Report of Comprehensive Evaluation Visit to Ferris State University
April 18 - 20, 2011

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<th>Area of Concern from Report</th>
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<th>Recommendation of the Team</th>
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<td>Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention.</td>
<td>(1e.) The role and place of Kendall College of Art and Design at Ferris State University was not clear to the Team or to the various institutional faculty, staff, and students the Team met with. This lack of clarity about Kendall College represents a question about the integrity of Ferris State University. Although the Higher Learning Commission accepted a required progress report on the merger of Kendall College of Art and Design and Ferris State University in 2004, the Team did not find any evidence of other steps taken to integrate the two institutions since that time.</td>
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<td>a. Core Component - 1e The organization upholds and protects its integrity.</td>
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<td>Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require Commission follow-up.</td>
<td>(1e) The Team found evidence that Ferris State University is not addressing all areas needed to uphold and protect its integrity. The integration of Kendall College of Art and Design and Ferris State University ten years following the merger of the two institutions is not complete. While the Team concluded following a review of the University’s web site and publications, that its presentation to the public was fair and appropriate, the role of Kendall College of Art and Design at Ferris State University is not clearly presented to the public. For example, the web site of Kendall College of Art and Design is accessible from the main Ferris State University web site; however the Kendall College web site looks different from the web sites of all other colleges at Ferris State University. It is difficult to move back and forth from the Kendall College of Art and Design web site to the Ferris State University web site.</td>
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It is the recommendation of the Team that Ferris State University submit a progress report to
Higher Learning Commission which will address the continued integration of Kendall College of
Art and Design and Ferris State University. The report should be sent to the Commission by
September 30, 2013. The report should address how three major functional areas 1) curriculum
and academic requirements for students, 2) personnel policies for faculty and staff, and 3) budgeting and financial processes are integrated at the Kendall and Ferris State University
campuses. The rationale for this required report is continuing uncertainty about the relationship
between Kendall College of Art and Design and Ferris State University expressed by students,
faculty, and staff on both campuses more than ten years after the merger of the institutions. It is
expected that the progress report provide specific evidence of how the academic and curricular,
personnel, and finance areas at Kendall College are integrated within Ferris Sany recent changes Progress report on integration of Kendall in policies or procedures to track the expansion of graduate education. For example the granting College of Art and Design and Ferris of status as a graduate faculty member is based on the decision of the dean of the appropriate State University due on 30 September, college. Each college with graduate pr

Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need
organizational attention

(2b) One area of potential concern for the future was the resource base allocated to support and
expand the technological infrastructure of the University. While FSU has taken solid steps
towards responding to a similar concern raised by the 2001 HLC Team, allocating sufficient
resources to sustain the “normal” electronic infrastructure is a difficult task for any institution.
With the substantial increase in on-line enrollments at Ferris State University over the last
decade, and especially the last three or four years, the difficulties multiply. To be sure those
interviewed by the Team, generally gave ITS personnel high marks, and those affiliated with the
Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning (FCTL) were especially appreciated for their technical
expertise and customer-oriented style. The concern here is whether the growing demand for
capacity and support will outrun existing resource deployments, a matter that Ferris State
University administrators should continue to monitor closely over the coming years.

(2c.) There is no lack at Ferris State University of data collection for the ongoing evaluation and
assessment of various university offices, programs, and activities. If there is a concern to be
expressed in this regard, it is one involving “closing the loop”, insuring that assessment results are
c. Core Component 2 c. The organization’s ongoing used to inform decisions and drive appropriate responses. Notwithstanding the case of the
evaluation and assessment processes provide reliable internal audit cited above, it is not evident that the data collected have been consistently used to
evidence of institutional effectiveness that clearly informs maximum effectiveness in this regard. This is an area that deserves further institutional
strategies for continuous improvement.
Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention

a. Core Component 3 a. The organization’s goals for student learning outcomes are clearly stated for each educational program and make effective assessment of follow up studies possible. How data results are applied is not evident throughout all programs. An inspection of TracDat, the electronic database storing assessment program, indicated that, while all programs had goals and objectives, not all programs had collected data and few, in fact, indicated evidence educational program and make effective assessment possible.

b. Core Component 3 b. The organization values and supports effective teaching. While Ferris State University supports professional development, it is not apparent there exists a strategy “to facilitate teaching suited to varied learning environments.” Little evidence was found to examine or address effective teaching at the graduate level.

b. Core Component 3 b. The organization values and supports effective teaching. Ferris State University should self-evaluate the campus climate for promoting scholarship. The Team found little if any discussion of faculty scholarship in the self study, in faculty profiles, or in promotion and tenure guidelines in the collective bargaining agreement or in the departmental policies that were selected for review. Whether faculty are engaged in applied or basic research or whether they participate in the scholarship of teaching or of service, more FSU faculty should be encouraged to participate and contribute to their disciplines and the dissemination of knowledge. Ferris State University has a unique mission and focus on professional and technical education which should be shared with the education community. This is particularly important as graduate education expands at FSU.

b. Core Component 3 b. The organization values and supports effective teaching. In Team discussions with various faculty groups during the visit the issue of having some faculty members who had worked at the institutions for many years in “at will” or “term by term” employment categories was raised. Ferris State University needs to make sure to have policies in place to ensure equitable treatment of all faculty groups. This will help to assure effective teaching and program continuity.
c. Core Component 3

(3c.) The organization creates effective learning environments.

(3c.) More departments and programs need to incorporate assessment data to inform programmatic decisions. As mentioned above there is a need in assessment at FSU to “close the loop” - analyze collected assessment data and use it for curriculum planning and development.

(3c.) There is little evidence at FSU of an organizational commitment to create an effective graduate learning environment. There are exemplary graduate level programs at FSU at the Michigan College of Optometry and the College of Pharmacy which have been accredited by their respective professional organizations and have national recognition. There are also graduate programs in the College of Allied Health, the College of Business, Kendall College of Art and Design, the College of Education and Human Services, and the College of Professional and Technical Studies. Graduate education is not addressed however in the self study in any detail. There is no position, person responsible for, or link to graduate education in the Office of Academic Affairs. There is a University Graduate and Professional Council which is a University-wide committee of the Academic Senate which reports to the Academic Senate. Based on a review of the minutes of the University Graduate and Professional Council, there have not been any recent changes in policies or procedures to track the expansion of graduate education. For example the granting of status as a graduate faculty member is based on the decision of the dean of the appropriate college. Each college with graduate programs is supposed to have a graduate curriculum committee but there is no evidence that these committees are in place or functioning. Of particular concern is the new doctoral program, the Ed. D. in Community College Leadership which is housed in the College of Professional and Technical Studies (CPTS). The only other degree programs in CPTS are undergraduate degree programs in digital animation and game design, digital media software engineering, and industrial technology and management. CPTS also does not have tenured or tenure track faculty.

(3c.) Academic departments should make explicit how they recognize student diversity and shape instruction to meet the learning needs of different groups of students. Ferris State University has made institutional progress regarding African Americans in higher education. However, its location remains a conservative rural oasis. Linking with Grand Rapids is important. Diversity is reported as real in theory and practice, but more action steps are needed to push FSU out into the community more. Inclusion advocates should be trained to advocate for inclusion and social justice.

(3c.) Ferris State University does not have a strategic plan for instructional technology. The development of such a plan was given to a campus wide committee which has not yet issued a draft.

(3c.) It was noted during the visit that the number of students with disabilities has decreased over the past few years. Lower retention rates for African American students also remain an issue at Ferris.
d. Core Component 3. The organization’s learning resources support student learning and effective teaching.

(3d.) Online instruction, clearly a growing area at Ferris State University, demands many more technological and instructional design skills than many faculty possess. FLITE (library) faculty and staff, and the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning are focused on online learning but faculty and the academic units need to be directly involved in the curricular processes that accompany increased delivery of online instruction. During the review of materials and meetings with various faculty and staff involved in online instruction the Team was told by faculty and staff that FSU should provide more support for online instruction. Faculty suggested that more training sessions related to different components of online instruction would be helpful. Faculty and staff suggested that a formal program for faculty mentors in online instruction could help to demonstrate best practices in online instruction. A need for more professional staff to support online instruction, including instructional designers was among recent changes in policies or procedures to tra

(3d.) Learning resources identified in the self study were focused on technological resources and student support, retention, and recruitment programs. There was little data provided on use of traditional library resources like information on the size of the print collection, circulation of texts, inter-library loans, and patron traffic patterns. There was little information presented about usage of electronic learning resources; for example recording visits to various library sites or downloads of materials.

Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention

b. Core Component 4b. The organization demonstrates that research and scholarship. The lack of evidence of this type of information in the Ferris State University self study is itself data about how the acquisition of knowledge and the exercise of intellectual inquiry are viewed at FSU. Ferris State University needs to address the role of research and scholarship at the institution.

(4b.) Through analysis of institutional documentation and interviews with faculty and staff, the Team was not able to conclude that Ferris State University demonstrated that the culture of scholarship is consistently present on campus; such a culture is necessary to support an expansion of current graduate education.
(4b) Statements in on campus interviews (with faculty, staff, and students), the self study and supporting documentation all suggest that the institution views itself as primarily a “teaching institution”. However, the institution does not have a common institutional definition or model for appropriate scholarship. Pockets of active scholarship do exist but with the lack of an institutional definition, policy and expectation, scholarship is not consistently occurring across the institution. A statement from p. 183 of the self study best sums up this issue: Perceptions Survey findings indicate that the University must consider the role of research and its integration into a “teaching-centered institution.”

(4c) Ferris State University has made global issues and diversity part of its general education programs and requires a course on race, ethnicity and gender, but there needs to be more focus on the intersection of diversity and global interaction.

c. Core Component 4c. The organization assesses the integration of these issues in the learning process. For example, diversity has been identified as usefulness of its curricula to students who will live and work in a global, diverse, and technological society.