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Systems Portfolio Overview

Mission Statement: “University of St. Francis (USF) is a Catholic university rooted in the liberal arts. As a Catholic university, we are a welcoming community of learners challenged by Franciscan values and Charism, engaged in a continuous pursuit of knowledge, faith, wisdom, and justice, and ever mindful of a tradition that emphasizes reverence for creation, compassion and peacemaking. We strive for academic excellence in all programs, preparing women and men to contribute to the world through service and leadership.”

The Values of USF are Respect (regard for the dignity of each individual, respect for life and reverence for the gift of creation); Compassion (opening our hearts to others, fostering loving relationships and promoting empathy, forgiveness and peace); Service (building of community, sharing our gifts selflessly and caring for the needs of others); and Integrity (dedication to excellence, fulfillment of responsibilities, faith in God and trust in others and commitment to truth and justice.

The 2006 – 2011 Vision states: “At the completion of 2011 the University of St. Francis will be a premier Franciscan University offering undergraduate, degree completion and graduate programs of the highest quality. Building on our heritage, the University will educate and graduate students of diverse backgrounds, preparing them to serve the world.” This vision statement is currently under revision as part of the new strategic plan.

The University was founded in 1920 by the Congregation of the Third Order of St. Francis of Mary Immaculate for the education of its own members. The University first accepted women outside of the congregation into Assisi Junior College in 1925. Assisi Junior College became the College of St. Francis with the adoption of a senior college curriculum in 1930. In 1971 the College became coeducational and in 1972 began offering off-campus degree-completion programs serving diploma school nurses and associate degree health care professionals. In 1980, the first master’s program, in Health Services Administration, was initiated.

During the early 1990s, the University began offering additional graduate programs. In 1997, the College of St. Francis affiliated with the Provena Saint Joseph College of Nursing, which had evolved from a diploma nursing school founded in 1920 to a baccalaureate-level institution awarding the BS in Nursing degree. In 1998, the College of St. Francis became the University of St. Francis. In February 2009 the University was approved for its first doctoral program, a Doctor of Nursing Practice Program beginning fall 2009 to be delivered online and accessible to students throughout the country.

The main campus is located on the near west side of Joliet; the campus location is adjacent to the Upper Bluffs National historic district and within the Cathedral district. Until 2004 the University and the congregation shared the campus and in 2003, the University purchased a 28,000 square foot wing of the Motherhouse from the Congregation and in 2004 purchased the remaining 75,000 square feet as well as purchasing Tower Hall, the main academic building and all of the land upon which the University sits. The University is completing the renovation of the remaining areas of the Motherhouse in stages.

In addition to the main location, the College of Education operates a professional development center in leased space two miles from campus; a facility in Albuquerque, New Mexico houses the Physician
Assistant program; and finally a partnership with the City of Joliet and the historic downtown Joliet Rialto Theater has resulted in moving the Visual Arts Department to the Rialto Square Building and classes began there in August 2009.

Until recently, the University viewed its urban location with some concern. The campus location was almost invisible since the University did not own property on any major thoroughfare. Playing a part in the life of the Joliet community seemed unimportant. The University, under new presidential leadership, is claiming its place as Joliet’s university, reaching out to join the community in new partnerships and connections. The re-connection is symbolized in establishing the former Motherhouse as a part of the University with a solid presence on US Route 30, one of Joliet’s major thoroughfares.

The location of USF in Will County is as important as its location in Joliet. Located at the southwestern edge of the expanding Chicago-land metropolis, Will County is the fastest growing county in Illinois and 10th fastest growing county in the United States from 2000-2006 (US Census Bureau). This population growth creates opportunities for enrollment growth, programmatic expansion and partnerships.

One unique feature of USF is that we have offered a variety of programs to health care professionals for over thirty years. The first of these was the baccalaureate-level degree-completion Health Arts program followed by the MS in Health Services Administration, undergraduate and then graduate nursing programs, and a MS Physician Assistant program.

St. Francis was also an early adapter of online courses. Our MBA program first initiated online course delivery in 1998. The University’s enrollment in online courses has increased from 1300 in 2004 to 2,010 in Spring 2009 and enrollments in two new programs have been almost entirely online. Currently, four undergraduate degree completion programs and five graduate programs can be completed entirely online if the student chooses.

Due to the national dispersion of program sites, USF has had two program identities: the “national programs,” all either health-related undergraduate degree completion programs or health-related graduate programs, and “local” undergraduate and graduate programs offered in Joliet or the surrounding area. These two wings of our identity are reflected in the Strategic Plan 2004 - 2006 institutional vision.

As the University became more data driven, and as the academic and the admissions areas were reorganized to be more efficient and effective, the institutional vision became more integrated. Thus the vision articulated for Strategic Plan 2006 – 2011 recognizes that national is also local.

**O1:** The goals for student learning at USF can be categorized as follows (see [1P4]):

1. A sense of ethics and values reflecting the religious foundations of USF and its Franciscan Charism
   - Evidence of having embarked on a personal search for truth, meaning, and faith, including an understanding of and respect for Catholic ideals
   - Understanding of and sensitivity to values including: personal integrity, respect for the dignity of others, and reverence for creation, compassion, justice, and peacemaking
2. Mastery of the chosen discipline
   - Clear understanding of key ideas, concepts, and theories of the chosen discipline
   - Proficiency in skills and methodology
3. Active participation as a citizen of a diverse democracy and pluralistic world
   - Deep understanding of oneself and respect for the diverse identities of others, their histories, and their cultures
   - Positive personal and interpersonal skills
   - Capacity for associative living (i.e., living in common with others)
   - Potential to contribute to society with leadership through service

4. Ability to communicate complex ideas in written and oral form in various situations and with diverse audiences

5. Intellectual competencies, curiosity and habits of mind that foster continual pursuit of knowledge and independent thought
   - Facility in quantitative reasoning, as well as scientific and technological literacy
   - Aesthetic awareness and appreciation
   - Ability to analyze and interpret historical data; to understand methods and analyze concepts from philosophy, theology, and the social sciences
   - Read imaginatively and critically

6. Intellectual agility and ability to adapt and manage change, including the ability to translate knowledge into action and to solve problems.
   - Ability to learn in multiple modes and from different disciplines
   - Ability to find the best available sources of information (electronic and print, questionnaire, interviews, etc.); sift, organize, and evaluate that information, and develop critical analyses

USF offers 35 undergraduate majors and four undergraduate degree completion programs for adult learners. The largest program is the degree-completion Health Care Leadership major. The largest baccalaureate majors are, in rank order, Nursing, Education (combined certification areas), Business (includes accounting, finance, management and marketing), and Biology. In addition, the University offers 15 Master’s programs in the fields of business, education, social work, and nursing. The largest of these is Health Administration; the next two largest are Education and Business. In February 2009 the University was approved to offer a Doctor of Nursing Practice Program and began delivering this program in 2009 as an on-line program and accessible to students throughout the country.

The University is organized into four colleges: College of Nursing and Allied Health; College of Education; College of Arts and Sciences; and College of Business and Health Administration.

O2: USF manages its student and administrative support service processes predominantly through its organizational structure. It is an expectation of all student and administrative support services that their focus is on encouraging and supporting student success in light of the University’s vision, mission and core values of respect, service, integrity and compassion. In the context of the 2006-2011 strategic plan, student and administrative support service areas fall into five broad categories: new student enrollment, learning support, student services, mission integration, and administrative support.

Table O1 details the departments and functional areas grouped by those service categories which help support student learning and the University’s 2006-2011 strategic plan strategies (see [2P2]).
Table O1: Key Student and Administrative Support Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support Area</th>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Key Processes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Student Enrollment</td>
<td>Undergraduate/ Graduate/ Degree Completion Admissions, Enrollment Support Services, Marketing, Academic Advising and Articulation, Student Development</td>
<td>Inquiry, application, admission, placement and testing, registration/advising, articulation and prior learning, orientation/confirming registration, welcome center, marketing, enrollment communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Support</td>
<td>Academic Colleges, Academic Resource Center, Academic and Information Support Services, Academic Advising.</td>
<td>Academic advising, online learning, academic information services, tutoring, supplemental instruction, academic coaching, disability accommodations, assessment of student learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Services</td>
<td>Student Development, Residence Life, Career Development, Athletics, Institutional Diversity, Financial Aid, Registrar, Health &amp; Personal Counseling Services, Operations &amp; Facilities, Barnes and Noble Bookstore*, Sodexho Food Services*</td>
<td>Student activities, residence life housing and programming, career advising, mentoring, student governance, diversity support, intercollegiate sports, financial aid processing, wellness programming, behavioral health treatment and referral services, student records management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission Integration</td>
<td>Mission Integration, University Ministry</td>
<td>Spiritual development and activities, mission/Ex Corde alignment, mission awareness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

O3: The variety of programs and delivery options directs the University to categorize students for tracking purposes and programming as demonstrated in Table O2, below. To better understand student needs, other subgroups in addition to the listed categories are also documented and tracked such as under-represented and at-risk students. For retention purposes, students with high financial need or who “stop-out” additionally are identified. The most comprehensive tracking is of traditional undergraduate students, so systems that establish the needs of these students are more advanced than those that may look at other stakeholders (see [3P4]).

Table O2: Stakeholders Requirements and Expectations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder</th>
<th>Requirements and Expectations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate Students</td>
<td>Registration effectiveness, financial assistance, course variety, caring campus, satisfying student life activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Residents</td>
<td>Attractive &amp; comfortable living conditions, good food services, reasonable Regulations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Commuters</td>
<td>Parking, space on campus to promote a sense of belonging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree Completion Undergraduate</td>
<td>Registration effectiveness, financial assistance, course variety, caring campus, satisfying student life activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Students</td>
<td>Flexibility, cutting-edge education, convenience/accessibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Stakeholders:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board of Trustees</td>
<td>Relationship with the university, responsible fiscal management, accountability, quality programming</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Congregation

Relationship with the university, commitment to Franciscan values/heritage, quality programming, service/servant leadership, commitment to traditionally Franciscan and congregation music and art

Catholic Church/Diocese

Relationship with the university, application of Ex Corde

Alumni

Employment and career services, networking opportunities, support the university, maintain relationships, participate in university activities

Feeder Schools

Articulation agreements, communication, program and financial aid information, transfer ease

Prospective Students

Program and financial aid information, affordability, academic reputation, personal attention

Parents

Program and financial aid information, affordability, safe environment

Government

Compliance with 504 and ADA, equity in treatment, IPEDS, Reauthorization of the Higher Education Amendments

City of Joliet

Revitalizing downtown and Cathedral areas, expertise

Neighbors

Well kept campus, considerate students, neighborhood safety, programming of speakers, intellectual and life-long learning

Employers

Appropriate job skills, good communication, analytical problem solving skills, ability to work independently and in groups

Business (Not-for-Profit Sector)

Research resources, faculty expertise, community development, university investment, financial and human resources, student resources, facility use, model of diversity

Partnerships

University investment, financial and human resources, research resources, faculty expertise, student resources, facility use

Primary Competitors:

- **Lewis University**: private not-for-profit Catholic university 10 miles away. Lewis University offers traditional undergraduate programs, off-site degree completion programs for adults and graduate programs. Lewis University is the most frequent cross-application institution and the most frequent private college destination for freshman and transfer applicants who enroll elsewhere.

- **Northern Illinois University**: public university of 22,000 located 50 miles northwest of Joliet. NIU is the second most frequent cross-application institution and the second most frequent public college destination for freshman and transfer applicants who enroll elsewhere.

- **University of Phoenix**: private for-profit university specializing in undergraduate and graduate degree programs online and at sites across the United States. The University of Phoenix is a competitor for adult undergraduate degree completion and graduate students.

04: University of St. Francis is organized around functions and colleges. Five vice presidents define the operating units of academic affairs, business affairs, institutional advancement, admission & enrollment services, and mission integration. Four colleges gather similar programs to share strengths and create efficiencies organized around arts & sciences, business, education, nursing and allied health, and professional studies. The latter college encompasses a number of graduate and adult degree completion programs (See Organizational Chart). Information is exchanged across units through such bodies at the Deans and Vice President’s Council, the University Council, and college & administrators groups.
Governance is handled by four major bodies: Board of Trustees; Academic Assembly; Administrator Staff Council and Student Government. Academic Assembly oversees the academic issues of the university including curriculum. The Administrator & Staff Council oversees the needs of non-faculty employees and their role in the institution as they contribute to the academic enterprise. Student Government addresses the needs and interests of students and contributes to sustaining campus life. Finally the trustees oversee the university as an entity and ensure it is meeting its mission while being financially responsible.

The University’s structures and decision-making bodies are designed to provide a voice for each constituent with shared decision making and communication vehicles for information to flow up and down the organization.

Table O4 Administrative, Faculty and Staff Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Administrators</th>
<th>Staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adjunct</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>56%</th>
<th>64%</th>
<th>68%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Caucasian</th>
<th>84%</th>
<th>87%</th>
<th>74%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Education Level* | 69% | n/a | n/a |

n/a indicates data is not applicable or not available
*Percent of full-time faculty with a terminal degree

O5: Leadership is exercised through the formal governance bodies, through formal positional authority such as the President and Vice Presidents, Deans and Directors, and through the operational groups.

Formal Governance: The formal decision-making structures are the Board of Trustees, President, and three major groups: Academic Assembly, Administration and Staff Council (ASC), and the Student Government Association (SGA). Each of the major groups, the Board of Trustees, and the colleges operate through committees with functions and processes specified by By-Laws. The President receives recommendations from each of the groups, elects to approve or disapprove, and recommends passage of those he approves to the Board of Trustees.

The President, Provost and Vice Presidents oversee day-to-day operations (see Organizational Chart). The Provost and Vice Presidents each have operational departments within their divisions.
The decision-making bodies are highly formal and hierarchical. Decisions at lower levels are referred for action to higher levels. Membership in each of the bodies is generally specified and unique to that body. Rarely is there crossover in committee participation. The exceptions are faculty membership on the ASC Social Committee and the ASC Make a Difference Committee.

Operational Groups: In contrast, structurally, there are a number of operational groups each dedicated to a specific task. Unlike departments, divisions and the three governance groups, operational groups are potentially ephemeral. Some are temporary, although they may continue for several years (Strategic Plan Coordinating Committee). Some are charged with planning regularly recurring events (Open House Committee) or annual events (Commencement Committee). Membership crosses divisional and department lines; any one of the groups may have a mix of members from at least two of the employee groups (faculty, staff and administrators) and some also include students.

Generally the operational groups are created by one of the formal governance bodies or by administrators (President, Vice Presidents, Deans, and Directors) to conduct operational planning and implementation and/or exploration and recommendations on policy and procedural matters. Functionally, within the organization, they serve one or more of the following purposes:

- communication and collaboration,
- coordination and implementation of policies and processes,
- planning of new initiatives or recurring events.

University Council: Formerly referred to as “Cabinet” this group was formed by the President to advise him as well as provide cross-sectional information to all areas of the University. It operates outside of the three formal governance bodies and itself has no decision-making authority. The University Council is charged with two major functions:

- Review of and advice regarding recommendations emanating from the Operational Groups or from divisions within the University
- Communication to their constituents regarding information presented to Cabinet and on other matters considered by Cabinet

University Council members include the University President; Provost; Vice Presidents, the Presidents of Academic Assembly; Administrator and Staff Council and Student Government Association; the Dean of Student Life; the Deans of the four Colleges; Comptroller, the Executive Director of Operations; the Executive Director of USF Solutions, the Executive Director of University Relations; the Executive Director of Financial Aid Services, the Director of Human Resources, Director of Athletics, and the Director of Institutional Effectiveness.

AQIP: The AQIP Core Team is comprised of eight individuals and these individuals oversee the AQIP process. The AQIP Liaison is part of the Core Team. The AQIP Liaison coordinates the Quality Improvement Council that is comprised of nine team leaders, each responsible for one of the Nine Categories of Improvement and their corresponding section of the Systems Portfolio. Quality Improvement Teams submit Quality Improvement Initiatives to the AQIP Core Team for action approval and inevitable some of these initiatives are elevated to the status of Action Projects (see [5P7]).
O6: The University of St. Francis’ vision calls for the institution to become a “premier” Catholic Franciscan university, with “highest quality” academic programs. Further, the vision statement provides the foundation to build its achievements and incorporate the principles of high performing organizations in order to develop a continuous quality culture.

The Mission forms the basis for our vision and we turn our vision into reality by accomplishing the goals of our Strategic Plan. The underlying foundation of this transformation from vision to goals and action is based on the use of continuous quality improvement throughout the institution by:

- Focusing on the needs of stakeholders,
- Developing broad based involvement in decision-making processes,
- Ensuring shared vision through effective communication processes;
- Using data to build institutional change,
- Making decisions and evaluating performance with fact-based information gathering and analysis
- Integrating the Catholic Franciscan Charism into decision making processes; and
- Investing in our most precious resource, the people who are the University family.

The six goals of the Strategic Plan are academic excellence; living the Catholic Franciscan Charism; focusing on students; increasing the quality, diversity and size of the student body; creating partnerships to serve the community; and increasing resources and using them effectively to achieve institutional goals (see [6P4, 6P5]).

Table O3 shows the alignment of mission, vision and goals from the institutional point of view.

**Table O3: Alignment of Mission, Vision and Strategic Goals**

O7: USF migrated to the Sungard Banner administrative system in 1999. As the University integrated more administrative functions within the Banner system, the Banner User Group evolved into a small more focused group of major functional system administrators. The new Banner Administrator Group continues to provide input and guidance in the management of information through the Banner administrative system.

With the integrated administrative computing system, the continued increase in electronic library material and the growth of the University’s online degree programs, the University restructured its information technology in 2003 with a goal of improving and enhancing all technology operations within the University. The Division of Academic and Information Support Services (AISS) were created by combining the various functions within the institution that had a focus on information. These areas included Network Services, Information Services, and Center for Instructional Delivery, Institutional Effectiveness, Library and University Web Services. The creation of AISS has resulted in improved communication between the various departments and the University.

The University’s Assessment Council monitors the academic and student assessment processes and is responsible for the assessment of general education outcomes. An annual detailed report is provided to the university.
All requests for the collection of Banner system data from a University-wide context are coordinated among the Information and Administrative Services (IAS) Department, functional areas within the University’s administrative computing areas and the Banner Advisor Group. As requests for the collection of data are received, IAS works with other constituents, especially Institutional Effectiveness, to determine the most effective means of processing and storing the data within the University’s information systems. Institutional Effectiveness, working with AISS and other users, determines the most effective means of communicating the results and of disseminating the information (see [7P1]).

Centralized Information Systems

USF purchased and implemented the Sungard Banner administrative computing system to manage information through a centralized, integrated, relational database system. The University’s administrative system is the main authoritative source for information within the University and functions as the central repository for current and future data storage. The main administrative functional areas and associated key informational areas of the University’s Banner system are Banner Student (Admissions and Registrar); Banner Financial Aid (Financial Aid Services); Banner Finance (Business Office and Budget Managers); Banner HR (Human Resources); and Banner Advancement (Advancement).

Another major centralized information system is the University Course Management System (CMS). The University uses Blackboard as its CMS. This system is used to manage the University’s online degree programs as well as an instructional tool to support student learning in the traditional classroom.

USF, through a grant from the CampusEAI consortium has implemented phase one of the University’s new MyUSF portal and will introduce Phase 2 during the 2009-2010 academic year. The portal has two major functions: identity management that allows the user centralized access to the various internal and external technology systems, and to aggregate information for individuals based on their role and function within the University.

Research

In order to support the University and department needs for institutional research data, USF has developed a survey procedure administered by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE). Permission to survey stakeholders must be given so students and employees are not over sampled with survey requests. Surveys are designed by OIE and results are collected and analyzed and disseminated to the appropriate department at the end of the collection period. Beginning in the fall of 2009, major surveys will be housed on the OIE web page in the portal. In addition to the survey approval process, human subject research proposals must go through the Institutional Review Board, which is co-chaired by two USF faculty, for approval.

Electronic gathering of data through secure web forms has grown considerably over the last four years. Web form-generated information is managed through the University’s Academic and Information Support Services (AISS) area and disseminated to appropriate units at the completion of the survey period. The AISS division also assists the unit in the analysis of this information through the Institutional Effectiveness.
University of St. Francis recently completed a SWOT analysis during 2010 as part of the strategic planning process. Appearing below is our current appraisal of our commitments, constraints, challenges and opportunities (see [8P1,8P2]):

**Commitments:**
- Campus Master Plan
- Academic Excellence
- Catholic Franciscan Heritage
- Service to those who are not served
- Several federal and state grants we are receiving commit us to address specific issues

**Constraints:**
- Tuition driven
- National, state, and local economy
- Lack of space (for building, classrooms, parking)
- Limited development dollars and financial resources to support institutional needs
- Large unfunded financial aid and scholarship budget competes for institutional resources
- Highly competitive market in the Chicago area

**Challenges:**
- Competition from Private and For-Profit institutions
- Federal and State funding of financial assistance programs
- The University has a very small endowment (14 million, up from 10 million three years ago) and therefore is tuition-dependent.
- The current economy is extremely unpredictable as to its affects on retention and enrollment.
- Competitors may have superior facilities in some instances

**Opportunities:**
- Population growth in Will County and surrounding areas offers opportunities for enrollment growth and for development of programs targeted at local needs
- Career/job growth in the logistics and health industries as well as the “green economy”
- Technology through mobile and virtual computing and consortiums
- Collaboration with other higher education institutions, Catholic high schools and the community in general
- Forecasted increases in the adult student market
- Joining AQIP provides the structure for focusing on quality. Without improving processes, the University will not be able to effectively take advantage of emerging opportunities
- Plans for the growth of the University and capital campaign
Several local partnerships have been established and nurtured to enhance both the role of the University in the community and the community in the University (see [9P1, 9P2] and Action Project—Quantifying USF Partnerships).

College of Education Partnerships: The College of Education and Joliet Public School District 86 have established a Professional Development School (PDS) at Farragut and A. O. Marshall elementary schools. The mission of the PDS is to provide improved professional preparation of teacher candidates and faculty development as well as inquiry directed at the improvement of practice and enhanced student learning. Unique aspects of the partnership include the development of the Center for Urban Research in Education, Child Health and Well-being Center, and an Assessment & Diagnosis Clinic. In addition, the College of Education partners with local school districts to provide professional development workshops and courses.

Joliet Junior College: JJC is the largest source of transfer students for the University, enabled through a number of partnership arrangements. These include 2+2 agreements, accepting Associate in Applied Science degrees in partial fulfillment of requirements for Management, Health Care Leadership, Organizational Leadership and the RN/BSN degrees; dual admissions; and unified curricula in nursing and education.

City of Joliet: The City of Joliet considers the University the anchor of the near west-side and has committed city development funds to infrastructure improvements in the neighborhood in accordance with the University’s master plan. These include rebuilding streets with parkway medians and funding a statue of the foundress of the Sisters of St. Francis.

Joliet Grade School District 86: USF in collaboration with Joliet Grade School District 86 is participating in a $6.99 million grant program from the U.S. Department of Education’s Teacher Quality Enhancement Program (TQE) awarded to the Associated Colleges of Illinois (ACI). USF collaborated with ACI and seven other deans/chairs of education to develop a vision of transforming teacher preparation in high-need urban schools. The result is ACI’s new Center for Urban Research in Education which will explore educational issues affecting diverse metropolitan regions.

Rialto Theater in downtown Joliet: The partnership between the City of Joliet, USF and the Rialto Theater has resulted in the opportunity to move the Visual Arts Department to the Rialto building to create synergy between the USF art program and professional artists in the downtown Rialto Arts District. This opportunity greatly enhances the learning spaces for the program and is poised to take advantage of the easy access to Chicago via train.

Joliet Park District: For some 30 years, USF has partnered with the Joliet Park District and other entities to utilize facilities for sports, such as golf, soccer, tennis and women’s softball. USF benefits by having access to affordable facilities without having to maintain them and the Joliet Park District and other partners are able to maximize facility use and bring in some revenue. The most exciting of these partnerships is with the Joliet Jack-Hammers semi-professional baseball team for use of Silver Cross Field, a four-year old state-of-the-art professional baseball stadium.
**Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie:** This partnership provides opportunities for collaboration in management, inventory, research, monitoring, and educational activities. As of July 2009 the partnership has resulted in the following: 1) USF assuming a stewardship role for the Doyle Lake Watershed 2) Developing an interpretive brochure 3) USF Hosting a Midewin 10th Anniversary Research Symposium 4) Developing a long-term River Watch stream monitoring project of Midewin streams and 5) USF faculty and students conducting a year-long visitor survey at Midewin.

**Forest Preserve District of Will County:** This collaboration has provided opportunity for access to nearby high-quality nature preserves for teaching and research and has led to several collaborative research projects.
AQIP Category One: Helping Students Learn

Processes (P)

1P1--In summer 2003, a team of faculty, a student and the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences attended the Greater Expectations Institute. As a result, this team, along with the Vice President for Academic Affairs, developed a draft of revised common learning objectives. These outcomes were then presented to the faculty for comments and revisions. At the same time each college developed program level learning objectives. In 2006, a team from the College of Arts and Sciences combined the University outcomes with a revision of a section of the USF catalog which speaks to our philosophy of liberal education (see Appendix 1).

In 2009, the Executive Committee of the Academic Assembly established an Ad Hoc Committee of the USF Academic Assembly on Liberal Education Curriculum. The committee was charged to coordinate the revision of the liberal education curriculum. Specifically, the committee will determine a tentative time line for revision, investigate general education at other schools, determine a curriculum in the best interest of USF students across the university, use the information gathered by USF faculty from previous meetings and conferences and submitted by any Academic Assembly member(s) as the committee works and finally proposes a general education curriculum structure. The committee will also propose a permanent governance structure for dealing with general education assessment, revision, and approval of new courses. The committee holds regular forums to which all stakeholders are invited to provide input into the revision process. In order to increase access and involvement, the committee places and regularly updates materials (e.g., minutes, previous models, background information, etc.) on the USF portal.

1P2--The faculty within each major develops specific program level learning outcomes. Accredited programs, or those programs seeking accreditation, utilize accreditation standards to guide development of program outcomes. Additionally, programs preparing students for professional certification or licensure utilize certification standards of state and/or national certifying bodies. Some programs, depending on the major, utilize professional advisory groups to assist with the development of program outcomes. Benchmarking against peer institutions is also utilized within some programs.

1P3--Proposals for new programs and courses must go through a governance approval process prior to implementation. Proposal guidelines are provided in the University Policy Manual, Section 5.4. New course proposals must include a rationale and justification for the course; a sample syllabus; description of necessary resources; and effects on other courses or programs. New program proposals must include program objectives for the first five years of operation; rationale, including survey results that measure the demand for the proposed degree and student interest in the program; projected enrollment for the first five years of the program; description of accreditation standards; an assessment plan; description of existing and additional resources required; and effects on other majors, minors, or concentrations. Course proposals are initially reviewed at the college level, and if approved, proceed to the University Curriculum Committee and Chief Academic Officer for review and approval. Curriculum proposals follow the same process with the addition of a vote of the Academic Assembly, recommendation of the Chief Academic Officer, recommendation of the President, and a vote of the Board of Trustees. In response to the need for a mechanism to quickly design competitive academic programs and courses, the Center for Innovation (CI) was developed during the spring 2009 semester (see [1P4]).
There are several ways that learning goals, student’s career needs and employment realities are measured and used in the academic departments (see [O1]). At the conclusion of their program, students are asked to complete a survey that collects information regarding employment status at graduation. Most academic programs now employ exit surveys to capture distinct curricular and employment data as well permission to survey employers. Career Development surveys students six months after graduation to determine if they are employed in their field and/or attending graduate school. Students are surveyed one year after graduation to assess major programs outcomes, and to ask for employment data as well as permission to survey their employer. Once the results for career development and alumni surveys are tabulated, major and college data is sent to the respective colleges by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. Employers are surveyed by college or individual departments to determine if their graduates have the skills necessary for their job.

These survey results, along with certification/licensure examination scores are used by the departments to review curriculum and set goals for improvement as a part of their annual assessment activities. Assessment reports are submitted to the college curriculum committee in the fall for review and to ensure that assessment results are being used to enhance the curriculum. Each college reports their assessment activities and results to the Assessment Committee each spring. The Assessment Committee reports annually to the Provost and President on compliance and quality of assessment plans and reports throughout the University.

Another mechanism for developing responsive academic programming is the new Center for Innovation and Leadership (CIL) noted in [IP3]. The CIL is responsible for the development of credit-bearing courses, certificates, and programs through a “quick” start response system. The purpose of the CIL is to provide a mechanism of quick response to market demand for academic programs. Such programs and initiatives may be in operation for no more than two years before requiring approval from University Curriculum and Academic Assembly. New courses and credit bearing certificate programs are implemented using the existing Topics Course model currently outlined in the USF catalog. Approval for academic programs is implemented through the CIL Faculty Advisory Committee. If these courses/programs are not successful, they will be phased out and/or reconfigured to respond to new market conditions.

Admission standards, based on data of criteria linked to academic success, are established by the Academic Assembly through recommendations by the Educational Standards Committee in conjunction with the Director of Undergraduate Admissions and the Admissions Committee and with final approval of the President. Students not meeting admission requirements can be considered for provisional admission by the Admissions Committee, comprised of university faculty and administrators, once the student has submitted a personal statement and teacher recommendations. Provisional admission is granted on the basis of evidence of each applicant’s individual potential to be academically successful as indicated by the required documentation. Some professional programs have additional admission requirements consistent with their external accreditation bodies. All admissions criteria are reviewed periodically to ensure they are appropriate.

Criteria for course prerequisites are established by department and based on sequences, best practices, and data on successful students. Prerequisites are restructured based on feedback from course and program reviews. For example, when nursing students struggled in their first clinical courses, the college
established prerequisite courses to bridge from the general education courses and serve as a foundation to
the clinical coursework.

1P6--Admissions representatives utilize several methods to communicate programmatic preparation,
learning and development objectives. First, information is communicated to each prospective student
regarding the academic program of interest. Students receive a letter from the department outlining
highlights of the program, program outcomes and expectations along with an academic program sheet
describing the program in detail, outcomes, and curricular and graduation requirements. Additionally,
admissions’ e-communications direct the students to department websites which also contain this
information. Finally, the University Catalog, in which all programs are required to list their outcomes, is
available on the University website, and prospective students can request a hard copy catalog.

Admissions provide this information to students at any point along the recruitment process. If a student is
a recruit, they receive the information as mentioned above. If the prospective student first appears in the
admission system as an applicant, they receive the information they should have received as a
recruit. Once a student registers and enrolls, a catalog is given to him or her. Additionally, the student's
faculty advisor or the Academic Advising Center provides each student with a copy of the curriculum and
all requirements (major and general education) required to earn a degree in a given program at the time of
registration. Students can also complete an electronic degree audit to examine requirements. Academic
advisors discuss skills and abilities necessary to successfully complete a program, program requirements,
degrees offered, career possibilities, placement, and success of recent alumni graduating from the
program. Some programs also incorporate expectations of the program and career into one or more of
their early courses and program handbooks.

1P7--Students are guided during the recruitment and admission processes to ensure that the selected
program meets individual needs and professional goals. Further confirmation occurs during the initial
advising session with the Core I faculty, faculty advisors or the Academic Advising Center. Student
preparedness, fears and challenges are addressed by advisors. Students may be directed to a variety of
resources including the Academic Resource Center, the Center for Instructional Delivery, the library and
the college of their particular program for specific information.

During the initial advising session before the first semester of entering, previous academic experiences,
work and volunteer experiences, interests, talents, dislikes perceived abilities and challenges, results of
assessment tests, program requirements and expectations are discussed. A plan of study for the first
semester is established according to the major program. If prerequisite deficiencies are identified, course
preparation and a plan for meeting these requirements are determined. Students may be directed to
additional resources for study tips, test taking, tutoring, etc.

Throughout the fall semester, freshmen participate in additional activities to explore or confirm their
selected major. These include participation in an on-line career guidance and planning system during the
freshman CORE I course, which assists students in selecting a major program that matches their needs,
interests and abilities. Freshmen also have a Career Discovery Day which exposes them to information in
programs and careers of their top four choices. Once freshmen declare a major, they are assigned a faculty
advisor in the major who meets with them each semester, maps out a degree plan, monitors progress,
identifies challenges and provides guidance and information on internships, careers and job opportunities.
Transfer and graduate students may seek additional assistance from Academic Advising & Career
Services. Students that are planning to major in nursing will be assigned an advisor in Academic Advising & Career Services until they are ready to start the clinical phase of the nursing program.

Nursing and Education majors have an additional assessment to ensure that they are academically ready to begin these majors. Students entering teacher education programs must have satisfactory scores on the Basic Skills test. Nursing majors must have a satisfactory score on the TEAS (Test of Essential Academic Skills) test prior to beginning their pre-clinical courses.

Transfer students are introduced to their academic program during their initial advising session at which time a degree plan is established. As with freshmen, they are assigned a faculty advisor who assists them throughout their remaining semesters.

Students who are not progressing academically according to program standards, are dismissed from a particular college or want to change their major will be referred to Academic Advising & Career Services to explore other career paths. Options are explored according to interests and abilities with additional information and testing provided by a career counselor. Academic Advising & Career Services offers many workshops throughout the year to help students understand the connection between their academic and career goals.

The Academic Resource Center (ARC) (see [7P1]) provides learning support services and transition programs for students to reach their potential and achieve their goals. Identification of underprepared students begins at the point of admissions. The Admissions Committee places admitted students who do not meet one or more of the standard admissions criteria in one of two supports: Academic Coaching, a one-on-one relationship with a learning specialist to establish an academic learning plan and support to fulfill that plan, or Academic Achievement Seminar which provides lessons on study skills. Freshmen with weak writing skills are placed in writing tutorials with professors who work individually with students. Students in remedial math are also placed in a math lab with weekly supported practice.

The University Success Scholars, funded by a grant from a CIC/Walmart Success Award, provides support and leadership training for first generation students. Summer Academy program provides a five day residential experience that gives students a taste of the academic expectations of college. The program core is a one credit hour course team taught, giving students a sample of writing to test expectations and a variety of teaching approaches. ARC provides a Nursing Academy for academically at-risk students about to enter their clinical studies. This program provides intensive review of basic skills, dosage calculation, and critical thinking exercises.

Students are also identified through an Early Alert system, where faculty informs students in academic trouble. Notifications also go to the ARC, the student’s advisor, and athletics, if an athlete. This notice allows appropriate interventions including advising and ARC services. Other programs available to all students include Writing and Math Centers, peer tutoring, Supplemental Instruction for historically difficult courses, First Hand Mentor Program for new students, workshops and a self-help library. Additionally, continuing students on academic probation are also required to participate in Academic Coaching.

ARC provides support for USF distance education students by telephone, e-mail, and use of “Smarthinking,” an online access to assistance with writing 24 hours each day/7 days a week. In addition to “Smarthinking,” students will continue to have access to tutors in the Academic Resource Center.
Currently, ARC is developing an online tutoring component in math and writing to supplement its peer tutoring to be implemented in 2011-12.

**1P9--Assessment of learning approaches begins with freshmen and entering upper class nursing students who take the LASSI, Learning and Study Strategies Inventory, an assessment of study strategies. Advisors then use this information to assist the students. ARC also offers a complete learning style assessment and analysis to students who desire one. Students who are in academic coaching or academic achievement seminar take a learning style assessment with guidance on how to use the information. Some disciplines (especially education) also use learning style information with their students. Finally, instructors and others also refer students to the ARC if they detect a difficulty.**

USF faculty members are encouraged to employ learner-centered instructional practices in order to address the various learning preferences of students. Course content is presented in a variety of formats including lectures, interactive discussions, simulations, case studies, cooperative learning, multimedia presentations, small and large group activities, etc in an effort to align with the diverse ways students learn.

**1P10--Seniors:** University of St. Francis Career Services staff assists all students with their employment needs. To support personal and professional development; assistance with job search, resume and cover letter writing, along with career counseling services are provided. Career Services include alumni assistance, career assessments & interest inventories, career counseling, employment listings, guest speakers, internship opportunities, job fair notices, job search assistance, on-campus recruiting, personal assistance with resume and cover letter writing, and workshops and seminars.

**Commuters:** The Commuter Assistants are a group dedicated to programming for commuter students and they have budgetary support from and report to Student Government. Their mission is to strive to inform, inspire, and most importantly, include the commuter students in order to create a more unified student body. The Commuter Assistants are responsible for the successful programs such as Appetizer Hour, Commuter Appreciation Breakfast, and Commuter vs. Resident Bowling, Make your Own Trail Mix and Parking Raffles.

The Commuter Assistant students must interview for this position and they are responsible for:

- Participation in training, orientations, retreats or other workshops as needed
- Project a caring, concerned, and approachable demeanor and embody the USF values
- Serve as a role model at all times
- Promote positive campus traditions, programs, and resources
- Assist in coordination, maintenance and production of commuter student publications
- Actively participate in and support student activities on campus

**Students with Disabilities:** Students whose disabilities require academic support can find appropriate resources in the Academic Resource Center (ARC) in the Office of Disability Services. ARC provides a professional to evaluate documentation and ensure that appropriate accommodations and access are provided for students with disabilities. This person also acts as their advocate. Any student who requires special accommodations due to a disability should first contact the Coordinator for Students with Disabilities. Samples of accommodations are sign language interpreters, test proctoring, books on tape or
other audio, special, alternative or extended-time testing situations, note takers, special physical accommodations in residence halls, software that scans material and reads aloud, voice recognition computer software, and consultation on learning strategies that compensate for the disability. Tutoring, academic coaching and counseling are available as well.

**1P11**–The Educational Standards Committee, as part of the University governance process, is responsible for studying and maintaining academic standards policies including the determination of academic probation for and the suspension of students; readmission policies, admission policies, grading policies, establishing and upholding policies regarding the academic integrity of students; recommending the academic calendar; and establishing standards relevant to academic honors.

USF has moved to a tenure track system in a commitment to the development of learning environment that will nurture and support academic excellence among faculty and students alike. With a tenure status, the achievements of faculty are recognized to internationally accepted standards, and an acknowledgment of the importance of teaching, scholarship, and service to the University, its students and community. To be considered for tenure, a faculty member must prepare a portfolio that reflects his or her professional commitment to the University and its mission. The professional portfolio documents the quality and effectiveness of a faculty member’s performance in teaching, scholarship, and service. Faculty are required to write a self-assessment that is a personal evaluation of performance quality and effectiveness in teaching, scholarship, and service, as well as their contribution to mission. Faculty is also required to provide a description of professional efforts, goals, and plans for continued professional development in the areas of teaching, scholarship, and service.

In conjunction with the tenure process and supporting all faculty in improving teaching and learning, the Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE) was created in 2008. The CTE supports and promotes the development of teaching skills and strengthen the institution's culture of teaching for the purpose of enhanced student learning by providing professional development and resources for faculty.

**1P12**–The University of St. Francis has built an effective and efficient course delivery system based upon several factors including quality faculty and staff, technology and support for the technology. Courses are delivered in a variety of formats including in person, online and blended. In addition, some programs provide learning experiences that include clinical, internships, practica, or student teaching.

Delivery decisions balance student and institutional needs based upon factors such as program need, estimated enrollment and location of students. Students can register online and additional sections of courses are added based upon student demand. In their first semester, all freshmen are enrolled in the first of three sequential Core classes. The first Core instructor serves as the freshman’s advisor during the first semester. For transfer students, courses are evaluated at the point of entry, an advisor is assigned and a program of study is determined. Each graduate student has an assigned advisor to guide them through an appropriate cycle of courses.

Off-campus and online courses are often taught by adjunct faculty members, who are normally required to use standard textbooks and syllabi templates established by our full-time faculty. Course objectives are consistent no matter the location or instructor of the course. Additionally, adjunct faculty members attend an orientation and in many cases are assigned a mentor. College administrators also view the courses in person or online to ensure quality.
The Center for Instructional Delivery (CID) provides support, direction, and technical assistance to those colleges and departments involved in the online course initiatives. CID is the main support for the learning platform for online courses. CID provides an online course shell to every campus course running each semester. This enhances the campus courses by allowing the instructor to post course materials, deliver supplemental materials, and administer quizzes and exams, and post grades online for students to view in between course meetings. This greatly improves the efficiency of the course leaving more time to address materials and activities within the class.

In order to determine the effectiveness of course formats, all courses use end of course final evaluations that assess the instruction and learning environment of the class. The feedback received through these evaluations is compiled and forwarded to both full-time faculty and adjunct faculty as well as to the Dean of each college. If concerns surface on these course evaluations, they are addressed by administration with the faculty member. Administrators within the colleges visit and evaluate faculty on a rotating basis in order to make sure the teaching methods and course delivery system are effective. Online courses are also closely monitored by administrators.

1P13--Programs and courses are continually assessed through annual assessment reports, program review (every 5 years), department and college advisory groups, alumni surveys and employer surveys. The program review is conducted every five years or as expected by the external accreditation for that program. The goal of a program review is to increase the awareness of faculty members and administrators about their educational practices so they can improve the quality of teaching and learning.

Program review is a continual process of goal identification and review, faculty conversation about teaching and learning strategies and assessment and revision. The formal evaluation, which includes the self-study and the report of the review committee, is simply a signpost in that process, showing the results of prior assessment activities and pointing the way to a continuation of these activities in the years ahead.

In addition, a Comprehensive Academic Review (CAR) takes place every 10 years. The CAR evaluates academic and administrative programs and focuses on four areas: How well does a program serve the mission of the University, what is the demand (need) for the program, what is the academic quality, and what is its financial contribution? The evaluation results in recommendations and provides data for program prioritization and resource allocation.

1P14--The Academic Program Review and suggestions made by the University Curriculum committee are used by the program faculty in conjunction with the Dean to formulate recommendations for the future of the academic program to strengthen, sustain, refocus, or phase out the program. The program review and recommendations are officially accepted or rejected by the Provost. If rejected, the review will be revised by the program faculty in consultation with the Provost and the appropriate Dean. Figure 1.1 illustrates this process.

In the case of recommendation to strengthen, sustain, or refocus, specific recommendations should be made for improvement and modification of the program. In the case of a recommendation to phase out a program, specific recommendations should be made for the delivery of service and timing of the phasing out of the program.

In addition to program reviews, many programs have advisory boards which review the curriculum in light of changing employer needs. Courses and programs may be changed based on recommendations.
from external sources such as alumni and employer surveys or accreditation agencies. Program research on new teaching or learning methods and new technologies may also be the impetus for change.

All changes in the curriculum go through an approval process at the college, the University Curriculum Committee and the Academic Assembly. As noted in [1P13], the Comprehensive Academic Review also results in recommendations and provides data for program prioritization and resource allocation.

**Figure 1.1 USF Assessment Process**

1P15--USF has an extensive support system in place to monitor and encourage student achievement and development and ensure that students have access to the appropriate services. Support for learning needs is provided through a number of offices, and a table describing the support can be found in Appendix 1.2.

**Appendix: 1.2 Support for Learning Needs**

1P16--In the Spring 2010 semester, the Division of Student Affairs created eleven co-curricular learning outcomes and established internal and external measurements to monitor student progress. Each of the co-curricular learning outcomes was aligned with one or more of the six university-wide learning outcomes. Each learning outcome is assessed each year through a variety of measures including but not limited to: national satisfaction surveys, number of programs offered, attendance at programs, retention rates, involvement in student organizations, and leadership workshop participation.

**Outcome 1:** Students will enhance their awareness of Franciscan values as it relates to one’s personal belief system. (University Outcomes 1 and 3)

**Outcome 2:** Students will use problem solving and conflict resolution skills in making decisions. (3,4,6)

**Outcome 3:** Students will engage in activities that promote emotional and physical well-being. (3)

**Outcome 4:** Students will participate in experiences that enhance leadership skills. (3,6)
Outcome 5: Students will understand the need and importance of creating a diverse community. (1,3)

Outcome 6: Students will develop the capacity to understand and interact effectively with others who differ in beliefs, behaviors, values, and worldview. (1,3,4)

Outcome 7: Students will take responsibility for their personal actions and its impact on self and others. (3)

Outcome 8: Students will engage in activities that promote a sense of community. (3)

Outcome 9: Students will develop an understanding and participate in service learning. (3)

Outcome 10: Students will engage in activities that promote time management and study skills. (3,6)

Outcome 11: Students will participate in student organizations and activities which directly relate to majors/programs of study and/or career goals. (2,3,6)

1P17--USF’s assessment system includes external data, including required competency exams, internship and practica evaluations, and alumni and employer surveys, and internal performance measures such as course embedded assessments and capstone projects. Exit requirements provide quality checks at the conclusion of all programs; and the registrar conducts a graduation audit for each student to ensure that all requirements have been met. Data from employer satisfaction surveys are analyzed to determine how well employer outcomes are met. The University reviews undergraduate grade point averages as one criteria for entry into graduate programs. Finally, many colleges and departments have their own advisory groups to provide feedback on the academic preparation of graduates.

1P18--The Assessment Committee is responsible for the oversight and support of a process of continual self-evaluation and improvement of teaching and learning across all academic and some non-academic units of the University. As of fall 2010, the Assessment Committee is a faculty led committee that is a part of the formal academic governance structure. The Committee includes the director of institutional effectiveness and has a faculty member representative from each college. The Committee acts in an advisory capacity to programs to assist them in conducting assessment activities, including providing faculty with the newly developed Assessment Handbook. The Committee annually reviews assessment reports submitted by Colleges for their departments. The Committee provides an annual report documenting the strengths and weaknesses of the University’s overall assessment program.

Each college is responsible for monitoring the assessment process at the department, program and course level. A standardized syllabus format requires faculty to be specific on assessment methods and course outcomes. Typically, a team from the college reviews assessment reports and presents them at a College meeting or to department chairs. In the spring, the college representative then presents the results of the college assessment to the Assessment Committee. Assessment Committee members are responsible for university-wide assessment and reporting the results to the appropriate groups. At the end of the academic year, the Assessment Committee submits a report to the provost who then reports to the president.

The assessment plan is built on a philosophy of continuous quality improvement. Each year, data are collected and analyzed using the Rubric for the Evaluation of the Annual Assessment Report with the results used to produce changes in curriculum, thus ensuring a higher quality learning experience for the students.
student. After four annual cycles of assessment, each program examines the accumulated results along with benchmarked external data to evaluate the entire curriculum in the program review process. (see Figure 1.1). Majors that are accredited by national organizations follow those guidelines to produce quality programs in accordance with national norms.

Each academic program is required to develop an assessment plan which contains both formative and summative assessment techniques to determine if students are achieving the intended learning outcomes. Formative assessment techniques include course assignments and examinations, which may include admissions into “advanced standing” in a program. Summative assessment techniques are different for each program but may include portfolios, capstone experiences, certification exams and major field tests. Each program must document their annual assessment results in an assessment report which includes a column for curriculum changes as a result of the assessment. The reports are presented to the college assessment committee and the appropriate dean in the fall of the academic year. A summation of the colleges’ assessments is presented to the Assessment Committee in the spring each year.

There is also a systematic plan for assessing liberal education outcomes. The Assessment Committee coordinates the process which involves utilizing and/or developing assessments that are aligned to the liberal education outcomes. For example, the University utilizes the standardized “ETS Proficiency Profile” as a measure of achievement in critical thinking, reading, writing and mathematics in the context of humanities, social sciences and natural sciences. In addition, the Committee develops rubrics that are used to assess course embedded assessments. As with all assessments, the results are analyzed and data-informed recommendations and improvements are made.

Results (R)

1R1 – Collecting and Analyzing Students’ Learning and Development

The assessment system utilizes multiple and diverse methods to increase accuracy and validity. The system provides a balance of internal, external, direct, and indirect assessments of achievement related to program outcomes. The assessments include course embedded, field-based and capstone performance-based assessments. Data from all of these assessments are aggregated, summarized, analyzed and communicated in an annual assessment report. Data collected regularly is presented in Table 1.2.

Table 1.2 Assessment Data Collection

1R2--USF has most recently focused on oral communication, critical thinking, and writing from the common student learning outcomes. The ETS Proficiency Profile Test (formally MAPP), which assesses critical thinking, reading, writing, and math, was administered to all graduating seniors over the past three years. Results, presented in the Appendix 2, indicate that average scores of USF students are slightly below the average scores of students at comparable institutions. USF recently assessed course-embedded assignments using the Writing Assessment Rubric and the Critical Thinking Rubric in a sample of upper division courses.

Results of the writing assessment shown in Appendix 3 indicated USF students are performing slightly below the “Acceptable” range with an average of 1.8 with a scale of 1 = Unacceptable and 2 = Acceptable. These results are consistent with the MAPP test results. A noted area of improvement is Conventions.
Results for the Critical Thinking Rubric indicated that approximately 10% of USF students attained mastery of Critical Thinking Level 3. Therefore, faculty volunteers will use the critical thinking rubric to assess student work and examine the results for consistency with MAPP test results.

**1R3**—Academic programs are required to submit a report each year which describes specific program improvements that have been made based on the assessment results. In addition, each college submits an assessment report annually summarizing the program assessments for the Assessment Committee which develops a university wide assessment report (see Appendix 6 - College of Arts & Sciences Assessment Report and Appendix 7 - Annual Assessment Committee Report). Because of the necessity to craft assessments that are specially designed to measure specific program outcomes, it is difficult to summarize results across programs. However, in reviewing program assessment reports, the vast majority of students are meeting expectations in all programs.

**1R4**—According to the most recently compiled information collected from exit surveys, placement surveys, alumni surveys and other information submitted to USF, as well as internet research, a high proportion of graduates are employed in their field or attend graduate school. For the on-campus traditional undergraduate program completers, of those that information was available, 75% were employed full time in their field and/or attending graduate school within six months of graduation. For the adult degree completion program completers, of those that information was available, 93% were employed full time in their field and/or attending grad school within six months of graduation. For the graduate program completers that information was available, 91% were employed full time in their field within six months of graduation. Results from the alumni survey indicate that graduates believe that they are well prepared in their chosen field, and data from employer surveys that are administered in some programs concur that graduates have the knowledge and skills required to be successful. In addition, data from program capstones, internships, and other exit assessments indicate a high level of achievement.

**1R5**—USF closely monitors its support for learning processes. The University has administered university-wide nationally benchmarked assessments for many years including, NSSE and Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (Appendix 8—Noel Levitz and Appendix 9—NSSE). Results from Noel Levitz and NSSE indicate a high degree of satisfaction with campus support services and academic advising. In fact, several areas were significantly higher than other national four-year private institutions.

*Table 1.3 Selected Satisfaction Questions from Noel Levitz SSI*

Table 1.4 identifies the results of the implementation of the Academic Warning System. Faculty are encouraged to report early in the semester if any of their students are either not attending class or performing poorly in the first few assignments. The University attempts to intervene and help the students. The warning system is effective because the University dismissed only 0.3% of the students who did NOT receive an academic warning. Therefore, by identifying “at-risk” students with the warning system, we can help improve the overall retention rate by encouraging at-risk students to seek the help they need.

*Table 1.4 Academic Warning System – End of Term Academic Standings for Traditional Undergraduates*
Tutoring and supplemental instruction processes are utilized by students as learning supports. Table 1.5 reports the results of students using or not using tutoring and supplemental instruction (SI) for year 2009-10. On average, over the past decade, tutored and SI students earn fewer Ds, Fs and Ws than non-participating students. Over 2000 tutoring sessions were provided to more than 500 individuals during the 2009-10 academic year.

Table 1.5 Utilization of Tutoring and Supplemental Instruction (SI) 2009-10

USF also monitors learning support processes via course and instructor evaluations and exit surveys which are administered to students. Aspects of program operations that are evaluated include advising, communication, faculty, program delivery, facilities, support services, and learning experiences. The assessments include both quantitative and qualitative data. Every evaluation and survey is reviewed by the dean, associate dean, and other appropriate faculty. Quantitative data is summarized by means and frequencies, and qualitative data are examined for themes and trends. Overall results indicate that faculty members are highly qualified and students believe they are receiving high quality instruction and service.

As a component of the Core I course, freshmen are introduced to the available support services and resources across the University (e.g., Academic Resource Center, Computer Labs, Math Center, and Writing Center). Results from a satisfaction survey administered by the Academic Resource Center indicate that students find the services helpful. The advising process during Core I was noted as especially useful.

I6 USF uses national exams, state licensure tests, NSSE, Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory to benchmark and compare results with other institutions.

- Student responses on the latest NSSE (2009) showed significantly higher results than similar Carnegie institutions and national NSSE results in the categories of Level of Academic Achievement (LAC) and Active and Collaborative Learning (ACL).
- The undergraduate Business Program: Over the last 3 years, scores on the Business Major Field Test scores were below average range compared to national norms (Table 1.7).
- Education Program: Pass rates for program completers were 100% for the Basic Skills Test, Content-Area Tests, and the Assessment of Professional Teaching.
- Nursing Program: Over the last 4 years pass rates on NCLEX board scores were above both state and national averages for two years but below average for two years (Table 1.9)

Table 1.6 NSSE (2009) results for Level of Academic Achievement (LAC) and Active and Collaborative Learning (ACL)

Improvements (I)

I1 Improvements in this category have been guided by our current strategic plan. The first goal of the plan is to develop and maintain excellence in academic programs. At its core, this goal addresses “helping students learn.” In order to achieve the goal, several objectives were developed, including:

- Demonstrate continuous academic improvement through assessment and program accreditation.
- Retain and attract the best full time and adjunct faculty who are committed to collaboration and student development.
• Increase technology-based curricula and learning strategies.
• Develop new programs to meet documented emerging needs.
• Develop and implement systems of academic support to enhance program excellence.
• Integrate service learning within the curriculum.

Recent improvements in helping students learn include:

• Developed and published new liberal education goals in the University Catalog
• Established a General Education Task Force to revise general education curriculum (see Action Project—General Education Curriculum Revision)
• Made technology and training available for faculty use of personal response systems (i.e. “clickers”) in all classrooms
• Established the Center for Teaching Excellence with a mission to enhance excellence in teaching at USF
• Established the Center for Innovation with a mission to fund and expedite implementation of new academic programs and learning strategies
• Established and implemented the Writing-Across-the-Curriculum to encourage deep learning through thinking and writing.
• Upgraded course management system to Blackboard CE8, which integrates new technology tools that bring resources and improved instructor/student interaction in both online and blended (face-to-face courses that integrate the use of Blackboard in coursework).
• Expanded instructional use of Adobe Connect for synchronous online interactive activities and webinars between students and faculty.

Developing a culture of continuous improvement has long been a priority for USF. In 2004, we developed a process for program assessment that took four years to fully develop and have the process working in the colleges now with a college report going to the Assessment Committee. For the 2010-2011 academic year, we had 100% compliance for the program assessments reports. This assessment process is continually being enhanced and the development of an assessment handbook has made a positive impact for faculty. We have developed a process and workshops that take faculty through the steps of writing a mission, goals and objectives and then a plan. The movement of the Assessment Committee to be a part of formal governance structure and run by faculty has significantly improved buy-in from the faculty.

There are several processes that work well. Through the Assessment Committee, the Writing Across the Curriculum Committee was formed. (WAC) The Assessment Committee had completed an assessment of writing and found the results lacking. The WAC Committee developed the writing intensive course model, for general education and major courses. WAC worked through governance to add two writing intensive courses as a graduation requirement. The Academic Assembly also passed a policy mandating that each senior graduating will be required to take an assessment of general education outcomes. Currently, the ETS Proficiency Profile (formally MAPP) serves this purpose. The Committee continues to conduct assessments in writing, critical thinking and oral communication across the curriculum with rubrics piloted in 2008-09.
Another illustration of a success process is the cross-analysis of assessments. For example, the Director of the Institutional Effectiveness analyzes the results of the HERI survey of faculty, the CIRP survey of incoming freshmen attitudes, the Beginning College Student Survey of Student Engagement (BCSSE), the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and the Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) to look for trends across all the surveys. The results are presented to the President’s Executive Committee and the data is used for goal setting and planning for improvement.

Based upon the experiences implementing the current strategic planning process, the Vice Presidents have revised the strategic planning process for 2011-2016 (see Figure 1.2). We have learned that many processes are overlapping and to incorporate AQIP, strategic planning, program reviews and the budget will end some of the current duplication.

**Figure 1.2. Diagrammatic view of integration of major planning and assessment processes**

![Diagram of strategic planning and assessment processes](image_url)
AQIP Category Two: Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives

Processes (P)

2P1--As indicated in the Overview introduction and [O1], the University of St. Francis (USF) distinguishes itself and its mission through the Charism of its founding sisters. This spiritual influence directs our orientation to service to others and a love of all of God's creation. From this directive, initiatives include structures to reach unmet community needs and to serve as good environmental stewards. These efforts are directed through a number of programs. Each program has a director or chair that provides leadership. Table 2.1 provides the major Charism programs and outreach efforts.

Table 2.1 Charism and Community Outreach Programs

A second distinctive objective is collaboration with the city of Joliet and this is a result of a shared vision for a vibrant city with USF at its heart. Cooperation with the city has evolved through discussion between key personnel in city government and the University.

2P2--An observable strength for this University is the integrated approach to mission-critical objectives. The distinctive objectives are central to the overall strategic goals. The determination of objectives for our external stakeholders is a collaborative process rooted in the University's Franciscan heritage. The 2006-2011 strategic goals and objectives have emerged through a layered analytical and participative series of gatherings and discussions (see [8P1]).

The University of St. Francis has as part of its leadership team a full-time Vice President for Mission Integration and Ministry. This individual is charged with keeping the connection between the church and USF. Through this Vice President, the expectations of the Joliet Diocese and the founding Congregation, the Sisters of St. Francis of Mary Immaculate, are considered in framing the goals and objectives of the University.

Other critical components of this decision making process emanate from the Vice President's Council, whose membership includes the Vice President for Business Affairs, Vice President for Enrollment Services, Vice President for Academic Affairs (Provost), Vice President for Development, Chief Information Officer and the Vice President for Mission and Ministry. These individuals all receive input and guidance from the entire university community. Further advice and counsel comes from the University Council comprised of the Vice Presidents mentioned above as well as the Dean's and senior administrators representing Student Life, Athletics, Physical Plant, Information Services, Public Relations, Alumni Affairs, Institutional Effectiveness, Human Resources, Business Affairs, Financial Aid Services and Enrollment Processing.

Other arms of the University providing input to our processes are Strategic Planning, University Ministry and Charism Council. Their roles are in direct correlation with the objectives to affirm and communicate our Catholic and Franciscan values. (see [8P2]). In addition to the input channels described above, the University has established the following units for the specific purpose of identifying and addressing community needs:
• USF Solutions is tasked to carry out environmental scans and network with local businesses in order to identify the needs of external stakeholders. Solutions staff then provides solutions to these needs using University faculty and student expertise.
• A Hispanic Community Outreach Coordinator who communicates and collaborates with the local Hispanic community to identify ways the University can serve this population.
• The Regional Education Academy for Leadership (REAL) identifies and serves the teacher education needs of K-12 school districts.

2P3--The context for USF objectives in addition to helping students learn is the religious foundation upon which the University was built. The University of St. Francis is rooted in its Catholic Franciscan tradition which strives to infuse all endeavors with the precepts espoused by the founding congregation, the Sisters of St. Francis of Mary Immaculate and became the values of the University:

• Respect a reverence for all life and humankind
• Compassion for all people, always
• Service in the spirit of St. Francis
• Integrity in our work and interaction

These values are communicated in many ways to the employees, beginning with new employee orientation which teaches about Francis and Clare and how their values live today. At the beginning of every academic year all employees are invited to "We Are One Day" celebrating the richness of the USF community, setting the theme for the year and bringing in a speaker to bring passion to a new year of serving students. We have embraced the concept of Servant Leadership and many of these principles are incorporated in the 360 degree evaluation of our leaders. Our commitment of service to the University and surrounding community is evaluated in administrator evaluation and in the faculty tenure process.

In August of 2004 the President formed the Catholic Franciscan Charism Council with appointed members from the University community, the founding congregation and the Diocese. It is the Charism Council who developed the Servant Leader Attributes and Tools for Discernment for Decision-Making. These tools actualize the mission of the University into actionable outcomes. In addition, there are references to communication, shared decision making, and articulating the mission, value and beliefs in other aspects of the Servant Leader Attributes.

Students understand USF values and mission through orientation sessions for freshmen and transfers. A community Mass where classes are canceled is held the first week of every semester. In September, we celebrate Founder's Day with our founding congregation. Besides orientation and daily mass, the Charism Council has been brainstorming of how to help our students learn about those who came before them. We are discussing ways that majors can take on research projects as part of their experience in history, the arts and in service through internships and teaching experiences in our Catholic schools. The University has hosted a social justice speaker series which brought speakers such as Helen Prejean to campus to talk about issues of justice. The University has developed a major in Criminal and Social Justice to take our commitment a step further. There is more work to be done but we have begun to live the values of USF.
2P4--Through reporting relationships with the Dean’s, Vice Presidents and senior administrators the needs of faculty and staff are taken into consideration relative to the stated objectives. The current AQIP Core Team is comprised of the President, Vice President of Academic Affairs (Provost), Director of Institutional Effectiveness, Executive Director of Financial Aid Services, Director of Academic Resource Center, Director of Graduate Admissions, Director of Information Academic Services and a Faculty Representative who is an Associate Professor in Education. These individuals represent a huge cross-section of the institution and feedback is solicited to be used in these processes.

The Assessment Council recognizes that University of St. Francis has not undertaken a meaningful assessment of our Catholic and Franciscan values. The Council has plans to use embedded assessment in the general education curriculum and assess required artifacts in the proposed e-portfolio.

2P5--One specific means of determining faculty, administrator and staff needs is the Administrators and Staff Council (ASC). This unit supports the mission and values of the USF by representing staff and administrators. The ASC promotes the welfare of the University and the employees it represents by:

- Providing an effective means of communication among staff and administration concerning university issues
- Providing a forum for discussion of university issues, policies, and procedures
- Providing a role in governance
- Seeking out professional development opportunities
- Promoting professional and social collegiality
- Recommending changes to salary, benefits and working conditions

The Faculty Compensation Committee and Faculty Affairs Committee are yet another means for determining faculty needs. Other information regarding the determination of Faculty/Staff needs can be found in [4P5] (Determining Training Needs) and [4P9] (Evaluating Employee Satisfaction).

2P6--As a Catholic Franciscan institution we have two objectives: “Affirm and communicate our Catholic and Franciscan Values,” and, “Access and share resources through community partnerships,” and these are both key areas. As shown below, the University has added questions to the NSSE study to directly compare our student stake-holders responses with students attending other Catholic institutions. This seems to be the best way to determine if we are accomplishing these objectives with this constituency. We will continue to look for both quantitative and qualitative measures that directly compare our situation with other similar institutions. This area of assessment is an on-going effort that will continue to persevere through our AQIP involvement.

Reaching out to the community is an inherent part of our Catholic Franciscan mission. USF also realizes that through accessing and sharing resources we can extend our capabilities with all stake-holders. We feel that the significant achievements listed under the results stated below show both a high degree of commitment to our Other Distinct Objectives and also evidence a great deal of success. We also believe that by undertaking and being successful with these partnerships and collaborations we are providing professional development opportunities for faculty as we offer unique learning opportunities for students that would not necessarily be available otherwise.
USF has membership in both the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities (ACCU) and the Association of Franciscan Colleges and Universities (AFCU). Each year conferences occur where member institutions share information as to how they communicate their distinct mission and identity. Presidents from member groups also communicate on a regular basis to share information. This information is used to benchmark USF with comparable institutions.

**Results (R)**

2R1--A significant percentage of USF measures for the other distinctive objectives have been qualitative. Multiple influences including AQIP, have catalyzed an increase in quantitative tools and data analyses. Other distinctive objectives are now assessed both qualitatively and quantitatively with a commitment for increasing quantitative data collection. For example, the "Community Engagement” process was a dramatic experiential event. The initial community resistance to the USF Campus Master Plan was transformed, albeit painfully, to alliance and support. A critical aspect of the Master Plan was the purchase of the houses surrounding the campus. It is difficult to achieve this goal if the home owners refuse to sell, as was the case prior to the community engagement process. Subsequent to the community involvement meetings, homeowners voluntarily contacted the University to discuss home sales with the result of 45 residential and commercial properties purchased by USF since 2004. Unequivocally, the University has been more intentional in its measurement of Catholic Franciscanism as an underpinning to University life and learning. Table 2.2 depicts the measurement methods.

**Table 2.2 Tools for measuring Catholic/Franciscan values**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affirm Catholic Franciscan Values</th>
<th>Measurement Process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Common student learning objectives</td>
<td>Annual Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational and Personal Growth</td>
<td>NSSE (National Survey of Student Engagement)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spirituality</td>
<td>CIRP (Cooperative Institutional Research Program) &amp; National Survey of Student Engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission Integration</td>
<td>Mission Integration Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charism</td>
<td>360 Degree Survey</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2R2--The following are some distinct evidence of accomplishing our distinct objectives:

- Results for community interaction are quite vividly portrayed by the support the University has received subsequent to the concerted community engagement process utilized for the Campus Master Plan. The City of Joliet now deems USF the anchor of the near west side. Most recently USF received a multimillion dollar grant to establish a health care clinic on the University property. Achievement of this grant award required support from community and government agencies at multiple levels.

- The University partnered with the Groundwork Domestic Violence Shelter, the Housing Authority of Joliet, Joliet Public Schools District 86, Lamb’s Fold Women’s Center, Provena Saint Joseph Medical Center, Senior Services Center of Will County, Silver Cross Hospital, United Way of Will County, Will County Health Department/Will County Community Health
Center and the Will-Grundy Medical Clinic to create the University of St. Francis Health and Wellness Center. The Health and Wellness center is open to all, but will primarily serve school children, senior citizens and domestic violence victims.

- The University of St. Francis in collaboration with Joliet Grade School District 86 is participating in a $6.99 million grant program from the U.S. Department of Education’s Teacher Quality Enhancement Program (TQE) awarded to the Associated Colleges of Illinois (ACI). USF collaborated with ACI and seven other deans/chairs of education to develop a vision of transforming teacher preparation in high-need urban schools. The result is ACI’s new Center for Urban Research in Education which will explore educational issues affecting diverse metropolitan regions. USF as part of the ACI initiative will collaborate with more than 40 other partners—from high-need school districts and community colleges to major businesses—to develop and launch new strategies for preparing teachers for high-need schools. The new center will coordinate these projects, disseminate new ideas and best practices across the initiative’s partners (and nationwide); offer teacher and faculty professional development programs; promote technology in teaching and learning; provide technical assistance to partner schools and colleges; recruit business partners to the initiative; and develop new projects to serve high-need schools in the future.

- In 2006-2007, the Charism Council (see [2P1]) proposed two documents to the president for his approval. The first being "Characteristics of Servant Leadership" and the second a "Discernment Process for Decision-making". Both have been approved by the president. The Charism Council includes two representatives from the community, one a Franciscan Friar from St. John's Parish and the other a representative from the Diocese of Joliet.

- The Personal Counseling department of the University has chaired a Campus/Community Cooperative. The Campus Security Act requires that colleges and universities develop both preventive as well as response capacities relative to violence on campuses. The purpose of this Cooperative is to bring together the mental health resources of other area colleges and university counseling departments as well as local mental health provider agencies, to assist one another in doing both prevention and response services relative to violence.

- The University of St. Francis has chaired and initiated an effort to bring the following groups together:
  - University of St. Francis Counseling and Security Departments
  - Lewis University Counseling, Health and Safety Departments
  - Joliet Junior College Counseling Department
  - Will County Health Department’s Behavioral Health Services Div.
  - Family Counseling Services of Will and Grundy Counties
  - Morning Star Counseling Services
  - Crisis Line of Will and Grundy Counties
  - Crisis Intervention team of Provena St. Joseph Medical Center
• In 2008, USF began hosting an after school mentoring program for Big Brothers/Big Sisters that brought together local area grade school students. Every week 10 grade school students are matched up with 10 college students who get to know each other, help with homework and play games. The program runs throughout the school year.

• USF Business Solutions, a resource center for business and community partnerships at USF began in 2004. Since its inception, the center has worked with over 200 organizations, connecting them with University resources through a variety of training, consulting and conferencing services.

During 2008-09, USF Solutions offered continuing education programs to area businesses and industries to include such topics as: Grant Writing, Business Writing, Effective Public Speaking, Retirement Planning, Conflict Resolutions, Marketing Strategies, Networking for Women, and Project Management. The assessment rubric developed for workshops and seminars is a 5 point Likert Scale. (see [9R1].)

2R3--Table 2.3 contains Freshman/Senior data is from the 2006 NSSE study. The data depicted contains mean scores with USF compared with Catholic colleges and universities that we selected, as well as comparison data selected by NSSE as our Carnegie peers. The final column represents how USF matched with all institutions subscribing to the NSSE process. The data depicted only references differences that were noted as significant in the NSSE study. One significant observation is that USF freshmen have participated in community service or volunteer work more than freshmen at other Catholic schools or all of the NSSE schools. Also USF students rated well compared to other schools in developing a personal code of values and ethics and a deepened sense of spirituality. However, USF students did not compare well in regards to being aware of opportunities for volunteering and community service.

**Table 2.3 Enriching Educational Experiences**

2R4--The performance results of Accomplishing Other Distinct Objectives strengthen our institution in several ways:

• Our strong relationship with the City of Joliet will help as we continue to implement the Campus Master Plan.

• The Health and Wellness Center lessens the need for low income health facilities in the city while providing clinical opportunities for our student in nursing and social work.

• The NSSE results show that our students’ awareness of volunteer opportunities is lacking. Although there are many volunteer opportunities such as Big Brothers, Big Sisters and free income tax preparation for low income students, not enough students seem to be aware of them. More publicity of opportunities is needed.

• An ongoing conversation with the Charism Council includes ways to provide more “connections” for students. There are several ideas being discussed for implementation in the next academic year.
Improvements (I)

211--Input, dialogue, and commitment are key elements of the current community engagement improvement process. A series of meetings took place to review and revise the current strategic plan and a working strategic plan is now in place. Key performance indicators were established for each USF distinctive objective. The Board of Trustees Retreat and a retreat for Vice Presidents have been held which focused on key performance indicators which will enable more precise measurements of results and further enable continuous improvement. Based on this work a dashboard has been developed with KPI’s for each area of the strategic plan. This dashboard has been in place for one year and will be reviewed by both the Trustee and Vice Presidents group at their retreat in September. Data will continue to be gathered from NSSE and CIRP. Town Hall meetings initiated by the President take place periodically. Other improvements are noted below:

- The strategic plan initiatives are reviewed once a month by the Vice Presidents. This is a new process that was created this year.
- The initiatives funded by grants are reviewed on an annual basis with accomplishments being reported as a condition of the grant.
- Due to the work by our Recreation Administration department and students for obesity concerns, District 86 has implemented a new physical education curriculum.

Concerted efforts to help foster relationships with the outside community and our stakeholders continually take place. Newly established local community partnerships, such as the Visual Arts Department relocating to the Rialto Theatre in downtown Joliet, student teacher placement, internships, strong diocesan communication, prominent speaker presentations from the private and public sector, relationships with social services agencies, provide a mobile consulate for Joliet area immigrants, local membership in Gold’s gym for all students and employees, and the recent announcement of the University’s Capital Campaign all contribute to achieving our major objectives, fulfilling our mission and distinguishing our University from other educational institutions. Because of these endeavors, the University of St. Francis is poised to become the pre-eminent university of the Chicago-land metropolitan area.

212--Continuous communication between the president, senior management, faculty, administrators and staff are paramount to the improvement of overall performance among the University’s constituency. The President’s Retreat for Vice President’s and Deans, periodic Town Hall Meetings facilitated by the President for all employees, department retreats, yearly “We Are One” days all serve to increase feedback and participation among the USF community. Through these venues, constant ways to improve communication, thereby strengthening the University and insuring success of the objectives, are continually being sought.
AQIP Category Three: Understanding Students’ and Other Stakeholders’ Needs

Processes (P)

3P1--As University of St. Francis has progressed through AQIP, there is a better awareness of the importance of retention and an improved system of data collection concerning retention and student’s needs. The itemized needs of current and prospective students are identified from a variety of surveys and feedback. Requirements, listed in Figure 3.1 according to priority, were determined through repeated Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Surveys, the most recent from spring 2008. It should be noted that we have seen significant increased satisfaction in numerous areas of importance since 2005 survey.

Student needs may be classified into four categories: learning, service to students, student life, and employment. The multiple Noel-Levitz surveys and other data sources (Table 3.1) allow USF to identify trends and patterns that indicate success and challenges as well as improvement or regression over time. Subgroups of students may also be identified and targeted for intervention if necessary. Data collected regularly is illustrated in Table 3.1, with frequency and responsibility for collection and/or analysis shown in Table 3.2.

Table 3.1 Data Collection System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Needs</th>
<th>Pre-entry to Entry</th>
<th>Enrollment</th>
<th>Post-completion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning</strong></td>
<td>ACT/SAT Student Data, Demographic &amp; Trend Analyses, Student Placement tests, Admissions Committee, Accreditation reviews by professional associations, School &amp; Admission Counselors</td>
<td>Academic program assessment, Early alerts &amp; midterm warnings, Historical registration &amp; grade data, Retention data, National Surveys of Student Engagement (NSSE &amp; BCSSE), Academic Advising Sessions, D-F-W-rates of courses, Advisory committees, Focus groups</td>
<td>Graduate Survey, Graduation data, Accrediting agencies, Licensure &amp; Certification pass rates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Service</strong></td>
<td>Cooperative Institutional Research Project (CIRP), Demographic and Trend Analyses</td>
<td>Student Satisfaction Surveys (Noel Levitz), Retention data, Student surveys &amp; focus groups, Advisory committees, Focus groups</td>
<td>Graduate Survey, Graduation data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Life</strong></td>
<td>Cooperative Institutional Research Project (CIRP), Financial aid applications, Demographic &amp; Trend Analyses</td>
<td>Student Satisfaction Surveys (Noel Levitz), Retention data, Orientation evaluations, Student surveys &amp; focus groups, Advisory committees, Focus groups</td>
<td>Graduate Survey, Graduation data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employment</strong></td>
<td>Cooperative Institutional Research Project (CIRP), Demographic Analysis</td>
<td></td>
<td>Graduate Survey</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Category Three: Understanding Students’ and Other Stakeholders’ Needs
At risk students are identified at multiple points. Upon acceptance, an admissions committee identifies students with weak entrance requirements and admission scores, and assigns required support systems (see [1P8]) including a seminar course on study skills or academic coaching. The Financial Aid Services Office identifies financially at-risk students. At registration, students with weak writing samples are assigned a required tutorial for all writing assignments; students in need of remedial math are placed in a required Math Lab. During the first weeks, all entering freshmen take study skills assessment test called LASSI, with follow-up assignments and guidance for weak areas. Continuing students on academic probation are required to engage in academic coaching.

Table 3.2  Data Timetable

The USF Retention View, a database linked to the BANNER student information system (see [7P1] includes pre-enrollment information and demographics on students, as well as information on other factors such as current GPA and financial need. The database allows exploration of data sorted by individual student, cohorts or subgroups of the undergraduate traditional programs. The Retention View allows the University to establish factors that are significant for student success and to identify subgroups that may need intervention for persistence and achievement.

The Quality Student Life and Learning (QSLL) group is a campus-wide system of teams; a strategy team and separate teams for undergraduate traditional, degree completion, and graduate students, that brings expertise and feedback to supplement the data generated and aid in its analysis. The strategy team takes the analysis of data and the expert information of team members to set goals and directions. New units are then created that may involve additional people beyond the team members to develop strategies to address the needs of students. The additional associates may be faculty, administrators, staff or students who either are directly involved with a goal, or have an interest or expertise in the goal area.

The department and college assessment processes identify the academic needs of students within each college, program and discipline. Further detail is offered in Category 1, Helping Students Learn. Use of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and the Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement (BCSSE) assists this effort by providing goals and measures for behaviors that provide direction for continuous improvement. (See Appendix 8 - NSSE Report)

During the summer of 2005, Institutional Effectiveness and QSLL combined the results of a number of surveys and reports that were collected over the previous two years to find the University’s strengths and weaknesses in serving students. This report was presented to the President’s Cabinet, which then assigned action steps to the appropriate administrative areas to address the overriding issues. (See Appendix 9 - Trends in Student & Faculty Surveys) This report is scheduled to be repeated in summer 2009.

Often information from the various assessments is shared with the University community through “brown bag” sessions or email dissemination. We continue to look for ways to communicate in the most effective, efficient manner to identify areas of improvement.

3P2--The University seeks to establish a personal bond with prospective students beginning in the recruitment stage. Beyond traditional open houses, mailings, phone calls, e-mails and campus visits, admissions counselors establish a personal relationship with each potential student, learning his/her
expectations and needs. Traditional undergraduate students are invited to visit campus and classrooms, talk with professors and spend the night in the residence halls. The Saint Ambassador Corps offers a peer connection through tours and open houses and most recently Instant Message (IM) communication with prospective students. Individual colleges also establish relationships with prospective graduate students through special liaisons or coordinators devoted to those students. The admissions counselors maintain a personal connection with students until they are enrolled.

At registration, students begin their relationship with an academic advisor. To strengthen that relationship, freshmen advisors are the instructors of the freshmen common experience course (CORE I) during the first semester and are later replaced with an academic advisor in the student’s major. Transfer and graduate students are welcomed and guided by the Advising Center or by their program or site coordinator, depending on the program, and then connected with an advisor in their college. The academic advisor works with a student throughout his/her academic career not just with course decisions but with enrichment and career plans.

Before classes begin, an orientation for new undergraduate students is provided. Three and a half days of programming is offered for freshmen and a one-day program addresses the specific needs of traditional transfer students. The Orientation Board, which is comprised of student leaders, plans student led activities for welcome weekend. A candle-lighting ceremony provides a tie to the University, its mission and tradition. Additional orientations are provided within specific colleges and disciplines to welcome and introduce undergraduate and graduate students to the specific expectations within the discipline. Online students are invited to a demo course on Blackboard and to interactive materials within the student portal. Location coordinators establish the connection and orientation for students at distant sites. The beginning of the academic year welcomes back all students with banners, “service centers” located throughout campus to answer questions, a welcome picnic, and a traditional “Opening Mass” celebrating the founders’ heritage.

Communities are established for many students. All freshmen are placed in the first of a series of three “Core” courses to provide a common experience and encourage connection with each other and the University. The common experience includes readings, lectures and field trips. A program of peer mentors is also available to new freshmen. Summer Academy and First Hand Mentor programs are available to aid freshman in their transition to college. Some graduate programs establish cohorts of students who work and progress together. To meet the challenge of distant and online learners, a residency weekend is required for graduate nursing students and opportunities to engage and communicate online are provided to all students.

A variety of avenues encourage students to connect including clubs and organizations such as the Student Government Association, University Ministry, and the Student Activities Board. Events, activities and trips are planned and sponsored by the various groups. Other programs and organizations are available to targeted populations such as Duns Scotus Scholars and the Biology Fellows honors programs; the College Success Network, for students who are first generation, low-income or from under-represented groups; and clubs for other under-represented populations. In addition, the University of St. Francis portal system serves as another means of connection and communication for students. Additionally, students are encouraged to stay connected with faculty through office visits and email. Students are also recognized through honor societies and receptions in their academic disciplines.
Other efforts to build and maintain relationships with students include the Resident Assistant (RA) program which provides resources to student residents as well as builds community; Town Hall meetings led by SGA to offer students a chance to voice opinions; the Food Committee, comprised of students and staff to discuss issues/concerns about food service; the Diversity Council held focus groups discussing the unique experiences of students of color.

3P3--Stakeholder needs is assessed through four primary methods [see Table 3.3]; modes of personal contacts, advisory boards, opportunities through professional organizations, and other forms of feedback. Advisory boards from the presidential level to the department level assist the University in prioritizing needs and identifying and seeking opportunities. They may also assist in solutions to identified needs along with current research and information from the appropriate professional organizations to formulate goals and plans.

Table 3.3 Primary Method Assessments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder</th>
<th>Personal Contact</th>
<th>Advisory Board</th>
<th>Professional Organization</th>
<th>Formal Feedback</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community &amp; Neighbors</td>
<td>Cathedral Area Preservation Assoc. membership; Relationship with City Council &amp; Joliet Police dept. Neighbors adjacent to the University</td>
<td>Chamber of Commerce</td>
<td>Community members included in Master Planning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeder schools</td>
<td>HS &amp; community college counselor meetings; USF faculty visit with Com. Col. Faculty; School visits and fairs</td>
<td>IACAC</td>
<td>NACAC</td>
<td>Enrollment process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employers</td>
<td>Meetings with potential student employers</td>
<td>Career Advisory Board</td>
<td>Member of IL Small College Placement Association</td>
<td>Surveys of students and employers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Businesses &amp; Partnerships</td>
<td>Participation on workforce boards, committees &amp; professional organizations; Meetings with potential partners; Chamber of Commerce; Will County Center for Economic Development</td>
<td>President’s Business Board of Advisors; College of Business Advisory Board</td>
<td>Chamber of Commerce Will County Center for Economic Development Will County Logistics Council</td>
<td>Local research of business and economic trends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alumni</td>
<td>Email blasts; Alumni magazine; web; alumni conference; alumni social events</td>
<td>Alumni Association Board</td>
<td></td>
<td>Focus groups across United States; webinars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congregation</td>
<td>Personal dialogue between President and Congregation; University Charism Council</td>
<td>Sisters sit on Board of Trustees</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>Admissions counselor, faculty and financial aid advisor communication</td>
<td>Parents Association</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Category Three: 37 University of St. Francis
Understanding Students’ and Other Stakeholders’ Needs
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prospective students</th>
<th>Admissions counselor, faculty and financial aid advisor communication</th>
<th>Focus groups, evaluations, enrollment process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Board of Trustees</td>
<td>Contact by the president; workshops; board retreat</td>
<td>Assoc. of Governing Bds of Univ &amp; Colleges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Meeting &amp; self evaluations; orientation review</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**3P4**—In addition to the modes of personal contact listed in Table 3.3, relationships are built and maintained through designated liaisons, events and continued university outreach. The Vice President for University Ministry serves as the liaison to the Congregation; University Relations provides connections to the community and its partnerships; the Solutions Resource Center works with business partnerships; and the offices of admissions designate specific individuals to work as contacts with their feeder institutions. New trustees are also provided a mentor.

Trustees, Sisters, businesses, school contacts, counselors and alumni are invited to campus for a variety of events in a continuous effort to sustain and strengthen these relationships. The University invites its constituents to the many speakers and presentations we host each year. Most recently these have included presentations by then Senator, now President Barack Obama, and Arun Ghandi, as well as a presentation on Business Ethics and the Global Economy. Founder’s Day, open to all constituents, is an annual celebration recognizing the sponsorship and role of the founding congregation. A retreat is provided for the trustees. The University continually works on outreach projects such as community greening projects, tax preparation services, and local ministry initiatives which include a food and coat drive. The University plays an annual role in the neighborhood CAPA event. Outreach is also provided through tutoring in local schools, and involvement in the local Mexican Consulate and the Hispanic Center.

The University of St. Francis recently signed an agreement with the Department of Veterans Affairs to join the Yellow Ribbon Program. Under this program, USF will be able to serve the educational needs of Post 9-11 veterans as well as those who qualify for education benefits under the Montgomery GI Bill and other veteran initiatives. As part of the Yellow Ribbon program, the University agrees to cover roughly 25% of the veteran's tuition enabling that person to attend the university tuition free. USF is currently authorized to service veterans in Illinois, New Mexico, and Wisconsin as well as veterans across the country that enroll in online degree programs delivered from our main campus in Illinois.

**3P5**—The first step to determine new groups to be addressed is the identification of such parties. Identification may come from a specific department, college or division or a university committee such as assessment or retention. The University’s Regional Education Academy for Leadership (REAL), Solutions and the Center for Innovation are all avenues through which new services and needs are identified. Once identified, analysis of unmet needs and current trends, practices at peer institutions, and feedback from faculty, staff, students, and other appropriate parties are solicited. Trying to decide whether a new group should be addressed is then determined by a variety of factors including whether it addresses our mission and fits into our Strategic Plan, whether it was recommended by an appropriate advisory board or committee and the availability and commitment of necessary resources. Proposals for new programs for education or services must proceed through the appropriate protocols, including governance where designated. Proposals all include a rationale, a detailed plan, list of required resources and communication and assessment plans.

Category Three: 38 University of St. Francis
Understanding Students’ and Other Stakeholders’ Needs
3P6--A variety of methods are offered for students to voice their complaints. Means include the Student Satisfaction Survey; course, department, event and service evaluations; suggestion boxes; student government; the student newspaper, and various focus groups. The evaluations include both quantitative (Likert scale) data and qualitative (open-ended questions). An open-door policy exists among administration and faculty to consistently accept student input.

Procedures for grievances that deal with academics are outlined in the University Catalog. Non-academic grievance procedures are outlined in the Student Handbook and handled by Student Affairs, with the exception of a disability grievance. An accommodation grievance is outlined through the Office of Disability Services (ODS) and published in all ODS materials and requests for accommodations. To maintain a student focus, policies require student input before they are activated and again after implementation.

Resolution process steps for individual complaints:

Gather facts ➔ Staff Resolves Complaint ➔ Dean/director (if needed) ➔ Vice-president (if needed)

Subsequent actions are communicated to all parties concerned via telephone, email, and/or letter. We often check back with the complainant, especially if this is a community member, to ensure the problem remains corrected.

Complaints that form a pattern or are persistent, require more in-depth analysis. Parking has been a persistent complaint of students. Though this problem has not been entirely resolved, three new parking facilities have been opened and this continues to be addressed as part of the University Master Plan.

Results (R)

3R1--Satisfaction of students, alumni, and trustees is assessed on a regular basis. Alumni are surveyed annually. Trustee satisfaction is evaluated at each meeting as well as annually. Surveys and evaluations are done after all prospective student activities such as Visit Days, Online Information Sessions, and Open Houses.

The process to assess student satisfaction is continuously evolving and being evaluated. Procedures to judge student satisfaction occur at three levels: university-wide, at the college or division level, and at the department level (Figure 3.1). University-wide, the appropriate Noel-Levitz satisfaction inventory, supervised by the QSLL teams, is used for traditional and adult students. Satisfaction is measured against previous University of St. Francis results, as well as national and peer institution outcomes. The university-wide student satisfaction surveys occur every other year; focus groups are utilized as needed; and all other processes occur annually. Focus groups, additional targeted surveys, and supplemental information from other sources such as HERI are also used. Results are broken down by College and reviewed with Deans.

Figure 3.1 Satisfaction Processes

3R2--According to the results of the Noel Levitz surveys (see Figure 3.4), student satisfaction at USF has improved in a number of areas. These areas, consistent with previous reports, should be acknowledged and publicized. The University’s strong points are: excellence in instruction, knowledgeable and helpful
academic advisors, effective registration procedures (including getting the classes a student needs), available and helpful academic supports (computers, tutoring), and timely announced financial aid. Opportunities for growth and improvement are also identified in these surveys and include: parking: adequate and secure, commitment to under-represented groups, adequate selection of food in the cafeteria and registration personnel who are helpful.

**Figure 3.4 Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory results**

Looking at particular subgroups of students reveals significantly important information and issues to be addressed, especially with responses from African American students (Table 3.5). African American students in 2005 had lower satisfaction levels than the national averages in four of the five categories but because of interventions, the results were different in 2008. by 2008, African American students at University of St. Francis reported that they were satisfied in four of the five categories at levels higher than the national averages (Figure 3.5). Academic advising should be reviewed to determine if there are appropriate interventions.

**Figure 3.5 African American Student Satisfaction**

The degree completion and graduate students historically indicate higher satisfaction rates than our traditional populations. Table 3.6 demonstrates the gaps between satisfaction and importance reported by these students in areas most significant to them. We continue to report smaller gaps than the national average.

**Figure 3.6 Noel-Levitz Adult Learning Inventory results**

Additionally, the majority of alumni who responded regard their college education at University of St. Francis as more than adequately preparing them for their future. The majority of alumni respondents in the 2007 survey indicated how well the University prepared them for continuing education. (Table 3.7)

**Figure 3.7 Preparation for Continuing Education**

3R3--Indicators of relationship building include persistence and graduation rates, alumni satisfaction, NSSE, and student satisfaction in relationship matters. Over the past five years, the University experienced a dip in the retention rate of first to second year students for African American and Hispanic students. (see Figure 3.8)

Over six year, the average retention rate of first-time freshmen to the second year at USF was not significantly different than the MSP (NEED to define MSP) means for all students and Hispanics, but over the 6 year period the freshmen retention rate for African American students was nearly 10% lower than the national means (see Figure 3.8)

**Figure 3.8 Comparison of USF with Mid-Sized Private Colleges and Universities (MSP)**

Graduation of first-time freshmen to the sixth year at USF (Figure 3.9) was better than the national average of all students and Hispanic students, but African Americans continued to have lower graduation rates, similar to the 2 year retention rates.

**Figure 3.9 Graduation of First-Time Freshmen in 6 Years**
According to the results from the Noel-Levitz survey, students at USF are more satisfied than the national average in three measures of building relationships (Figure 3.10).

**Figure 3.10 Building Relationships**

Nearly 80% of the 2007 USF graduates that responded to the survey indicated that they definitely or probably would choose USF again if they were to start college over (Figure 3.11).

**Figure 3.11 Alumni Survey Results**

3R4—Improving alumni relationships and services for alumni remain the goal of the Alumni Relations and Advancement Offices and resulted in significant advances for USF in FY08. We made great strides with better and more frequent communications with alumni (introduced the "Saints Connection" alumni newsletter), increased online communications with young alumni by establishing a presence on FaceBook, MySpace, and LinkedIn, established an active student alumni association (SAA) on campus, and re-established an alumni travel program. In addition, alumni and development officers traveled to 111 nationwide Vision & Voices events and alumni gatherings in FY08 than ever before in our continued effort to reconnect.

The Alumni Board approved Alumni Chapter Guidelines for use in establishing new chapters and three new alumni chapters were officially established in FY08: The Student Alumni Association (SAA) on campus (which petitioned and was accepted for university club status also); The African American Alumni Association (4A) and an alumni chapter in Allentown, PA. Communication began with alumnae from Kansas City, Denver and New Orleans (and others) who are interested in starting chapters in those areas; our Washington D.C. and Williamsport, PA chapters continued to thrive.

Phonathon calling was expanded to 9 months of the year, more segmentation of databases made for more focused messaging to alumni and the introduction of online pledge reminder calls and emails resulted in phonathon pledge rates increasing to 22% from 17% last year. Also increased the number of annual fund CRE’s in publications, developed full page magazine ads to support the annual fund and had 2 major direct mail appeals, a fall full scale targeted mailing and then sent a donor targeted spring end of fiscal year appeal. We continued to recognize leadership level donors through University of St. Francis Society events, making a concerted effort to host events highlighting student achievement/talent. University of St. Francis Society membership again increased by 10.5% (210 to 232 members), which was equal to the increase in FY07. We were successful in exceeding our internal fund raising goal of $600,000 in FY08 unrestricted funding by raising $660,003 - a 12% increase in unrestricted income from the FY07 level of $590,179. Significant to the increase in FY08 unrestricted funds was Annual Scholarship Fund giving, which were $103,267 in 2006, $114,275 in 2007 and $332,259 in 2008. This is a 10% increase in FY07 and a nearly 300% increase in FY08.

A very successful internal employee-giving campaign that enhanced campus beautification through engraved bricks and benches for the campus quad raised the highest amount of money and had the largest participation ever in FY08: over $42,000 in pledges/payments and 46% employee participation with the purchase of 28 engraved benches and over 200 engraved bricks.

The Sisters of St. Francis of Mary Immaculate are the founding congregation and a key stakeholder. Under the President Michael Vinciguerra, the connection between the University and the Sisters has
solidified. The Vice President for Mission of the Congregation is a member of the Charism Council. Together the Sisters join the University for Founder’s Day every fall. One of the sisters has joined the Health and Wellness Center on a part-time basis and another is considering employment at the University. The City of Joliet is a key stakeholder and has been pleased with and helps support the growth at University of St. Francis. The neighborhood is another key stakeholder. This group has been advised of the Master Plan every step of the way and their feedback has been encouraged. This fall a renewed effort to have our resident students park in exclusive resident parking lots to help alleviate the street parking in the evenings.

3R5--Working with key stakeholders has helped the University improve its environment and bring its mission to more people. The relationship with the City of Joliet continues to grow and improve the community through joint efforts such as the tree-lined boulevard, statue of the University’s founder, the newly bricked university quad and the downtown Rialto project.

The University continues to expand its projects and programs as outreach efforts to the community, our constituents, and our stakeholders. These include but are not exclusive to the Health and Wellness Center, the Regional Education Academy for Leadership (REAL), Solutions, the Center for Innovation, Summer Camps for children, our annual Back to School Fair, Founders Day activities, Big Brothers and Sisters program, and the Will County United Way initiative. The continued involvement and participation of our stakeholders is a measure of our performance and commitment.

3R6--Tables 3.4 through 3.10 indicate our results compared to national norms.

Improvements (I)

3I1--The teams of Quality Student Life and Learning (QSLL) are the initial agents of action for student satisfaction and persistence improvement (see 3P1). From the analysis of data listed in 3R1, the QSLL teams share strengths and opportunities for growth with deans and directors and appropriate departments and offices. Growth from previous years is shared with the university community. Areas of concern supplemented with other feedback, such as departmental or event evaluations become the guides for improvement plans for particular departments and/or the University in its planning. QSLL will also act as a catalyst to set direction or begin initiatives, such as customer service training, that can then be absorbed into existing systems. At other times, QSLL will work with departments or committees to establish an action plan.

3I2--Targets for improvement are selected at two levels, university-wide and departmental. Specific targets for departments are determined by Noel-Levitz importance-satisfaction gaps. Gaps on items designated as high importance by our students are compared to national norms. Those items with a significant difference or with a gap of more than 1.0 become targets for action. Our goal is to reach a gap of under 1.0 for all items.

University-wide targets are formed in response to a combination of data presented in [3P1], especially the combination of retention view correlations, student satisfaction, NSSE, CIRP and HERI. Underrepresented student populations and sophomores were identified as groups who were significantly less satisfied and also historically at risk of leaving. The Institutional Research department and QSLL committee combined report in [3P1] pointed to three university-wide areas for improvement: diversity,
social development and support, and opportunities for intellectual and moral growth. These categories become a priority as they align with the core values of the university, respect, compassion, and service & integrity, (see Table 3.11). The strategic plan reflects these targets in a more detailed manner, to address the identified specifics within the targets.

Table 3.16 Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target Category</th>
<th>USF Value</th>
<th>Strategic Plan Goal or Objective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diversity</td>
<td>Respect</td>
<td>GOAL II: Affirm and communicate our Catholic and Franciscan values. --- Increase the diversity of our faculty, staff and administration. GOAL III: Create and nurture a student-centered environment, focused on student needs. GOAL IV: Increase the quality, quantity and diversity of the student body. --- Increase our undergraduate retention rate, especially students of diversity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Development &amp; Support</td>
<td>Compassion</td>
<td>GOAL III: Create and nurture a student-centered environment, focused on student needs. --- Nurture student personal growth through out-of-classroom activities. --- Enhance and integrate career development opportunities throughout a student's experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual/ Moral Development</td>
<td>Service Integrity</td>
<td>GOAL I: Develop and maintain excellence in academic programs.---Integrate service learning within the curriculum.--- Retain and attract the best full-time and adjunct faculty who are committed to collaboration and student development. GOAL II: Affirm and communicate our Catholic and Franciscan values.--- Explore the role of global thinking and servant leadership in academic programs and co-curricular activities.--- Expand University Ministry activities and resources to involve the majority of our students on the Joliet campus.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
AQIP Category Four: Valuing People

Processes (P)

4P1--Each administrative and staff position has a detailed job description. The job descriptions include a position summary, essential duties, minimum qualifications, preferred qualifications and working conditions/physical requirements. The descriptions are reviewed annually as part of the performance appraisal review and, in the case of a vacancy, as part of a request to rehire a position.

As part of an AQIP project, the university has recently conducted a Job Evaluation for each administrative and staff position. The results of this process include a new job description for each unique position, which identifies its minimum requirements (credentials, skills and values). This process will help ensure that the requirements identified are valid predictors of future success in the position.

As annual performance appraisals are completed, supervisors may identify necessary changes in the minimum requirements of positions for future hiring decisions. Faculty members and their dean usually determine the specific skills required for an academic position.

4P2--Job descriptions are used as the basis for development of recruitment materials and selection of applicants for consideration. As candidates proceed through the interview and hiring process, the university questions and seeks evidence of skills and values.

Credentials, skills and values are also verified through application materials, transcripts, reference checks and background checks.

The Office of Mission Integration prepared a document titled “Hiring for Mission” (see [2P1]) which is included in the university’s Recruitment Protocols. It suggests how to evaluate candidates and appropriate questions to ask in an interview. Additionally, the President meets with the prospective faculty member during the interview to evaluate further their academic credentials and to apprise them of our mission.

4P3--Recruitment and hiring guidelines are spelled out in Section 3.3 of the University Policy Manual. In addition, the Human Resources office publishes a Recruitment Protocols manual which includes a process for revision/creation of job description, a request for position staffing with approvals, a system of job posting which includes internal, web and print ads, role of the search committee, administrative support materials for the process, interview guidelines, selection criteria, reference and background checks, job offers, and the request for hire or contract. These protocols give the manager/supervisor clear direction on how to attract applicants and conduct a search and screening process for hiring.

All positions are recruited through the university web site. Based on classification, positions are recruited through local newspapers, professional associations, and higher education resources. When possible, the university requests priority for diverse applicants in an effort to improve the diversity of employees.

Searches are conducted by the appropriate hiring manager or, in the case of faculty or executive leadership positions, search committees. Faculty candidates provide teaching demonstrations for committee members, students, the dean, and provost. Faculty candidates then meet with the president. For searches by committee, once all candidates have been interviewed, the search committee presents to the hiring manager a list of acceptable candidates, including notation of the perceived strengths and
weaknesses of each candidate. The chair of the search committee and the hiring manager meet to choose a candidate by consensus. In the absence of such a consensus, the final selection will be made by the hiring manager. In the event that no acceptable candidate is found, the search may be reopened immediately or at a later time.

4P4--The following methods are used to orient employees on history, mission and values:

**New Employee Orientation**

The New Employee Orientation includes a segment addressing the history of the university which includes: mission, vision, and core values; organization of the university; governance structure; and policy manual information.

**Mission & Values Training**

New employees become more acquainted with the mission and values of the University through training provided by the Office of Mission Integration. Sessions focus on the histories of the founding congregation and the university, Saints Francis and Clare and their Franciscan values, and the University as a Franciscan institution of higher education in today’s world.

Additionally, faculty is provided with printed materials such as The Franciscan Intellectual Tradition and is challenged to consider how a discussion on values might be incorporated into course curriculum. Faculty is also invited to roundtable discussions on Franciscan writings or to become involved with the San Damiano Scholars, a group of faculty who have studied Francis and/or experienced Assisi.

4P5--Currently, the university is very reactive in addressing changes in personnel. Plans are in place to begin a formal succession planning process through which all employees are provided the opportunity to map out their career path, setting goals and objectives which will help them in their quest. Additionally, some employees will be identified for promotional opportunities through this process and will be offered additional training and education to meet these goals.

4P6--Work processes and activities, when appropriate, involve a great deal of communication and collaboration between offices to ensure a high level of success and student satisfaction. Examples are collaborative efforts geared at new student orientation, registration and class attendance confirmation which are shared activities developed by the offices of academic advising, registrar, admissions, student life, business affairs and financial aid.

During the 2008-2009 academic year, an Institutional Administrative Program Review was completed. This process required each administrative unit to review their processes and efficiencies. The recommendations from this process were shared with the Board of Trustees during the fall 2009 Trustee Retreat. This process will be repeated periodically.

Another mechanism now in place for review of work processes and activities is the AQIP/Quality Improvement teams. These teams are organized according to the nine Systems Portfolio categories. Each team is charged with reviewing the institutional processes for their Category on an annual basis and suggesting quality improvement initiatives to the Budget and Planning Committee and the AQIP Core Team as possible Action Projects.
A number of elements are in place to ensure ethical practices among our employees. First, a core value of the University is “integrity”. This value is communicated as an element of our ‘decision matrix’ which administrators are encouraged to use when making decisions. It is reinforced through our “leadership attributes” as being a characteristic of a good leader. Finally, all administrators are asked to sign a “Conflict of Interest” disclosure statement to reinforce good business practices.

Plans are in place to develop and implement a Code of Ethics and Ethics Training for all employees.

Training needs is determined at the departmental level by the department supervisor or chair. All staff and administrators participate in an annual Performance Appraisal Review (PAR) process. During this review, training needs are identified and plans are developed to satisfy these needs.

In addition, as new technologies or initiatives are introduced, training needs are identified. As an example, following several situations involving lack of supervisory skills, the need to train supervisors on specific policies and procedures was identified, and a training plan was developed and delivered.

Employee training continues to improve. The Human Resources Office has developed training plans which include a New Employee Orientation, general training topics for all employees, specific training for supervisors, and safety training for employees in facilities and security. In addition, the Center for Instructional Delivery (CID) provides technology training. These training presentations are available through instructor-led formats, individual delivery, and computer-based classrooms. All employees are encouraged to participate and, in certain situations, they may be required. This type of development is very beneficial in that there is a prompt transfer of learning allowing the employee immediately to apply training and develop professionally. Training is reinforced through supporting documentation and tutorials located on the USF website available to faculty, staff and administration at any time.

Employees are eligible for tuition waiver and tuition exchange benefits, allowing them to take credit classes and even earn certificates or degrees.

Faculty

The University recognizes its responsibility to design and support programs for faculty development and education. Each full-time faculty member can request funding for annual development activity from the Teaching and Professional Growth Committee. Support programs are designed for in-service development by promoting activities and programs. Written reports and oral presentations are given to reinforce training and to share information with faculty members. The Center for Teaching Excellence is should provide faculty with opportunities to improve student learning.

Staff and Administrators

Training of staff is usually limited to in-house programs. Administrators are encouraged to attend professional conferences as appropriate to their position. The ASC Staff Development Committee researches professional development efforts at other higher education institutions and attempts to identify potential funding sources to support professional development activities at USF.
Staff and Administrators

Staff and Administrators participate in an annual Performance Appraisal Review (PAR) process, which evaluates the employee on the basis of essential job responsibilities found in the job description, university-wide performance criteria, specific performance goals and professional development criteria assigned to the individual at the beginning of the year. Each employee completes a self-evaluation, the supervisor completes a supervisory evaluation, and the two meet to compare, contrast and, ultimately, set performance and development goals for the next year.

Supervisors have additional competencies measured through their PAR, to evaluate their supervisory skills.

Executive leadership positions are also evaluated through a 360 degree feedback process once every three years.

Faculty

First-year faculty members are reviewed primarily to ensure competency in teaching and advising students. Subsequently, faculty must demonstrate competence in other areas including: teaching (instructor performance, subject expertise), service (to the department, university, community and profession), professional and scholarly activities (growth and development within discipline, research, creative activity, and academic advising).

First-year or new track faculty members are mentored through the Teaching and Professional Growth Committee. Elements of mentoring include:

- Developing relationships with colleagues, staff and students
- Promoting effective teaching and mentoring of students
- Assessing course quality and advising students

In the third year, the faculty member prepares a professional portfolio of accomplished work, work in progress and professional goals for review by other faculty. A primary focus is teaching excellence and mastery of one’s subject area but this three-year review is intended to help the faculty member develop their tenure portfolio.

In the sixth year of service, the faculty member submits an application for tenure, a current portfolio, documentation of research, community service, a terminal degree, and letters of recommendation. Excellent teaching is a primary criterion for evaluation followed by service to the University and students, and scholarship and research. Within teaching, motivating and mentoring students is a key criterion. Upon receiving tenure, faculty members participate in a five-year review process to monitor continued quality.

4P11--The Human Resources Office works with executive leadership, the Faculty Compensation Committee, and the Benefits, Classification and Compensation Committee of the ASC each year to identify priorities for benefits and compensation planning. Over the past three years, the benefits offered have been expanded to include: a flexible spending plan for medical and dependent care expenses; an
employer-sponsored short term disability plan; an Employee Assistance Program; an additional medical insurance offering via a High Deductible Health Care plan with university contributions to a Health Savings Account or a Health Reimbursement Account; and, with an aging workforce approaching retirement, additional vendors were added to our 403(b) plan with emphasis on retirement planning.

Work remains to be done linking a recognition, reward and compensation system to performance, service and “Helping Students Learn”. The University’s plan is to further develop the administrator/staff performance evaluation tool so that compensation can be aligned with results. That tool however, does not have a strong link to “Helping Students Learn” and would need to be incorporated into the instrument. The faculty evaluation system more closely accomplishes all of the objectives but still is not linked to compensation.

Employee Service Awards are given annually to faculty, administrators and staff on the 5th, 10th, 15th, 20th, 25th, 30th and 35th anniversaries of employment.

Faculty

The Teaching and Professional Growth Committee recommends three awards to faculty each year: Excellence in Teaching, Achievement in Scholarship, and Achievement in Service Awards. Nominations are submitted by students, faculty, administrators, and staff. The purpose of the award is to publicly recognize the accomplishments of instructional faculty who excel in one of the three areas. Each recipient receives a monetary award. Following retirement from USF, eligible faculty may apply for and receive the distinction of Professor Emeritus, the highest honor bestowed upon faculty members.

Staff and Administrators

Staff and administrators are eligible for two awards provided annually: Franciscan Charism Award which recognizes an employee who enriches the lives of others through service to the students and institution; and the Innovation Award which recognizes an individual’s innovation in service to students and the university.

4P12--Faculty, staff and administrators can be motivated through the evaluation process which takes place at every level of the university. The evaluation affords the administrator, supervisor or department chair an opportunity to commend a member of the USF community on exemplary performance and service.

Each Fall during St. Francis week, the president and vice presidents serve all employees a breakfast in appreciation for their contributions to the university. It is also a reminder that we are all called to serve.

Faculty can also be recognized through the award of tenure and promotion in rank. At USF tenure is an expression of the relationship between the faculty and the university; it is a mutual commitment to the development of a Catholic and Franciscan learning environment that will nurture and support academic excellence among faculty and students alike. Tenure involves a commitment by the university to each member of the faculty and an equal commitment of each faculty member to the university. In granting tenure, the university awards its faculty the security of continuous appointment and employment. This permanent status is recognition of their achievements according to internationally accepted standards, and an acknowledgment of the importance of their teaching, scholarship, and service to the university, its
students, and community. In committing to tenure, the faculty member acknowledges a commitment to USF and promises to serve its mission. (See [4P10]). Promotion in rank is based on demonstrated excellence in teaching, scholarship and service.

4P13--Employee Satisfaction

Over the last several years, several instruments used in institutional surveys give us some indication of employee satisfaction. Currently, the Human Resources Office is working with Institutional Research to conduct the first USF Employee Satisfaction Survey which will be administered annually to better monitor the attitudes of faculty, staff and administrators. Results will be compiled and reviewed for action items in June 2011.

In 2005, faculty participated in the HERI Survey. The survey was administered to full-time undergraduate faculty and normed against other Catholic 4-year Colleges. Several questions seem to give a sense of faculty employment satisfaction at USF. Table 4.1 shows the 2005 Faculty HERI Survey results.

Table 4.1 2005 Faculty HERI Survey results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Admin</th>
<th>Staff</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concern for the Individual</td>
<td>5.71</td>
<td>5.72</td>
<td>6.08</td>
<td>5.51</td>
<td>5.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Effectiveness</td>
<td>5.60</td>
<td>5.61</td>
<td>5.84</td>
<td>5.42</td>
<td>5.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Excellence</td>
<td>5.31</td>
<td>5.33</td>
<td>5.54</td>
<td>5.21</td>
<td>5.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Centeredness</td>
<td>5.69</td>
<td>5.76</td>
<td>5.82</td>
<td>5.81</td>
<td>5.66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All of the above questions indicate a higher level of satisfaction among faculty at USF that that of their colleagues at peer 4yr Catholic colleges.

Noel-Levitz Institutional Priorities Survey is another instrument which gives us some indication of employee satisfaction. In this survey, faculty, administrators and staff were asked to respond whether they felt the following were in place at USF:

Table 4.2 Institutional Priorities Survey

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<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results of this survey indicate that USF is very comparable to peer Catholic 4-year Colleges and that faculty and staff at USF generally agrees that USF is doing a good job at meeting priorities. Administrators however are more critical of the institution’s success. The University administers the Noel-Levitz survey every two to three years to monitor progress and student/employee satisfaction. Faculty and Administrators rated especially well in terms of recognizing Student Centeredness as a priority.

The University hosts a number of collegial and morale development activities during the year. Among them are 1% Day (where USF faculty, staff and administrators spend a half day beautifying the campus followed by a social party), the University Christmas Party, a Children’s Christmas Party, as well as employee welcome gatherings and twice yearly retirement parties.
Employee Health and Safety

Plans are underway to develop an Occupational Health program for all employees, with specific emphases on facilities and security employees. The Crisis Team reviews and updates the Emergency Preparedness Plan, and implements drills and practices for different scenarios including: pandemic flu, tornado, bomb threat, hostage situation, violence in the workplace and others.

Employee Well-being

Since 2001, USF has contracted with local fitness facilities which allow students and faculty to use the facility free of charge. The Human Resources Office arranged for the availability of an Employee Assistance Program effective March 2009. Prior to that, employees only had access to the Personal Counseling services provided by the university, and medical services through their health insurance coverage. Now, they have access to all three types of services. In addition, the Human Resources Office sends informational e-mails regarding health and wellness issues to all employees. Plans are being developed to distribute a wellness newsletter to employees as well.

Results (R)

4R1--In 2004, the University implemented a system of job grading (staff and administrative jobs only). Jobs were graded starting at 5 and ranging up to 23. After the initial grading, a committee of administrators and staff met to review the grading and to set guidelines for future grading as well as position re-grading. After grading inequities were reviewed, positions were indexed against CUPA data to identify any inequities. Only a handful of positions appeared under compensated. Salary adjustments were issues and now all salaries for the majority of USF's CUPA benchmarked (eligible for comparison to CUPA data) positions fall within 90 - 110% of the CUPA average. As part of an AQIP project, the system is being reevaluated and position benchmarks will be updated by Fall 2011.

As a result of an analysis of faculty compensation, a five year program for salary adjustments has been initiated by the University to make faculty salaries more competitive. The program is on track and in its third year.

Employee retention has also been strong as indicated by the recent tracking of turnover rates among faculty, staff and administrators below:

Table 4.3 Turnover Rate

May and June are the highest turnover periods with a 7-8% turnover, but overall, the University has a very stable employee base with average years of service 10 years.

4R2--Diversity among staff and administrators has increased due to a concentrated effort to attract and retain a more diverse employee base. The percentage of employees from diverse background has increased compared to five years earlier. Current breakout is as shown in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4 Diversity Among University Employees

The addition of a Human Resource Office in 2004 has improved our hiring processes and services to employees. Standardized hiring procedures have been developed. Benefits counseling is in place and systems have been improved for filing grievances or raising questions about conditions of employment.
Employee retention is stable. New benefits have been offered to employees at minimal costs to the University.

4R3--As a result of training, faculty use of technology in the classroom has increased. Students are learning through varied methods. Within the last year, operational and academic areas have undergone a review of programming including staffing, job assignment and processes. The result is a list of recommendations for some reductions in administrative and staff positions, the realignment of work responsibilities and some job sharing.

4R4--As stated in [4P11] and [4P12], faculty salaries are lower than peer private institutions and a five year plan is in progress to correct those inequities at the professor and associate professor levels. Salaries are competitive at the assistant and instructor levels. A similar study is underway currently to review administrator salaries. When this study was conducted five years ago, most of the administrative salaries were within 5% of peer institutions.

The 2005 HERI Study (see [4P13]) indicated a strong sense of value among faculty with USF faculty scoring significantly higher than their peers at other 4-year Catholic colleges.

Lastly, the Noel-Levitz Study (see [4P13]) also shows USF employees in general feel the University is doing a good job at meeting its mission and serving students.

4I1--Major issues the University has made significant progress on but seeks to improve further include tying performance to pay through the use of our PAR process for administrators and staff; updating the employee classification system and compensation benchmarks, increasing our employee training program; implementing a succession planning process; continuing to enhance benefit programs to exceeds employee needs; and reach our goal of bringing all employee wages in line with peer institutions. The University is placing more emphasis on cultural diversity and its impact on students, faculty, staff and the community.

Staff and Administrators

The performance appraisal for all employees has been a major step in creating a process and system for valuing people. Data on results has been gathered and analyzed so that further improvements of the tool and process can be made. Within the next few years, the University will be able to tie recognition and compensation (linking pay with performance) to the process. One of the University’s past AQIP projects dealt with developing a performance evaluation system for administrators and staff.

The University is evaluating the employee classification system and benchmarking jobs and salary against those within the Chicago suburbs, Illinois, and across the country based upon institutional type and size. Salaries outside of a plus/minus tolerance of 5 percent will be recommended for adjustment.

Faculty

Faculty salaries by academic rank have been benchmarked against peer institutions with a goal of equity. The faculty members continue to evaluate each year to modify their five year plan, which is on track and in its last year.
All Employees

Service to the community is not a clear directive to employees, and proposed long range planning strategies will encourage further community involvement. The University has some baseline numbers to which it can measure progress but more needs to be done.

The University is also working with employees to seek their input on health care, retirement and other benefits in an effort to meet the needs of employees while balancing the burden of providing such services equitably between the employee and the University.

412--The current 2006-11 Strategic Plan has created an opportunity to set a measurement/indicator, baseline measure, benchmark, and an aspirational target for each of the objectives in the plan. Annually, a report is sent to the trustees and USF community indicating the level to which targets have been achieved. Additionally, mid-year reports are shared with all audiences, provide focused updates on selected action plans and indicate the level of progress on the plans developed to achieve the overall objectives.

The Budget & Planning committee is another means for faculty, staff and administrators to review the priorities of the institution, focus funding to achieve goals as well as gain an understanding of how the University manages its resources. Representatives from all areas of the university are included and members are encouraged to share information presented at these meetings with their constituents.
AQIP Category Five: Leading and Communicating

Processes (P)

5P1--The institution’s mission was last finalized in 2002 when a more succinct mission statement was crafted by a committee of faculty, students, staff and administrators. To date, a new Strategic Plan with refreshed vision and mission statements is at the Board of Trustee level for approval. This new plan and statements will be shared with the University community, and will be finished in Fall 2011. Focus groups, and standing committee input, were sought at every level of the University in the development of values behind the new plan.

5P2--The Strategic Plan 2006-2011 provides the context for setting directions that aligns with mission, vision and values (Table 8.2). Action plans and strategies that contribute to the strategic goals will be developed within each level of the University. Departmental and unit plans will be communicated to the Strategic Planning Committee which will evaluate appropriateness to mission, vision and strategic goals and periodically report to the University community.

Executive leadership is involved in this through Presidential involvement in the Strategic Plan, through Vice Presidential leadership at the division and department levels and through mid-level leaders working to align department and unit plans with division and University-wide strategies and vision.

Presidential, Vice Presidential, Strategic Planning and Budget and Planning committee members have provided the leadership in requiring that quantitative or qualitative measures [see 8P5] be developed for each goal and objective. Individual development toward mission, vision and values is supported through the performance appraisal and the tenure process—which encourage service and leadership. Several employee recognition awards target mission and values issues. These awards are presented each year at a gathering of appreciation for all staff within the institution. These include awards for teaching excellence, service excellence and scholarship excellence. A recent addition is the Spirit of SS. Francis and Clare for an employee exemplifying the lives of USF’s patron saints.

5P3--Students needs and expectations are assessed annually through both the Student Services and the Institutional Effectiveness/Retention Committee. Needs of potential students are explored through environmental scans conducted periodically through the Center for Innovation, the Regional Education Academy for Leadership (REAL) and Solutions. As needs are identified, new courses, certificates and major programs are proposed and implemented.

5P4--Future opportunities are sought primarily by using the institution’s relationship with the external environment. Institutional leaders, from the President to program directors, seek input from advisory boards and other institutional groups coupled with internal stakeholder review assessments (e.g., surveys, focus groups, and taskforces). The President’s Advisory Board brings leaders from the business, religious and government sectors to advise the University on future directions. Disciplinary advisory boards keep program directors and faculty abreast of industry needs. Most importantly, Board of Trustees members actively participate in strategic and facilities planning.
These mechanisms all bring external voices into the University. University leaders also go out into the community. For example:

- The University continues to be involved in discussions with City of Joliet officials regarding redevelopment and academic integration within the surrounding community
- University development leaders, along with the President, have reached a nationwide audience through the Visions and Voices program
- USF Solutions offers consulting and problem-solving assistance to business, government and not-for-profits

All of these efforts inform the University as it sets direction, develops or revises curriculum and plans for the future.

**5P5**--Decision-making processes mirror leadership and communication structures. Decisions made within the formal governance structures are hierarchical; those made within the operational groups are more localized, especially when they involve routine planning and implementation.

Decisions made within the formal governance structures include:

- Curriculum development and approval
- Annual budget development (recommendations from departments, colleges, et cetera, are ultimately approved by the Board of Trustees)
- Personnel policies (benefits, compensation, hiring, termination)
- Admissions standards

Decisions made within the informal structures include:

- Special Event planning
- Oversight of implementing policies and processes
- Operational planning, especially when it crosses divisional lines (recruitment strategies, registration procedures)

The operational groups (a part of the informal decision-making structure) also may make recommendations to one or more of the formal bodies for final decision. Typical recommendations include tuition and fee pricing strategies, management and negotiation with vendors for outsourcing of essential functions, and parking policies.

**5P6**--The University began to develop Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in Spring 2006. In Fall 2008, a Dashboard and KPIs were introduced to the Board of Trustees. The KPIs selected are among the many kinds of data the University has collected for some time. The data were used to inform one or more areas, but were not widely disseminated. These indicators now inform the Board of Trustees, President and Vice Presidents as they evaluate performance at the institutional level and to inform decision-making at the college, departmental and division levels. See Table 8.8 for updates. This effort was initiated in 2005-2006 with the initial identification of KPI's. The University will continue to use them to track institutional progress at the institutional-wide level.
Because many of these indicators are benchmarked and trend-lines are either developed, or can be developed, institutional achievements can be evaluated. Retention data, instructional technology and student satisfaction, for example, are routinely compared to national data and to peer institutions. While overall retention rates are in the mid-point of the national and peer rates, the University’s rates of retention and graduation for African-American students is below those of both peers and similar institutions nationally (see [3R2]). This led to the creation of the Office of Diversity charged with meeting the needs of all minority students but with a particular emphasis on African-Americans. This effort was inaugurated in fall 2006. As a result, a national program (Brother-2-Brother) was instituted on campus leading to improved retention rates.

In addition to the Dashboard and KPIs, data is gathered and analyzed in other areas. Table 5.1 summarizes the data gathered, the use, the department responsible, and the frequency of review.

**Table 5.1 Data in Addition to KPIs Gathered to Inform Decision-Making**

| 5P7 | Recommendations and reports flow to higher levels in the formal governance structure, and decisions made at upper levels are communicated to the head of the appropriate governance body, and then from head to committee chairs. The flow continues at the committee-chair level. Communication between the President occurs with all major governance bodies. It is important to note that a fair amount of information is shared informally due to the small nature of USF, the emphasis on a family-type integration in social settings and (importantly) cross-population on committees by official and executive leaders.

In the operational group arena, information and communication flows mainly upward to Vice Presidents, deans, etc. Responses from administrators trickle back down to the groups.

Chairs of operational groups report that it is sometimes difficult to get information from administrative departments. Some now note, however, that the President and Vice Presidents (once perceived as not creating adequate opportunities to share information with the campus community) have made good strides in a positive communicative direction.

The President’s Cabinet was originally created to enhance information flow and is evolving to achieve its full potential. Information flow from this group to constituents was inconsistent and some matters brought for consideration to Cabinet were ambiguous. Over the last two years Cabinet has been restructured with new members added and others strategically removed. The new Cabinet structure functions using previously solicited agenda items along with brief reports from members "for the good of the order." If there are no significant agenda items to be discussed at the assigned monthly meeting then Cabinet does not convene.

A flow chart diagramming information flow is found in Figure 5.1
Figure 5.1: Information Flow

Legend

- High Information Flow
- Less Information Flow

Informal Information Apparatus
Developing and communicating a shared vision is a part of the processes of developing and implementing the Strategic Plan [See Category 8]. In addition, the University has several other communication mechanisms. These include:

- Face-to-face meetings between senior administrators and various constituents
- "Breakfast with the President" was held every semester to allow the President to meet informally with students, faculty, staff and administrators
- The President’s “State of the University” address which occurs as the University welcomes faculty back to campus in August
- Trustee membership on the Strategic Planning Coordinating Committee, and feedback sessions with every department to garner ideas for implementing the strategic plan.
- University-Wide Town Hall Meetings
- Performance Appraisal processes for administrator and staff which include discussion of mission.
- The tenure process that ensures alignment among faculty
- Monthly meetings of the leadership of the three formal governance bodies, the President, Provost and the Vice Presidents
- Cross pollination of members within many different divisional committees
- 1% Day
- Administrator and Staff Council
- Academic Assembly
- “We Are One Day” – University-wide beginning of academic year workshop

Leadership skills are encouraged, developed and strengthened through: 1) Participation in governance; 2) Professional development; 3) Tuition reimbursement and exchange; 4) Performance appraisals; 5) Terminal degree funding; 6) Mentoring; and 7) Leadership conference support.

The three formal governance bodies, Administrator and Staff Council, Academic Assembly (see [1P5]) and Student Government Association, provide a variety of roles in which leadership ability may be developed, from committee membership or chair-ship through holding an individual office. Administrators, staff and faculty are all strongly encouraged to attend meetings and participate in governance activities.

All employees are evaluated through formal processes and all employee evaluation systems include acknowledgement or evaluation of service and other leadership activities.

The University hires institutional leaders through open collaborative processes. Once a person has been hired, orientation processes include a formal discussion of mission, vision and values. This is true for Trustees as well. New members of the Board of Trustees have a two-day orientation into the culture of higher education, the strategic vision and objectives and issues facing the University.

Plans have been discussed to officially select current university staff that can be identified as good fits for future leadership succession. This includes a program for administrative terminal degree reimbursement.
Results (R)

5R1--Formally and quantitatively, several mechanisms are in use. In the past, the University has used 360-degree evaluations for senior administrators. The University also administered a Mission Integration Survey in 2005, and this provided indirect information on faculty and administrator perceptions of leadership and communication.

In gathering data for the Systems Portfolio, campus leadership within both the formal governance and operational groups were surveyed about where and from whom they received information, where they sent information, and what information was difficult to obtain. Information is also gathered informally and anecdotally through the informal information apparatus (Figure 5.1).

Information on leading and communicating is most regularly gathered through formal meetings.

These include those between the leadership of the formal governance organizations, the President and the Vice Presidents, periodic informal town hall sessions and other interactive sharing sessions.

The strategic plan development process [see 8P1 – 8P3] also provides information on leadership communication, which feeds into the development of strategic plan objectives. Since this strategic plan process is interactive, it yields information on leadership and areas of poor communication.

All of the aforementioned information-gathering mechanisms should continue as scheduled since they provide pivotal feedback on effectiveness of communication, satisfaction with leadership and leadership behaviors, understanding of and alignment with strategic institutional directions, and emerging issues and concerns.

5R2--Leadership roles and communication are most effective within the formal governance structures and least effective across structural boundaries. There has been a substantial growth in the use of operational groups to create cross-functional linkages among those who share responsibilities for events such like registration and student check-in but the development of communication paths between these groups is in its infancy.

This analysis indicates that the most salient area for improvement of processes and systems for the University at this time is communication. The analysis of information flow presented in Figure 5.1 indicates that communication of information and data flows primarily up the organizational chart with weak communication linkages down to colleges, departments, committees and operational groups, finally with unofficial communication swirling through the “informal information apparatus.”

As part of USF’s continued effort to create and continuously improve a communication plan that promotes understanding of mission, challenges, goals, growth, programs, diversity and services to both internal and external audiences, the institution’s web presence was redesigned in 2009. University Relations conducted extensive qualitative and quantitative research with students, graduates, staff, faculty, new residents, long-time residents, employers, the Board of Trustees and an outside firm to create an exciting new web identity. Figure 5.2 below details the symbolism behind the University’s new online communication tool.

Figure 5.2: New USF Web Presence
The University used the HERI Faculty Survey to assess faculty attitudes, experiences, concerns, job satisfaction. The last survey was in 2008. The HERI Faculty Survey is nationally normed so comparisons may be made with similar institutions.

Of particular relevance was the finding that a lower percentage of USF faculty than the national sample reported agreement the statement, “Faculty are typically at odds with the administration.” USF faculty and administrators have above average positive relations. Efforts to further improve existing communication structures can be found in Figure 5.3. USF leadership developed this newly revised communication system to continue its strong relationship with faculty and other constituents.

5R3--In order to compare efforts in leading in communicating, USF needs to collect data internally and then compare it to external data. At this time, internal assessments have not been completed. There is a need to develop a survey for this purpose and find a tool to use that allows comparisons externally. This area is a known weakness.

Figure 5.3: USF Communication System

---Meeting Minutes---
Board of Trustees
Academic Assembly Meeting Minutes
Administrator and Staff Council
Cabinet
Assorted Committee

---Campus Wide Traditional Communications---
Newsletters (print & electronic)
Email
Town Hall/Brown Bag Meetings
Newspaper
USF TV and Radio (WCSF)
Brochures

---Personal Communications---
Performance Appraisals
Informal Reviews
Staff Meetings
USF Visions and Voices
Informal Information Apparatus
1% Day
"We Are One" Day

---Technological Communications---
Email
Robot Emergency Calling/Texting
Message Boards
USF web site
Emergency Broadcast System (PA)
Electronic Signage
USF ComSys

Improvements (I)

5I1--Analyzing formal and informal data on communication flow, the process for working on improvement begins with continual discussions and meetings between the Provost, Vice Presidents and President and are widened to include the leadership of Academic Assembly, Administrator and Staff Council and the Student Government Association. Throughout these interactions, ideas are generated and the following needs have been identified as essential to improving the overall leadership and communication process:
• Continuation of regular meetings with the leadership of the three governance organizations with the President and Vice Presidents to share information and concerns; meeting minutes for these interchanges are to be made available to all concerned parties

• Continuation of regularly scheduled Town Hall and Brown Bag meetings focusing on brief communications from leaders; 15 minutes of question time will be included at these meetings

• Increase “management by walking around” so executive leaders are more visible and weigh more creditably on line-level decisions requiring their input

• Develop open communication sessions, e.g., Breakfast with the President, Administrator and Staff Council meeting lunches, and open Academic Assembly meetings where video transcripts can be viewed by all interested parties

• Increase regular communication regarding implementation of the 1) USF Strategic Plan, 2) Campus Master Plan and 3) Budget and Planning Committee

The “nested” departmental-level planning that is a part of the Strategic Plan process (see [8P3]) aids communication in that it gives members of the University community an opportunity to see where their particular role fits into the overall plan.

The effect of these steps, and others to be determined over the upcoming year, will be evaluated using informal feedback from students, faculty, staff and administrators as well as through discussions with campus leaders. Formal survey use will also be a major component of facilitating a more complete feedback loop among all constituents. The University is investigating if there is a survey instrument that would annually evaluate communication effectiveness of the campus.

In order to enhance the ability to provide immediate, critical information to the entire university community, two new systems have been added to USF’s campus technology network. The University has installed a new PA system that operates along with the currently installed telephone system allowing users to broadcast important safety and security information in case of emergencies or bad weather. With this system, each university building is now capable of broadcasting different messages during incidents of need. USF also has a new system that can send voice, text and/or email messages to communicate with everyone when a necessary situation dictates. This flexible system allows the University to send messages to each user’s preferred form of communication.

Starting Fall 2009, the enhanced Portal became a versatile, targeted, and immediate form of communication for the USF community by providing each student, faculty, administrator, and staff with individualized access to information pertinent to their position. Within the Portal, students can perform degree audits online, and pay tuition based off bill inquiries; employees can process payroll; faculty can access student information via their course roster, and also issue mid-term progress reports for their students sent automatically to advisors.

5I2--Targets for leading and communicating are driven by the University’s mission, values and strategic plan. This direction is used by the governance infrastructure, Budget and Planning Committee, AQIP teams, and the Cabinet to improve leadership and communication. Targets are set by the Vice Presidents, communicated institutionally, and monitored by the Vice Presidents, President, and Board of Trustees.
AQIP Category Six: Supporting Institutional Operations

Processes (P)

6P1--Both formal and informal means are used to identify the needs of students and other support services. Often, anecdotal feedback is collected, reactively or informally by departments regarding day-to-day operations. Formal assessments are also used, usually in the form of a department survey (i.e. alumni survey), to identify process needs and to evaluate services. The Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI), National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), and the EBI Benchmarking survey (for residential living) are regular university-wide level assessments used to identify process needs. Table 6.1 summarizes informal and formal ways in which needs are identified as they relate to each support area reported by individual service areas.

Table 6.1 Informal and Formal Methods for Identifying Process Needs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support Area/ Departments</th>
<th>Methods for Identifying Process Needs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Informal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Student Enrollment</td>
<td>Consultation/ interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate/ Graduate/ Degree Completion Admissions, Enrollment Support Services, Marketing, Academic Advising and Articulation, Student Development</td>
<td>Student Government Assoc.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning Support</td>
<td>Faculty consultation, self-identification, suggestion box, focus groups, service on committees, observation; Academic Assembly and Governance Committees; Board of Trustee Committees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Colleges, Academic Resource Center, Academic and Information Support Services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Services</td>
<td>Suggestion box, focus groups, individual consultation, advisory boards, attendance, literature review Parents Organization,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission Integration</td>
<td>Roundtables discussions, individual consultation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission Integration, University Ministry</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Support</td>
<td>Ongoing solicitation of feedback, shift logs Administrator and Staff Council</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6P2--Administrative support service needs are identified in formal and informal ways. Anecdotal feedback is collected, reactively or informally by departments regarding day-to-day operations from colleagues. In addition, administrators and staff work together in respective departments to review goals and statistical reports regularly in order to identify process needs in their area. Faculty, staff and administrators share membership on key administrative support service-related work groups such as the Budget & Planning Committee, Campus Master Plan Committee, or Board of Trustees subcommittees. Through their respective college deans and/or department chairs, faculty may also give input about administrative support services.

Another needs assessment occurs when new technology and redesign of business processes are implemented. The University has begun a systematic implementation of a new electronic document management/imagining system. The original implementation occurred in the student admission process with a goal of reducing paper and improving the time to application acceptance. The new system allows students to view the progress of their admission in to the University since the process has been integrated into the University's portal system. During initial system process reviews the need to include academic advising became a new need. Now, advisors and faculty can electronically access a student's academic and associated information.

A recent example of a support service process is a survey of faculty, staff and administration conducted by Information Technology asking for suggestions on how to make the portal website more efficient and user-friendly. As a result, a new portal was launched in the summer of 2009 and 2010.

6P3--In response to the recent campus shootings the University has created a Crisis Response Team, which wrote a crisis manual, ongoing education of stakeholders about the procedures, and managing crises if they occur. Finally, the Director of Security communicates safety plans by attending meetings held by individual departments and divisions.

Protocols are based on Illinois State Law and the Will County Emergency Preparedness Task Force. In addition, all four institutions of higher education within Will County have shared their respective procedures with each other to assist with establishing consistent processes.

A formal voice mail and text messaging system has been implemented for weather emergencies and other crises. Speaker systems have been placed throughout campus allowing everyone on campus to hear announcements in the event of an emergency.

Student Affairs has implemented a Behavior Intervention Team which conducts threat assessments for students who may be a danger to themselves or others. The protocol is designed to match best practices in threat assessment according to the Association for Student Conduct Administration. Communication for the new process will be presented at a university workshop as well as e-mail notification.

6P4--To improve the identification of stakeholder needs and how these needs impact multiple areas across the University there has expanded the breadth of the Executive Council, which consists of the President, Vice Presidents, Chief Information Officer, Academic Deans, the Dean of Student Life, and the Executive Director of University Relations. The Executive Council meets weekly to discuss major issues facing the University. During its annual retreat the Executive Committee approves all strategic action initiatives that the University will implement in the coming academic year.
The implementation of strategic plan is the responsibility of the Executive Council and specifically the vice presidents. The majority of annual strategic action initiatives are integrated with the goals and objectives of the appropriate divisions and departments. Day-to-day management involves managers such as deans, executive directors, directors, counselors and support staff personnel running the various offices with regular staff meetings held by the divisional vice presidents. In addition, committees like Quality Student Life and Learning, Diversity Council, Assessment Council, Check-In, New Student Registration, Catholic & Franciscan Charism (see [2P1]) Council and New Student Orientation teams address support service issues.

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness established a 2006-2011 Strategic Plan Milestone Chart which is now complete. This process became an AQIP Action Project—Implementation of the Strategic Plan.

6P5--Documentation of processes occurs through a variety of methods. For example, two divisions (Academic Affairs and University Advancement) publish regular newsletters documenting events and highlights within their programs.

The Information Technology area is in the process of improving access to university information, committee reports, academic assessment plans, and the results of various surveys (NSSE, SSI, and the other formal assessment tools) are available for faculty to share current academic processes. The IT department is migrating university information from limited access storage to a web based, searchable information dissemination system.

Another major initiative is the creation of a similar portal based information delivery system for the Board of Trustees. The project goal, once implemented, will allow the Trustees to easily access current Board minutes and other material through the portal giving the Trustees the ability to search past Board material and actions whenever there is a need for such information.

Results (R)

6R1--A variety of measures are used to monitor student support service processes. Measures vary from data collection solely by individual service areas to university-wide assessments. The major methods for identifying process needs (see Table 6.1) are the Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) and the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). These assessments along with other formal and informal measures are listed in Table 6.1.

Qualitative measures are also performed within specific departments. For example, the Office of Personal Counseling assesses growth and improvement of each client. During the intake, both the client and the counselor rate the client’s level of anxiety about a issue in which the person is experiencing during the appointment. The Counseling Center can then report numbers on how many clients felt their level of anxiety went up or down.

Also, exit surveys and the Student Satisfaction Survey are administered to off-campus students to gather data in order to maintain consistent high standards of academic quality and service to students.

6R2--Results from data collected through university wide assessments about student support processes are reported throughout the University and provide feedback for appropriate support areas. The needs identified are listed in Table 6.1.
An example of an identified process need is financial aid processing. In the 2003 Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI), financial aid assistance was rated significantly low despite its high importance to students. After analyzing the 2003 results and conducting student focus group meetings, the Financial Aid Services area re-evaluated and revised freshmen and transfer scholarship programs to stay at competitive levels; improved procedures to decrease application turnaround time and scholarship renewal; removed the automated phone line; increased counselor availability and personal contact with students; and expanded initiatives to promote timely student completion of the FAFSA form. There was significant improvement noted in spring 2005 and spring 2008 as indicated by significant increases in student satisfaction according to the Noel-Levitz SSI (Table 6.2A). Further, Financial Aid Services received feedback through the check-in process to implement a registration hold to encourage returning students to process their financial aid earlier in the calendar year.

Other key processes such as residence hall housing conditions and parking also had received significantly low ratings in the SSI for 2003 and 2005. The University’s largest residence hall was renovated in summer 2005 after being identified as a need. An increase in continuing resident student retention in fall 2006 (7% increase from fall 2005) provided a positive indicator that students will have a higher satisfaction rating for housing conditions.

In both 2003 and 2005 SSI surveys, students were not satisfied with the Universities commitment to commuters. Because commuters are about 60% of the undergraduate student body, these low ratings were taken very seriously (Table 6.2 C). In spring 2006, the University began to implement improvements in activities for commuters through a commuter assistant program. The goal of the program was to explore ways to address the needs of commuter students.

Table 6.2 Selected Satisfaction Questions from Noel Levitz SSI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial aid awards are announced to students in time to be helpful in college planning.</td>
<td>USF 4.34^</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td>5.04*^</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nat’l</td>
<td>4.65</td>
<td>4.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate financial aid is available for most students.</td>
<td>USF 4.38*</td>
<td>4.62</td>
<td>4.85*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nat’l</td>
<td>4.64</td>
<td>4.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is an adequate selection of food available in the cafeteria.</td>
<td>USF 3.82</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>3.66^</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nat’l</td>
<td>3.99</td>
<td>4.06</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>Institution's commitment to Commuters</td>
<td>USF 4.59*</td>
<td>4.57*</td>
<td>4.91*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nat’l</td>
<td>4.87</td>
<td>4.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My academic advisor is approachable.</td>
<td>USF 5.57</td>
<td>5.67</td>
<td>5.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nat’l</td>
<td>5.41</td>
<td>5.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My academic advisor is concerned about my success as an individual.</td>
<td>USF 5.46*</td>
<td>5.65*</td>
<td>5.57*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nat’l</td>
<td>5.16</td>
<td>5.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My academic advisor helps me set goals to work toward.</td>
<td>USF 4.96*</td>
<td>5.60*</td>
<td>5.13*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nat’l</td>
<td>4.70</td>
<td>5.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My academic advisor is knowledgeable about requirements in my major.</td>
<td>USF 5.74*</td>
<td>5.14*</td>
<td>5.91*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nat’l</td>
<td>5.38</td>
<td>4.70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Indicates significant difference from USF mean 2005; \^ Indicates significant difference from year’s National mean.

Note: Questions are rated on a seven-point scale from “1” being not satisfied at all to “7” being very satisfied, 4 indicates neutral.
As part of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), the Catholic Universities Consortium asked participants additional questions distinct to Catholic institutions. In 2004, our student's understanding of our mission was lower than the national average and significantly lower for seniors. However, because of interventions, both freshmen and seniors at USF claimed they had a better understanding of our mission and that these scores were higher than the national average. The lower scores for seniors compared to freshmen is attributed to a high proportion of transfers among the seniors.

Table 6.3 Knowledge of University’s Mission from NSSE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The mission of this institution is widely understood by students.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FR</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USF</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>3.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nat’l</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>3.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SR</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USF</td>
<td>3.23^</td>
<td>3.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nat’l</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>3.37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tutoring and supplemental instruction processes are utilized by students as learning supports. Users of the specific learning supports uniformly have an average course grade of 2.0 or higher in the subject area or SI course. Among this group, students tutored in math and writing earn a higher average course grade than non-users. In general, tutored students earn fewer Ds, Fs and Ws than non-tutored students. SI users earn higher course grades than non-users. 529 individuals utilized tutoring services during the 2005-06 academic year as compared to 422 during the 2003-04 academic year.

The College of Education made adaptations to the modular delivery format during its summer term based on information from on and off campus exit surveys. The results of the SSI administered to off campus students in February 2005 show that our off campus students, both graduate and undergraduate, were significantly higher in overall satisfaction (6.26) than the national average (5.96).

As a result of a site visit by a HLC reviewer in March 2007, the reviewer concluded that “…overall, the pattern of this institution’s operations at its extended sites appears to be adequate, and no further review or monitoring by the Higher Learning Commission is necessary”.. The reviewer went on to remark, “The University of Saint Francis has successfully established professional, gracious and individualized services and programs for its off-site students”.

**6R3**—The Campus Master Plan development process is an example of one of the University's administrative support processes to address the need to improve and expand its facilities. The goal to make the University a visible anchor of Joliet’s Near West side. It required the City of Joliet to commit and invest in its infrastructure around the University and adjacent neighborhoods (approximately $1.2 million). There was extensive input from within the University, external constituencies, neighborhood, sponsoring congregation and city officials. After 15 community meetings, 28 planning meetings and three board meetings, the University finalized its Campus Master Plan from three campus master plan scenarios presented to constituencies. During Phase I, the University completed the purchase of and renovation of the historic Motherhouse building and the renovation of the Marian Residence Hall. In addition, the University also expanded parking and initiated campus beautification projects such as 1% day and major landscaping of its quadrangle area.

In addition, the University’s website continues to provide information to internal stakeholders through our secure portal and while the external website primarily serves the external community and marketing to
prospective students. The MyUSF portal is a secure place where stakeholders are provided university services and student support functions based on person personal identity and role within the University. A major advantage of this approach is the ability to deliver information and services to an individual and a anytime any where basis.

6R4--The University is increasingly more data driven in planning service improvement. The University’s support areas use data from formal assessment tools (statistical reports, survey data, or normed assessments) to guide them in identifying key needs such as satisfaction with student life and activities, adequate living conditions, financial assistance, parking planning, commuter student services or learning support services. Information may lead to quick improvements within departments or they may also lead to projects that require collaboration across divisions.

For example, the student satisfaction and EBI Residence Life surveys identified food service as an area of large dissatisfaction. As a direct result, meal plans were changed to reflect the grab and go. needs of the students, and ability to use meal swipes for payment were expanded to include a second location. A recent AQIP Action Project was the enhancement of the New Student Orientation Program. Student satisfaction with the program increased from 2007 to 2008. After identifying a need for better communication of university policies to students, new programs in alcohol education and sexual assault awareness are scheduled for Fall 2009.

The University uses information when appropriate to determine how to effectively and efficiently delivery services through technology. The MyUSF portal has been redesigned and new student support services added as a result of feedback from users through surveys, focus meeting, voluntary redesign groups and the review of portal activity logs. One example of this collaboration is the new academic advising system that incorporates technology and personalized assistance to students regardless of where or how they are attending USF. Students and advisors are now able to view progress to graduation, determine the impact of changing a major and to generate a real time Academic Degree Plan, though the portal whenever the student desires this information.

6R5--The University is able to compare its results from formal assessments such as the Student Satisfaction Inventory to nationally normed data. We are able to identify strengths, weaknesses and opportunities for improvement in student support services. We are also able to compare ourselves to like schools. For example, the National Survey of Student Engagement data allowed us to compare our results to those of other Catholic Universities. We have identified a list of aspiring schools in which to compare key results in order to improve our level of support services.

The Office of Residence Life conducted the EBI Resident Assessment survey in April 2009. Results were published in June 2009, and the University chose to compare itself to six like institutions who had also completed the survey: Aurora University, College of St. Catherine, William Woods University, Rockhurst University, DeSales University, and Hamline University. Of the 19 topical areas (see list below), USF scored below the Select 6 institutions in 17 areas of student satisfaction. Only Learning Outcomes: Personal Growth was significantly higher and Learning Outcomes: Diverse Interactions showed no difference. The University recognizes the need to improve the residence life department, and hired a Director to change the culture and create a strong sense of community within the residence halls.
The Academic Information Support Services (AISS) Division is a good example of how the University has begun to compare internal processes with external organizations. Each year the AISS division completes the Educuase Core Data Service which allows a comparison of university's IT operations and functions with other colleges including our aspirational institutions and Illinois small private schools. The AISS Division has received the Model of Efficiency Award twice in the last year and half from University Business Magazine for the support and services provided through our portal and for the implementation of its new document management/imagining system.

**Improvements (I)**

**6I1** Improvement priorities for the student support services have included:

- Increase student services for students of diversity: Office of Diversity, Brother to Brother, Authentic Manhood (number of students affected)
- Enhance and integrate career development opportunities for students added NACE Link for alumni and student job listings as well as job postings; guest speakers added also; Moved department into the Academic Advising and Career Services so students can go to the same place for more services
- Added a VISTA volunteer to enhance the service learning program for students and faculty
- In the Motherhouse the following areas were added: new residence hall, study hall, Bistro (dining), Computer Center and Student Service Wing
- Moving the Visual Arts Department to the Artist District in downtown Joliet this fall
- Change the conduct process to include the creation of a conduct board for higher level cases in accordance with best practices in conduct administration
- Release of a new portal based student and advisor degree advising applet that allows for a anytime any where access to
  - a student’s academic record,
  - allows for a “what if” process if a student is exploring a change in major
  - ability to generate a “Academic Degree Plan” that indicates what must be complete in order to graduate.

Improvement priorities for the administrative support services include:

- Upgrade university facilities and infrastructure
- Acquire and allocate additional resources and increase philanthropic giving: Capital Campaign has been launched.
- Developing fair and competitive employee compensation packages
- Implementing a document imaging/management system that will improve university business processes, reduce operational costs through improved workflow, and reduction of costs through a reduction in paper consumption.

The University communicates results and improvement priorities through divisional meetings, university wide kickoff gatherings, feedback sessions, email reports and literature. Communication to other stakeholders utilizes periodic reports, special campus meetings or events, press releases, the University website and the University magazine.

**6I2** The Board of Trustees has approved information reporting process to assure they are making sound decisions. Based upon approved data elements the administration provides the Board with a dashboard of...
elements and KPI's (see [7P2]) for each element. In addition, a dashboard and KPI's were developed for most committees of the Board.

In conjunction with the development of a new strategic plan (2011-2016) the Board of Trustees created a Strategic subcommittee to provide direction, oversight and monitoring of the University implementation strategic plan and goals.

The Board of Trustees also recently created a new Facility Management subcommittee to provide direction in the maintaining the university's current physical assets and properties.
AQIP Category Seven: Measuring Effectiveness

Processes (P)

7P1--Selection, management and distribution of data and performance information is accomplished via the following mechanisms:

Instructional

- The University assessment process for instructional programs was developed using best practices by the Assessment Council, composed of representatives from each college, in consultation with the University Curriculum Committee, the college deans, the vice president for academic affairs, and the president. Each college is responsible for monitoring the assessment process at the college and department level. Assessment of instructional outcomes is the responsibility of each college and department. Colleges present assessment results annually to the Assessment Council, who submits a university-wide assessment report to the Provost and President at the end of the year (see AQIP Category 1—Helping Students Learn). Under the direction of the University Curriculum Committee and the Assessment Council, departments also undergo a systematic Program Review every five years.

- The assessment process of instructional services offered by the University’s Academic Resource Center was developed by the Center. The assessment process includes using both internal and external measures of the mission and goals of the department, focusing on supporting student academic success and keeping with best practices in the field. Data and information are collected and analyzed annually, and are shared with the divisional vice president and the department’s advisory council in order to evaluate and increase the program’s effectiveness.

- In 2008, an academic program review committee representing all academic colleges developed a standardized template to collect data and performance information on all instructional programs using benchmarking and input from faculty and trustees. Each academic program was requested to complete the review which includes questions related to how the program fulfills the University’s mission, its importance and contribution to the University, and assessment of the demand and outcomes of the program.

Non-instructional

- The University’s non-instructional data and performance information is divided into five general functional areas: Finance, Financial Aid, Human Resource, Development, and Non-Instructional Student (Enrollment and Retention). Selection of data and performance information from these areas for use in supporting non-instructional programs is managed by leadership in each of the functional areas in response to needs of their internal and external constituents and the advancement of the strategic plan objectives relating to their area.

- The University manages non-instructional data through the use of the Sungard Banner administrative computing system, which provides a centralized, integrated, relational database system. The University’s Administrative Information Services department, along with input and guidance of functional areas of the institution, manage the information in this system.
In 2008, an institutional Program Review Committee developed a standardized template based on benchmarking and input from an internal taskforce in order to collect data and performance information on all non-instructional departments. Each non-instructional department was requested to complete the review which includes questions related to how they fulfill the University’s mission, their importance to the University, how they demonstrate cost effectiveness, how they measure performance, and ideas they have to improve their departmental operation (i.e., developed standardized data for each program to use in their analysis).

The University has several tools to help with managing and distributing both instructional and non-instructional, data including:

- The administrative computing system (Sungard Banner).
- A portal for access to student records, financial (budget & purchasing, development), academic (degree progress report, course evaluations, schedules, academic standing) and logistic (room availability) information.
- Electronic collaboration tools including Adobe Connect to facilitate virtual meetings, TeamViewer and our Groupwise E-Mail system.
- Custom reports developed in various toolsets (see [7P3]) designed to aggregate data for analysis.

7P2--Data and performance information to support planning and improvement levels is typically managed at two major levels: an overall organizational level, and at the departmental level. The organizational level is addressed in this section, while [7P3] describes details of the data and performance information managed at the departmental level. Overall, the data flows freely between departments, and organizational level data is filtered into the appropriate departments.

**Organizational Level**

- A strategic plan is created with broad input from the University community and is derived primarily from the mission, vision and values of the University.
- The AQIP Quality Initiatives and the Strategic Plan are connected to help develop direction, objectives, and planning towards prioritizing, funding, and implementing projects to achieve the vision of the University priorities, which go to the budget and planning committee to consider funding priorities.
- The University Board of Trustees, President, and Vice Presidents agreed on specific measurements to reflect progress on the strategic plan mention 5 areas which became the Board of Trustees dashboard. Data is collected, updated, and evaluated quarterly on these measurements. The Board of Trustees also has sub-committees which each have their own more detailed dashboards that reflect more specific and detailed information and progress on key performance indicators.
- The action items of the strategic plan are reviewed quarterly by the Vice Presidents to ensure that strategic initiatives are accomplished.
At a departmental level there are both internal and external demands that drive the data and performance information collected and managed.

- Internally, factors from the organizational level feed into departmental operation mandates such as elements of the strategic plan, AQIP Action Projects, and university mission, vision and values.

- Additionally, at the academic level individual program assessment leads into a University wide assessment council which asks for a broad subset of that data to measure program outcomes, successes, and opportunities for improvement. An assessment plan report is updated yearly to measure program results.

- The University community is involved through several committees which help determine the needs of individual departments. These committees are formed on an as needed basis to facilitate departmental needs and are used to request, gather, and analyze information from stakeholders and evaluate the current processes and determine what may be needed both short-term and long-term.

- Externally, the accreditation process for each College, School, or department in general determines what data to collect and analyze. Many departments, such as in the School of Business, also utilize external Advisory Board members in their assessment processes.

- Furthermore IPEDS mandates the collection of certain data, and discussions with industry contacts are used to reinforce or refute course objectives and determine any future needs for new courses or programs.

- The main system for collecting and storing data and performance information is the administrative computing system (Sungard Banner). Some of the tools used in conjunction to this system to extract, analyze and report data are Singularity, an internal-built Portal, Microsoft Excel/Access/MapPoint, and Crystal Reports. For example, our Information Retrieval System (IRS) uses excel to extract data from the administrative computing system to measure admission, enrollment and student life data.

Given the broad nature of data and information the University collects, there are several areas, committees and processes in place to facilitate the analysis and sharing of this data. The University currently has an active Action Project—Building an Electronic Assessment Module.

- A dedicated Office of Institutional Effectiveness department which analyzes and publishes student centric data has been established since fall 2008. This department is a master repository of data which allows the department to look internally at historical data and trends, and compare data to our external benchmarks over time. Furthermore, this department has created a comprehensive dashboard which is reflective of strategic plan elements and performance. It is used to look at various benchmarks and performance information across the University across five major elements: quality, Catholic Franciscan values, student centered environment, growth and shape of the student body, strategic goals, and our fiscal condition.

- Institutional wide academic and administrative program review committee was commissioned to review, summarize, and share the benchmarks set and performance information for all of our
administrative and academic units. This information was shared by the Vice Presidents who developed recommendations based upon the reports. These recommendations were shared with the President and the Board of Trustees for their approval and/or recommendations.

- Financial data is analyzed by the VP of Finance to see historical and current income and expense trends, as well as through standard financial reports (P&L and balance sheet) which are further reviewed in detail every year by an external auditing firm.

- Information is also broadly shared through newsletters published by the VP’s of the individual divisions. For example:
  - Provost/VPAA distributes a quarterly report communicating and celebrating activities in academic and student life
  - VP of Finance gives reports on the overall financial health of the institution
  - VP of Advancement sends out bi-monthly university wide bulletin related to the performance of our entire development and alumni division

7P5 --The Office of Institutional Effectiveness and the Business Affairs Department are the two main areas within the University for data analysis. The Information and Administrative Service (IAS) department works closely with these two data collection areas to provide a centralized point of data storage and the mechanisms needed for reporting the information to the appropriate users in a usable format.

Individual units and colleges work with Institutional Effectiveness, Business Affairs Department and IAS to develop their specific informational needs. Again instead of having each unit develop their own data storage processes, whenever possible the data is integrated into the University’s main data systems. An example of this is the migration of student health records that were stored in an Access database within the Student Health Services area to a process of storing all the information within the Banner database. This allows the students shot and immunization records to be accessed by appropriate staff in the College of Nursing to more effectively monitor the required immunization history of our student nurses.

The University is working with faculty in academic majors and other groups such as Deans and Administrators and the Board of Trustees to determine useful comparative groups. By looking at what categories of information is needed, Institutional Effectiveness can develop groups which are similar in nature for benchmarking purposes whether it be based on location, institution size, religious affiliation, etc. For this type of benchmarking, Institutional Effectiveness often uses IPEDS data, along with other sources.

For nationally-normed assessments, both departments and the institution may only have a limited aggregated comparison group in which to benchmark data with, such as “private liberal arts” or “Catholic institutions”. In these cases, Institutional Effectiveness will choose the most appropriate group.

7P6--Traditional means of ensuring that departmental analysis of information and their alignment with the institution’s mission and goals has been the academic department program assessment that is required every five years. Each college aligns their mission and goals to the Universities overall mission and goals. The departments in each college align their mission and goals to the college’s mission and goals. In this way, the department’s goals are aligned with the University’s goals. The department program review is currently reviewed by the college curriculum committee and the dean. Once approved at this level, it is
reviewed by the University Curriculum Committee and finally the Provost/Vice President Academic Affairs.

Additionally other processes are in place which help align departmental analysis of information to our university’s mission and goals including:

- Analysis of data is discussed at individual college meetings at the beginning and end of the school year; the discussions ensure that the goals of the college align with the University, and that our course objectives support the college objectives.

- Individual academic programs are required to conduct yearly assessments and make yearly reports that are available to all employees on our computer network.

- Vice Presidents are responsible for each of their own areas. They interpret and share the data and how it relates to organizational goals with the President, Board of Trustees, and where applicable the University community.

- Non-academic departments build from goals annually set by division VP

- A portion of each staff and administrators yearly performance review is related to aligning employee goals with the organizational mission and goals.

7P7--Within the Academic and Information Support Services (AISS) division, there are primarily three departments that manage the operation of the University’s information systems:

Network Support Services (NSS) is responsible for the operation and support of the University data and telecommunication networks. Data security is maintained by a multilevel rights configuration on servers and services and all users are provided a user ID and password for access to network services. All intranet and internet data traffic is logged and monitored for malicious services or usage. NSS maintains a firewall that performs deep packet inspection, intrusion detection and application based control to provide secure access to and from the internet. Finally, NSS is responsible for the hardware and software support for the desktop computing environment of the institution.

The Center for Instructional Delivery (CID) is responsible for the operational aspects of Blackboard, the University’s course management system. Student support and help desk is handled through a 24/7 web-based problem report form as well as a toll free telephone number during the normal operational hours of CID. CID also provides support and training for online faculty. This is accomplished through a combination of personal contact and collaboration software that gives the University the ability to use video conferencing and a remote desktop control system to enhance learning and support.

The Information and Administrative Services Department (IAS) is responsible for the operational aspects of the University’s administrative computing system (Sungard Banner), the web-based portal system, and the underlying systems and databases systems require. Data integrity within the administrative systems is decentralized to the various functional areas that work through both IAS and Institutional Effectiveness. Some departmental managers are provided with “data exception reports” that run weekly through automated processes and notify these departments of data that can be determined as inconsistent, incomplete, or incorrect. Other departmental managers use data mining techniques in applying their own quality assurance processes to look for trends and anomalies in data to ensure correctness.
Results (R)

7R1--The AISS division measures its performance regularly by comparing longitudinal data to both internal and external benchmarks. Externally this is accomplished by using the comparative ratio analysis from the Educause Core Data Survey (CDS) to benchmark USF to other institutions. Internal measures via Key Performance indicators include basic technology usage measures (e.g., portal, average usage stats and email data), and online course measures. Portal activity reports are also used to measure the effectiveness of new changes to the services and support provided through the portal. Finally, a technology user’s survey is administered and analyzed annually, which measures overall user satisfaction with the technology provided at USF and helps provide feedback on issues regarding technology at the USF.

For measuring student centric data, student’s needs and satisfaction, and program outcomes, USF collects and analyzes the following data regularly. For example:

- The Noel Levitz and NSSE surveys are issued every other year to measure and benchmark overall student satisfaction and identify opportunities for improvement within the University.
- Academic programs are assessed every year to ensure they are meeting their objectives.
- Graduates are surveyed 6 months after graduation to determine job placement of USF students, and again 1 year after graduation to indirectly measure departmental program outcomes, and in the future 5 years after graduation to measure general education outcomes.

Furthermore, USF’s Office of Institutional Effectiveness produces detailed dashboards to measure and reflect the overall progress of the University towards strategic plan objectives. These dashboards aggregate the data collected across all of the University information and knowledge management systems and which is then used by the University’s Board of Trustees and upper level administration for strategic decision making. Some items reflected on the dashboards are data collected from Noel Levitz, NSSE, program assessment, financial aid data, financial data and health, employee demographics, employee to student ratios, and alumni, graduation, and job placement data.

7R2--Yearly academic assessment plans and reports as well as five-year program reviews require academic units to explain the connection among missions, values and goals. Other evidence is derived from the results of various surveys targeted towards specific groups. These groups were chosen to measure the effectiveness or impact of a procedural change to that targeted group. For example, with regards to student satisfaction we administer a Noel Levitz survey from which the results are analyzed, and processes are adjusted to address findings. The results are then re-evaluated from subsequent surveys to verify improvement. Asking a consistent set of questions allows the University to review the plans and various actions taken over a two year period to ensure we are addressing the needs of our stakeholders and accomplishing our mission and goals. Furthermore, the NSSE survey measures are directly tied to our mission of academics and student engagement in learning. The NSSE results are further examined by the retention group and Institutional Effectiveness to target unsatisfactory results and develop special plans to rectify areas of concern.

Non-academic departments and divisions review progress towards annual goals, and strategic initiatives regularly. Additionally, the dashboards, as described in 7P4, are used specifically to monitor our progress in accomplishing our university mission and goals. As stated previously, these dashboards are updated
and reviewed quarterly by upper level management, and adjustments to university processes are made on an as needed basis.

**7R3**—Since the NSSE and Noel Levitz surveys are nationally benchmarked we are able to compare the results to other similar institutions. Some of the primary sources used to obtain external data in order to benchmark ourselves to other organizations both in and outside of higher education are:

- Retention results are compared to data from a private group called the Consortium for Student Retention Data Exchange (CSRDE).
- Integrated post-secondary education data system (IPEDS) data.
- Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) data.
- Moody’s for financial data.

Data from many external sources is tabulated, analyzed, and used to benchmark USF depending on the need.

**Improvements (I)**

**7I1**—USF has made many improvements over the last few years in its ability to collect, analyze, distribute, and use various data and information to drive performance improvement. Some of the most noteworthy improvements are:

- Executive level dashboards were implemented in 2008 and are being adjusted on an on-going basis to better reflect data aggregation to measure overall effectiveness and university wide improvements. Dashboard effectiveness will be re-evaluated in the latter half of 2009 by the Board of Trustees and Vice Presidents to ensure the correct items are being measured and any changes will be made as necessary.
- An assessment council has been organized which has devised simple assessments for general education. The council has also consistently collected and evaluated departmental assessment rubrics. The actual organization structure of the assessment council is being evaluated to maximize effectiveness and to become a part of the official academic governance system.
- A General Education Task Force has been developed reporting to the Curriculum Committee to work on revision of the general education curriculum.
- The retention committee has made significant improvements in processes across the University by creating an organized structure of action teams to solve performance issues identified through our data analysis.
- A Center for Innovation has been created within the University which is designed to be an incubator to fast-track new programs that data analysis shows as potential opportunities for our institution.
- A Center for Teaching and Excellence has been established where faculty can receive consultation and guidance on a variety of instructional areas such as service learning, writing across the curriculum, assessment, tenure, innovative teaching methods, and sharing teaching ideas with others.
The Information Technology department has deployed a robust, web-based portal system to help aggregate and deliver university data to its various constituents.

The culture within our university is very open, innovative, and supportive. It is one that encourages solid research that focuses on a test, analysis of the process, data collection of results, and evaluation of the results for continuous improvement. Because of this culture, faculty are encouraged and supported to "push the envelope" and try new pedagogy especially in regards to the use of technology in the classroom. Additionally, both faculty and administration are supported in finding new and innovative ways of improving the overall effectiveness of the organization based on the results of fact finding and alignment and prioritization of ideas with the strategic plan.

Because of the importance and impact of the strategic plan, it was developed using a broad process that included as many people as possible in order to gather a large set of ideas and initiatives, and to facilitate a university wide buy in. Strategic plan milestone charts are also openly available to all employees for them to see exactly which initiatives are being worked on and where the University is at with the overall progress. Other committees also follow this same model for broad representation and input such as our assessment council. We find that involving much of the university helps to ensure buy in across all of our constituencies and with integration of ideas across the community.

Table 7.1 shows an overview of how the various university wide planning, implementation, and assessment processes link together.

**Table 7.1 Linkages of Planning**

![Diagram of Linkages of Planning](image)
AQIP Category Eight: Planning Continuous Improvement

Processes (P)

8P1—The overarching plan that sets institutional direction and identifies strategies is the 2006-2011 Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan Coordinating Committee is comprised of 15 members, including the President and two Board of Trustees members. Aside from these latter three, all members were chosen for their institution-wide perspective, data analysis skills and understanding of consultative processes. Two members are faculty and the remaining members are administrators from across the institution.

The process began with data input from internal and external environmental scans, trend analysis and other methods. Analysis of the data led to a review of the vision, goals and objectives of the 2004–2006 Strategic Plan. The new plan carried forward those imperatives that remained relevant, e.g., academic excellence, while incorporating emergent strategies and imperatives. The process which led to the approval of the vision and strategic goals and objectives is diagrammed in Figure 8.2.

Figure 8.2 Process for Developing Goals and Objectives

Implementation planning began in June, 2006, shortly after Trustee approval of the Strategic Plan Vision, Goals and Objectives, with the first of a series of feedback sessions hosted by the Advancement division to gather ideas for both strategic and campaign planning. These suggestions were collated and turned over to the Strategic Planning Coordinating Committee. All ideas were allocated to an individual, usually a committee chair or dean, or to an existing group for consideration. Those ideas that evolved into workable initiatives were presented in one-page proposal form to the Strategic Planning Committee in late September. Each proposal outlined the initiative and estimated resource needs required for implementation. The Strategic Planning Committee reviewed the proposals for consistency with the strategic goals and objectives and made recommendations to the appropriate governance body, department or planning group. The strategic planning process is currently being repeated for the period 2011-2016.

8P2—Short and long term strategies emerged through the Strategic Planning process. As environmental data were collected and feedback solicited, consistent themes and imperatives emerged. These included focusing enrollment strategies, increasing diversity, and ways of living the Catholic Franciscan identity, the necessity for partnerships, and fiscal health and stability. The feedback process allowed for differences in opinion about the relative importance of strategies to emerge. For example, emphasizing servant leadership as an institutional ethos emerged as a possibility early in the process. However, when this appeared as a strategic goal, many were uncomfortable because it was a new idea, not well understood and never widely discussed. The idea did not disappear but was transformed from the strategic level to the implementation level.
At the implementation stage, budget recommendations from the Budget and Planning Committee along with Development Office fundraising efforts serve to allocate scarce resources to the highest priority efforts, deferring others to later stages (see [8P6]).

8P3—Beginning with Strategic Plan 2006 – 2011, each level of the University was required to develop a strategic plan that constituted that unit’s vision of its unique role in supporting and contributing to the overall Strategic Plan; the University-wide plan therefore provided a context within which college, divisional and departmental plans will nest.

The unit plans were communicated to the Strategic Planning Coordinating Committee which communicated the plans, and progress on the plans, to the University community through e-mail, continued feedback sessions, and periodic reports. Departments reviewed and discussed progress on their action steps; salient progress and successes were communicated to the University community by the Strategic Planning Coordinating Committee at the end of the fall and spring semesters. Department plans were updated over the summer, based on emerging needs, and the process was repeated. The annual action plan cycle is diagrammed in Figure 8.3

**Figure 8.3 Annual Cycle for Developing Unit level Action Plans**

The intended outcomes of vertical alignment include understanding of and involvement in the strategic plan throughout the University, as well as better communication of action steps and of University-wide progress toward strategic goals.

8P4—As of Spring 2009, the Vice-Presidents Council has assumed responsibility for monitoring progress on the strategic plan. Shifting the responsibility to the vice-presidents centralizes the strategic plan monitoring within a group whose members are all members of the Budget and Planning Committee and the AQIP teams. Since both of the latter groups have representation from across the University, the vice-presidents are in a position to coordinate and communicate without being the only voices being heard. There is a current Action Project, Implementation of the Strategic Plan focusing on the development of the 2011-2016 Strategic Plan.

8P5—As Strategic Plan 2006 – 2011 was developed, ways of measuring each objective were sought. Since the University was beginning to use Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) (see [5P4]) for internal...
decision making and for communication to the Board of Trustees, those KPIs which related to strategic plan objectives were selected and samples are found in Table 8.4.

Table 8.4 Example Dashboard and KPI Measurements of Strategic Plan Objectives

8P6—Estimated resource needs were presented with Implementation Proposals. If a project moves forward, it is subject to consideration for funding within the annual operating budget by the Budget and Planning Committee. This committee is composed of the following members: Vice Presidents of the University, a faculty member representing the Faculty Compensation Committee, a faculty member appointed by the Dean(s) after consultation with the Chief Academic Officer from whatever college or colleges are not represented on the Budget and Planning Committee, Chairperson of the Administrators & Staff Council, an Administrator Representative of the Administrators & Staff Council, a Staff Representative of the Administrators & Staff Council, Controller, Chairperson of the Academic Assembly, Academic Deans, Chief Student Services Officer, Director of Human Resources. The Budget and Planning Committee recommends funding on the basis of priorities shaped by the Strategic Plan. Increased use of technology has allowed the Budget and Planning Committee to increasingly focus on planning rather than budgeting.

The Advancement Division also considers requests for grants or Capital Campaign funds and prepares fund-raising strategies for those projects it evaluates as fundable. Implementation of these projects occurs when funding is received.

8P7—USF does not have a formal risk assessment process in place at this time for planning. In all planning exercises, the potential for risk is discussed. One key example of this risk assessment would be our FY10 Budget Planning Process. During this exercise several models were developed to address the uncertainty of the economy and all iterations of the budget are poised and ready for enactment based on future developments.

USF is also expanding the addition of At Risk Indicators to the Board of Trustees Dashboard. The following indicators have already been added:

- Tuition discounting
- % of alumni giving
- Student retention

Others being considered include some of the 20 At Risk Indicators listed in *Turnaround: Leading Stressed Colleges and Universities to Excellence* by James Martin and James E. Samels.

8P8—A variety of means are used to train faculty, staff and administrators including technology training, customer service training and faculty development activities (see [4P4]). Specific professional development goals, tied to personal, department or University needs, are identified through the personnel appraisal and tenure processes and evaluated during the next appraisal cycle (see [4P6]). A policy and process that encourages pursuit of a terminal degree for selected administrators by funding tuition was implemented Spring 2009.

Recently online training in Sexual Harassment, Incident Command, and AQIP processes has been implemented by Human Resources.
In addition to the individual goals setting, recognition and reward systems are institution wide mechanisms to value development of skills and abilities to meet institutional needs.

Results (R)

8R1--University of St. Francis has implemented several new opportunities to measure effectiveness of our strategic and other planning processes:

- For the first time in 2011 the University has used the Noel-Levitz employee survey to measure employee perceptions of involvement in decision making and planning. This survey will be administered every other year from now on. Questions in the survey also include responses to questions such as “Does the Institution plan carefully?”

- The Board of Trustees has formed a new committee called the Strategy Committee. The charge of this committee is to annually monitor changes in the economic, political, and academic environment and assess the “fit” of the strategic plan, suggesting “adaptations” as needed.

- The 2011-2016 Strategic Plan has an improved monitoring and accountability process built into it that allows constant communication and assessment of the plan as depicted in Figure 8.11.

Figure 8.11 Process for Implementing, Reviewing and Monitoring
8R2--Strategic Plan 2004–2006 was developed by a new administration in its first year in order to give impetus to changing the University from an insecure and fragile institution with little sense of its strengths, challenges and capabilities to a self-confident, continuously improving university with a clear sense of direction, an understanding of the characteristics of institutional quality and the desire to achieve both. The Vital Focus process was used as part of the means to develop the plan and as a part of our effort to qualify for AQIP and to identify and select action projects.

Strategic Plan 2004–2006 action steps were developed by implementation teams who developed detailed action steps, with milestones at approximately quarterly intervals. A Strategic Plan Implementation Committee, comprised of the project directors, met monthly to review progress. Progress on each project was reported annually. Concrete results from the 2004–2006 Strategic Plan include development and implementation of tenure, Campus Master Plan, assessment process, non-faculty Performance Appraisal, development of the Administrator and Staff Council to give non-faculty a voice in decision-making, development and improvement of retention processes and analysis and revision of admission processes.

Strategic Plan 2006–2011 was approached more systematically, by using internal and external environmental scans, benchmarking where possible and insisting that the measurement of achievement be kept clearly in mind throughout the process. As a result, Strategic Plan 2006–2011 is more specific in actions and clearer about knowing when the desired result is achieved, or at least when improvement occurs. The planning process is discussed in greater detail in [8P1] – [8P3], above.

Accomplishment of strategies and action steps in Strategic Plan 2006 – 2011 were much easier to evaluate because metrics were built in as it was developed. The University has also taken on an Action Project—Implementation of the Strategic Plan. In addition, the Strategic Plan has been reviewed annually against external and internal trends and Strategic Plan 2011-2016 is currently under development.

8R3--In Spring 2007 the University began to require that performance measurements must, where possible, be evaluated by setting targets. Some, such as retention (below) use external benchmarks as reference points or to set expectations. Others, such as then percent of general education courses taught by full-time faculty, us internal benchmarks or baseline points.

Several examples are given below:

Retention: Improving retention was a strategic issue in the 2004-2006 Strategic Plan and continues to be a strategic issue in the 2006 – 2011 plan. USF has tracked retention data for over a decade using the Consortium for Student Retention Data Exchange as a source for external benchmarking (Table 8.6). The data shows improvement in retention from first to second year and in the six year graduation rate over time. Based on the improvement and on comparisons with national averages, the retention goals for 2011 are:

First to second year: 80% consistently
Six year graduation rate: 60% consistently

These goals were set three years ago and the results are approaching the goal. If the rates continue on consistently, a review of the goals and benchmarks will be conducted.

Table 8.6 Retention Data and Benchmarks
Goals for student engagement and satisfaction are also tracked as part of the University’s plans to improve retention rates. The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) is used every two to three years to assess student involvement. Results are compared to national averages, similar Carnegie groups, and a consortium of Catholic institutions. Table 8.7 gives the most recent results compared to national averages (National and Carnegie results were similar).

Table 8.7 NSSE Comparisons

The series of student satisfaction surveys from Noel Levitz are used to assess students’ satisfaction with services and learning. Goals are to maintain a significant statistical positive advantage in the scale of Academic Advising and improve two other scales, Student Centeredness and Campus Life, to meet national averages. Other scales are to continue to at least meet national means. Additionally, the University plans to reduce performance gaps in satisfaction for university’s services with no survey gap larger than 1.0.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs): Table 8.8 shows those KPIs that have had projections of goals set for the year 2011 (the end of the current strategic plan). Some benchmark data has not yet been gathered.

Table 8.8 Example Dashboard and Key Performance Indicators and Projected Goals

8R4--This information is contained in [8R3] under associated tables, above.

8R5--In 2007 when USF attended the Strategy Forum in Lisle, IL one of the key areas we discussed as a definitive need for continued quality improvement was not only the need to broaden institutional involvement in AQIP, but also to broaden institutional involvement in overall institutional quality efforts.

In the original University of St. Francis model, there were nine Quality Improvement Teams comprised of 5-6 members with one member designated as the leader. Recommendations were given to the President by the Core Team and the President subsequently invited the Quality Improvement Team leads. The respective leaders of each team make up the Quality Improvement Council. Each team had a broad focus on three specifically related AQIP Categories, with one AQIP Category being designated as the team's primary category of responsibility. During updates to the USF Systems Portfolio, this team would be assigned to assist the Core Team with updates.

Several challenges were presented in the original model. Having each team concentrate on three AQIP categories proved cumbersome and confusing. Additionally, it was difficult for the teams to focus on exactly what their responsibilities were. Initially the primary focus of each team was to gather and submit Quality Improvement Initiatives to the Quality Improvement Council via the Quality Improvement Coordinator. The Council was to meet once per quarter for the review and potential enactment of Quality Improvement Initiatives at USF.

Several decisions were made to improve the Quality Improvement Council model. The fact that the model did accomplish the initiative to broaden university-wide involvement was paramount. In order to “un-complicate” the structure it was decided that we would take a two-phase approach in moving forward with our institutional quality improvement efforts. Part of “Phase One” was to reorganize the teams and have each team focus on only one of the nine AQIP categories for improvement.
The task of creating an institutional climate of continuous quality improvement is now a paramount project. Originally there were approximately a dozen people who had intimate knowledge of AQIP, and these people were the driving force behind its administration. With the inception of the Quality Improvement Teams this has broadened this core group to over 50 people. The Provost has given this presentation to the academic Dean’s and two general information sessions were help in April 2009 and were attended by approximately 75 university employees. A similar presentation was given to the Board of Trustees in early summer 2009.

During summer 2009 Human Resources, in coordination with the Provost provided a university-wide information session on AQIP and its connection to the Higher Learning Commission and accreditation in general. A presentation addressing the topic of AQIP and quality improvement was developed and a mass E-Mail will very shortly sent to all faculty, staff and administrators so they can grasp the basics of the relationship between AQIP, quality improvement and accreditation.

One central topic that emerged in our attempt to infuse a continuous climate of institutional quality improvement has been a perception that much of the work done for Strategic Planning, Budget and Planning, Strategic Initiatives, Assessment, Quality Improvement Teams and AQIP is duplicative. In truth we have found that this is more than a simple perception. Great efforts were made to bring all of these efforts into a loop that minimizes duplication of effort, while enhancing the overall effectiveness and linkages of these processes mentioned above. Our vision resulted in the model that appears in Figure 8.10 shown under [8I1], below.

**Improvements (I)**

8I1--In order to integrate institutional quality improvement with the AQIP accreditation process, our AQIP Liaison developed the team structure shown in Figure 8.9. These teams are organized by the AQIP categories and have the role of assessing the processes in their category on an on-going basis. These teams undertake annual environmental scans including reviewing best practices, propose quality improvement initiatives and are responsible for up-dating their category section in the Systems Portfolio. Some of these quality improvement initiatives are selected to be AQIP action projects.

In January 2010 the newly restructured Core Team met and selected three new Action Projects. While all six submissions had good merits, three projects were put on hold due to the fact that the budget resources needed to pursue them would not be forthcoming during the next fiscal year. Three solid projects came out of the process:

- **General Education Curriculum Revision (Category 1):** The General Education program has not been revised at USF in over 25 years with the exception of adding Core classes and the Core classes are not fulfilling their original intent. This Action Project will be far reaching and ultimately affect all colleges of the University as well as all undergraduate students.

- **Building An Electronic Assessment Model (Category 7):** This tool will assist in examining assessment and improvement initiatives university wide. The hope is that this will bring a great deal of organization to these procedures and eventually relieve some of the pressures the institution receives from external accrediting bodies for accountability. We had originally considered third-party software for this venture, however the cost was prohibitive and none out there seemed to meet our needs.
• **Quantify USF’s Current Partners and Resources Necessary To Maintain Them (Category 9):** The goal of this Action Project is to compile a list of the current university partnerships (service, sponsorship, business) and academic partnerships. The quantification will include a listing of these partnerships as well as the direct and indirect costs in maintaining them. The overall intent is that this endeavor will help maximize USF resources and our ability to serve the community.

Figure 8.9  Quality Improvement and AQIP Category Teams

In order to improve institutional understanding of how various planning processes are integrated, the University diagrammed the relationships (see Figure 8.10). This diagram has been used to demonstrate how strategic planning, quality initiatives (including AQIP action Plans), budgeting and planning, and assessment are linked. This linkage is included in a mandatory AQIP presentation to all USF employees.

Figure 8.10  Integration of Planning Processes

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**812**—In general, each planning body at the University of St. Francis is expected to develop target or benchmarks that will be used in the assessment of progress being made toward each specific goal. This process began in 2004 with the development of the Campus Master Plan. This master plan based the future campus size and expansion on enrollment targets. Subsequently, we have monitored university enrollments and have made comparisons against the targets (see Table 8.9).

**Table 8.9 Campus Master Plan Projections versus Actual Enrollments**

As the institution begins the action planning for phase 2 of the campus master plan the planning committee is assessing the original enrollment target by comparing the actual enrollment numbers and the targeted figures from the campus master plan. During the phase 2 planning the updated enrollment data will be used to determine what will happen during the second phase planning.

This process of developing targets and that assessing progress towards specific goals is being incorporated in the institution’s new strategic plan implementation. The new strategic plan report form
will include areas for Goals/Objectives, Measurement/Indicator, Baseline, Benchmark, Aspirational Target and Responsible Party to make clear the guidelines and responsibilities for the successful accomplishment of each action plan.
AQIP Category Nine: Building Collaborative Relationships

Processes (P)

9P1--University of St. Francis Admission staff and faculty work closely with feeder high schools and community colleges to provide information about USF as well as educating potential students. Admission staff members seek to strengthen relationships by: regularly meeting with high school and community college counselors; hosting and participating in college fairs; mentoring high school teachers; providing professional development opportunities for teachers; and participating in relevant industry organizations which provide a variety of networking opportunities.

Seventeen community colleges are targeted by USF Admissions. Articulation agreements are in effect for programs with 10 community colleges and transfer guides are provided for a variety of programs for 23 community colleges. (Transfer guides have increased by 35% over the guides available in 2009). USF has dedicated two employees within the Degree-Completion and Graduate Admissions Department to instituting partnerships, one to corporate partnerships and the other to school partnerships.

In addition to Admissions, departments across the campus also maintain and build relationships with feeder high schools and community colleges. The recent Action Project: “Quantify USF’s current partnerships and resources expended to maintain them” identified over twenty USF departments who maintain partnerships and/or relationships with over fifty elementary school districts, high school districts and community college districts. Specific examples include: USF athletic coaches have established close personal relationships with their high school and community college counterparts, and they offer sport-specific clinics that are attended by more than 500 Chicago area high school and other coaches and more than 1,000 Chicago area student athletes. The University’s Health and Wellness Center takes a variety of services, both medical and educational, to area schools as a service to our community’s students. The USF Recreation, Sport and Tourism Management Department provides outreach programs in after school programming such as Camp Fitness and Kids in Nature to elementary District 86 schools through the Joliet Partnership for Healthy Family program (JPHF). The USF Criminal and Social Justice program has established a partnership with the Joliet Township High School Youth Experiencing Success in School (YESS) outreach program. The College of Education maintains formal agreements with school districts to provide master’s degree programs to cohorts and has partnered with Performance Learning Systems (PLS) to offer a collaborative Teaching and Learning advanced degree program.

In addition to feeder schools, the University is an active member of the Joliet Chamber of Commerce and Industry’s Business-Education Council; the Grundy County Chamber of Commerce’s Business-Education Council; and the Will County Center for Economic Development’s Will County Cares Education Council. Through these initiatives, the university maintains close relationship and communication with area school superintendents and businesses that support education.

Professional development programs that do not apply to degrees are offered through the USF Business Solutions Center and Regional Education Academy for Leadership (REAL). REAL maintains relationships with many school districts, and USF Business Solutions maintains relationships with business and non-profit organizations in the community. The Center for Innovation and Leadership was established in 2009. It supports initiatives which create interdisciplinary interactions and partnerships with internal and external USF consumer groups.
Diversity is also addressed through faculty and student outreach to the regional minority communities and through a variety of service projects by students and employees. A partnership with Big Brothers/Sisters is an example of one that meaningfully ties USF to an organization that may provide a link to future students.

9P2--Service and leadership are key components of USF’s mission and important elements in prioritizing relationships with the organizations that depend on our supply of students.

Each of the colleges seeks and prioritizes relationships with employers that will contribute to a well-rounded educational experience for students. The colleges each draw on informal advisory boards of external constituents, including employers, to provide dialogue and connection to the environment USF graduates will enter upon graduation. These relationships are additionally important in that they offer advisement regarding currency and effectiveness of the curriculum. Since many faculty members emphasize experiential learning, they maintain close contacts with professionals in their areas of expertise, providing a most important connection with the educational organizations and employers that depend on the supply of USF students. Alumni Relations and coaches also provide an important link to the business world by maintaining relationships with alumni. Athletic alumni, in particular, have hired a high percentage of USF graduates during the past 20 years.

USF is a member of the Illinois Small College Placement Association (ISCPA) and also provides career placement services to the benefit of both employers and students through NACElink, which allows employers to directly post positions. In addition, the Academic Advising and Career Services Department maintains direct relationships with some 75 companies and organizations.

USF also works with the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), the leading source of information, research and resources on the employment of the college educated. NACE forecasts trends in the job market; tracks legal issues in employment, the job search, and hiring practices; and provides college and employer professionals with benchmarks for their work. The American Association for Employment in Education (AAEE), is another resource for the university as it provides its members with direct access to research, publications and networking opportunities with colleagues, all focused upon the highest standards in educator preparation, recruitment, hiring and retention.

USF’s Solutions Resource Center was created and is dedicated to creating and continuously developing partnerships with area businesses and not-for-profit organizations. Solutions is highly visible in supporting the university’s “goal of being a responsive and effective partner in shaping the region’s future and economy by connecting university resources to community needs and providing its students with real world, problem-solving experiences.” Services include business consulting, continuing education, training, community outreach, and conference space and youth camps. Students and faculty members provide or work with projects to the greatest extent possible, creating a foundation for future connection.

9P3--USF seeks partnerships with organizations that share our values of Respect, Integrity, Service and Compassion, and who will demonstrate these when dealing with our students and community. We expect these partners to be extensions of the university culture. Among the external partnerships that provide
services to USF students are Barnes & Noble Booksellers, IKON, Sodexho food services and PACE. Agreements have been made with outside practitioners for personal counseling and health and social services that are required by students and beyond the university’s in-house resources. The library partners with other libraries to share resources. The university has partnered with Americorps Vista to assist with development and implementation of service learning, a critical goal of our 2006-2011 strategic plan.

9P4--Stewardship of limited resources is essential to the USF mission. The university seeks partnerships with supply organizations that share its values and are committed to top quality service and the maximization of resources. We look for those who are innovative and cost conscious. These organizations must also share the university’s proactive stance on greening and preservation. The university expects these partners to be extensions of the university culture.

9P5--The recent Action Project: “Quantify USF’s current partnerships…” sought to create a list of partnerships maintained across the institution. The data received indicated USF maintains relationships with nearly 70 agencies, 63 healthcare organizations, 62 associations, 47 government and/or chambers of commerce, 42 businesses, 17 service clubs, 12 parks and recreation entities, 12 religious groups and several uncategorized organizations. The data collected will be distributed to the university at-large via our internal portal network in an effort to communicate relationships and maximize the benefit of these relationships. In the review of the Action Project from the Higher Learning Commission dated 9/20/10, the reviewer stated: “As USF acknowledged, the University will be able to use the data gathered from this project to make informed decisions about how to best maximize resources and serve the community.”

As noted in the previous study, the president also plays a personal role in seeking community partnerships and is either directly involved with them or has designated a representative for active participation and leadership. In this vein, USF has created and built very successful relationships with many of the government entities noted—park districts, city, county, state and federal—as well as with neighborhood groups. It has even created the highly innovative Collaboration of Care, which addresses the region’s need for affordable, quality health care utilizing the university’s Health and Wellness Center along with area hospitals and clinics and health care providers.

9P6--The varying needs of those involved in partnership relationships remain largely ensured by personal contact in planning and assessing as noted in 9P2 of the previous Systems Portfolio. Much progress has been made, though, in connecting these partnerships to Strategic Plan and division goals, an initiative of the Vice Presidents Council. The university has also instituted a process for creating, prioritizing, documenting and reviewing partnerships, which began in fall 2009.

9P7--While, as noted in the previous study, relationships within the institution had seemed to emerge on an as-needed basis, USF has made progress in this area with more internal partnerships forming to meet strategic goals:

- New program development, such as the Visual Arts and Music education majors, admission initiatives and imaging and marketing efforts have been areas in which collaboration has improved significantly.
• The Strategic Marketing Communication Task Force, appointed by the president, consists of 25 members who come from throughout the university. Members act as ambassadors for imaging and marketing as well as provide direction and advice regarding planning and execution of initiatives.

• The Campus Master Plan is another example of success in building internal relationships. The Campus Master Plan Committee not only consists of a cross-section of university and community members, but also engaged the entire university community in the planning process.

• The University has a tradition of “pitching in” when needed, but a more focused Vice Presidents Council is providing more strategic direction for internal collaborations by offering stronger rationales connecting these projects to strategic plan and committing resources to support initiatives.

• The university-wide retention program mandates internal communication among faculty, administrators and coaches. This program aids our students academically as well as helps to preserve the institution’s financial viability.

• Integration and communication is ensured through direction by the president and vice presidents, through educational programming such as town meetings and internal “webinar” type programming.

As mentioned in [9P5] above, the Action Project recently completed will assist in communicating existing partnerships across internal departments. In the review of the Action Project from the Higher Learning Commission dated 9/20/10, the reviewer stated: “By stressing the importance of institution-wide involvement, USF has shown commitment to AQIP category (4) Valuing People, (5) Leading and Communicating, and (9) Building Collaborative Relationships.”

Results (R)

9R1—Those relationships maintained to directly provide or enhance the educational experience are carefully assessed through the university’s academic assessment processes with additional assessment criteria often required by the academic unit. Those academic areas that have specialized accreditation undertake rigorous assessment to ensure the effectiveness of their programming and partnerships.

USF Business Solutions also employs a formal assessment process for its programming and partners. Within each category of service: consulting, training and development, and conferencing, client evaluations are conducted and compiled to analyze trends occurring in services. Other partnerships—governmental, neighborhood, etc.—are gauged by participation, success of individual initiatives or activities, received funding or perceived good will.

As noted in [9I1], the University has created an approval process "to identify and develop mission-related partnerships" and a process for members of the USF community to identify, define and seek approval for proposed partnerships.
9R2--Results for building, enhancing and expanding the university’s key collaborative relationships have overall been excellent. As noted repeatedly, outreach is central to the university’s mission, Franciscan tradition and strategic plan. The types of relationships that have been pursued and built have become more strategic to improve and develop the educational experience and commitment to quality that, in turn, have contributed to the institution’s overall imaging.

The number of partnerships has grown. Though partnerships may be pursued by different university sectors, all are essential to fulfilling the university’s mission and meeting the goals of Strategic Plan 2006-11. The previous System Portfolio details many successful collaborative relationships, which are still in existence and many have been further enhanced.

Following is one of the most exciting collaborative relationships as an example of our success: The University of St. Francis, City of Joliet, Rialto Square Theatre and the City Center Partnership have created a unique partnership that encompasses economic development, community/quality of life development, jobs creation and educational programming that extends to disadvantaged children in the community.

In August 2009, USF moved its Arts and Design Department program to the Rialto Square office complex, creating a unique educational experience and vibrant artist community that has enhanced the redevelopment of the downtown and the image of the city, its City Center and county seat. In keeping with its mission of quality education and service, USF has committed to providing community outreach to underserved populations while centered in the downtown area.

Research has shown that at the core of successful downtown redevelopments a major educational institution has been a key component just as important as commerce. The partnership provides short- and long-term benefits. It has increased foot traffic and potential business in Joliet’s City Center, provided a stream of revenue for the landmark theatre operations (USF will invest $5,210,194 over a 20-year lease of instructional and gallery space at the Rialto). It provides support for the new Rialto Arts District artist community and has increased educational and cultural outreach to underserved populations.

The $3.8 million redevelopment plan received unprecedented support. The City of Joliet committed about $540,000 in funding over two years to support interest on a loan that the Rialto must take to finance the renovation project. State Sen. A.J. Wilhelmi committed $50,000 in state funding to support the project. The City Center Partnership downtown redevelopment organization will contribute $10,000 to the Rialto renovation. State Rep. Jack McGuire has prioritized the project on his list of appropriations for $10,000 should funding be allocated. The University of St. Francis, in partnership with PACE, provides a shuttle service from the main campus to downtown Joliet for students, faculty and staff.

9R3--While USF has a track record of successes in building collaborative relationships, many are unique to the university’s mission, values and urban setting, so they have not been compared to other institutions for assessment purposes. However, the university has developed some relationships using the experience of other institutions as background information. The AQIP Category Nine team acknowledges the Action Project reviewers comments from 9/20/10 that “measuring itself against other similar institutions in order
to determine whether it is maintaining optimal partnerships” is a topic to discuss and provide recommendations for next steps.

**Improvement (I)**

**911**—In the previous study, it was noted that the university did not take a systematic approach to seeking and developing partnerships and other collaborative initiatives, nor did it quantify the resources committed to these initiatives or fully assess their effectiveness. As called for by Strategic Plan 2006-11, the university has created an approval process “to identify and develop mission-related partnerships.” Five areas of partnerships have been identified and are pursued: Academic partnerships, Service partnerships, Sponsorship partnerships, Business partnerships and Catholic organizations partnerships.

The [Action Project—Quantifying Partnerships](#) recently completed sought to quantify partnerships in order to gather the data required to make decisions. New initiatives that the AQIP Category Nine team plans to pursue are: (1) Organize data received by partnership category (2) Develop a process to identify official University representation in community organizations and (3) Communicate to the University community the value of collaborative relationships/partnerships.

**912**—As noted previously, outreach is central to the University’s mission, Franciscan tradition and strategic plan. Partnerships are created as the University recognizes a need—internal or external—or an opportunity for future expansion or quality enhancement. The University environment encourages entrepreneurship to the extent that it has formed a Center for Innovation, an academic resource and support service center for faculty and administrators. The center offers resources to assist in the growth and development of new academic markets and products, as well as in improvements in efficiency, effectiveness and quality. The Center for Innovation is to be an incubator for conceptualization and cultivation of new and creative ideas. Additionally, the center will provide financial resources through the start-up and growth stages.
Criterion One – Mission and Integrity. The organization operates with integrity to ensure the fulfillment of its mission through structures and processes that involve the board, administration, faculty, staff, and students.

Core Component 1a. The organization’s mission documents are clear and articulate publicly the organization’s commitments.

- The University of St. Francis Mission Statement is a guiding force in setting the direction for all operations. [Overview, O2, Table O1, O6, Table O3, 4P2, 4P5, Table 6.1, Table 6.3]
- University of St. Francis (USF) distinguishes itself and its mission through the Charism of its founding sisters. [Overview, O1, O6, 2P1, 2P2, 2R2, 3R4, 4P11, 6P4, ]
- The 2006—2011 Strategic Plan is interwoven in all areas of the University. [Overview, O5, O6, 2P2, 3P5, Table 3.16, 4I2, 5P2, 5P8, 6P4, 7P2, 8P1, 8P3, Table 8.4, 9P6, 9R2]
- The University includes their Vision in all facets of University life. [Overview, Table O3, 2P3,5P1, 5P4, 7P2, 8P1]

Core Component 1b. In its mission documents, the organization recognizes the diversity of its learners, other constituencies, and the greater society it serves.

- USF Values of Compassion and Service emphasize a respect for all beings. [Overview, 2P6, 2R1, 4P4,]
- USF Vision Statement states our heritage of graduating students from diverse backgrounds. [Overview]
- USF’s Goals for Student Learning and programs help foster and assist students from all learning backgrounds and measurements of success. [O1, Table O1, O6, 1P7, 1P8, 1P15, 3P1, 3P2, Figure 3.4, Figure 3.5, Figure 3.6, Table 3.16, 6I1]
- USF fosters numerous stakeholder relationships that aid in strengthening our commitment to diversity. [Overview, Table O2, O6, O9, 2P6, 3P1, 3P2, 3R4, 4R2, 9P1, 9P3]

Core Component 1c. Understanding of and support for the mission pervade the organization.

- Recruitment and training of staff ensures that they understand and support the mission of the University. [O2, O6, 2P1, 2P2, 4P4, 5R1, Table 6.1, Table 6.3]
- Measurement of knowledge of the University Mission are carried out on a regular basis. [Table 2.2, Table 6.3]
- Goals for student learning incorporate the University Mission. [O1, 1P16, Table 2.3]
- Alignment of the Mission and Vision are incorporated in all areas of planning. [O1, Table O3, 2P2, Table 7.1, Figure 8.2, 8P2, Figure 8.10]
Core component 1d. The organization’s governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative process that enable the organization to fulfill its mission.

- USF processes are aligned to include a large variety of stakeholders in the development of Mission, Vision and Strategic Planning. [O5, O6, Table O3, 2P3, 3P5, 4I2, 5P2, 5I1, 6P4, 7P2, 8P1, 9R2]
- Several committees and planning groups are tasked to ensure collaboration and effective leadership. [O5, 3P5, 5P2, 5P8, 5I1, 6P4, 7P2, 9P2]
- Trustee involvement is sought in all areas of planning. [4I2, 5P1, 5P8, 6I2, 8P1]
- Various linkages in governance ensure collaboration between academics and administration. [O1, Table O1, O4, O5, Table O3, 1P3, 1P5, 1P11, 1R3, 2P4, 5I1, Table 6.1, 7R1]

Core component 1e. The organization upholds and protects its integrity.

- Stakeholder and constituent satisfaction is measured and used for planning. [O3, Table O2, O6, O7, 1P1, 2P2, 3P3, 3R5, 5P4, 7P3, 7R1]
- Community service by the University and our students is encouraged and facilitated. [Overview, 1P16, 1I1, 2P1, Table 2.1, 2P2, 2P6, 2R3, 4P10, 8I1, 9P1, 9P2, 9P5]
- The University Values, employee training and academic programs encourages integrity among the entire University community. [Overview, O1, O2, 1P11, 2P3, 3I2, Table 3.16, 4P7, 9P3]
- Alignment of Mission. Vision and Strategic Planning is carried out on an on-going basis. [O2, Table O1, Table, O6, Table O3, 5R1, 7P6, 7I2, 8P3]

Criterion Two – Preparing for the Future. The organization’s allocation of resources and its processes for evaluation and planning demonstrate its capacity to fulfill the mission, improve the quality of its education, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

Core Component 2a. The organization realistically prepares for a future shaped by multiple societal and economic trends.

- New program proposals include market analysis and utilization of professional advisory groups. The Center for Innovation was created to provide a mechanism of quick response to market demand. [1P2, 1P3, 1P4, 3P5]
- Annual alumni and employer surveys measure program outcomes with employers needs and job requirements. [1P4, 5P4]
- Human Resources makes great effort to attract new hires with the skill set to enhance the quality of the University. [4P1, 4P2, 4P3, 5P1]
- The Comprehensive Academic Review (CAR) evaluates four areas of a program including demand, quality and financial contribution. [1P13]
- Academic Program Review and the annual academic assessment processes look at curriculum to strengthen to meet the needs of the student and the community. [1P14, 1P17, 1R4]
Core component 2b. The organization’s resource base supports its educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.

- The faculty review process assesses the expertise of the faculty and provides opportunities to enhance and update programmatic competencies. [4P10]
- The Teaching and Professional Growth Committee provides funding for faculty to both present and attend professional conferences. [5P9]
- Goal VI of the Strategic Plan outlines strengthening stewardship and fiscal stability through various methods to strengthen institutional goals. [O6, 9P4]
- The Strategic Planning processes is ever-evolving to meet the needs of the University. [1I2, Figure 1.2, 2P2, 5P2, 5P8, 8P1, Figure 8.2, 8P2, Figure 8.3]

Core component 2c. The organization’s ongoing evaluation and assessment processes provide reliable evidence of institutional effectiveness that clearly informs strategies for continuous improvement.

- The assessment process was enhanced by the addition of an assessment committee to faculty governance. This year there is the highest participation in academic assessment. [1P17, 1P18, 1R1, 1I1, 7P1]
- Use of internal and external assessment has led to improvements such as Writing Across the Curriculum and the enhancement of the strategic plan updates. [1I2]
- Use of a University Dashboard which is given to the Board of Trustees allows major goals and progress including benchmarking the progress of major initiatives in the strategic plan. [6I2, 8P5]
- Several new opportunities to measure effectiveness have been implemented which can be attributed to the AQIP process. [8R1, 8R5, 8I1]

Core component 2d. All levels of planning align with the organization’s mission, thereby enhancing its capacity to fulfill that mission.

- An observable strength of the University if the integrated approach to mission critical objectives, including the decision making processes and strategic planning. [2P2, 6R2, 7I2]
- The Charism Council and University Ministry are charged to provide input into planning with a mission lens. [2P2]
- Each College and academic department’s outcomes align with the mission and vision of the University. [7P6, 7R2, 8P3]

Criterion Three – Student Learning and Effective Teaching. The organization provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission.

Core component 3a. The organization’s goals for student learning outcomes are clearly stated for each educational program and make effective assessment possible.

- Goals and objectives are established that reflect the philosophy of liberal education and the mission of the university. [O1, 1P1, 1P2]
• Ongoing assessment helps determine the effectiveness of educational programs. [1P13, 1P14, 1P18, 1R3, 1I2]

• Various evaluations of student learning provide information for improving curricular and co-curricular student learning and goal identification. [1P9, 1P15, 1P17, 1R1, 1R2, 1R5, 1I2]

• USF assesses employer needs when determining program outcomes. [Table O2, 1P4, Table 3.3, 9P2]

Core component 3b. The organization values and supports effective teaching.

• Faculty teaching and advising have systematic evaluation and recognition. [4P10, 4P11, 4P12, 5P2]

• The university has moved to a tenure track for a commitment to the development of learning environment that will nurture and support academic excellence among faculty and students alike. [1P11]

• Opportunities are provided for faculty development. [4P9]

• Processes for program and curriculum development and review are committed to core values. [1P1, 1P3, 1R2, 1I1, 1I2]

• Data and performance information inform improvements in curriculum and supports. [7P1]

Core component 3c. The organization creates effective learning environments.

• A variety of effective and efficient delivery modes are offered to students. [1P12]

• Partnerships provide learning environments beyond the classroom including service learning and internship opportunities. [O9, 9P5, 9P7, 9R2]

• The Center for Innovation and Leadership develops responsive academic programming. [1P4, 7I1]

• Student support services are designed to accommodate diverse student learning needs. [1P8, 1P10]

• The Division of Student Affairs has established co-curricular learning outcomes. [1P16]

Core component 3d. The organization’s learning resources support student learning and effective teaching.

• Services and programs are in place to support student learning. [Table O1, 1P8, 1P9, 1P15]

• The special centers are established to promote effective teaching. [1P11, 1P12]

• Support is provided for Information Technology, including for online teaching. [O7, 6P2, 6R3, 6R4, 7P7]

• Library services support student learning and effective teaching. [O7, 1P15, 9P3]

• Student learning guidance is provided through the offices of academic advising and career services. [Table O1, 1P6, 1P7, 3P2, 6R4, 6I1]

Criterion Four: Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge, The organization promotes a life of learning for its faculty, administration, staff, and students by fostering and supporting inquiry, creativity, practice, and social responsibility in ways consistent with its mission.
Core Component 4a. The organization demonstrates, through the actions of its board, administrators, students, faculty, and staff, that it values a life of learning.

- USF uses exit surveys, alumni surveys and placement surveys to determine the life-long learning goals of its graduates. [O1, 1P4, 1P7, 1P11, 1R4, 3R2, Figure 3.7, 4P10, 9P2]
- Faculty, staff and administrators are offered tuition benefits and other opportunities to achieve life-long learning and career goals. [4P9, 4P10]
- Awards programs for faculty, staff and administrators rewards superior performance. [4P11, 4P12, 4P13, 5P2]
- USF offers various training opportunities to faculty, staff, administrators, students and other stakeholders to further their life-long learning and development. [1P8, 1P11, 4P4, 4P8, 4P9, 8P8, 9P2]
- USF promotes and fosters service learning opportunities for students, employees and other stakeholders. [1P16, 1II, Table 3.16, 6I1, 7I1, 9P3]

Core Component 4b. The organization demonstrates that acquisition of a breadth of knowledge and skills and the exercise of intellectual inquiry are integral to its educational programs.

- Faculty are given training opportunities and mentored throughout their career. [1P1, 1P11, 1P13, 1II, 2P6, 4P4, 4P9, 4P10, 4R3, 7P7, 7I1]
- Institutional goals, objectives and practices promote a breadth of knowledge. [Overview, O1, 1R4]
- Student support services provide guidance and assistance to students in acquiring and improving knowledge. [1P6, 1P7, 1P8, 3P2, 4P10, 6R4]
- USF assesses and continues to strengthen general education curriculum and outcomes. [O7, 1P1, 1II, 1II, 7R1, 7I1, 8I1]

Core Component 4c. The organization assesses the usefulness of its curricula to students who will live and work in a global, diverse, and technological society.

- USF assesses curriculum to provide opportunities to prepare students to function in an increasingly technologically based world. [Table O1, O7, O8, O9, Table 1.2, 1P12, 1R2, 1R3, 1II, 2R2, 4P9, 9P2]
- USF uses various instruments to assess the value of curriculum to continually enable ourselves to prepare students to function in a global and diverse society. [1P1, 1P3, 1P4, 1P14, Figure 1.1, 1P18, 1II, 1II, 5P4, 6R1, 6R5, 7P1, 7P6, Table 8.7]
- USF assesses and develops students’ knowledge and practice of our Catholic Franciscan values. [Overview, O1, 1P10, 1P16, 2P2, 2P4, 2P6, Table 2.2, Table 3.16, 4P4, 7P6]
- USF assesses students’ needs in order to provide a valuable and rewarding educational experience. [O7, O9, 1P1, 1P4, 1P7, 1P13, 1P16, 1P18, 1R5, 1R6, Table 1.6, 3R1, Table 3.1, 5P3, 5P4, 6R1, 6R5, 7P1, 7I1, Table 8.7, 8I1, 9P2]

Core component 4d. The organization provides support to ensure that faculty, students, and staff acquire, discover, and apply knowledge responsibly.

- USF stresses service learning opportunities to teach students the values of service and to benefit the communities we serve. [1P16, 1II, 3I2, Table 3.16, 6I1, 7I1, 9P3]
USF assessments show that students' appreciation for learning, spirituality, and service increases with exposure to our community and curriculum. [O1, Table O2, O8, 1P1 (Appendix 1), Table 2.2, 2R3, Table 2.3, 3R1 (Appendix 9)]

USF imparts a sense of ethics and values in its students and employees. [Overview, O1, 1P1 (Appendix 1), 1P10, 1P16, 2P3, 2R3, Table 2.3, Table 3.16, 4P7, 5P2, 7R2, 9P3]

USF's Statement of Values embodies Respect, Compassion, Service, and Integrity. [Overview, O1, O2, 2P3, Table 3.16, 9P3]

Criterion Five: Engagement and Service. As called for by its mission, the organization identifies its constituencies and serves them in ways that both value.

Core Component 5a. The organization learns from the constituencies it serves and analyzes its capacity to serve their needs and expectations.

- USF continually builds and maintains relationships with its external stakeholders. [O6, O7, 1P1, 2P2, 3P3, 3R5, 6I1, 9P1, 9P2]
- USF assesses external stakeholders' needs and expectations in order to maintain and foster these relationships. [O3, Table O2, 1P14, 2P3, 3P3, Table 3.3, 7P1, 7R1, 9P2]
- USF has formalized a process to identify key partnerships. [9P6, 9R1, 9I1]
- USF assesses internal stakeholders' needs and expectations to react and respond to their needs. [O3, Table O2, O4, O7, 1P4, 1P7, 1P10, 1P15, Appendix 1.2, 2P4, 2P5, 3P1, Table 3.1, Table 3.2, 4P8, 4I1, 5P3, 5P4, Table 5.1, 5I1, 6P1, Table 6.1, 6P2, Table 6.2, 6R4, 7P1, 7P5, 7R1]

Core Component 5b. The organization has the capacity and the commitment to engage with its identified constituencies and communities.

- USF establishes and maintains external collaborative relationships across several departments. [O2, Table O2, O9, 2R2, 2R4, Table 3.3, 3P4, 3R4, 9P1, 9P2]
- USF has identified the needs of its internal and external stakeholders in order to provide services they desire. [O2, O7, 1P4, 1P7, 1P9, 1P12, 1P13, Figure 1.1, 1P16, 1P17, 1P18, 1R1, Table 1.2, 1R2, 1R3, 1R4, 1R6, 1I2, 2P6, 2R1, 3P1, Table 3.1, 3P3, Table 3.3, 3R1, Figure 3.4, Figure 3.5, 5P3, 5R2, Table 6.1, 6R1, 6R5, 7P1, 7P4, Table 8.7, Table 8.8, 9R1]
- USF continually engages our surrounding neighbors and the City of Joliet in order to maintain a mutually beneficial partnership. [Overview, O3, Table O2, O9, 2P2, 2R2, Table 3.3, 3P4, 3R4, 3R5, 5P4, 6R3, 6I1, 9P1, 9P5, 9R1]
- USF builds relationships with high schools and community colleges by continual outreach efforts. [O8, O9, 2R2, Table 3.3, 9P1]

Core Component 5c. The organization demonstrates its responsiveness to those constituencies that depend on it for service.

- USF builds relationships that foster and further Helping Students Learn. [Table O1, Table O2, O9, 1P10, 2P1, Table 2.1, 2R2, Table 3.3, 3P4, 3R5, 6I1, 9P1, 9P2, 9P3, 9R2]
- USF maintains its Catholic Franciscan mission through consultation with stakeholders. [Table O2, O6, 2P2, 2P3, 2P6, 2R2, Table 6.1, 6R2, 9I1]
• USF uses data from all stakeholders in formulating the Strategic Plan. [Figure 1.2, Table O1, O5, O8, 2P2, 2I1, 3P5, 5P1, 6I2, 8P1, 9P3, 9P6]

• USF collaborates with a broad cross-section of stakeholders in order to increase the scope of our engagement. [Table O2, O7, 1P1, 2P2, 2I1, 3R5, 6P3, 6R3, 6I1, 7P3, 7R2]

Core Component 5d. Internal and external constituencies value the services the organization provides.

• USF uses various surveys and instruments to assess stakeholder needs and expectations. [1P17, 1R5, Table 1.3, 1R6, 2P5, 3P1, Table 3.1, 3P6, 3R1, Figure 3.1, 3R2, 4P13, Table 4.1, Table 4.2, 5P6, 6P1, 6R1, Table 6.2, 6R2, 7R1, 7R2, 8R3]

• USF has various relationships that benefit local primary and secondary education institutions. [Table O2, O8, O9, 2P2, 2R2, 3P3, 3P4, 3R5, 9P1]

• USF relies on the input of various internal stakeholders as part of the governance process. [O4, O5, 1P1, 1P10, 1P11, 2P5, 3P2, 5P4, 5P7, 5P9, 5R2, 5I2, 6P1, 7I1, 8P1]

• USF has developed partnerships that mutually benefit the University and the City of Joliet and Will County. [Overview, Table O2, O9, 2P1, 2R2, 2I1, 3P3, 3R4, 5P4, 6R3, 6I1, 9P1, 9R2]