CHAPTER 1
Introduction

Higher Learning Commission Self-Study Report 2013
University of North Dakota
The University of North Dakota (UND) is on a path from great to exceptional. With the arrival in 2008 of Dr. Robert Kelley, the University’s 11th President, the University community embarked on a journey of reinvigoration that resulted in a set of five strategic priorities known collectively as Exceptional UND (section 1.A):

- Enrich the student experience
- Encourage gathering
- Facilitate collaboration
- Expand UND’s presence
- Enhance the quality of life

These five priorities guide the University as it works to fulfill its integrative mission to educate the next generation, advance the state of knowledge, and serve the public. The following two examples (both described in more detail within the body of this document) highlight how UND continues to innovate at the heart of its core academic mission:

In the fall of 2012, UND dedicated and began using its first SCALE-UP (Student-Centered Active Learning Environment for Undergraduate Programs) classroom, an innovative, state-of-the-art teaching space, or a true “learning environment” (section 3.D.4.b). Developed with the first three Exceptional UND priorities in mind, this new classroom—the largest of its kind in the region, and outfitted with computers, multiple video screens, white boards, and audio systems—is helping to change the way UND instructors teach large lecture-style classes, such as Biology 111 and 150.

Another outgrowth of the Exceptional UND priorities was the development of the First-Year Seminar Program, designed to promote student learning and engagement, retention, and success (section 3.D.2). These First-Year Seminars incorporate cutting-edge subject matter, pedagogy, and skills to facilitate the transition to college. The program gives first-year students a chance to study topics that will engage their interest, challenge them academically, and help them acquire the skills for a successful college career. The classes are small (no more than 25 students), making it easy for students to get to know and work with the professor and classmates. The seminars are designed to help new students reflect on how they learn, encouraging them to be active and effective learners and helping them develop the academic skills needed for university-level work.

This self-study explores the many ways that Exceptional UND is having a positive impact on the life of the University. Also herein are discussions of challenges for growth as the University continues to strive toward the Exceptional UND vision.
THE UNIVERSITY, THE COMMUNITY, THE STATE, AND ACCREDITATION HISTORY.

The University

The University of North Dakota is the state’s oldest and largest institution of higher learning, and is the flagship of the North Dakota University System (NDUS). Founded in 1883, six years before North Dakota statehood, UND occupies 550 beautifully landscaped acres in Grand Forks, N.D., a classic college town of more than 50,000 people nestled on the banks of Red River of the North, across from sister city East Grand Forks, Minn. There are approximately 100,000 people in the Grand Forks Metropolitan Zone, which includes the Grand Forks Air Force Base and East Grand Forks, Minn. Founded with a strong commitment to serve the community, the University’s mission was to provide students a liberal arts foundation with a particular focus of arts and sciences, business, education, engineering, healthcare and medicine, and later aerospace and law.

Today, UND continues to enhance the quality of life for its students, faculty, staff and the citizens of North Dakota through a focus on creativity, innovation, and a pioneer-inspired entrepreneurial spirit.

UND enrolls more than 15,000 students in nine colleges and schools: College of Arts & Sciences, College of Business & Public Administration, College of Education & Human Development, College of Engineering & Mines, College of Nursing & Professional Disciplines, School of Graduate Studies, John D. Odegard School of Aerospace Sciences, School of Law, and School of Medicine & Health Sciences.

- UND offers 224 fields of study and more than 3,000 courses. The four most popular areas include the health professions, aviation, engineering, and business. Undergraduate enrollment totaled 11,953 in fall 2012.
- Graduate education is offered in 83 programs, including professional degrees in law (J.D.) and medicine (M.D.). Graduate and professional enrollment for fall 2012 was 3,297.
- The University also has a growing distance learning program that offers 32 online degree programs.
- UND awarded 1,709 bachelor’s, 647 master’s, 115 doctoral, 89 law, and 59 medical degrees between July 1, 2011, and June 30, 2012.
- UND’s diverse student body represents all 50 states and more than 60 countries.
- With more than 250 registered student organizations, UND also has a strong residence hall system, engaged campus student leaders, and strong cultural centers, including an American Indian Student Services Center.
- Nearly 400 American Indian students are enrolled at UND; they utilize 30 programs and organizations specifically designed to meet the academic, social and support needs of underserved populations. The number of students and the number and strength of programs combine to make UND one of the top schools in the nation for educating American Indian students.
- UND is one of the top 100 doctoral research universities in the country and is Carnegie-
UND student-athletes excel in the classroom as well as on the field, ice, or court, consistently posting a collective 3.0 or better grade-point average each semester.

classified as an RU/H (high research activity) institution.

• UND has an economic impact on the state and region of well over $1 billion a year.

• UND had approximately $119.3 million in total sponsored program expenditures in FY2012. Nearly $75 million was in research expenditures. The $119.3 million in total sponsored program expenditures resulted in an impact on Grand Forks County, North Dakota, and the five-state North Central Census Region of $244.2 million in economic output, 2,061 jobs, and nearly $24.2 million in local, state and federal tax revenue, according to a recent study by the UND Bureau of Business and Economic Research.

• The American Academy of Family Physicians consistently ranks UND’s School of Medicine & Health Sciences as one of the top medical schools in the nation for graduating family medicine physicians.

• The University has an international reputation for research and scholarship in the health sciences, energy and the environment, aerospace, and engineering.

An anchor of the Red River Valley Research Corridor, UND’s 55-acre technology park hosts both emerging enterprises and established centers and businesses that help facilitate the transfer of university research advances to applications in business and industry. Prominent facilities in this endeavor include the Ina Mae Rude Entrepreneur Center, the Norman Skalicky Technology Incubator and the REAC 1 (Research Enterprise and Commercialization) Building. On the other end of the campus, the internationally recognized Energy & Environmental Research Center (EERC) features state-of-the-art facilities on 15 acres and employs about 300 scientists, engineers, and support staff. The EERC is one of the world’s leading developers of cleaner, more efficient energy technologies as well as environmental technologies to protect and clean our air, water, and soil. Since 1987, the EERC has served more than 1,100 clients from 50 states and 51 countries.

UND is also benefitting from the $300 million comprehensive capital campaign, “North Dakota Spirit: The Campaign for North Dakota.” The dollars from this campaign are already having a transformative effect in the areas of dedicated students, inspirational educators, innovative programs, and extraordinary facilities.

Part of the NCAA, UND has strong athletic programs. A perennial contender in Division I men’s hockey with seven national championships, UND is a full member of NCAA Division I across all sports and is now a member of the Big Sky Conference in most of its athletic programs. Before its recent transition to Division I, UND earned Division II national championships in many sports, including football, women’s basketball, and swimming and diving.

UND student-athletes excel in the classroom as well as on the field, ice, or court, consistently posting a collective 3.0 or better grade-point average each semester. Numerous UND student-athletes have gone to the professional ranks in a number of sports. It is a rare National Hockey League tournament that doesn’t include former UND players, and the 2010 Winter Olympics featured Monique and Jocelyne Lamoureux on
The Community

With grassland prairie to the west and Minnesota lakes and forests to the east, Grand Forks has been ranked by Money magazine as one of the most livable cities in the country. Short commutes, few traffic problems, safety, low crime, parks and theaters, and a cost of living considerably below that of large American cities are some of the advantages Grand Forks offers. The city ranks consistently high in comparative surveys for business, education, quality of life and community safety, making it an excellent choice for families and professionals alike. A wide variety of arts organizations, galleries, museums and exceptional athletic facilities ensure a vibrant cultural and sporting community. The Greenway along the Red River offers 2,200 acres of open, natural settings for four-season recreation. Parks, bike trails, golf courses, tennis courts and swimming pools provide summer recreation, while favorite winter activities and sports include cross country skiing, sledding, snowmobiling, skating and ice hockey.
The State

With its vigorous agricultural and energy-related industries, North Dakota has stood above the continued global economic downturn. In fact, the state enjoyed a $2 billion surplus going into the 2013 legislative session and continues to enjoy a very strong economy, thanks in part to development of the Bakken oil field in the western part of the state. North Dakota is now second in the nation in oil production, behind only Texas, and has the lowest unemployment rate in the United States, according to the latest jobs report from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. UND’s Energy & Environmental Research Center and College of Engineering & Mines are contributing significantly to development of the state’s energy industry through research, services, and the education of skilled professionals.

North Dakota’s economy is fueling the recovery in the Midwest, according to the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis. The bank’s district experienced strong agriculture, mining and oil industries, healthy manufacturing exports, and moderate consumer spending growth with subdued price increases in most sectors. Fed economists cite not only oil but also very positive commodity prices. Manufacturing is gaining ground in North Dakota, with busy food processing plants and hard goods manufacturers seeing increased orders. Not surprisingly, North Dakota business leaders posted the most optimistic replies to the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis’ recent poll on outlooks for their local economies, with 91 percent somewhat or very optimistic, compared to 62 percent district wide. Numerous reports in the national media have highlighted the state’s positive economy and governmental budget situation.

State and national parks and picturesque lakes are found throughout the region, providing excellent hunting and fishing. Grand Forks and its sister city, East Grand Forks, Minn., make up a trade center in the heart of a diversified and stable agricultural area, the economy of which is buttressed by developing industrial and technology concerns and the nearby Grand Forks Air Force Base. But, first and foremost, Grand Forks is a college town, permeated for more than a century with the presence and values of the University. Students, faculty, and staff are full partners in the community; in fact, several past mayors of Grand Forks were University professors, and the current mayor received his medical training at UND. Students, faculty, and staff are regularly elected to the Grand Forks City Council and the state legislature, and are active in organizations throughout Greater Grand Forks.

This thorough integration of campus and community has helped Grand Forks develop an outstanding public school system, a large and highly sophisticated medical complex, a symphony orchestra, a master chorale music ensemble, a community theater, plenty of movie cinemas, and such specialized businesses as used bookstores and coffeehouses. Grand Forks features shopping districts, motel accommodations, parks and recreational amenities, sporting venues, and a selection of fine dining and family restaurants.
UND has been continuously accredited by the North Central Association, now through the Higher Learning Commission, since the Association was organized in 1913.

Accreditation History

UND has been continuously accredited by the North Central Association, now through the Higher Learning Commission, since the Association was organized in 1913. UND received its most recent accreditation in 2003. Accrediting agencies that have approved components of UND at the college or school level include: the AACSB International – the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business; the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET); the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME); the American Bar Association (ABA); the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology; the Aviation Accreditation Board International; the National Association of Industrial Technology; the Association of Technology, Management, and Applied Engineering (ATMAE); the National Association of Schools of Music; the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA) - Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation (COPRA); and the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), among others. Numerous programs are also accredited at the department level. Additional details concerning the many agencies that accredit some portion of UND may be found later in this self-study (section 4.A.5).
RESOURCES TO PREVIOUS SITE VISIT COMMENTS

The University received comments from HLC team reviewers in 2003, following the last comprehensive visit for reaffirmation of accreditation. Additional comments were received in 2008, following a visit focused on assessment. Although some of the challenges identified in those visits remain, a number of actions have been taken and significant progress has been made in most areas addressed. This section of the self-study summarizes steps taken between 2003 and 2013 to address those areas of identified need.

Response to 2003 HLC (Comprehensive) Site Visit Team Comments

Following the 2003 HLC team visit for the reaffirmation of accreditation, UND received recommendations for action in the Assurance section of the team report. Many of these recommendations were further explicated in the Advancement section. The suggested action items below are excerpted from the Assurance report. Following each recommendation is a summary of progress related to that item and, where appropriate, links to the section of the self-study where the issue is addressed in more detail.

“Some campus sentiment suggests that, as the UND mission statement is more than ten years old, a revised mission statement should be considered as part of the strategic planning initiatives, in order more specifically to identify desired attributes and priorities and more inclusively to provide direction to all major organizational components.” (HLC Report, Page 13)

UND UPDATE A: Although a revised mission statement has not yet been considered, this self-study identifies a need for establishing a regular process for review and revision or re-approval of the mission. In the meantime, UND has continued to engage in regular institutional planning, including under two separate strategic plans and the current Exceptional UND vision and accompanying priorities (section 1.A). Numerous units also have engaged in strategic planning or visioning in alignment with the University’s mission and vision. The Exceptional UND vision and priorities, both of which are aligned with the mission, were developed through a substantial and inclusive process and are providing direction to major organizational components of the institution (section 5.C.2).

Furthermore, the self-study process demonstrated that the mission, although not recently reviewed, continues to function as an accurate and effective map for institutional decision making (sections 1.A and 1.B).

“Faculty salaries are significantly below the regional average in all colleges and schools except the School of Medicine and Health Sciences, where the disparity, although still significant, is much less.” (HLC Report, Page 15)

UND UPDATE B: The need for a current institutional analysis of workloads and salaries is identified in this self-study (Criterion Three, Summary) as an area where action should be taken. However, significant progress has been made and a survey conducted by the American Association of University Professors shows that the salary gap at the professor level has been reduced from 42.6 percent to 26.6 percent, at the associate level from 19 percent to 4.3 percent, and at the assistant level...
granting institution, the University does maintain records documenting that 86 percent of full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty had terminal degrees in 2002, 93 percent in 2007, and 94 percent in 2012.

The student-to-faculty ratio is 17:1 (section 3.C.1). Program accreditation visits generally document a pattern of adequacy in faculty numbers and stability in faculty-student ratios (sections 3.C.2 and 5.A.1.b). However, as was noted in the self-study, there is some unevenness across programs with certain deans identifying needs for additional faculty to carry out the work of units within their divisions (section 3.C.1).

The HERI survey provides evidence that UND faculty report more stress than peers at other public institutions in some categories (e.g., more stress over teaching load, more stress over research or publishing demands); however, UND faculty report less stress in other areas (e.g., less stress in relation to procedures and “red tape,” less stress related to job security or budget cuts). That survey also shows that 70 percent of UND faculty would “definitely” or “probably” want to come to UND if they were beginning again and that UND faculty are more satisfied than their peers at public institutions with some aspects of the job, e.g., their freedom to determine course content and their job security. Overall, 72 percent of UND faculty report being satisfied with their job, compared to 74 percent of faculty at public universities nationally.

New program proposals occur through processes likely to minimize any potential negative impact on faculty. New academic programs are conceptualized and proposed by faculty. They
are designed to meet specific needs or advance UND’s mission, and, during development, plans are tethered to the mission and vision of the units that will house them. Any needed resources are analyzed as the proposal is evaluated. That evaluation occurs through a two-stage process over multiple academic years as required by the state university system (section 3.A.3). Proposals requiring faculty lines specify the source of those lines, which may include internal reallocation. Prior to the submission of a proposal for approvals at the state system office, they are reviewed by the home academic unit, the dean, and the Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs. Resource adequacy is an important consideration during those reviews.

“Financial resources in some colleges (for example Arts and Sciences and Education and Human Resources) are devoted almost exclusively to instruction (approximately 95-97 percent) making it very difficult to provide for other needs. Similarly, human resources to provide for college direction and oversight from the deans’ offices (associate and assistant dean positions) are very limited.” (HLC Report, Page 15)

UND UPDATE D: UND’s “Financial Summaries by Function of Fund,” may appear to demonstrate that a high portion of budget dollars in some colleges are designated for instruction. In the 2011 budget for the College of Arts & Sciences, for example, $29.3 million was labeled “general academic instruction” (out of a total of about $33.5 million). However, all faculty salaries are included in that budget item, and faculty salaries cover a great deal more than actual instructional time. Furthermore, these same Financial Summaries show that expenditures in other colleges are often divided quite differently (e.g., in the 2011 budget for the John D. Odegard School of Aerospace Sciences, $32.6 million was designated for general academic instruction, out of a total of $62.5 million). No other college has proportions approaching those in Arts & Sciences, a finding that may relate to the missions of the various colleges. More detail on budget allocations is found later in this self-study (section 5.A.1).

Significant turnover has occurred for various reasons among the deans recently, which may result in additional staffing changes in some college offices during 2013-14. However, as of this writing, six of the colleges (the John D. Odegard School of Aerospace Sciences, the College of Arts & Sciences, the College of Education & Human Development, the College of Engineering & Mines, the School of Law, and the College of Nursing & Professional Services) have two associate or assistant dean positions. The School of Medicine & Health Sciences has 13 associate and assistant dean positions. The College of Business & Public Administration has a single associate dean position with the intent of having two positions by the fall of 2013, and the School of Graduate Studies (under the leadership of an interim dean, originally appointed as associate dean) currently has no associate or assistant dean. As the Financial Summary by Function of Fund reports demonstrate, spending for academic administration within the colleges has increased steadily in the years since 2005. Although room for improvement remains, there has been an emphasis on ensuring that deans have the staffing necessary for their units’ missions.

“Facilities problems exist in many colleges because of the uneven distribution and quality of space and result in cramped shared offices, among other
problems….Enrollment growth is placing stress on auxiliary facilities. Parking and student housing facilities may be at maximum occupancy….’’ (HLC Report, Page 16)

**UND UPDATE E:** UND’s physical infrastructure has improved dramatically over the last 10 years. A new parking ramp has been added in a location convenient to the center of campus (section 5.A.1-c). New student housing has been built, and existing housing units have been significantly upgraded (section 5.A.1-c). New and upgraded academic and research facilities have also been (and continue to be) developed. Among the new construction and reconstruction projects occurring since 2003 are the Education Building, the Northern Plains Center for Behavioral Research, the National Center for Hydrogen Technology, the Energy & Environmental Research Center Office and Conference Center, the Family Medicine Centers, and the SCALE-UP classroom (sections 5.A.1-c and 3.D.4.b). In the 2013 legislative session, requests were made for critical upgrades and additions to spaces used by the School of Law and the School of Medicine & Health Sciences, and both upgrades were approved for funding. The School of Law’s renovation and addition, slated for completion by fall of 2015, will add vital instructional, technology, and student space upgrades. The School of Medicine & Health Sciences will move to a new state-of-the-art building in summer 2016 that supports a balance of teaching and research for medical students as well as graduate and undergraduate students. However, significant infrastructure needs remain throughout the campus, and the University regularly submits requests to the legislature for funding to maintain current facilities, upgrade existing buildings, and, when necessary, construct new facilities that meet current needs.

“The NDUS is working toward developing a PeopleSoft system for student records throughout its institutions. Institutional attention should be directed toward staff concerns regarding implementation of this system and the need for staff development….’’ (HLC Report, Page 16)

**UND UPDATE F:** PeopleSoft (also known as Connect ND) is providing important new capabilities for students. The system is now used for course registration, financial aid management, bill payments, campus housing arrangements, and other purposes. It is available to students in a mobile version as well as through computer networks on campus (section 5.A.1-d). PeopleSoft has provided new capabilities for staff as well. For example, budget applications make the process of monitoring transactions more efficient (section 5.A.5.b). Over time, many of the problems described in the 2003 team report have been addressed through a gradual process of familiarization combined with training. Problems with PeopleSoft remain, but the main concern identified through the self-study process is frustration at delays in state-level implementation of functionalities that could be useful for UND staff and faculty (section 5.A.1-d).

“As a large percent of the Student service departments’ budgets is supported through mandatory student fees with a much smaller amount coming from state appropriations, the institution should carefully assess the total cost of education for students in adding new fees for support services and auxiliary services.” (HLC Report, Page 16)
Assessment of general education is considerably more advanced than at the time of the previous comprehensive visit, with direct assessment now occurring at both the course level and outcome level.

UND UPDATE G: Analysis shows that tuition and fees have remained steady as a percentage of UND’s revenue stream, suggesting that reliance on fees as a source of funding is not increasing (section 5.A.1-a). In fact, UND has not increased tuition and fees at the same rate as its peers and, although costs to students have grown since 2003-04, the cost of tuition and fees is below that of peer institutions. Fees remain an area of concern, however, and a recent state performance audit of fees at UND and NDSU (an institution of similar size and complexity) has yielded a number of recommendations for improvement. It is expected that the North Dakota University System office, the State Board of Higher Education, and UND will implement policies to enact these recommendations.

“Assessment of student academic achievement at the University of North Dakota is neither consistently understood nor consistently implemented.

i. General education and graduate education do not appear to be included consistently in assessment planning and activities.

ii. Assessment plans and reports often make use of activities that are not measures of student academic achievement but rather other types of assessment, evaluation, or analysis….

iii. A majority of activities cited as measures of student academic achievement are attitudinal surveys….

iv. Only limited use of direct measures of student learning has been documented.

v. Assessment reports (in annual reports) by department for the two most recent years reveal that many are still at the early planning stage….

vi. Assessment plans and reports appear to lead to administrative or oversight responses that fail to underscore insufficient progress and inappropriate assessment measures and that fail to require timely revision.” (HLC Report, Page 18-19)

UND UPDATE H: The University has made significant progress in assessment and assurance of student learning, and that progress is articulated in some detail within the body of this self-study (section 4.B). Assessment of general education is considerably more advanced than at the time of the previous comprehensive visit, with direct assessment now occurring at both the course level and outcome level. Indirect assessment also occurs both within individual courses and through institutional tools such as surveys. Assessment is consistently addressed in graduate and undergraduate program review as well as through a review process implemented by the University Assessment Committee (sections 4.A.1 and 4.B.1).

The Committee’s review process demonstrates that academic programs have assessment plans, and that those plans identify intended student learning outcomes and describe assessment methods that are measures of student learning (section 4.B.1). Implementation of methods is somewhat uneven across programs, but the Committee reviews demonstrate that direct assessment methods are used regularly in academic programs (section 4.B.2). While surveys continue to be used and provide important information for many offices and programs on campus, annual reports reflect a cross-campus understanding that assessment should include direct methods, rather than occurring only or primarily through surveys and other indirect methods.
While assessment reports continue to show evolution of assessment plans, that evolution is often a loop-closing on the assessment process itself. As programs change, as program accreditor standards are revised, as methods prove to be more or less useful and feasible, and as findings prove more or less interesting, faculty in those programs make changes to their plans. Work on those plans and work done according to the plans is documented in online databases. UND’s assessment plan database and annual reporting system were both improved in the years since the 2003-04 reaccreditation team report. The annual reporting system now prompts submitters to click on their program’s assessment plan, a strategy intended to encourage posting of the most current plan, and the assessment plan database now includes both the most recent plan and the previous plan(s).

Assessment plans and reports are reviewed by members of the Assessment Committee on a three-year cycle, and the findings from those reviews are documented using templates designed both to collect information about the University’s progress in assessment and to report back to program directors and faculty. An annual report-back luncheon occurs in May (section 4.B.1), with members of the Assessment Committee meeting with chairs or directors of reviewed programs and with deans from colleges included in the year’s review processes. Assessment activities are also examined during program reviews (section 4.A.1).

Although a number of opportunities for improvement are identified in the Criterion Four summary, the achievements described document a growing culture of evidence-based decision making regarding student learning. This is a significant improvement from the time of UND’s previous comprehensive visit.

“Although the institution has recently put renewed emphasis on assessment and identified a quality curriculum as a goal, resources to support this renewed emphasis appear limited. The current Associate Provost for Assessment, though experienced in working with assessment, has only a 20 percent assignment to this activity. The University Assessment Committee is knowledgeable about assessment and responds to major assessment reports, but it does not have, or is not using, the authority to direct departments or programs to make changes in plans and programs and to ensure implementation of direct assessment of student academic achievement.” (HLC Report, Page 19)

**UND UPDATE I**: The 20 percent time assigned to leadership on assessment was replaced in the fall of 2005 with a 50 percent position focused on assessment. Little more than a year later, the position was redefined as 100 percent, with time divided between assessment and promoting student achievement. In 2010, under the leadership of the previous Vice President of Academic Affairs & Provost, the position was realigned, still at 100 percent time, to focus on assessment and accreditation (section 5.C.2). That position of Director of Assessment and Regional Accreditation represents the University’s commitment to providing support for and oversight of faculty assessment of student learning.

However, leadership for assessment also occurs within colleges and programs. For example, the College of Business & Public Administration created the position of Executive Director of Assessment in 2012 (section 4.B.2). The Aviation
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Planning is a priority at UND and at the North Dakota University System (NDUS) office (section 5.c.4), and possible contingencies are considered as part of that effort. The state’s economy (section 5.A.1), regional opportunities and needs (section 1.d.2), and the adequacy of funding (section 5.c.1) are key factors in determining whether to go forward with proposed programs. In addition, the University has processes that must be followed when new programs are proposed. These “Stage I” and “Stage II” processes are mandated by the NDUS (section 3.A.3). They require that new program proposals be accompanied by budget information identifying necessary resources and explaining where those resources will come from. Before programs are approved, they go through a chain of approval processes both at UND and within the NDUS and State Board of Higher Education. Through these processes, UND manages a program array that is indeed ambitious but also appropriate and sustainable for the institution’s mission.

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Department has designated an Assistant Chair of Assessment beginning in 2003, and a number of other departments also designate individual faculty to oversee and coordinate assessment (section 4.B.4). The Assessment Committee also continues to provide knowledgeable review of and oversight for assessment, although the model at UND has been to encourage understanding of and commitment to assessment rather than to rely on a coercive, directive approach from an individual or committee viewed as having institutional “authority” over departments or other units. The culture changes that have occurred on campus suggest that approach is proving successful (section 4.B).

“The program array at UND appears ambitious for the numbers of faculty and resources available and the numbers of students and range of student interests….Over-extension in any major area can retard progress toward strategic institutional goals. Program array change needs to be linked with both institutional resources and good practice and with the state’s economy.” (HLC Report, Page 21)

UND UPDATE J: Planning is a priority at UND and at the North Dakota University System (NDUS) office (section 5.C.4), and possible contingencies are considered as part of that effort. The state’s economy (section 5.A.1), regional opportunities and needs (section 1.D.2), and the adequacy of funding (section 5.C.1) are key factors in determining whether to go forward with proposed programs. In addition, the University has processes that must be followed when new programs are proposed. These “Stage I” and “Stage II” processes are mandated by the NDUS (section 3.A.3). They require that new program proposals be accompanied by budget information identifying necessary resources and explaining where those resources will come from. Before programs are approved, they go through a chain of approval processes both at UND and within the NDUS and State Board of Higher Education. Through these processes, UND manages a program array that is indeed ambitious but also appropriate and sustainable for the institution’s mission.

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INTRODUCTION

Access to scholarly resources to 49,000 electronic full-text journals, 55,000 e-books, and 85 online databases. A March 2013 report to the University Senate Library Committee indicated that the Chester Fritz Library expenditures have increased from $4,005,150 in FY 2008 to $4,729,861 in FY 2012.

Libraries at UND support the institutional mission through the acquisition of scholarly resources, teaching information literacy to students, converting scholarly resources to digital form to enhance access, creating unique digital resources from Special Collections, developing and implementing electronic discovery tools to aid in use of scholarly resources, sponsoring events to facilitate the exchange of ideas, and developing resource sharing programs with other libraries. Despite these accomplishments, funding needs remain pressing, especially in the face of rising costs for subscriptions and digital resources.

“It is the considered judgment of the visiting team that continued use of the Indianhead logo and the ‘Fighting Sioux’ nickname reduces the university’s ability to accomplish its purposes and diminishes its educational effectiveness.” (HLC Report, Page 21)

UND UPDATE K: As noted above, significant progress has been made on salaries. A recent American Association of University Professors survey shows that the salary gap at the professor level has been reduced from 42.6 percent to 26.6 percent, at the associate level from 19 percent to 4.3 percent, and at the assistant level from 13.5 percent to 10.5 percent. In addition, the University continues to dedicate resources to faculty salaries whenever possible (sections 5.A.2 and 5.A.4), with the result that salaries have increased at a rate that exceeds the rate of increase in state appropriations for salaries (Table 5.A.4-1). However, as noted in the more detailed analysis of faculty salaries, improvements continue to be needed (section 5.A.4).

“UND libraries and existing resources are insufficient to support additional students and additional programs and disciplines, or provide access via increased, seamless computer-based usage.” (HLC Report, Page 21)

UND UPDATE L: Additional resources for UND libraries are a continuing need, as noted in the Opportunities for Improvement summary section of Criterion Three. However, the Chester Fritz Library, in conjunction with five discipline-specific libraries and a number of special collections (sections 3.D.4-c and 3.D.5-a), provides students and faculty with access to an extensive array of resources.

Comparisons of current holdings with holdings documented in 2004-05 clarify the changes that have occurred since the previous site visit. In 2004-05, the annual report for the Chester Fritz Library stated that the Library had 30,000 full-text electronic journals, 10,000 e-books, and 77 online databases. In 2012, the Library had increased access to scholarly resources to 49,000 electronic full-text journals, 55,000 e-books, and 85 online databases. A March 2013 report to the University Senate Library Committee indicated that the Chester Fritz Library expenditures have increased from $4,005,150 in FY 2008 to $4,729,861 in FY 2012.

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UND UPDATE M: Use of the Fighting Sioux nickname and logo has been discontinued (section 5.B.2).

“Documentation concerning campus grievance and disciplinary procedures is in a state of flux at UND, as are certain aspects of the policies themselves…. the process for filing faculty grievances against the administration and the faculty role in handling allegations against other faculty remain items of significant concern among faculty. It appears that more needs to be done to address concerns, the
UND’s new Diversity Advisory Council and the creation of the Ombuds Office are expected to improve the campus climate.

first step of which is the development of statements and where necessary policies and procedures acceptable to both faculty and administration on these matters.” (HLC Report, Page 25)

UND UPDATE N: Opportunities to collect information about campus grievance and disciplinary processes and policies are still somewhat in flux since the campus has very recently created and hired for a new Ombuds position on a pilot basis (section 2.A). The Ombuds will provide neutral informational services intended to help mitigate or resolve complaints or conflicts, without providing advocacy, to students, staff, and faculty. However, grievance policies for all University constituencies are readily and publicly available in a number of locations (section 2.A). Although grievances are regularly handled in accordance with those well-documented policies, an opportunity exists for the University to analyze patterns and trends in grievances in order to ensure that actions to prevent future incidents are taken when appropriate.

“The Report of Survey Findings, 2003, issued by the President’s Advisory Committee on Women, was forwarded to the team as part of the third-party comment process. Understanding that these Findings (which appear to require campus action) will be placed on the agenda for the next meeting of the Campus Climate Committee, the team supports this action and recommends that the committee make or commission a thorough analysis of the survey findings and make an appropriate response.” (HLC Report, Page 25)

UND UPDATE O: Two recent actions are expected to be useful, over time, in significantly improving the campus climate. The first is the appointment of UND’s new Diversity Advisory Council (section 1.A), convened in 2011 with a charge of making recommendations (section 1.C.1) designed to strengthen the institution’s commitment to diversity and inclusion, consistent with the University’s mission. One particularly significant early recommendation was for the creation of a new senior-level position (title to be determined) of chief diversity officer or the functional equivalent. That individual’s responsibilities likely will include pulling together initiatives that previously have been loosely organized but, taken together and strengthened, can enhance diversity, inclusion, and equity across the University. The second action is the decision to create an Ombuds Office (section 2.A) for the campus on a pilot basis. Among the duties of the newly hired Ombuds officer will be the identification of patterns that may contribute to a negative campus climate and reporting those to leadership. Once such patterns are identified, it will be possible to examine policies and procedures that can correct problems and contribute to a healthier climate.

“The institution needs to continue to seek additional ways to increase diversity among faculty, staff, and students.” (HLC Report, Page 25)
UND UPDATE Q: The institution continues to monitor and encourage (section 4.B) regular assessment activities through the actions of the University Assessment Committee, the Essential Studies Committee, and the Director of Assessment and Regional Accreditation. Moreover, many assessment activities are now thoroughly integrated into various teaching and learning initiatives (section 4.B.4), thus further embedding assessment into the life of the University. Continued organizational attention, however, remains essential even several years into the work.

“Many departmental level plans focus on assessment at the course level, with a focus on ‘my course’ rather than on ‘our program.’ Assessment at the departmental level needs to attend to what all graduating seniors in that program need to know and be able to do…” (HLC Report 2008, Page 7-8

UND UPDATE P: The need for identifying strategies that will increase campus diversity is clearly recognized and has been responded to through two actions. First, President Robert Kelley created the Diversity Advisory Committee (section 1.C) charged with helping to create and maintain a diverse, welcoming, and inclusive campus environment. Second, in response to recommendations from the Diversity Advisory Committee, President Kelley has approved the creation of a senior-level leadership position in the area of diversity and inclusion (section 1.C.1). These institutional actions are intended to both increase diversity and increase support for students and others from diverse backgrounds. In addition, the University currently maintains an array of programs designed to enhance and support diversity, with a particular focus on American Indian populations (section 1.C.1).

Response to 2008 HLC (Focused) Site Visit Team Comments

Four additional recommendations were made following the 2008 HLC site visit focused on assessment. Those recommendations were further explicated in the consultation (advancement) section of the report, and two additional recommendations were offered. UND’s actions in response to the focused visit comments are summarized below.

“The focus on an intentional and structured approach to assessment is relatively new at the University of North Dakota….Thus, continued organizational attention needs to be paid to the progress of implementation of assessment plans in all areas.” (HLC Report 2008, Page 7)
that may lend themselves most readily to course-level assessment strategies.

Expectations for participation in course-level assessment for purposes of Essential Studies, as part of program accreditation, or as one component of a program assessment strategy may occasionally contribute to confusion about the appropriate level for assessment. Departmental assessment reports, however, regularly refer to programmatic rather than course-level outcomes, even though data may be collected in specific courses.

“More attention needs to be paid to assessment at the graduate level.” (HLC Report 2008, Page 8)

**UND UPDATE S:** Fewer graduate than undergraduate programs are subject to programmatic accreditation. This may result in a somewhat diminished incentive for assessment among faculty responsible for graduate programs. Furthermore, many graduate programs are small in comparison with undergraduate programs in the same departments, meaning that generating enough data to see clear trends may take a period of years. As a result of these factors, assessment of graduate programs may continue to lag that of undergraduate programs to some degree.

However, significant improvements have been made in assessment of graduate programs. Graduate faculty are typically expected to score program learning outcomes demonstrated through theses, dissertations, independent studies, and cumulative exams. In addition, graduate program review emphasizes assessment, including loop-closing activities, as reported by the program in question. The result has been considerable progress in assessment of graduate-level programs. “The feeling persists among some faculty and chairs that assessment activities are responses to external pressures and demands…UND needs to monitor, recognize, and reward the efforts of faculty and staff who are committing their professional time to the assessment initiative.” (HLC Report 2008, Page 8)

**UND UPDATE T:** The need for rewarding the efforts of faculty and staff who are committed to assessment above and beyond normal expectations for its integration into the teaching and learning enterprise remains and is reiterated in the Criterion Four summary section titled “Opportunities for Improvement.” However, the institution’s success at integrating assessment with teaching and learning initiatives has been very helpful in reinforcing the value of and providing intrinsic motivation for engaging in assessment (section 4.B). Furthermore, it is increasingly the case that faculty expect that resource requests will fare better if supported by assessment findings. Finally, the annual May Assessment Luncheon is one example of a recurring campus activity that now incorporates the involvement of faculty who have conducted or overseen exemplary assessment work. This faculty involvement both celebrates their achievements and provides models of best practices in assessment for peers in similar programs. Simple strategies such as these are increasingly interwoven into normal institutional activities to reinforce the value of contributions to assessment.
As the UND updates demonstrate, faculty, staff, and administrators at UND have taken site visitors’ comments very seriously, and a number of changes have been made in response to findings from both the comprehensive visit and the focused visit. Since the comments by their nature were intended to highlight the university’s challenges and areas for action, it is not surprising to see that needs remain in several of the areas noted. However, the progress has also been significant. A fuller picture of the university’s progress in each of these areas, and information about the change processes that have led to the progress described, is included within the five criterion chapters of this self-study.

“The team strongly encourages UND to continue this appointment [of an Essential Studies director] on an ongoing basis, preferably assigning the directorship to a tenured faculty member....” (HLC Report 2008, Page 5)

UND UPDATE U: The Essential Studies Director has remained as a permanent, ongoing position, held since its creation by a tenured faculty member (section 3.B.2).

“While these [Essential Studies] goals are similar to the goals in the UND mission statement, there are a sufficient number of differences to make it seem that UND has two sets of institutional goals. It would be very helpful to the implementation of the Essential Studies program if the program goals and mission goals were more closely aligned....The arrival of a new president at the same time that the Essential Studies program is being launched could provide the opportunity, however, for UND to revisit the official UND Mission Statement....” (HLC Report 2008, Page 5)

UND UPDATE V: Although the mission statement has not been revisited, the Exceptional UND vision (section I.A) was developed through a massive and inclusive process, and the strategic priorities identified in that vision serve to guide institutional decision making. Development of the Essential Studies program preceded Exceptional UND, but the priority of enhancing student learning aligns well with the aims of Essential Studies. As is noted in the summary section of Criterion One, it would be appropriate at this point to revisit the mission, bearing in mind both the strategic vision and the goals identified for Essential Studies, and engage in a campuswide process for further strengthening alignment.

Summary

As the UND updates demonstrate, faculty, staff, and administrators at UND have taken site visitors’ comments very seriously, and a number of changes have been made in response to findings from both the comprehensive visit and the focused visit. Since the comments by their nature were intended to highlight the University’s challenges and areas for action, it is not surprising to see that needs remain in several of the areas noted. However, the progress has also been significant. A fuller picture of the University’s progress in each of these areas, and information about the change processes that have led to the progress described, is included within the five criterion chapters of this self-study.
THE SELF-STUDY PROCESS

In 2010, a draft timeline for the 2013-14 reaffirmation of accreditation process was developed by Joan Hawthorne, Director of Assessment and Regional Accreditation, and approved by Paul LeBel, then Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs. This plan projected a three-year effort culminating in an on-campus site visit from the HLC team in the fall of 2013. This section describes events in the process and chronicles the endeavors of the more than 120 individuals who volunteered to help with the self-study.

Self-Study Leadership

In September of 2010, two tenured faculty were selected to team with Joan Hawthorne as co-chairs for the self-study process: Patrick O’Neill of the Department of Economics in the College of Business & Public Administration and Donna Pearson of the Department of Teaching & Learning in the College of Education & Human Development. Meetings of the three-person Leadership Team occurred throughout the fall of 2010, resulting in the development of a more detailed timeline, a reporting model, and lists of specific responsibilities to be assigned to the various teams that would be involved in the self-study effort. Co-chairs for each of the five criterion areas were appointed by Provost LeBel, in conjunction with the Leadership Team, during the spring semester. Figure 1.C.1-1 provides a three-year overview of the process as envisioned.

Although some changes were made to the slate of individuals serving over the course of the self-study process, the original Steering Committee was composed of the Leadership Team, the Provost
Preparing the Five Criterion Chapters

Beginning in the fall of 2011 and working through changes in criterion titles and core components as the HLC finalized new criteria language, members of the five criterion teams began the process of collecting data related to the various core components and subcomponents. (Figure 1.C.2-1) The evidence collection phase of the process was, functionally, a massive, multi-participant research project. Documenting the items of evidence was a primary need, addressed through efforts of the Advisory Committee (identified elsewhere as the Tech Planning committee). By spring, the criterion teams were conducting preliminary analyses and summarizing their findings. Members of the Steering Committee agreed that providing two-page summaries of the various chapters would be useful for discussion within the committee itself but also as a preliminary overview of findings for review by the Provost and other university administrators. Each summary included three major headings: strengths, challenges/weaknesses, and areas for improvement. Steering Committee meetings were spent reviewing and interpreting the findings, a process that proved useful for co-chairs of the various teams.

The focus for the third and final year of preparation was on writing, rewriting, and editing, with many iterations needed. Each criterion team developed its own process for completing the writing. While some teams chose to divide the work with various team members writing individual sections, others gathered the data centrally and left the writing in the hands of the co-chairs or a small group of writers. Once chapters began to come together, they were shared with the Leadership Team (Paul LeBel at that time; the position is now held by Thomas DiLorenzo), and the criterion co-chairs:

- Criterion 1: Roxanne Hurley and Steve Moser (Jeff Powell was added in spring of 2013)
- Criterion 2: Kathleen Gershman and Cara Halgren (Brett Goodwin appointed as a replacement for Halgren in fall of 2011)
- Criterion 3: Jim Mochoruk and Lori Robison
- Criterion 4: Mark Hoffman and Donovan Widmer (Janna Schill was added in spring of 2012)
- Criterion 5: Peggy Lucke and Jeffrey Sun

The Executive Committee included the three members of the Leadership Team and the Provost. The Associate Vice-President for Academic Affairs, Steve Light, was added to both the Steering Committee and the Executive Committee during the first months of self-study activity, and served an active leadership and oversight role as operational proxy for the Provost.

Despite changes in personnel, the reporting model as originally developed remains structurally identical to the final version (Figure 1.C.1-2). The model demonstrates reporting lines and linkages that were designed to ensure ease of communication, which was recognized as critical in managing the work flow throughout the self-study process. Effective communication was also viewed as essential to addressing concerns and resolving problems that would arise in conjunction with finding or analyzing evidence.
Team for review and feedback. Meeting with co-chairs of individual criterion teams, the Leadership Team members evaluated evidence and asked questions designed to aid co-chairs in clarifying intended meanings and conclusions.

After an iterative process of revisions and editing by criterion team members and the Leadership Team, chapter drafts were reviewed by the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Provost. Additional minor revisions preceded each open forum. Near-final versions of the five criterion chapters were posted for review and comment by members of the University community during the spring of 2013, in conjunction with open forums held on each criterion area. Final revisions, both substantive and stylistic, followed the forums, with feedback from the University community taken into account.

Publicity Collaboration

To assist in creating campuswide awareness of the HLC, the reaccreditation process, and the linkages between the self-study process and UND’s own Exceptional UND strategic priorities (section I.A), a Publicity Task Force was created under the direction of Leadership Team member Pat O’Neill. Members of this task force created a website interface that documented the University’s self-study efforts. The newly revamped site built on initial efforts to be publicly transparent about the process but provided enhanced maneuverability and began establishing a foundation for linkages between a clearer Exceptional UND brand and the self-study.

Among its other efforts, the Publicity Task Force planned and organized a series of five open forums for presentation and discussion of findings from the
criterion areas. All campus community members were encouraged to attend the HLC forums to hear preliminary results of the self-study process. The open forum objectives included informing the public of the self-study findings and requesting feedback to be used as input for the final report to the HLC. Each forum began with introductory comments from a member of the Leadership Team, followed by a presentation of findings from criterion co-chairs. Attendees (live and online) were invited to ask questions during the forum and, after the forum concluded, provide feedback using an online form. Attendees were also informed that any additional questions could be sent to Joan Hawthorne, a member of the Leadership Team, after the forum. Each forum included a reminder that feedback would be crucial not only for finalizing the criterion chapters but also for the longer-term aim of building on the Exceptional UND vision through use of self-study findings.

The University Letter, an electronic campus newsletter, and supplemental email "blasts" to members of the University community were used to publicize the times and locations of all open forums. Links to the online versions of the self-study chapter drafts, four-page summary documents for each of the five chapters, and the feedback form were also highlighted in the publicity materials. Open forums in spring 2013 occurred according to the following schedule:

- Criterion 1–Mission; Thursday, March 7
- Criterion 2–Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct; Tuesday, March 19
- Criterion 3–Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support; Tuesday, March 26
- Criterion 4–Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement; Tuesday, April 2
- Criterion 5 –Resources, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness; Tuesday, April 9

The final opportunity for feedback from members of the University community concluded in May of 2013 in order to provide sufficient time for the extensive close editing, technology integration, and production process to finalize the self-study.

Technology Integration and Final Document Production

Once final revisions had been completed, the next step was to work with criterion team partners from the Center for Instructional and Learning Technologies (CILT). A CILT staff member had been assigned to each criterion team, and those CILT staffers worked with co-chairs to ensure that each link in the self-study document was live and connected to the correct piece of evidence. Additional time was spent, once the links were in place, making the shift from a "working document" of individual chapters to a cohesive "electronic document" featuring photographs, figures, working links, and a consistent template for the entire self-study.
HLC Site Visit

In preparation for the actual site visit in October of 2013, UND’s self-study report is expected to be sent to the HLC in August, eight weeks prior to the visit itself. Although final editing and refining continues as the document approaches completion, preparations for the on-site visit are already under way under the direction of Donna Pearson, member of the Leadership Team, and members of a Logistics Planning Team. A slate of discussions with individuals and groups, including the President, vice presidents, various directors and deans, members of key committees and constituencies, community leaders, faculty, staff, and students, is anticipated.

An overview of the entire effort is provided in the Figure 1.C.5-1.
LOOKING FORWARD

The publicity campaign, initiated through the Publicity Task Force as part of the process of preparing for reaffirmation of accreditation, is continuing into the fall of 2013 with numerous events designed to accomplish four main objectives:

- Launch Exceptional UND and its relationship to the self-study and HLC visit;
- Create awareness of the main results of the self-study and the HLC visit among the entire campus and external community;
- Coordinate with the Logistics group for publicity during the HLC visit;
- Continue the momentum of Exceptional UND and the self-study action items after the visit.

The aim of the publicity effort, like that of the self-study itself, is to enable the University to reap the full benefits of the self-study as a basis for continued development and growth of an Exceptional UND. As articulated in the self-study plan prepared by the Provost in conjunction with the Leadership Team, the long-term aim of the self-study and reporting process is to “benefit [UND] by sharpening our understanding of our progress and challenges in carrying out UND’s mission and fostering success in achieving the vision and priorities as articulated in the Exceptional UND initiative.” The insights gained through the self-study, documented here, are anticipated to accomplish that end.