety
of internships expose the students to various regions of the United States. This, of course, exposes the program as well.

Recommendations are few. If talk of developing one of the now derelict buildings on campus into a restaurant is true, then this should be pursued with vigor. If it is not--then it should be. The faculty might want to consider the potential for advertising in national trade and popular publications. This would raise "brand awareness" of the program as well as attract students from a wide geographic area.

Program: Education (all associated undergraduate and graduate programs)

Dominant Rating: 1

Comments: Education is one of the institution’s premier programs and is widely recognized as such in this part of the state. The programs consistently meet or exceed benchmarks of excellence (such as continuing accreditation by NCATE).

One point that warrants consideration is the possibility of grade inflation in this (previous) division. Over 75% of the grades in the division for Fall 2004 were A’s and B’s. When one considers the graduate programs (with SLP removed), over 93% of the grades were A’s and B’s (with 83% being A’s) for the same semester. One must wonder if this practice might not jeopardize the integrity of the program in the eyes of the institution, employers, etc. Further, one wonders how those who graduate from a program with this grading rubric might grade their own future students.

Program: English (all associated programs)

Dominant Rating: 1-2

Comments: The English program has a high profile within the community due to the success of the annual Eudora Welty Writers Symposium. The more recent Tennessee Williams Festival has gained a more academic flavor in the past two years. This offering provides another opportunity to raise awareness of the program and offer English majors an important scholarly experience outside of the classroom. The addition of a creative writing emphasis provides a wonderful opportunity to host writers/poets in residence, etc. The English faculty is highly regarded and amongst the most professionally active on campus. Members of the faculty regularly publish books and scholarly articles. One was recently named a Fulbright Scholar.

Three recommendations are made. First, while not as vigorously expressed, members of this faculty are amongst those concerned about the holdings of Fant Library. The institution is encouraged to address this issue. Second, MUW English students have not had much encouragement or success presenting papers at conferences, attending conferences and other scholarly activities, or submitting work for publication. The English program does sponsor its own literary publication "The Dilettanti." Quality has generally been high. Third, amongst the
disciplines in the former Division of Humanities, the English program has the highest number of graduates going on to graduate school. Top graduates should be encouraged to apply to the best programs in the nation and compete for top awards.

Program: Family Studies (Home Ec and Family Life and Relations)

Dominant Rating: 1 & 4 (equally distributed between these two)

Comments: While this is one of the largest majors on campus, relatively few students declare it as their major upon arriving at the institution. As with Social Science, the perception amongst many faculty is that students “end up” in this major after finding other academic streams too difficult. The Division Head/Dean under whom the program resides argues that this perception is inaccurate and points out that the American Council on Family Relations recognizes this program as meeting standards which allow the graduates to be awarded the title “Certified Family Life Educator.” As such, this is recognized as an accredited program.

It appears that this is a program within which substantial growth might occur. It is apparent to reviewers that a substantial amount of public relation work must be done to make the positive aspects of the program and its accomplishments more widely recognized to the campus community.

The group also reviewed the Home economics component, a track that is no longer offered. Teacher certification, however, in Family and Consumer Sciences is offered.

Program: Fine Arts (Visual & Performing Arts)

Dominant Rating: 2-3

Comments: This program is integral to the heart of a liberal arts institution. As noted, it will be combined with Music under the institutional reorganization. The progress of both programs must be monitored to ensure that the (former) General Music program does not negatively impact Theater in the new structure.

Program: Health Education (graduate)

Dominant Rating: 1

Comments: Like the other teacher education programs, this one is a combination of a strong general health program and a strong education program. As might be expected, the product is also strong.
Program: History

Dominant Rating: 3

Comments: The history program has struggled with student numbers. It does not have a high profile within the community or amongst recruits. Several significant issues must be addressed to help this essential program improve and thrive. The program does have a well regarded faculty. The small faculty has published three books in the past few years as well as numerous other professional publications. One has been named a Fulbright Scholar and the faculty has several grants awarded. Yet the size of the faculty limits course offerings as well as student activities. The institution should make a concerted effort to work with the faculty to discuss ways to raise the profile of the program within the community (the MSMS history program provides a good example) and recruit additional students.

Several recommendations are made. First, the program has struggled to provide internships. None have been made available in the past several years. Institutional resources must be devoted to the internship program so that it becomes a stable, regular, and even required part of the program. Highlighting internship opportunities would also be useful in recruiting. In the absence of an established internship, history majors without teacher licensure could graduate without any exposure to the profession outside of the classroom. Key to this issue is the hiring of a university archivist. As positions open it might be advisable to hire an individual who could act as an archivist for the university as well as teach the archiving classes that exist and/or an additional course. The presence of an archivist would create important internship/research opportunities and exposure to the fields of public and local history. An archivist could work with the university's archival material.

Second, history is one of several programs that has pointed out the need for expanded resources in the university library so that students can truly have a first class education and research experience. The institution is encouraged to address this issue. Third, MUW history students have not had much encouragement or success presenting papers at conference, attending conferences and other scholarly activities, or submitting work for publication. One student panel presented work at a scholarly conference in 2004. This was the only one of record going back five years. The institution is encouraged to work with faculty and provide support and/or incentives to encourage these activities. Not only does this provide important opportunities for students it is also an avenue through which the profile of the program can be raised. Few students continue on to graduate school. The institution may want to study why this is the case.

Program: Kinesiology (all areas)

Dominant Rating: 1

Comments: This is a strong program with good potential for growth. The program provides good community services and serves as a positive public relations group for the institution.
Program: Mathematics

Dominate Rating: 1

See general comments for programs in math and science above under biology.

Program: Microbiology

Dominate Rating: none determinable

Comments: This program had a broad rating with nearly identical awarding of 1, 2, and 3. In addition, see general comments for programs in math and science above under biology.

Program: Music (general)

Dominant Rating: 4

Comments: This is a troublesome program because it is integral to the heart of what a liberal arts institution should be on the one hand, and it produces so few graduates and has so few majors on the other. If it is to be “revived” to improve its rating, a substantial investment in both faculty and equipment might be necessary.

It is the understanding of the reviewers that this program will be combined with Theater to become the new Performing Arts Department. The progress of this new Department should be carefully monitored to ensure that the rating of the current Visual and Performing Arts program (which includes Theater) is not “dragged down” by this union.

Program: Music Therapy

Dominant Rating: 4

Comments: This is a struggling program with no consistent faculty and few students who have declared this as their major. It is recognized that this is the only music therapy program in the state system. However, it is also recognized that one of the strongest music therapy programs in the country is housed at the University of Alabama. It is highly unlikely that this program will be able to become competitive without a significant infusion of institutional support, and one must question if that investment is wise.
Program: Music Education

Dominant Rating: 1-2

Comments: Like Art Teacher Ed, this is a “hybrid” program; however, in this case, education is the strong component and music is a very weak component. It will be a good idea to monitor the performance of this program over time.

Program: Nursing (all associated programs)

Dominant Rating: 1

Comments: Nursing is one of the institution's premier programs. It has a high profile within the community and among potential students. The program consistently meets or exceeds benchmarks of excellence.

One area that might warrant consideration is the high proportion of A’s that are awarded (especially at the graduate level, where more than 84% of the grades are A’s).

Program: Paralegal Studies

Dominant Rating: 4

Comments: This program has consistently produced approximately one dozen graduates each year. However, it relies primarily on one full time professor to teach major coursework, with supplemental instruction from the program administrator and adjunct instructors. The program is accredited by ABA. It needs a second full time faculty to reduce reliance on adjunct faculty.

The paralegal program suffers from a lack of institutional funds for its library and software. The latter is an increasingly crucial issue as the training of legal assistants is becoming more and more focused on computer/software utilization. In the past the program has depended heavily on the charity of legal professionals to donate books to the law library. The director is now discussing ways to get free copies of software. While these efforts are admirable and commendable, this is no way to run a quality program (depending on the vagaries of handouts is dangerous). The institution must examine the resource, software, and technology needs of this program and decide whether to commit the necessary capital to them.

Program: Physical Science, Teacher Certification

Dominate Rating: 1/3

See general comments for programs in math and science above under biology.
Program: Political Science

Dominant Rating: 3-4

Comments: The political science program has struggled with high faculty turnover and position uncertainty over the last several years (since the death of David Evans). The current search for a full-time position in political science will strengthen the program and its well respected faculty member. The program struggles with low student numbers. The institution should make a concerted effort to work with the new faculty duo to discuss ways to raise the profile of the program within the community and recruit additional students.

Three recommendations are made. First, internships are a normal part of a well-established program. The program at MUW has only recently undertaken this effort. The credit for this effort goes to the current faculty member. However, institutional resources must be devoted to the internship program so that it becomes a stable, regular, and even required part of the political science program. Highlighting internship opportunities would also be useful in recruiting. Second, political science is one of several programs that has pointed out the need for expanded resources in the university library so that students can truly have a first class education and research experience. The institution is encouraged to address this issue. Third, MUW political science students have not had much encouragement or success presenting papers at conference, attending conferences and other scholarly activities, or submitting work for publication. The institution is encouraged to work with faculty and provide support and/or incentives to encourage these activities. Not only does this provide important opportunities for students it is also an avenue through which the profile of the program can be raised.

Program: Psychology

Dominant Rating: 1

Comments: This is a strong program which is an important component of the liberal arts mission of the institution. If areas into which this program can expand might be identified (such as a graduate program not offered by MSU), this program could provide a vehicle for additional institutional growth.

Program: Social Science

Dominant Rating: 3-4

Comments: The social science degree has several issues that must be addressed. The first is the perception amongst faculty (including many of those that teach within the major) that students "end up" in the major after finding other academic streams too difficult or as a way to "avoid" the B.A. foreign language requirement of history and political science. While there are several
students in the major (most seeking teacher certification) none have come into the university declaring social science as their major. Indeed, this program is one of the few that has consistently garnered this distinction. There is no single faculty member associated with the degree. There are no supportive programs associated with the degree (i.e. honors society, internship program, etc.).

However, the major is important in its role supporting teacher certification in social sciences and the institution should provide support and attention to this program. Three recommendations are made. First, the institution should consider changing the social science degree to a B.A. This would put it in line with other related degrees and disciplines. Second, as the primary academic justification for the program is one associated with teacher certification, the institution may want to consider doing away with the free-standing social science major and having only social science with teacher certification. Third, the institution should examine the topical make-up of the major. The core disciplines are history and political science. However, students can take classes in a potpourri of other areas. Unfortunately, some of those areas, such as anthropology, are no longer taught at MUW or do not have a full program.

Program: Spanish
Dominant Rating: 3
Comments: This program produces a very small number of graduates. It is considered necessary to liberal arts institution; however, the need for degree versus the need for the courses must be questioned.

Program: Speech Language Pathology (undergraduate and graduate programs)
Dominant Rating: 1
Comments: SLP is one of the trio of outstanding professional programs at the W. It is a consistent achiever of benchmarks of excellences and is a strong recruiter amongst potential students. There may, however, be limited ability to expand this program in terms of number of students.

As part of the deliberations, the following more general comments were also included. Program review needs to become incorporated into the fabric of MUW. While those programs holding accreditations do undergo a routine self-study/external review process, all other programs offered would benefit from this. While related to this indirectly, the issue of graduate program funding was raised as a topic which may require additional analysis. As this review process unfolded, there were several discussions about the current identity of MUW as a liberal arts institution when so many students are enrolled in pre-professional and graduate programs. The University may need to review this and may elect to define what might be a desired proportion of professional programs to liberal arts programs.
It was emphasized that any savings that might accrue from academic program realignment must go back into academic programs and not into other activities of the campus such as administration, facilities or student services.

In addition, we plan to review the benchmarks of excellence submitted by various programs in an attempt to assemble a list of 4-7 common benchmarks of excellence that should be present in a program regardless of discipline or emphasis. Beyond that, we will (when possible) provide 3-5 additional benchmarks that are specific to a given program.

**Summary:**

The following areas are recommended for action. As a note, the working group emphasized that these ratings present the findings of a review conducted by a group of faculty/staff and represent only the first step in development of systematic, on-going program review.

1. There are a number of programs that are relatively healthy and stable on campus, there are a number of programs that need some support to become what they might be and deserve to receive that support because they fit into our perception of what this institution is, and there are a few programs whose continued existence must be considered during these tight economic times.

2. Program review should become a systematic, on-going activity.

As a next step, each program will be asked to respond to these ratings. In addition, all programs will be asked to present specific plans to address weaknesses cited as well as a list of resources required to implement these plans. These documents will drive this continuing program review.

As resources become available, these will need to be allocated to existing programs or used to develop new programs. To ensure that this occurs, program review needs to become a systematic, on-going activity. As mentioned above, resources must be allocated to allow departments to implement plans for improvement if the institution is to continue offering programs that are widely recognized for their quality.

At the same time, if it is agreed that adequate funds have been allocated for this purpose or if it is agreed that a new program is clearly of high priority, then funds may be judiciously applied for programmatic development. While the development of new programs was not specifically addressed, a few programs have been identified in the analysis section of this report. Many of these relate to elevating well subscribed minors to majors. Other programs, such as reinstating an MBA or pursuing a master’s degree in educational leadership follow directly from the mission of the University. However, any programmatic developments need to include an identified on-going resource stream.

Finally, it must be stressed that these ratings follow from a review of the programs offered and do not reflect the quality of the faculty offering the program. This distinction needs to be maintained.
C. Faculty

Background: This section focused on the cohort of faculty required to offer the programs provided to students served. Specifically, this section will review the characteristics of the faculty and will raise issues that need to be addressed as the University continues to provide students the broad array of quality learning opportunities which lead to the majors/minors and core curriculum offered. Again, data collected from a variety of resources were analyzed. Some of the demographic information was obtained from the MUW Employee Benefits Survey, Spring 2004. Other data were obtained from the 2004-2005 CUPA-HR report, the Institutional Self-Study 2001-2003 for SACS, and the Office of Institutional Research. In addition, in an effort to obtain specific information from the faculty at large, informal departmental surveys were completed.

An analysis of the programs offered clearly addresses a number of the University goals and objectives. The following two goals are clearly addressed:

MUW Goal 7: Promote diversity among MUW students, faculty, and staff.

MUW Goal 8: Encourage research, scholarship and creative endeavors to enhance instruction and professional development.

This section follows from the working group’s decision to follow a three-tiered evaluation of the faculty and its interaction with the University. The first tier is an analysis of the faculty at present (Current Faculty Demographics). The second tier begins the recommendations as it captures a vision of whom we want to become (Projected Faculty Resource Needs). Finally, the third tier is a set of proposals of how to get from where we are at present to where we want to be in the near future (Meeting Projected Faculty Needs: Recommendations).

Analyses: These demographics were gathered from data sets maintained by the University. Since the data behind different reports are defined differently or have a different collection date, the number of faculty will vary slightly. Please note that these differences are small and have little if any impact on the conclusions drawn.

1. Age. According to the Office of Institutional Research, as of February 24, 2005, there were 144 faculty members at Mississippi University for Women. Of these 144 faculty, six were 26-30 years of age, thirty-three were 31-40 years of age, forty-four were 41-50 years of age, forty-six were 51-60 years of age, thirteen were 61-70 years of age, and two were 71-80 years of age. Median age range for faculty members is 51-60 years of age with a bimodal distribution of the 41-50 year and the 51-60 year age range.

2. Gender. Of the 144 faculty members, ninety-three (65%) were female and fifty-one (35%) were male.

3. Marital Status. Out of 144 faculty members, a majority (99) of faculty members indicated that they were married while 31 are single. Additionally, 2 are widowed and 12 are divorced.

4. Ethnicity. Information obtained by the Office of Institutional Research indicated that out of 144 faculty members, one hundred and thirty-three were Caucasian (92%), five were African
American (3.5%), one was Hispanic (less than 1%), four were of Asian descent (2.8%), and one was Native American (less than 1%).

5. Full Time vs. Part-time. According to the 2004-2005 CUPA-HR report, the majority of the faculty, one hundred and thirty-three individuals, were employed full time with a standard full time teaching load of twelve course hours. Forty-seven faculty members were employed part time. The total number of Fall course hours (2004) taught by part-time faculty was 279.

6. Tenure and Rank Distribution. Faculty demographics supplied by the Office of Institutional Research for 2004-2005, indicated that there were forty-four faculty members employed at the rank of instructor (33%), thirty-five faculty members employed at the rank of assistant professor (26%), twenty-one faculty members employed at the rank of associate professor (16%), and thirty-three employed at the rank of professor (25%). Of the cumulative 133 faculty, fifty-four are tenured, thirty-five more faculty are eligible for tenure, and fifty-five are not eligible for tenure.

7. Terminal Degrees. Faculty demographics obtained from the Institutional Self-Study 2001-2003 for SACS indicated that out of the 134 faculty members employed at that time, 93 (69%) had terminal degrees in their respective areas. This included sixty-two Ph.D. degrees, twelve Ed.D. degrees, four D.S.N. degrees, three J.D.degrees, one D.M.A. degree, one D.A. degree, and eight M.F.A degrees. Of those forty-one faculty members who did not have terminal degrees in their respective areas, one had a B.F.A. degree, one had a M.Ed. degree, one had a M.B.A. degree, one had a M.M. degree, one had a M.N. degree, twenty-three had M.S.N.degrees, eight had M.S.degrees, and five had M.A. degrees.

8. Years of Service. Demographics obtained from the MUW Employee Benefits Survey-Spring 2004 (completed by both faculty and staff) indicated that of the 152 responses, 18 respondents (11.8%) had been employed at MUW for less than a year, 52 (34.2%) had been employed for one to five years, 43 (28.3%) had been employed for six to ten years; thus, almost 3/4 (74.3%) of respondents have been employed with MUW for ten or fewer years. Of those remaining, 11(7.2%) had been employed for eleven to fifteen years, 10 (6.6%) had been employed for sixteen to twenty years, and eighteen (11.8%) had been employed for over twenty years. Of the remaining respondents (25.6%) employed with MUW for more than 10 years (those whose expertise is the most valuable for mentorship), nearly half are within a few years of retirement.

9. Workload Analysis. According to the National Faculty Salaries in 2004-2005 CUPA-HR report, for undergraduate teaching in both summer and regular term, 12 hours are considered to be full time. For graduate level teaching, 9 hours are considered to be full-time. However, no such distinction was made in the Institutional Self-Study 2001-2003 for SACS report. According to the Office of Human Resources, approximately 30% of the faculty, 50 faculty members in the fall and 32 in the spring taught overloads.

10. Compensation. Faculty demographics obtained from Banner and individual contracts indicated that the average full-time salary for a faculty member at MUW was $40,090. When broken down according to rank, these averages were as follows: average salary for instructor- $33,876, average salary for assistant professor- $39,118, average salary for associate professor-$40,979, and the average salary for professor- $46,386. The following chart illustrates MUW
Faculty salaries as broken down by rank and division based on nine month contracts and includes compensation for administrative duties since these responsibilities are considered as part of the full-time load of faculty who serve in administrative roles. Median salaries are reported to provide a clearer picture of what might be expected as a typical salary by rank in each academic area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MUW: Median salaries reported</th>
<th>Instructor</th>
<th>Asst. Prof</th>
<th>Assoc. Prof</th>
<th>Professor</th>
<th>#</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MUW: Communication, General</td>
<td>$32,236</td>
<td>$53,000</td>
<td>$40,772</td>
<td>Na</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUW: Culinary Arts and Related Services, Other</td>
<td>$32,947</td>
<td>$40,000</td>
<td>$51,953</td>
<td>Na</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUW: Education, General</td>
<td>Na</td>
<td>$40,900</td>
<td>Na</td>
<td>$58,903</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>MUW: Education/Teaching of the Gifted and Talented</td>
<td>Na</td>
<td>Na</td>
<td>Na</td>
<td>$49,504</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUW: French Language and Literature</td>
<td>$26,910</td>
<td>Na</td>
<td>Na</td>
<td>Na</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUW: Spanish Language and Literature</td>
<td>$33,830</td>
<td>$37,581</td>
<td>Na</td>
<td>Na</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUW: Human Development and Family Studies, General</td>
<td>Na</td>
<td>Na</td>
<td>Na</td>
<td>$36,113</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUW: Law (LL.B., J.D.)</td>
<td>Na</td>
<td>Na</td>
<td>Na</td>
<td>$48,956</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUW: English Language and Literature, General</td>
<td>$29,895</td>
<td>$37,494</td>
<td>$38,550</td>
<td>$45,343</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUW: Biology/Biological Sciences, General</td>
<td>Na</td>
<td>$36,470</td>
<td>$40,590</td>
<td>$60,398</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUW: Medical Microbiology and Bacteriology (NEW)</td>
<td>Na</td>
<td>$37,013</td>
<td>Na</td>
<td>Na</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUW: Mathematics, General</td>
<td>$28,000</td>
<td>Na</td>
<td>$40,005</td>
<td>$52,820</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUW: Health and Physical Education, General</td>
<td>$36,000</td>
<td>$45,000</td>
<td>Na</td>
<td>$51,148</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUW: Philosophy</td>
<td>Na</td>
<td>Na</td>
<td>Na</td>
<td>$51,449</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUW: Chemistry, General</td>
<td>$31,837</td>
<td>$38,000</td>
<td>Na</td>
<td>Na</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUW: Developmental and Child Psychology</td>
<td>Na</td>
<td>$36,230</td>
<td>Na</td>
<td>$43,823</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUW: Social Sciences, General</td>
<td>Na</td>
<td>$36,020</td>
<td>Na</td>
<td>Na</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUW: History, General</td>
<td>$28,050</td>
<td>$28,500</td>
<td>$42,647</td>
<td>$47,907</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUW: Median salaries reported</td>
<td>Instructor</td>
<td>Asst. Prof</td>
<td>Assoc. Prof</td>
<td>Professor</td>
<td>#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUW: Political Science and Government, General</td>
<td>Na</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Na</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>$38,694</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUW: Visual and Performing Arts, General</td>
<td>Na</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>$37,260</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>$40,737</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUW: Drama and Dramatics/Theatre Arts, General</td>
<td>$34,636</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Na</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUW: Music Performance, General</td>
<td>$31,975</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>$34,880</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$46,494</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUW: Audiology/Speech-Language Pathology</td>
<td>$36,810</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>$47,752</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$45,589</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUW: Nursing (RN, ASN, BSN, MSN)</td>
<td>$41,852</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>$40,356</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>$49,080</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUW: Business Administration and Mgt, General</td>
<td>$46,030</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>$47,600</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$51,558</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUW: Accounting</td>
<td>$44,500</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$45,000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUW: Library</td>
<td>$26,773</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$28,390</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>$30,349</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. Contract Type. According to information obtained from the National Faculty Salaries in 2004-2005 CUPA-HR report, 80% of the faculty had contracts based on academic year (9-10 months) while 20% of the faculty had contracts based on calendar year (11-12 months).

12. Intangibles Lost to Faculty in the Past Five Years. Services valued by many faculty and considered relevant to faculty retention and recruitment include loss of access to the Demonstration School, faculty housing (e.g., changes proposed concerning fewer campus apartments reserved for faculty housing), and the addition of gym use fees.

Conclusions:

1. Age

According to demographics cited in Section I, in five years at least fifteen of the 144 faculty members may be retired and an untold number of the forty six who were within the 51-60 year old age range will be approaching retirement age. Given the University’s mission to continue to expand our student body, many faculty will need to be replaced. There is an impending loss of faculty across the nation as a result of the aging of the baby boomer population. While age of the faculty may not be a component which can be actively manipulated in the next five to ten years, this is an area which needs to be monitored. In order to grow and strengthen appropriately across disciplines, we stress our need to maintain master faculty with the ability to mentor younger faculty. This level of ability is typically tied to experience and rank. However, this may not be
the case when there is such a high level of older faculty being employed for shorter periods of
time (as indicated by the years of service data). There should be a fairly level representation of
age across the faculty. The information regarding the skewed faculty age in Section I can be
directly tied to lack of compensation, and remediation of this error is dependent upon
competitive salaries to recruit and retain faculty members at professorial ranks over the course of
their life span.

2. Gender

Given the University’s commitment to equal representation, we need to recruit more male
educators. While demographic data cannot be projected to the number of male educators to be
hired within the next five to ten years, all areas report a greater need for a more diverse
representation in the faculty. The information regarding the gender representation in Section I
can be directly tied to lack of compensation, and remediation of this error is dependent upon
competitive salaries to recruit and retain faculty members at professorial ranks.

3. Marital Status

No projections were made regarding marital status.

4. Ethnicity

Given the diversity of our student body, we need to recruit a more culturally diverse faculty. As
with gender representation, all areas report a greater need for more diversity. Additionally,
accreditation bodies for both the university (SACS) and its divisions (NCATE, etc.) have
indicated this area as a weakness for the institution. The information regarding the ethnicity of
the faculty reported in Section I can be directly tied to lack of compensation, and remediation of
this error is dependent upon competitive salaries to recruit and retain faculty members at
professorial ranks from all ethnic groups and cultures.

5. Full Time vs. Part-time

Projected demographics envisage a modification of the ratio reported in Section I. Within the
next five to ten years, a decrease in the percentage of course hours for part time faculty is
anticipated. It is the concern of the faculty workgroup that the current ratio of full to part-time
contracts is due in large part to the inability to recruit and retain appropriate full time faculty
members. Some programs reported difficulty with incorporation of part time faculty and
indicated that this difficulty decreases the strength of said programs. This can be directly tied to
lack of compensation, and remediation of this error is dependent upon competitive salaries to
recruit and retain faculty members at professorial ranks in full time positions.

6. Tenure and Rank Distribution

Projected demographics for the next five to ten years predict a change in the ratio of rank
distribution. Currently, there is concern that the inflating ranks of instructors are in response to
the inability to recruit and retain full time faculty members at the professorial ranks. As with the
information reported regarding full- vs. part-time contracts, it is anticipated in the next five to ten
years, rank distribution will become more equally distributed. Additionally, a change in the
number of faculty with tenure and eligibility for tenure is also predicted within the next five to ten years. As the institution becomes more successful at recruiting and retaining full-time faculty, an increase is expected in the ratio of those faculty having tenure as well as those faculty eligible for tenure. However, this increase is dependent on competitive salaries to recruit and retain faculty members at professorial ranks throughout the course of their academic lives.

7. Terminal Degrees

Since the demographics from section II were reported, there have been significant changes in the make up of faculty by terminal degree. A staggering example of these changes can be illustrated by the changes in the nursing program. Since the date the demographic information was collected, all four of the D.S.N. degree holders have departed. Many areas reported a need to increase the number of terminal degree holders within departments and colleges (divisions). As with the previous two components, within the next five to ten years an increase in the number of faculty members with terminal degrees in their disciplines is needed and expected. However, this increase is dependent on competitive salaries to recruit and retain faculty members at professorial ranks.

8. Years of Service

Within the next five to ten years, these statistics need to be monitored closely and there needs to be a significant decrease in the amount of turnover that results in percentages reported in Section I. Additionally, 28 employees had been employed for sixteen and above years. If these employees follow national trends, many will be retiring within the next five to ten years. In an article published in the NEA Higher Education Research Center Update (volume 7, number 5, December 2001), of the 18.2 percent of faculty members in public, four year institutions who were sixty years old or older, 42.3 reported being very likely to retire within the next three years and 30.2 were somewhat likely to retire within the next three years. However, the decrease in turnover is dependent on competitive salaries to recruit and retain all employees, especially faculty members holding professorial ranks.

9. Workload Analysis

According to the National Faculty Salaries in 2004-2005 CUPA-HR report, for undergraduate teaching in both summer and regular term, 12 hours are considered to be full time. For graduate level teaching, 9 hours are considered to be full time. However, no such distinction was made in the Institutional Self-Study 2001-2003 for SACS report. According to the Office of Human Resources, fifty faculty members taught overloads in the fall, and 32 faculty members taught overloads in the spring; thus, 30% of faculty members taught overloads. Within the next five to ten years, this ratio is expected to decrease if more full time faculty are hired and retained. Additionally, several divisions reported the need to lower the cap on current classes as well as to increase the number of courses offered. Projections for the next five to ten years indicate an increase in full time faculty. Therefore, even with a lowering of class caps and an increase in the number of courses being offered, there should be a subsequent decrease in the number of faculty teaching overloads. However, this expectation is dependent upon MUW supporting competitive salaries to recruit and retain faculty members at professorial ranks.
10. Compensation

Faculty demographics (see Section I) indicated that the average full-time salary for a faculty member at MUW was $40,090. When broken down according to rank, these averages were as follows: average salary for instructor- $33,876, average salary for assistant professor- $39,118, average salary for associate professor-$40,979, and the average salary for professor- $46,386.

The following tables illustrate the vast discrepancy between the salaries at MUW compared to institutions within the state, institutions within the SREB, and similar institutions nationwide. The first table is a comparison of average, full-time salaries (compiled by the IHL in January, 2005):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>MUW</th>
<th>Nationwide*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full Professor</td>
<td>46,386</td>
<td>96,624 (-52%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate</td>
<td>40,979</td>
<td>74,491 (-45%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor</td>
<td>39,118</td>
<td>60,692 (-36%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructor</td>
<td>33,876</td>
<td>51,703 (-35%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Note: The percentage of difference increases by rank.

The following table provides a nationwide comparison of IIB level faculty by rank (compiled by Smallwood, 2005):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>MUW</th>
<th>Nationwide*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full Professor</td>
<td>46,386</td>
<td>96,624 (-52%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate</td>
<td>40,979</td>
<td>74,491 (-45%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor</td>
<td>39,118</td>
<td>60,692 (-36%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructor</td>
<td>33,876</td>
<td>51,703 (-35%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following table provides a comparison of MUW median faculty salaries with seven other Mississippi universities based upon three teaching categories: English, History, and Mathematics (data provided in each university's 2005-2006 budget report and is reported for filled positions only):
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Instructor</th>
<th>Asst. Prof</th>
<th>Assoc. Prof</th>
<th>Professor</th>
<th>#</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MUW: English</td>
<td>$29,895</td>
<td>$37,500</td>
<td>$38,550</td>
<td>$46,889</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUW: History</td>
<td>No Data</td>
<td>$28,500</td>
<td>No Data</td>
<td>$53,868</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUW: Mathematics</td>
<td>$30,000</td>
<td>No Data</td>
<td>$40,795</td>
<td>$53,954</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcorn: English</td>
<td>$33,615</td>
<td>$41,820</td>
<td>$44,488</td>
<td>$54,309</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcorn: History</td>
<td>No Data</td>
<td>$39,265</td>
<td>No Data</td>
<td>No Data</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcorn: Mathematics</td>
<td>$32,423</td>
<td>$42,448</td>
<td>$47,410</td>
<td>$55,091</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delta: English (Languages &amp; Literature)</td>
<td>$31,460</td>
<td>$38,000</td>
<td>No Data</td>
<td>No Data</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delta: History</td>
<td>No Data</td>
<td>$42,000</td>
<td>$43,570</td>
<td>$48,064</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delta: Mathematics</td>
<td>$35,000</td>
<td>$42,000</td>
<td>$44,290</td>
<td>$56,298</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jackson State: English (English &amp; Languages)</td>
<td>$31,418</td>
<td>$39,800</td>
<td>$46,592</td>
<td>$52,796</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jackson State: History</td>
<td>$28,745</td>
<td>$38,034</td>
<td>$48,214</td>
<td>No Data</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jackson State: Mathematics</td>
<td>$39,576</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
<td>$57,000</td>
<td>$70,084</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSU: English</td>
<td>No Data</td>
<td>$43,000</td>
<td>$52,851</td>
<td>$66,237</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSU: History</td>
<td>No Data</td>
<td>$45,000</td>
<td>$53,983</td>
<td>$73,050</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSU: Mathematics (Mathematics &amp; Statistics)</td>
<td>$31,200</td>
<td>$51,140</td>
<td>$53,121</td>
<td>$65,240</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississippi Valley: English (English &amp; Language)</td>
<td>$33,800</td>
<td>$42,447</td>
<td>$49,539</td>
<td>$53,544</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississippi Valley: History</td>
<td>No Data</td>
<td>$40,604</td>
<td>$45,704</td>
<td>No Data</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississippi Valley: Mathematics</td>
<td>No Data</td>
<td>$46,000</td>
<td>$45,467</td>
<td>$56,645</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UM: English</td>
<td>$24,259</td>
<td>$44,400</td>
<td>$50,930</td>
<td>$61,989</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UM: History</td>
<td>No Data</td>
<td>$44,100</td>
<td>$49,176</td>
<td>$76,692</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Further, as part of this study, a peer analysis was commissioned from CUPA-HR. This analysis compared faculty, mid-level administrators and senior administrators within this group of institutions. MUW’s percentage of peer institutions’ median salary for faculty is -17%, for mid-level administrators is -10%, and for senior administrators is -7%. The full set of data is appended. Clearly, almost all faculty salaries by discipline and rank are less than the median salaries paid by these peers. Salaries for the other groups show some variation with salaries above the medians common in some cases. The peer set includes Dakota State University, Eastern Oregon University, Georgia Southwestern State University, Kentucky State University, Lander University, Montana Tech of The University of Montana, Northern State University, Peru State College, Southern Arkansas University, University of Montevallo, and Wayne State College. Peer institutions match MUW by factors such as size and mission. As can be noted, these peers are some of the smaller, less well-funded institutions in “poorer” predominately rural states.

MUW typically falls below sister institutions at state, region, and nationwide levels. In terms of the five and ten year projections, all areas reported that the major discrepancies in the salaries of MUW faculty must be remediated in order to maintain a well-qualified faculty.

Recommendations: Based on a thorough analysis of MUW’s faculty and the array of programs offered as well as a review of national trends, the following recommendations must be implemented if the institution is to recruit, grow, and maintain a healthy faculty.

As a note, several components of the faculty demographics cannot and should not be manipulated. Therefore, no recommendations are made related to age or marital status. However, the remainder of the demographic components are pertinent to the discussion at hand.

The single most important recommendation, which has long reaching effects, is to increase faculty compensation, both a) tangible and b) intangible. The single greatest concern reported by MUW faculty in the MUW Academic Master Plan Faculty Sub-Committee Request for information survey is in fact salary-related (39 of 60 completed responses, or 65%). As shown in the conclusions section above, faculty salaries are significantly below those offered peers in any comparative set. When informally surveyed for this document, an overwhelming majority of faculty indicated that they either were leaving or were considering leaving their tenure at MUW for better salaries elsewhere.
MUW’s 2004-2005 Budget reports 13 vacancies of 157 funded positions. While this number represents only 8% of all faculty positions at MUW, some divisions report a significant number of vacancies and others report none at all. All division heads have indicted that maintaining a well-qualified faculty is one of the greatest problems, if not the single greatest problem, impacting the integrity of their programs. Division heads were interviewed as part of this process and all stressed the unique challenges faced recruiting and retaining highly qualified faculty given the salary ranges offered. These comments are included in the report of this working group which is appended.

Salary impacts the faculty on many different levels. In addition to the most obvious impact, the inability to recruit and retain new faculty invariably leads to increases in teaching loads, and that leads to faculty burn-out. Like our peers nationwide, faculty members at MUW are working harder than before. Reflecting this extended commitment, evaluation of faculty here at MUW indicates that currently 32 (22%) faculty members are teaching overloads. Intrinsically, the quality of programs is directly affected by the applicant pool. Further, salary issues and the inability to recruit and retain new full-time faculty can also be correlated to the higher incidence of hiring adjunct faculty, typically at the instructor level, at disproportional high salary levels.

While salary is the most commonly recognized component of faculty compensation, it is not the only component for which we are recommending increase. Other tangible benefits include institutional support for teaching and research, faculty development opportunities, facilities, travel provisions, payment of incidental and professional expenses, supplemental salaries, endowed chairs, spousal hire programs and equipment.

Intangible benefits, or compensation, include a sense of community, leadership, release time, recognition, faculty forum, as well as the quality of faculty and students. To address this, a recommendation would be to support faculty professional development by creating centers for teaching and professional development which incorporate frequent interaction, collaboration, and community among faculty such as a faculty mentoring program. Additionally, the centers might include other activities that are common to these efforts including individual consultations, departmental consultations, workshops, seminars, conferences, teaching assistant training programs, annual award programs, materials on teaching development, and institutional participation in grants and research on teaching and faculty development. Further recommendations include development of a faculty club and a faculty dining room to increase collegiality outside of the academic environment as well as to aid in recruitment and retention of faculty members. When searches are conducted, the chair of each search should have updated benefits information available to provide candidates and should either be prepared to discuss salary or be aware who will discuss salary with candidates. Candidates should be provided information about the community to include information about schools, hospitals, denominational churches, realtors, and recreation applicable for both families and single applicants. This information may be requested from various outlets in the community and surrounding area and could be repackaged, if necessary, to provide a positive image to better meet the needs of applicants and incoming faculty.

To address the primary issue, MUW should develop a 5-year plan to increase faculty salaries. At the end of this period, faculty salaries by rank and by discipline should be no less than 5% higher than our local peer institutions for increased retention and recruitment of faculty. Plans to raise
funds for salaries should be developed. We propose further that MUW consider options of using funds already available to the university. For example, with increased support to the MUW Foundation for student scholarships, E & G money would be freed up each year for the university to use to meet priorities such as faculty and staff salaries.

While not explicitly related to this area, it is recommended that the expectation be established for increased accountability of the administration that is data driven, quantifiable, and clear. This accountability must extend to all areas of administration. To that end, more transparency regarding a variety of internal issues needs to occur. For instance, budgetary information should be included on the university website in a variety of formats. Any plans for fund dispersal should be included on the website as well. Additionally, the system of checks and balances that governs each level of the administration clearly should be delineated on the website and in the bulletin.

The transparency of information also needs to extend to faculty information. For instance, there does not appear to be any data being taken from exiting faculty members. It is the recommendation of this workgroup that measures be taken to remediate this problem. It is the belief of the workgroup that by creating a campus wide, consistently applied formula to all departing faculty as part of the exit interview, more pertinent information will be obtained to improve faculty retention, observe trends, track turnover, reduce faculty exodus and improve selection practices. Further, it is a recommendation of this workgroup that such documents and assessments, thereof, be posted on the university website to increase transparency between faculty and administration as is the practice at other in-state sister institutions (i.e., Mississippi State) and indeed at public universities nationwide (i.e., Penn State). Furthermore, the general patterns of responses should be presented to the Academic Council and Faculty Senate to increase faculty awareness of concerns in order to be more responsive to them.

Summary: If faculty (and staff) salaries are truly a priority, a published plan to allocate resources for this purpose needs to be developed. This plan should include detailed policies and procedures that address all aspects of academic funding particularly relevant to faculty salaries. The publication of such a plan clearly would illustrate MUW's dedication to the goals of recruiting, maintaining and retaining a well-qualified faculty.

D. ACADEMIC SUPPORT

Background: This section focused on the support provided to faculty and to students as the teaching/learning mission of the institution is fulfilled. Since evolving teaching methodologies are more and more being driven by evolving instructional technologies, in addition to acquiring technologies, the campus must support faculty and students who use these to facilitate the teaching/learning process. And more broadly, the University must review how the students and academic activities of the University are supported and how that support fits within the overall role and mission of the University.
An analysis of the programs offered clearly addresses a number of the University goals and objectives. The following three goals are clearly addressed:

MUW Goal 3: Provide student life programs that stimulate intellectual, social, emotional, physical, and leadership development.

MUW Goal 5: Promote effective organizational principles.

MUW Goal 9: Provide physical resources, infrastructure, and technology to advance the educational, operational, and public service goals of the University.

A number of readily available data sources were used including the results of survey data as well as IHL reports and MUW Fact Books. In addition, two surveys were generated and circulated, one for students and one for faculty.

Before beginning deliberations, it was agreed that “academic support” needed to be defined. The consensus was that the concept of academic support is much broader than one might initially think for almost everything on a university campus ultimately affects the academic performance of students. However, rather than review all functions of the University, the following working definition for academic support was agreed upon: Any University program, service, or resource that influences or has an impact on student learning. While this inclusive definition reflects the realities of campus life, this section focuses specifically on those programs and services which have a clear academic support mission.

As a note, this report reviewed a range of functions in great detail. The summary present here is abstracted from the entire report which is appended.

1. Fant Memorial Library

Fant Memorial Library provides a wide range of services to patrons (students, faculty, staff, and community members) including the circulating collection, reference collection, electronic resources, and information literacy services.

Current Situation: The past few years have seen a rapid growth in the type and extent of technology used in libraries. At the same time, funding has stayed essentially flat. Since costs for journals and other standing orders have been rising approximately 10% per year, the essentially flat budget has forced journal titles to be cut to stay within the budget. Further cuts are commonly made to provide increased access to electronic databases. Each year, the funds available to add to the circulating collection are limited. Decisions are often made to focus additions to the circulating collection in one area, perhaps in response to an approaching accreditation visit. In FY 2004, the emphasis for collection development was placed on materials for the graduate programs in response to a SACS recommendation indicating a need to increase resources in that area. In 2003-04, the expenditures toward the undergraduate circulating collection were $26,535 for all the divisions combined and $20,542 for the graduate programs combined. In 2000-01, a total of $50,000 was allocated to the divisions.
In addition to support for patrons, library faculty members provide instruction on information literacy. In 2003-04, this included instruction to 222 freshmen in UN101 on using the library, available resources, technology, databases, and rules. Also, in 2003-04, 942 students attended sessions with 66 other classes to gain information about library resources and research methods (2003-2004 Annual Report). Of course, there is much more instruction on an individual and small group basis that is not tallied.

From the 2005 survey of students conducted by the Academic Support Working Group, most student users of library services are satisfied.

* The library has the scholarly journals (periodicals) and other materials I need for my studies - 33% agree; 31% neutral; 22% disagree; 14% not applicable/no response.
* The library’s instruction sessions (tours, classes, workshops) have been helpful to me in my academic work - 27% agree; 29% neutral; 18% disagree; 26% not applicable/no response.
* The library’s interlibrary loan service usually permits me to obtain materials from other libraries within two weeks of my placing a request - 32% agree; 14% neutral; 3% disagree; 50% not applicable/no response.
* The library is open during hours which are convenient for students - 53% agree; 20% neutral; 21% disagree; 6% not applicable/no response.

The library faces these challenges:

* Budget restrictions, specifically lack of needed funds, as costs increase.
* Increasing impact of technology on library services.
* Heavy face-to-face interaction and instructional demands relative to the number of library faculty and staff.
* Assessing use of library resources through remote access such as via the Internet from locations other than Fant Memorial Library. This is much more complex than counting patrons entering the library.
* Staying current with technology, including knowledge, hardware, and software.

Future plans:

Increase involvement of Library faculty and staff in the planning of renovation and an addition for Fant Memorial.

Fill librarian position that has been vacant since 2000.

Obtain/create an electronic classroom for instructional sessions rather than using one seating area in the back corner that is open to the rest of the library, does not have the needed seating capacity, and does not provide any barrier between the “classroom” and the rest of the library.

Meet ADA compliance requirements including building accessibility, furniture, computer workstations, and other equipment.
2. Advising Center

The Advising Center provides advising to students and serves as a reference source for faculty and staff. The Advising Center is staffed 8:00am-5:00pm daily throughout the year, providing advising assistance to undeclared students, incoming students, and declared majors who are unable to meet with their assigned advisors. The Advising Center also works to improve student persistence.

Current Situation: The Advising Center is staffed by the director Dr. Patricia Donat and faculty members who serve on the Advising Corps from each division who are selected for their strong advising records, knowledge of rules and policies, and interest in quality advising. While the majority of advising is with undeclared students and incoming students, both freshmen and transfer students, other students will be provided assistance. Student contact data indicate that the Advising Center is providing a vital service that is used extensively. For calendar year 2004, the number of student contacts was 233 in Spring, 273 in Summer, and 272 in Fall.

Various efforts are made to increase student persistence. Each semester, a list of currently enrolled students who have not pre-registered for the next semester is circulated to divisions so that there can be follow-up to encourage these students to pre-register or to learn why they will not be returning to MUW.

Dr. Donat provides advising workshops primarily intended for new faculty members, but also attended by returning faculty members. She annually updates the Advising Manual and provides information to the faculty related to advising, policy changes, deadlines, and section availability during orientations.

Current challenges:

* Contribute to student retention efforts on campus, particularly in the first year.

Future plans:

* Decrease percentage of currently enrolled students who do not pre-register for the next semester. Barriers include holds on their accounts that in some cases may be small traffic or library fines and contacting students to encourage them to pre-register. Pre-registration helps divisions with the planning of sections and instructor needs, along with increasing the likelihood of retaining that student.
* Continue contacts of students with absences and/or low grades in selected general education classes as an early intervention tactic to offer support and assistance.
* Create a new position for a professional advisor who could possibly also serve as a writing center coordinator.
* Central location for the Advising Center taking into consideration the close working ties with the Registrar’s Office and Admissions.
3. Office of Academic Support Services

The Office of Academic Support Services provides peer tutoring, study skills workshops and classes, assistance to students on academic probation and students with disabilities, and oversight of the Summer Developmental Program.

Current Situation:

The use of academic support services is increasing.

* In the 2001 Graduating Student Survey, 44% of the respondents selected “not applicable” when asked to rate academic support services. In the 2004 survey, the number responding “not applicable” decreased to 22%.
* As the NA responses decreased, the ranking of the services as good or excellent increased from 37% in 2001 to 59% in 2004.
* The number of new requests for tutoring also increased from 72 during the 1999-2000 academic year to 115 during 2003-2004 (2000-2004 Annual Reports).
* The enrollment in the study skills course LS 101, required for students with two or more ACT subscores of 16 or below, increased from four students in the fall 1999 semester to 23 in the fall 2004 class.

Thirty students with disabilities currently have accommodations plans (Office of Academic Support Services). Most of the students seeking accommodations have unseen conditions such as a learning disability, attention deficit disorder or a psychological disorder which are usually accommodated with little difficulty. MUW, however, has a growing population of students with sensory or mobility disabilities for which accommodations are not as easily or quickly implemented.

Efforts to assist students experiencing or likely to experience academic difficulty is an ongoing focus of the office and includes instruction for groups of students in frequently failed classes, academic counseling for students on academic probation, individual student conferences by appointment, and academic advising for LS 101-102 students.

Current Challenges:

* Lack of a professionally staffed writing lab - Currently only peer tutors are available to assist students with specific assignments. Student tutors are not qualified to assess and teach remedial writing skills.
* Barriers to accessibility, both architectural and informational, for individuals with disabilities. A proactive plan for the removal of barriers should replace the current reactive approach since retrofitting accommodations delays accessibility and is costly. Increased involvement by the Disabilities Services Coordinator in the initial stages of renovation and construction planning would assure a greater awareness of accessibility issues from the beginning of a project.
* Support for at-risk students - The tables below indicate the number of freshmen admitted with one or more ACT subscore of 16 or below in each of the years listed
(Summers are not included) and the number of freshmen placed on probation. Currently there is no follow up information on these students. There is no information that indicates which students are more likely to perform poorly, how long they persist, or how many of them graduate. Having such information would help us make decisions about who needs the most help and when it is most critical to provide the assistance. While there are services available to assist these students, there is no required, structured program for them that assures that they get the help they need.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1 subscore</th>
<th>2 subscores</th>
<th>3 subscores</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000-2001</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001-2002</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002-2003</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-2004</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-2005</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Freshmen on Probation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001-2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002-2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2004</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On a smaller scale, the Director of Academic Support Service reports that 46 of 81 students enrolled in a class required for students with two or more low ACT subscores from 2000 until 2003 were no longer enrolled at MUW by spring 2004. Of these, only ten left with a GPA of 2.0 or better. The services and personnel necessary to provide the intensive support required by these students could possibly be provided through grant funds for minority or low income students; but, if not, the University should assume the responsibility for funding the needed services. It seems counterproductive to admit students who need high levels of academic support only to lose them because adequate support is not available.

Future plans:

* Creation of a professionally staffed writing lab
* Restructuring of tutoring services for greater efficiency and more availability
* More structured support efforts based on up-to-date follow-up information concerning at-risk students
* Creation of short-term and long-term plans for increased accessibility
* Continuing search for grant funding for support services for at-risk students
4. Registrar’s Office

The purpose of the Registrar’s Office is to keep accurate and up-to-date academic records, and to ensure the integrity, confidentiality, and security of records. In addition, the Office provides an accurate interpretation of such information to support and enhance teaching, research, and community service.

Current Situation:

It is the responsibility of the Registrar’s Office to maintain and update the tables and forms necessary for maintenance and implementation of the academic and student records components of the Banner Student Information System. The Registrar’s Office also issues official transcripts, certifies students for Veterans assistance, prepares audits of core and major requirements for degree seeking students, evaluates and posts transfer work, clears candidates for graduation, processes withdrawals, verifies enrollment, and organizes and coordinates activities for commencement. Over the past five years (2000-2005), general fund expenditures for the Registrar’s Office have decreased by 8.5%. During this period the work load of the office has increased significantly with the implementation of the Banner Student System. The staff of the Registrar’s Office has maintained the legacy system and has worked to develop various modules of the Banner Student Information System with a reduction in staff and funds.

With implementation of the Banner Web module of the Banner Student Information System, students have access to add/drop classes, change their email address, check the availability of classes, and to view their class schedule, holds, unofficial transcript, and grades. The faculty can now view their class roster, input grades, check availability of classes, and view their advisee’s transcript.

From the survey of students conducted by the Academic Support Working Group, students are satisfied with the Banner Web system.

* 83% are satisfied with Banner Web Registration for classes (add/drop).
* 73% are satisfied with the Banner Web Academic Transcript.
* 76% are satisfied with the Banner Web Class Schedule.
* 72% are satisfied with the Banner Web Grade Look-Up.

From the survey of faculty conducted by the Academic Support Working Group, faculty members are satisfied with the Banner Web system.

* 70% are satisfied with the Banner Web Class Roster.
* 81% are satisfied with the Banner Web Grade Entry.
* 72% are satisfied with the ability to check the availability of spaces in classes in Banner Web.
52% are satisfied and 27% are neutral on viewing the academic transcript of advisees in Banner Web.

Current Challenges:

* Conversion of Academic History B Academic history needs to be moved from the legacy system to the Banner system.
* Curriculum Advising and Program Planning (CAPP) B CAPP is a module of the Banner Student System that will allow faculty advisors and staff in the Registrar’s Office to run a compliance on degree seeking students. Students can also run “what if” compliance reports in Banner Web when they are considering changing majors.

Future Plans:

* New Position B The Registrar’s Office has managed to continue to provide services and implement their components of the Banner Student Information System with a reduced staff. A staff position is needed to continue to build and maintain course equivalencies in the transfer articulation module, help build and test CAPP, and stay current on Banner release notes.
* Imaging System B An imaging system would help address the space problem in storing academic records, transcripts, grade rolls, etc. and will also serve as a disaster recovery mechanism. There are several offices (Financial Aid, Human Resources, Registrar, Admissions, etc.) on campus that could benefit from an imaging system.

5. Computing Services

Computing Services supports academic computing and administrative computing on the MUW campus. This includes helping to provide technology that supports the learning and working needs of students, faculty, and staff.

Current Situation:

Computing Services is responsible for the acquisition, implementation, maintenance, and support of most technologies on campus. Over the past five years (2000 to 2005), general fund expenditures for computing support have decreased by 1% and the department has not increased staffing levels. The department currently supports approximately 950 personal computers and laptops (an increase of 15% in the five years), 15 computer labs, 60 routers and switches, 300 printers and 22 servers (a 50% increase since 2000). Our user support personnel provide telephone support for over 350 residence hall computer owners and more than 1500 potential dialup users in addition to our faculty and staff members.

Current Challenges:
* Increased demands for service, raised expectations, and escalating costs have made technology funding our greatest challenge. Addressing this issue will require our institution to embrace the strategic value of technology and understand the risks associated with technology services that fail or don’t meet expected levels of service.
* Increased utilization of our campus network has provided our students, faculty, and staff with exceptional opportunities but has also increased our risks associated with information storage, transmission, and access.
* The remaining historical data on our mainframe, including academic history, needs to be moved into either the Banner system or into a data warehouse on our Oracle database server.
* Our university needs to address faculty development, support, and training. This needs to go beyond simply how to use course management systems and focus on the broader learning management systems.

Future Plans:
Future plans are included in “Computing Services Campus Technology Plan FY05-FY07” which is included in the appendices of this report.

6. Health Center

The mission of the Campus Health Center is to promote a healthy lifestyle among students, faculty, staff and their dependents; prevent disease, treat acute illness and manage chronic problems; and provide individualized care in a confidential, respectful, and compassionate environment.

Current Situation:

The health center is housed in Taylor Hall on first floor. The 1,081 square foot area contains a small waiting room, receptionist area, two exam rooms, a nurse practitioner office, the coordinator’s office and a medicine/laboratory room. The Campus Health Center is open from 8:00am - 5:00 pm Monday through Friday and is closed one hour each day for lunch which is comparable to health centers at other universities. The small waiting area of the Health Center will seat up to eight people at a time. This space will not accommodate the number of patients during times of peak visits. The Campus Health Center will be moving into Eckford after renovations are completed sometime in 2006-2007, and enough waiting area space with additional seating will then be available. Increased usage of the health center has been noted for the last several years.

The survey of students conducted by the Academic Support Working Group indicated that 105 students or 76% of students responding were aware of the Campus Health Center services. Only
35 students or 25% agreed that the health center is open during hours which are convenient to them. Sixty-one students or 44% agreed that the hours were not convenient for them.

Current Challenges:

* Increased demand for services by MSMS students - MSMS students are required to have an excuse for class absences from the Campus Health Center and are coming at the same time MUW students, faculty, and staff need to be seen.
* Insufficient nurse practitioner coverage during peak visit times.
* Low staff salaries. The receptionist/secretary is one of the lowest paid clerical staff on campus.
* Need for complete blood count (CBC) machine to facilitate diagnosing and treatment in a more timely and less costly manner.
* Immunization compliance not enforced at admission into the university. The health center is then responsible for getting verification of compliance. This creates additional expense and manpower burdens for the health center staff.
* Need to increase the use of the Health center by staff and faculty - Even though usage has increased over the last two to three years, more staff and faculty should take advantage of this cost effective service.
* Lack of total awareness of Campus Health Center services for students. Even though 76% responding to the survey were aware of services, the percentage should have been 100%.
* Need for additional waiting area space in Taylor Hall.
* Security of Campus Health Center once the Division of Nursing moves to Martin Hall.

Future Plans:

* Increase budget to provide additional nurse practitioner coverage during peak visits.
* Develop strategies to increase awareness of the health center campus wide and encourage use by all students, faculty and staff.
* Continue to work with Office of Admissions to develop an immunization compliance policy comparable to other IHL institutions.
* Continue to request increase in Campus Health Center budget to increase staff salaries and purchase needed equipment.
* Develop strategy to change the way MSMS students come to the health center to get excuses for missing classes so MUW students, faculty and staff may be seen in a timely manner.
* Provide additional seating area in waiting room when need arises.
* Develop a plan for security of the Campus Health Center after the Division of Nursing moves into Martin Hall.
7. Space Utilization

MUW is presently in a period of transition regarding space usage. Two divisions are in temporary facilities after buildings were damaged or destroyed by a tornado in November 2002. Construction, which will return the Divisions of Fine and Performing Arts and Health and Kinesiology to permanent facilities, is currently underway. The Division of Nursing will move into a newly renovated facility within the year. The Vice President for Finance and Administration is establishing an ad hoc committee to study space utilization across campus. The findings of that committee should provide information that will assist the University in making better use of both academic and non-academic space on campus.

From a technology standpoint regarding campus space utilization, more areas in buildings on campus will be needed in the future where students can sit down and plug into the Internet. More students in the future will be carrying laptops or tablet PCs and they may want places between classes where they can sit down and get online to check email, communicate, search for information or to access class assignments. It would be desirable for every commonly-used building on campus to have "Internet-accessible lounge" of some sort for this purpose.

8. Resources

Current Situation:

There has been a 7.9% decrease in MUW’s E&G budget since 2000 (Summary of General Fund and Transfers, 2000-2004). MUW is anticipating a reduction in funding again for 2005-2006. Thus, it is imperative that the University look at ways to operate more efficiently.

In 2004, Subcommittee 5 of PIE Council was charged with evaluating MUW’s budget process. The committee looked at three-year and five-year trends for 1999-2003. After reviewing the committee’s report dated February 25, 2004, and compiling data on actual expenditures for 2004, the Academic Support Group concurs with the subcommittee’s recommendations on ways that MUW may improve “operational efficiencies”. The complete subcommittee’s report is included in the appendix.

Subcommittee 5’s (SC5) recommendations that may improve operational efficiencies are:

* Consider a zero-based budgeting approach to coincide with 5-year planning cycles.
* Evaluate E&G scholarshipping patterns.
* Undertake an immediate academic program review.
* Undertake an immediate review of the operating efficiencies of the non-academic units.
* Examine programming options that will increase student interest in summer school.
* Monitor increases in executive management as a percentage of the total E&G budget.
The five-year trend in the “Summary of General Fund and Transfers” shows a decrease in all E&G areas with the exception of Recruit/Publications/Marketing (+4.31%), Executive Management (+49.94%), and Scholarships (+35.34%). The Academic Support Group recognizes that MUW’s Priority 1 for planning and budgeting for 2005-2006 is “Increase the number and quality of students through effective implementation of the Enrollment Plan.” However, the Academic Support Group agrees with SC5 that MUW should examine E & G scholarships.

MUW’s tuition discount rate was 29% for FY2001, 30.5% for FY 2002 and 30.8% for FY 2003 as reported in August 2004 by IHL. In comparison, MUW went from the second highest for IHL institutions in 2001 and 2002 to the highest in 2003. MUW’s tuition discount rate for FY 2004 is 30%. The University should look at how scholarships are packaged. Are students receiving scholarships from multiple areas (i.e., academic scholarships, service, performance, and departmental)? Are we considering quality (ACT and GPA) as well as need when offering scholarships?

Staff and faculty received a two percent across-the-board raise in January 2003. In addition, employees earning less than $25,000 received an additional raise ($320 - $434.77) in 2003. For Fiscal Year 2004-2005 Academic Divisions received 2.288% of their faculty’s salary total to disperse as raises for their faculty. As an example, the 2.288% amounted to a total of $16,050 for the Division of Science and Mathematics. Budget managers did not receive any additional funds for 2004-2005 for staff raises.

SC5’s recommendations for how available revenues should be redirected are:

* Consider across-the-board increases in salary as a percentage or absolute amount for each employee.
* Make investments in alternative delivery mechanisms for existing programs.
* Reallocate resources for Academic Support.

Current Challenges:

* Maintain an effective balance in using E&G funds for scholarships with regard to academic quality of students, enrollment, and retention. Although recent scholarship patterns have improved, the questions remain: would a reduction in E&G scholarships, particularly to students with low ACTs and GPAs, negatively impact long-term enrollment and retention? Could student financial aid be supplemented through other sources (e.g., federal or state aid, MUW foundation)?

Future Plans:

* Form a University committee to oversee scholarship award offerings from the E&G budget.

9. Teaching and Learning

Current Situation:

From previously administered surveys of faculty and students from 2001 to 2004, it is noted that perceptions about instruction at MUW are positive.

* A favorable rating by seniors of quality of overall instruction improved from 88.6% to 93%.
* A favorable rating by seniors of quality of instruction in their major was consistently in the 93% range.
* An average of 85% of the faculty agreed that scholarly and creative activity is encouraged for students at MUW.
* Faculty agreement that experimentation with methods to improve instruction is encouraged ranged from 66.7% to 78.9%.
* In a 2003 survey, 91.8% of faculty who teach core curriculum classes reported using past student performance to revise a course.
* In the same survey, 89.2% reported using course evaluation to revise a course.
* Ratings of “satisfied” ranged from 75% to 87% among the eight divisions in response to a 2002 SACS Alumni Graduate Survey question concerning academic advising in the major.
* In the same survey “satisfied” ratings ranged from 89% to 91% among the divisions in response to a question about satisfaction with teaching in the academic division.

In April 2005, a survey of MUW faculty was conducted to shed light on the current teaching and learning practices among faculty members. Thirty-four percent of MUW faculty members completed all or part of the survey. Following is some of the more pertinent information gleaned from the survey results.

* Most interaction among faculty concerning teaching is very informal.
* There is very little peer assessment of teaching or peer mentoring among faculty.
* There are few University sponsored or division sponsored faculty development activities available for faculty or few attend those that are provided.
* Lecture is reported as the most frequently used method of teaching, and experimental methods based on research are less frequently used.
* Undergraduate research is sponsored by a majority of the respondents.
* Frequent feedback to students is provided by a majority of the respondents.
* On-going, informal assessment is widely used as well as traditional formal assessment
such as pencil-paper tests.
*Alternate means of assessment and structured test construction are less frequently used.
*There is little use of technology in teaching, and “smart classrooms” are under utilized.
*There is little emphasis placed on assessing teaching effectiveness.
*Changes in course presentations are most frequently based on student evaluations.

Current Challenges:

* Recognition of excellence in teaching - A high priority should be placed on excellence in teaching by recognizing and rewarding highly effective and innovative teaching. The recognition for teaching excellence should equal that given to scholarship, research and creative activities among the faculty.
* Provision of faculty development to improve teaching and learning - A teaching and learning center is needed to provide instruction, resources and assessment related to teaching.
* Technology support for faculty - An educational technology center is needed in connection with a teaching learning center to assist faculty with skills needed to integrate technology into instructional planning, delivery, and assessment.
* Interdepartmental interaction among faculty and cross-campus course offerings. There should be more opportunities for faculty from different disciplines to collaborate.
* Out-of-class learning opportunities - More opportunities for study abroad, internships, field trips, service learning, etc. should be offered.

10. Technology

Current Situation:

Since 1996, MUW has had every classroom, office and residence hall room connected to a campus-wide fiber-optic backbone. In 1999, the University began using the Banner system of administrative software. There are fourteen computer laboratories available for student and faculty use (SACS Institutional Self Study). All MUW faculty, staff, and students may apply for an MUW email account.

The use of technology in connection with instruction has increased dramatically over the last ten years. Presentation software using PowerPoint, videos, DVDs, websites, and discipline specific software are now available for instructional use. Many textbooks are packaged with a CD that provides supplementary materials to the actual printed text such as interactive practice, review materials, diagrams and graphics, and interactive learning activities. In 2003, a “smart classroom” was installed in every division on campus, and in 2004 the Interactive Video Network classroom was upgraded. During the 2004-05 fall and spring semesters, 140 classes were offered through WebCT either partially or completely online. Results of the Teaching and
Learning Survey for faculty members conducted by the Academic Support Working Group indicates, however that the technology that does exist is not used by many of the faculty.

* 82% of the faculty responding report only occasional or no use of the smart classroom.
* 46% report that they never provide course web pages.
* 54% do not use any form of electronic assessment.
* 76% report no or only occasional use of computer-based practice exercises in their instruction.
* 84% indicate that they have not taught from the interactive video network classroom.

From the same survey, satisfaction with current instructional technology and its support is low.

* 37% are satisfied with technology used in classes.
* 19% are satisfied with how the technology in “smart classrooms” works.
* 18% are satisfied with the support for technology in the “smart classrooms”.
* 61% feel that there should be more workshops offered on how to use popular productivity, presentation, and multimedia software.

From the 2005 survey of students conducted by the Academic Support Working Group, students use and value technology resources and would like to see technology increased on campus.

* 40% are satisfied with training provided by MUW on the use of computers.
* 50% are satisfied with technology used in classrooms.
* 63% agree that the use of technology by faculty has enhanced instruction
* 83% agree that computers have been a significant part of their coursework at MUW.
* 60% agree that MUW computer labs are open during hours which are convenient for them.
* 63% agree that the number of MUW computers and student access to those computers should be increased.
* 75% agree that more online classes should be offered to attract students from greater distances and accommodate non-traditional students.
* 71% agree that more computer related courses as well as a technology-based minor should be offered to give students a technology “edge”.
* 87% agree that wireless access to the Internet should be made available throughout the campus.
* 76% agree that more classrooms should be equipped with Internet connection ports at the desks for students using laptops.

It seems that there is a large gap in the technology available for use by faculty, staff and students and the actual use of and satisfaction with technology and the ability to support technology at MUW.
Current Challenges:

Academic technology support services (new terminology) is an area in which MUW does not have an organized plan or unit. MUW has grown in its use of technology in the classroom, but there is no one office or unit responsible for supporting these activities. Many issues related to online courses and using WebCT are directed to Continuing Education. Many issues related to computer hardware and software are directed to Academic Computing. Issues related to the equipment in the “smart classrooms” are directed to Resources Management. Issues related to incorporating technology into one’s class are generally targeted at those faculty members already using technology since we have no staff members with that expertise and/or responsibility.

As attractive as the notion of “smart classrooms” is to faculty members, the current system and the decisions related to creating them have led to a great deal of frustration among the faculty. No one seems able to identify who was responsible for selecting the current systems which would look quite different if faculty input had been solicited. Very little training was provided for use of the systems and trying to find support on campus when there are problems is difficult. Academic Computing was not involved in the decision making or installation and they have avoided taking these systems under their responsibility. Instead, the responsibility has fallen to Resources Management. Though the staff in Resources Management has accepted this responsibility and have worked very hard to be responsive and helpful, it is truly outside their realm to be expected to manage and problem solve for these technology systems.

There is a great need on campus to have support staff in the general area of academic technology. This includes implementing and maintaining hardware and software, as well as supporting and training faculty in developing course materials.

Future Plans:

* Creation of a technology support center in conjunction with a teaching/learning center
* New position - academic technologist to implement, maintain, and support hardware and software in support of academics
* New position - instructional technologist to train and assist faculty in the development of course materials

11. Organization

Current Situation:

Mississippi University for Women is currently undergoing a reorganization of its academic programs from divisions to colleges. Eight divisions will be reorganized into four colleges, Arts and Sciences, Business, Education and Human Science, and Nursing and Speech Pathology
and one institute, Culinary Arts. The new structure was approved by the IHL Board of Directors in April 2005, and will become effective July 1, 2005.

In addition to the college deans and institute director, the following offices and units report to the Vice President of Academic Affairs/Provost:

- Library
- Graduate Studies
- Academic Advising and General Education
- Academic Support Services
- Registrar’s Office
- Honors College
- PEP/Summer Scholars Program
- Continuing Education and Distance Learning
- Governor’s School
- Center for Creative Learning
- Study Abroad

Representatives of these offices and units along with division heads (soon to be deans) constitute the Academic Council which acts as an advisory board to the VPAA/Provost. The council provides for open lines of communication and collaboration among academic support units.

Other offices and units whose function includes some component of academic support report to other vice presidents. For example, Computing Services reports to the Vice President for Finance and Administration, and the Grant Development Office reports to the Vice President for Institutional Advancement.

Current Challenges:

* The number of direct reports to the VPAA/Provost. The change to a college structure will reduce the number of reports somewhat, and there is the possibility of further reduction if other programs currently under Academic Affairs are reorganized as well. One model is the consolidation of academic support units such as the Library, Academic Advising and Support Services, the proposed Teaching, Learning and Technology Center, and Continuing Education into one unit.
* The positioning of any new programs recommended in this report. Possible affiliations for the recommended Teaching, Learning and Technology Center include Academic Computing or the Library or Continuing Education. A writing center could be associated with the Office of Academic Support Services or the English Department.
* Organization, not related to offices and academic units, but to academic information. Currently academic policies, procedures, and guidelines are available to students in the Student Handbook, the MUW Bulletin, and on the MUW web site, all three of which are under the authority of different units on campus. Without careful
oversight, as academic information is changed and published, the revisions may not be made in all publications.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Several recommendations for action have emerged from the work of the Academic Support Working Group and are listed below.

This is the highest recommendation:

Create a unit (Teaching, Learning and Technology Center) that will provide support for faculty in planning, delivering and assessing instruction. A particular emphasis of this unit would be training and support for the use of instructional technology for faculty members.

The following recommendations are not in priority order:

* Develop a system to track specific student groups (low ACTs, probationary, scholarshipped, transfers) which will provide information necessary for effective decision making relating to scholarshipping practices and programming for academic support.

* Create a campus-wide faculty mentoring program for new faculty members. This would include the identification of experienced, successful faculty members who will complete a year-long structured mentoring program with a new faculty member.

* Create a new position in the Registrar’s Office to build and maintain course equivalencies in the transfer articulation module, help build and test CAPP, and stay current on Banner release notes.

* Create a writing lab to provide assessment and remedial instruction for students with poor writing skills

* Tighten and enforce current scholarship criteria.

* Expand library services. Fill two faculty positions in Fant Memorial Library. The Serials Librarian position has been vacant since 2002. An archivist is an anticipated position that the projected renovation will require. Create a wireless Internet system and a smart classroom for academic research instruction in Fant Memorial Library. These needs are projected to be addressed with the future renovation.

* Develop a long-term plan for the removal of barriers, both architectural and informational, for persons with disabilities. Before the 2002 tornado, a five to seven year plan to improve accessibility on campus was developed by the Physical Plant staff. Because of the work necessary to repair the storm damage, the access plan was interrupted, but now the plan should be evaluated and re-instituted.
* Expand Health Center services.

* Purchase a document imaging system to aid in the work of several University offices.

Summary:

The quality of instruction and most academic support units at MUW continue to have favorable ratings among students and faculty, but in order to maintain our high academic standards and to continue providing student-centered instructional programs in a personalized environment a clear and purposeful plans for future direction must be established. With the understanding that every aspect of campus life in some way influences the academic performance of students, the current situations have been assessed and future needs have been projected. The resulting recommendations are proposed to raise MUW to an even higher level of academic excellence.

E. OTHER AREAS FOR CONSIDERATION

The Ina E. Gordy Honors College

Background: Since its inception at Mississippi University for Women, the Honors Program, or College, has provided students with an excellent liberal arts education designed to supplement and enrich the standard curriculum and to prepare students for meaningful, productive lives after they graduate from the university. Yet, periodically, new opportunities and challenges arise that make changes to the program desirable, if not necessary. For example, almost a decade ago, Dr. James R. Keller, then the Director, made substantial changes to the honors curriculum, effectively changing the Honors Program to an Honors College. While these changes have proved successful, the time has come to revitalize the existing Honors College in order to meet the needs of a new generation of students and to fulfill the Honors College’s mission as a college rather than simply a program. Moreover, the recent scholarship endowment from Ina E. Gordy has made programmatic changes desirable. Prospective students seek not only large scholarships but also exciting educational opportunities.

Analysis and Recommendations: The following proposed initiatives—some of which will go into effect academic year 2006-07 and some of which should be phased in gradually over the next couple of years—find their inspiration in the success of the Honors Learning Community, which was launched in fall 2004. The chief principle of a learning community is that students with similar profiles who live and learn together are more likely to succeed than their counterparts. If that principle works for a small group of honors students, why not embellish that program and make it the nucleus of the Honors College rather than a fringe group? What follows comes as an answer to that question.

1. Entrance Requirements: The Honors College needs to redefine the profile of its student body. Currently, the only requirement for incoming freshmen is a 24 ACT score. This score is
substantially below the ACT requirement of many honors colleges in our region. For example, the minimum required or preferred score at Ole Miss, MSU, and the University of Alabama is 28. Over the last two years, the average ACT score of entering honors freshmen at MUW has been just under 27 with around 50% of the two cohorts scoring at or above 27. Thus, by raising the score to 27, for instance, the Honors College would focus on the top half of its typical cohort. This move should not be read as an exclusionary measure or as a recipe for lower enrollment. Different students are served in different ways. In order to create a cohesive group, honors students need to be similar: highly-motivated and high-performing. Anecdotally, honors faculty report that some honors students do not seem up to the task or engaged with the program. As a result, they often perform poorly, they sometimes alter the dynamics of the program, and they even drop honors all together. This issue is compounded by past scholarship practices, which awarded large scholarships to students, sometimes lower-scoring students, requiring them to be in honors, even though they had no desire to enroll in the program. Starting fall 2005, the Honors College will begin to remedy this problem by screening students (interviewing prospective honors students at Scholars’ Day and asking other prospective students who do not attend Scholars’ Day to submit applications), by asking students to make verbal commitments to the Honors College before interviewing for some of the university’s largest scholarships rather than afterwards, and by awarding the largest scholarships only to high-performing, highly-motivated students. In the future, the Honors College can continue to create a more cohesive student body by raising the minimum ACT score to 27 and by taking advantage of the Ina E. Gordy endowment, which will allow the Honors College to offer extremely large scholarships and thus to attract some of the best students. It is possible, though not inevitable, that enrollment in the Honors College may drop. However, the Honors College would be better served with a smaller number of students who really want to be in honors and who are truly qualified to be in the College.

2. New programming. To complement the proposed change in student profile, the Honors College will inaugurate new programs. Starting fall 2006, incoming freshman honors students will choose between two programs that fall under the Honors College (and, with some exceptions, they may be able to switch between the two programs): the Honors Program and the Residential Honors Program. Because naming affects public image—and since, moreover, the Honors College has been renamed—these two programs should eventually assume new, more prestigious-sounding names, perhaps Honors Scholars and Honors Scholars in Residence (names that resonate with Scholars’ Day, for instance, and that signify the importance of the programs). At this point, the program for Honors Scholars in Residence can accommodate approximately 20 sophomores and 20 freshmen. Remaining honors students will join the other program.

3. Curricular Revisions. All honors students, regardless of which program they choose, will follow essentially the same curriculum, the one currently in place. (One course in the current curriculum that deserves some modification is HO 101: Honors Forum. The only method of
evaluation for this course is attendance. Courses with that method of evaluation should award a pass or a fail rather than letter grades.) However, in the future, the Honors College should design a new curriculum to meet a challenge and to seize an opportunity. Currently, the curriculum includes honors sections of core courses. The problem is that increasingly honors students come to the university with transfer credit. In fact, about 40% of the fall 2004 and the fall 2005 honors cohorts entered the university with prior credit. Of the core courses that these students had already taken, English 101 outnumbered the rest. As a result, honors students may eventually find it difficult to find enough honors courses to take, it will become nearly impossible to block courses for a certain group of honors students to take together, and the Honors College will not be able to offer a cohesive curriculum followed by all students. This challenge brings with it an opportunity. Many honors programs offer alternative courses that count as the core curriculum for honors students. These alternative cores recognize not only that students often already have credit for the standard curriculum but also that honors students, especially those with higher ACT scores, often already meet the learning outcomes of general education courses. Moreover, many experts believe that honors courses should be different courses, not tougher versions of standard courses. The alternative core for honors students will probably feature a small set of required courses in the liberal arts (broadly defined). Some courses may be interdisciplinary and team-taught. By creating a set of required courses, the Honors College will be able to channel a certain subset of honors students, such as the Honors Scholars in Residence, through the same courses at the same time, creating a unified experience for those students. Once the Honors College has the new curriculum in place, it will need to take a more active role in recruiting the faculty who teach the courses. Currently, department chairs choose faculty to teach honors courses; and while they often make wise choices, not all faculty are equally suited to teaching honors students. The university will need to devise a financial and administrative structure that will permit the Director of the Honors College to recruit an honors faculty and perhaps to compensate them slightly more than usual to take into account the extra time and energy that teaching honors courses takes. A final feature of the new curriculum could include priority pre-registration for honors students.

4. Enhanced residential program. While all honors students will follow the same curriculum, the Honors Scholars in Residence will enjoy additional benefits. These honors students will live in the Honors Residence Hall, Grossnickle Hall, with two upper-level honors mentors and with a faculty-in-residence. (A job description for both mentors and faculty-in-residence will need to be designed along with appropriate compensation.) In the residence hall, these students will participate in informal academic activities, such as book clubs, study sessions, and discussions. The residence hall will also feature spaces for studying and socializing as well as computers and a small reference library. The freshman Honors Scholars in Residence will take a set of blocked honors courses in the fall and in the spring, they will study abroad together in the summer after their freshman year, and they will return to the residential program their sophomore year. Once a new curriculum is in place, sophomore Honors Scholars in Residence will have the opportunity to take blocked courses. Fall 2006, the sophomore students in the
residence hall will be 20 current freshman honors students, ideally members of the 2005-06 Honors Learning Community. The freshmen in the hall will be mostly the recipients of the 10 enhanced Centennial and the 5 enhanced Junior Centennial Scholarships that the university has already earmarked. A few other outstanding freshmen may apply for admission. By fall 2007, the Honors College will have cycled in two years of incoming freshmen on these enhanced scholarships; these students will be the primary residents in this hall. The Ina E. Gordy endowment may make other scholarship arrangements possible.

5. Organizational changes. All these initiatives chart an evolution of existing programs in the Honors College. However, the recent academic restructuring of the university has made possible a realignment of other programs currently independent of the Honors College. In fact, in several recommendations, the ad hoc committee on the academic reorganization articulated ways to realign and regroup such entities as the Honors College, the Mississippi Governor’s School, and the Summer Scholars’ Program (formerly PEP) under the same administrative unit. Those entities as well as campus-wide honoraries address the special needs of honors and honors-like students. These programs would benefit from consistent coordination and creative collaboration. For instance, students who attend the Summer Scholars’ Program should be recruited to become Honors Scholars at MUW. Thus, all these honors-related programs should come under the Honors College.

6. Dedicated space and support services. With these new programs and possible restructuring, the Honors College will need more support space and services. First and foremost, it needs a prominent space on campus with offices for the Director and the secretary, room for files and storage, and facilities for meeting, socializing, and teaching. The latter facilities could include an honors computer lab, a study-social space for students, a so-called smart classroom, and a small reference library. In addition to space, the Honors College needs support services. Currently, a half-time work-study student has the only paid position other than the Director. Eventually, the Director may need a part-time or a full-time professional administrative assistant along with one or more work-study students. Finally, to support the programs summarized above, the Honors College needs a larger budget, perhaps one that could include funds to invite visiting faculty. Until it receives substantial budget increases, the Honors College could probably manage with smaller increases to compensate the faculty-in-residence, the mentors, and the honors faculty who work with the students in residence; to provide services, such as food, computers, and reference books, for the residential students; and to provide furniture and equipment for the new office space.

Summary: With these changes in programs and resources, the University has an opportunity to provide a superior education for its honors students and to compete successfully with other major universities in the region.
Graduate Studies

Background: MUW is a public, Carnegie Masters II institution. The university provides high quality graduate programs that will enable graduate students to have the resources, content knowledge, and skills in research, technology, and critical thinking necessary for intellectual growth and leadership in their professions.

The Graduate Council oversees graduate programs, including coordinating entrance and exit requirements, approving curriculum offerings and graduate faculty qualifications. In addition, the Office of Graduate Studies provides a central location for maintaining graduate student records. The Director of Graduate Studies oversees the admission, progression, and completion procedures for graduate students and serves as the Chair of the Graduate Council.

MUW awards seven graduate degrees: the Master of Arts in Teaching, the Master of Education in Gifted Studies, the Master of Education in Differentiated Instruction, the Master of Education in Reading/Literacy, the Master of Science in Health Education, the Master of Science in Nursing, and the Master of Science in Speech-Language Pathology.

In the 2005-06 Academic Year there are 220 students enrolled in graduate programs at MUW. From summer of 2005 through spring of 2006 graduate students generated a total of 4058 credit hours. The majority of graduate students in Nursing and Speech-Language Pathology are enrolled as full-time students. In Differentiated Instruction, Gifted Studies, Health Education, the Master of Arts in Teaching and Reading Literacy, the majority of students are enrolled as part-time students.

Analysis and Recommendations: In many ways, the issues raised in the body of this plan apply to graduate programs. For example, most of the graduate students are commuters. Therefore, regardless if they are full-time or part-time, graduate students interact with the campus in much the same ways as other non-traditional, commuting students. Similar comparisons can be found in the other areas.

However, since graduate programming is inherently different than undergraduate offerings, the University needs to recognize that serving graduate students creates a unique set of issues which must be addressed. At this time, program coordinators/directors, other administrators and the Graduate Council all gather and review information from surveys and from formal and informal exit interviews. While this process may be used to improve certain aspects of specific programs, there appear to be few avenues to change administrative and support structures to better serve all graduate students. In fact, it appears that the graduate programs, in many ways, are simply “bolted on” to undergraduate units and, as a result, the primary administrative structures of the University are oblivious of these programs. Within this environment, the following recommendations are made.
1. Provide Academic Support and Students Services: While student satisfaction surveys are routinely administered to graduate students, these typically are just reviewed and discussed by members of the Graduate Council in a superficial manner. As noted earlier, the graduate programs offered have significant differences so the students in each program experience the University in different ways. Therefore, each program should review issues faced by students in their area. The Graduate Council should review these reports and should address any barriers to enrollment, continuation and/or completion identified. If barriers are identified, strategies should be implemented to address these.

2. Increase enrollment: More aggressive marketing efforts should be focused on recruiting graduate students in existing programs, especially those that can take more students, such as those in Education and Health Education. As part of the program review process, each graduate program should be required to review resources available and establish a limit on the number of students that can be enrolled. For example, anecdotal information has been presented that with current faculty and with the current limits on clinical sites, the graduate programs in Nursing and in Speech Language Pathology are at these limits.

As part of this process, financial aid needs to be reviewed. First, the full package of aid available to students in each program needs to be established. This information should be reviewed by Graduate Council and by academic administrators and then these groups should decide how institutional resources should be requested and allocated to maximize enrollment of graduate students at MUW. While the Council’s commitment to allocate resources to program areas in a “fair and equitable” way based on credit hours or enrollment is laudable, this may not be maximizing enrollment for the University. In a similar fashion, the Council and administrators should review other allocations that are currently based on enrollment to ensure that resources are being used to develop programs of comparable quality. As with undergraduate programs, the demands of graduate programs by area do vary. Commonly, programs in the health sciences are more expensive than those in education and these differences need to be recognized.

3. Add new graduate programs. Graduate programming is an avenue for increasing enrollment. Opportunities for new graduate programs should be explored, particularly in areas that are integral to the mission of MUW and which are commonly offered by regional publics that are peers. As programs are considered for development, it will be necessary to recognize that the Board has recently discouraged unnecessary duplication of offerings. It will be necessary to balance this with demand and with MUW’s mission. While it appears that decisions made in the past have led to the offering of some graduate programs in very specific areas, consideration needs to be given to offering high demand programs such as an MBA or a program in education leadership. However, as these new programs are considered, steps must be taken to distinguish the proposed programs from others offered in the state and in the region.

4. Organizational issues. As noted above, the graduate programs in many ways are not integrated into the administrative processes of the University. While those units that have
graduate programs do include these as they develop their plans, these discussions tend not to color the conversation of the campus as a whole. While the Graduate Council has served as the oversight body of the graduate programs, in many ways it has promoted a loose affiliation of the graduate programs, allowing each area to act independently. Efforts during the past year to increase coordination and to better use the administrative structure of the University needs to continue. For example, the Graduate Council should review admission decisions of each program, especially of students who do not meet published criteria. As part of this process, the University needs to recognize that the position of Director of Graduate Studies needs to be supported. As graduate offerings continue to grow, this position will grow in complexity and a time will soon come when the title should shift from Director to Dean of Graduate Studies.

Summary: Graduate programs are an integral part of MUW’s offerings and should continue to play a central role in the evolution of the University. However, the University needs to recognize the role these play and take steps to support and develop programming which meets the needs of the state, the region and the students we serve.
7. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

As stated, this planning effort is a logical outgrowth of the on-going planning efforts of the MUW community. Specifically, this Plan is built on the series of institutional goals incorporated in W-2009: A Strategic Plan for MUW. This document flowed from the MUW Mission and Vision statement as well as the series of Guiding Principles which were approved by The Board of Trustees of the State Institutions of Higher Learning in January of 2004. This Plan brings definition and coordinated action to these broader statements.

This Academic master Plan also builds upon and complements other plans in place on campus. Clearly, just as this Plan directs the academic activities of the campus, those responsible for implementation must recognize and must coordinate with activities directed by facility, technology and enrollment plans.

This document provides a blueprint for development and change at MUW. As such, it is a working document which will require routine updating and modification. While recommendations are offered which will logically lead to implementation, these will need to be continuously monitored because once goals and objectives are achieved, others will need to be established.

Finally, too often planning becomes an end in itself, resulting in documents that are written and immediately shelved. To this end, the Academic Council has assumed responsibility for overseeing implementation of this Plan. To accomplish this, the Council has agreed that each fall semester a formal review of accomplishments will be completed. Further, the Council will then review these successes in light of the actions called for under this plan and will then establish priorities including budget priorities for all academic and academic support units for the next fiscal year. This shall be completed by the end of the fall semester. These priorities and the integrated budget requests will be forwarded to PIE and to other administrative bodies to be incorporated as budgets are set. While this will be a bit of a departure from practice, it needs to be recognized that class schedules are prepared in January and students register in March. At that time, the University has committed funds for the next fiscal year. The process outlined here allows for the University to realistically discuss instructional budgets.

The production of this Plan has identified four major areas where Mississippi University for Women is undergoing transition:

* Our student population will continue the trends evident during the past decade, including an increase in part-time and non-traditional students and in students who live off campus. Program offerings and supporting activities will need to be provided for these students. Further, methods will need to be implemented to track the successes of all students as well as their satisfaction with services provided.
* As resources become available, consideration must first be given to support and strengthen existing programs. To ensure that this occurs, program review needs to become a systematic, on-going activity. While a program review was accomplished and is published as part of this document, the request that each program develops and submits specific tactical plans to address problems and weaknesses cited is most important. Allocating resources to address these will be key if the institution is to continue offering programs that are widely recognized for their quality. At the same time, if it is agreed that adequate funds have been allocated for this purpose or if it is agreed that a new program is clearly of high priority, then funds may be judiciously applied for programmatic development.

* Low faculty salaries are becoming a critical problem. If faculty (and staff) salaries are truly a priority, a published plan to allocate resources for this purpose needs to be developed. This plan should include detailed policies and procedures that address all aspects of academic funding particularly relevant to faculty salaries. The publication of such a plan clearly would illustrate MUW's dedication to the goals of recruiting, maintaining and retaining a well-qualified faculty.

* The quality of instruction and most academic support units at MUW continue to have favorable ratings among students and faculty. However, because of limited resources, several areas of need have been identified. Many of these areas focus on technologies and the uses of these technologies to support teaching and learning as well as the administrative functions of the University. While it is easy to buy and install hardware and software systems, the campus needs to provide support and training to make sure employees can make best use of systems in place.

It is obvious that Mississippi University for Women is undergoing significant change. However, there is a strong desire throughout the academic community to not lose sight of its primary mission as a teaching institution. Enhancement of student learning opportunities should remain as the primary concern.