

Coppin State University

SELF STUDY REPORT:

*Pioneering Academic and Community Innovation
through Technology*

Prepared for

Middle States Commission on Higher Education



February 2008

*Reginald S. Avery, Ph. D.
President*

Nurturing potential...Transforming lives

Executive Summary

Introduction

Coppin State University (CSU) is pleased to present its decennial self-study, *Pioneering Academic and Community Innovation through Technology*, to the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE), in preparation for its scheduled review for reaffirmation of accreditation. This self-study report provides a comprehensive review and analysis of evidence, which shows **CSU in compliance with all fourteen standards** as outlined in the MSCHE *Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education* (2006).

Since 2003, considerable changes have occurred at Coppin State University (CSU): a change in presidential leadership, a change in the status of the institution, and a change in the physical plant, to name a few. Because of these and other important changes, CSU chose a comprehensive approach to its self-study. The comprehensive approach has enabled the institution to examine and assess the impact these changes, as well as others, have had on the University and to position it to meet future opportunities and challenges. The CSU community believes that this self-study reflects two of CSU's fundamental characteristics---continuity and innovation. These characteristics have gained even greater importance now that the institution has attained University status. The title of the self-study, *Pioneering Academic and Community Innovation through Technology*, was chosen to both represent the historic mission of the University and to acknowledge the use of technology to advance that mission and to foster innovation.

Standard One: Mission, Goals, and Objectives. CSU continuously reassesses its mission, goals and objectives. In 2005, 11 strategic planning attributes to the mission statement were examined in 2002, determined that the top five mission attributes for the University's aspirational institutions were: academic excellence, community development, student development, urban agenda, and diversity. Overall, the two most important mission priorities were academic excellence and community development. In light of the review of the mission statement in 2005, it is recommended that the current list of CSU peer and aspirational institutions be reexamined to determine whether or not those institutions continue to be appropriate for the purpose of benchmarking and internal assessment.

Standard Two: Planning, Resource Allocation, and Institutional Renewal. Accountability reports required by the University System of Maryland (USM), the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC), the Department of Budget and Management, the U. S. Department of Education, and the Office of Civil Rights, ensure that assessment and accountability are integral components of ongoing planning and resource allocation practices. Led by a Planning Council charged with leading the University's efforts with respect to ongoing institutional renewal, CSU faculty, staff, and administrators have made a commitment to a culture of continuous planning, research, assessment, and accountability. These efforts enable CSU to measure overall effectiveness towards the achievement of its mission and goals. It is recommended that CSU continue to evaluate its strategic planning and resource allocation processes.

Standard Three: Institutional Resources. To achieve CSU's strategic goals and objectives concerning facility development, and meet some of the institution's severe space limitations, construction is underway on the \$73 million, 160,000 square-foot Health and Human Services Building. Subsequently, fall of 2009 will mark the completion of the new Physical Education Complex (\$137 million). An advanced information technology infrastructure remains a priority.

Innovations in digital technologies have markedly increased the use of information technologies in all facets of campus life—academic and administrative. Information technologies and information systems are increasingly perceived as vital assets, enabling CSU to accomplish its mission, realize its strategic priorities, and enhance institutional operations. Although CSU has been able to meet its commitment to students, faculty, staff, and the community, drastic under-funding over the years has resulted in a number of challenges. It is recommended that CSU identify more revenue opportunities through fiscal management strategies, tuition containment and fundraising. In addition, CSU should continue to seek funds to renovate or replace its buildings.

Standard Four: Leadership and Governance. There are provisions for collegial governance on campus, with opportunities, as appropriate, for different constituencies to have roles in policy development and decision-making. In 2004-2005, regular faculty actively participated in planning for a reorganization of the academic division. Both faculty and staff were actively consulted when the executive decision was made to place employees on temporary furlough in 2003-2004. The evaluation of CSU's compliance with Standard Four, Leadership and Governance, resulted in a recommendation for a plan to enhance governance.

Standard Five: Administration. CSU is in compliance with expectations relative to its administrative oversight as provided by the collective leadership of the Executive Council. The Administration seeks to be compliant through learning and research/scholarship to foster quality improvement and support for CSU's organization and governance.

Standard Six: Integrity. CSU provides full access to its policies and procedures through both hard and online copies. Faculty and students participate through a variety of means to communicate their interests and concerns. CSU requires that all course syllabi adhere to standards of basic content with the specification that all courses complete a faculty evaluation form. With this in mind, it is recommended that the academic administration establish clear mechanisms to review the specific departmental course syllabi to ensure adherence to standards of basic content and to provide clear and specific feedback to faculty. Department chairs should discuss the results of end-of-semester faculty evaluations with each member of their departments with a view toward continuous improvement.

Standard Seven: Institutional Assessment. A holistic approach is used in crafting the CSU Assessment model, which encompasses a three level approach to assessment (institution, program, and course). In addition to facilitating this process, an Assessment Steering Committee was created to facilitate ongoing assessment at the institution. This committee's charge is to ensure that assessment is happening at all levels within the institution along with appropriate assessment measures and continuous improvement efforts. A unique contribution of this

assessment model is that it integrates the use of technology throughout the assessment process. Using technical resources, CSU has the ability to make real-time decisions that are more reflective of the ever-changing learning environment. The assessment model positioned here is an inclusive model, which allows for feedback from all CSU's constituencies in an effort to promote continuous improvement.

Standard Eight: Student Admissions and Retention. Retention and graduation rates reflect the increase in student's progression and degree completion. However, there is a strong need to institutionalize enrollment and retention efforts for targeting specific student populations. CSU is aggressively working to resolve its enrollment and retention issues. As a result, the Financial Aid Office (FAO) has become far more effective and efficient in meeting the needs of students. Additionally, the recent implementation of instructional technology and EagleLINKS (PeopleSoft) has provided the institution with a greater opportunity to meet its mission while student placements have positively affected enrollment behaviors for new students. Currently, several initiatives assist prospective and currently enrolled students in addressing academic and career goals i.e., Black Male Initiative Taskforce, Office of Academic Advising, and the securing of additional institutional financial aid.

Standard Nine: Student Support Services. A comprehensive program of student support services complemented by a knowledgeable and committed staff; and guided by a broad-based institutional commitment to excellence in urban education is essential to fostering an environment where Coppin State University (CSU) students can achieve their educational and personal goals. However, due to limited resources such as finances and the need to enhance the number of core faculty and staff in critical support areas prevents CSU from having stronger programs across the institution. Despite these limited resources, CSU does an exceptional job with respect to the provision of program and services. However, appropriate and sufficient resources will enable the institution to: (1) increase the range of services and access to facilities for evening, weekend, and commuter students; (2) offer new students the opportunity to participate in self-assessment and career exploration using the System of Interactive Guidance and Information (SIGI) during their orientation to CSU; and (3) develop a campus-wide policy for records that is compliant with federal, state and local mandates.

Standard Ten: Faculty. CSU has inaugurated several measures to increase the institutional support needed to enhance the depth and breadth of faculty excellence in teaching, scholarship and service. An increase in Title III funds has enabled CSU to increase its financial commitment to faculty development and research. Qualified regular faculty across the liberal arts and professional disciplines at the institution are engaged in service initiatives that embody the vision and spirit of CSU's mission with respect to the needs and aspirations of African Americans living in Baltimore City. Reasonable measures are in place to ensure that Coppin recruits and maintains sufficient faculty who are appropriately qualified and credentialed to support undergraduate and graduate curriculum and instruction in the liberal arts and the professional disciplines offered by the University. CSU provides faculty and staff on-going opportunities to be trained in the use of instructional and information technologies. However, CSU faculty continues to carry the heaviest teaching load of any institution in the University System of Maryland (USM).

Standard Eleven: Educational Offerings. The self-study report includes evidence that CSU offers appropriate curriculum and courses of study that guide the institution in the fulfillment of its mission, evidenced by course syllabi, accreditation process, periodic program review, and self-studies comparing peer institutions' retention and graduation rates. Certificate programs at the institution, both non-degree and degree oriented, range from Day Care certification (non-degree) to advanced licensing in Rehabilitation Counseling (post-Master's degree) that are consistent with the mission and external standards. In addition to the main campus, CSU offers courses at three other instructional sites: Baltimore City, Prince George's County, and St. Mary's County. CSU has also developed over 50 on-line courses and more than 60 technology-enhanced courses through the use of Blackboard and Tegrity. Off-campus courses, technology enhanced courses and on-line courses meet the same standards as other courses offered at CSU.

Standard Twelve: General Education. An aggressive campaign to assess student-learning outcomes has been launched to ensure that proper interventions are implemented to improve general education requirements and course level performance. During the summer of 2007, the Math faculty redesigned the Developmental Math courses, which included more time allocated for lab and enhanced assessment measures. The first of these redesigned courses was piloted in fall 2007. Additionally, the English department has been cited as having courses that need further redesign to address unprepared student needs. Specifically, actions are underway to assess Accuplacer and to address the need for a lower level English course for students who cannot successfully pass EN 101. Continuous professional development and training is required for general education assessment to be ongoing and embraced by faculty.

Standard Thirteen: Educational Programs. CSU has developed a systematic approach to assist under prepared students achieve success. This approach combines mandatory placement testing, developmental and modified courses, academic support services and summer pre-college programs. The institution needs to re-evaluate the use of the placement tests. At present, the tests only have a direct impact on placement in developmental math courses. It appears that supplemental diagnostic tools administered during the first two weeks of classes have more of an impact on Reading and English placement of CSU students.

Standard Fourteen: Student Learning Outcomes Assessment. Coppin State University's Student Learning Outcomes Assessment process provides both formative and summative feedback relative to institutional effectiveness. Through data collection and analysis, snapshots of how well CSU serves students, and the nature of their success are taken, which in turn are shared and used by faculty, students and administrators to improve programs, services and learning. Using PeopleSoft, CSU has developed specialized Assessment modules for warehousing critical institutional effectiveness indicators. Notably, the School of Education was reaccredited by the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education programs and the Maryland State Department of Education during spring 2006, the School of Nursing received a favorable review during the fall semester and the Department of Social Work is scheduled for review in spring 2008. The Academic Program Review Committee (APRC) was re-activated in 2001 to facilitate internal academic program reviews and provide ongoing assessment of all programs. In spring 2006, CSU administered the National Study for Student Engagement to assess the level of student engagement on campus.

Conclusion:

Finally, as a result of the comprehensive studies, research, and analysis undertaken in order to prepare this comprehensive self-study report, CSU finds it is in compliance with all fourteen standards found in the MSCHE Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education (2006). CSU continues to pioneer academic and community innovation through technology in support of its mission and commitment to its students. Moreover, CSU continues to implement innovative solutions not only to address its concerns but to pursue and advance opportunities for its faculty, staff, students, and community. ...Powered by information technology as the centerpiece for all institutional operations, Coppin State University embodies ... and leverages the technology as a tool for improving teaching and learning practices, client, management, and student services:...p. 9, *CSU in 2010*