CHAPTER 7
Conclusion

The University of North Dakota’s next steps.
Aims of Self-Study

When members of the University community started the self-study process, they were assured that the aim was to complete a study that would inform institutional planning of an “Exceptional UND” future as well as meeting the needs of the reaccreditation process. It was with that promise that criterion co-chairs were asked to serve and that members of the community were invited to express their willingness to serve on a criterion team. It was with that understanding that teams completed the research and embarked on the writing. And it is with that intention that we approach this final phase of the reaffirmation of accreditation process.

A number of changes have occurred during the writing of the self-study, some of which are reflected in the self-study itself and others that will be described in an addendum submitted prior to the visit from the Higher Learning Commission team. The institutional commitment to a meaningful self-study, however, has remained constant throughout the three-year process.

We are anticipating that conversations about the University’s Exceptional UND future, scheduled to begin this fall and continue over the next year and beyond, will result in a number of concrete goals and plans for reaching those goals. This self-study will provide much of the information, including summaries of both strengths and needs, required to inform continued planning. In fact, discussions about alignments between the accreditation criteria and the Exceptional UND vision, the institution’s five strategic priorities, and unit missions are already beginning in programs and units around campus. These actions are a result of continuing administrative commitment to the institutional mission and vision, to meaningful planning, and to maximizing self-study value.

Request for Reaffirmation of Accreditation

The promise of real value for the University was a compelling motivation for all who contributed to the self-study. Those at UND who compiled the evidence and reviewed the various chapters were also pleased to see evidence of significant institutional strengths related to each of the five accreditation criteria. In this self-study, we note those strengths with the aim of building on them in the future. We also identify weaknesses and areas of need that will become the focus of “next steps” in 2013-14 and beyond.

In sum, the self-study describes an institution that:

- Takes mission seriously, developing, through an intensive and extensive campus-wide process, a vision and strategic priorities designed to enact that mission;
- Aims to act with integrity and transparency in ways consistent with high ethical standards as well as requirements of North Dakota state law and expectations of the Higher Learning Commission;
- Recognizes the centrality of high-quality teaching and learning in all its courses and programs;
- Has made significant progress on assessment of learning and is committed to evidence-based practice as well as systematic institutional improvement;
- Has the benefit of a stable and increasing resource base, managed under sound administrative leadership and used to support appropriate institutional priorities.

Within this document and the associated links, readers will find the evidence used to draw these conclusions. We look forward to conversations about our findings and opportunities to continue learning through the team review process.

On the basis of this self-study and in accordance with the Commission’s processes, we respectfully request reaffirmation.