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It is with great pride that Lake Superior State University (LSSU) presents its 2011 Self Study report to the Higher Learning Commission in preparation for the visit scheduled for October of 2011. Our critical and evidence-based self study was conducted utilizing members of the LSSU community to provide information from all areas of campus. Criterion Teams reviewed and summarized the evidence, and provided summaries to writers and editors. It is LSSU's belief that this document represents a candid and thoughtful self-reflection on where our University currently stands and where the leadership can take steps to strengthen our future. The results of this study have provided LSSU with unique insights into its strengths and weaknesses and have refocused the University on the importance of strategic planning and assessment.

Early in the writing process, LSSU chose to utilize the thematic approach to construct its self study. As a result, the Self Study document is broken into four chapters; the overall themes are that LSSU is a Future-Oriented, Learning-Focused, Connected, and Distinctive University. Within each theme (chapter), the evidence supporting the appropriate core components of the five criteria for accreditation are presented and discussed. A [cross-walk](#) has also been provided that will assist readers in defining how the core criteria are distributed within the Self Study.

As a teaching institution, LSSU strives to provide students with a high-quality education through "Redefining the Classroom," a theme that speaks to LSSU's focus on experiential learning. This is a theme repeated throughout the Self Study as LSSU reaffirms the unique experiential learning opportunities that inform the education it offers. Building on this and other identified strengths (many high-quality programs, an engaged student body, strong learning-support systems, and high-impact educational practices), LSSU plans to engage in the process of [program prioritization](#) in the 2011-12 academic year in an effort to better align resources with programs best fitting the institution's mission. In the instances where LSSU has identified weaknesses, plans have either been developed and are underway, or committees have been formed to study the issue and make recommendations to appropriate administrative bodies for implementation.

As a result of engaging in this self study process, Lake Superior State University is better positioned to develop and advance its strategic plan, as guided by its mission and vision, in a manner consistent with its core values. Our focus is now clearly on planning for our future. The University looks forward to welcoming the Higher Learning Commission evaluation team.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tony L. McLain".

Dr. Tony L. McLain



## Welcome to Lake Superior State University

Lake Superior State University, situated on the Canadian border in Michigan's Eastern Upper Peninsula (EUP), is the smallest of the state's fifteen public universities. With a five-year average academic year enrollment of just over 3,100 students, the University, under Carnegie Classification, is considered a small four-year undergraduate institution with a professions focus and a single graduate program. Its admission process is moderately selective with an undergraduate mix for entering students of approximately 67% new freshmen and 33% transfers. For new freshmen, the average high school GPA is 3.2 and the average ACT Composite is 21. The University grants 111 baccalaureate degrees in such diverse fields as fire science, criminal justice, engineering, business, health sciences, environmental chemistry, fisheries and wildlife, conservation leadership, exercise science, applied geographic information science, English literature, communication, fine arts, psychology, and sociology. Additionally, the University offers a Masters in Curriculum and Instruction.

The University sits atop a hill overlooking the sister cities of Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan (population 14,144) and Ontario, Canada (population 75,000). The EUP is comprised of three counties with a total population of 56,254 spread over 3,486 square miles. The region is a four-season recreational paradise with three Great Lakes within 50 miles, thousands of acres of public access lands, and hundreds of miles of streams, rivers, and inland lakes. Students attending Lake Superior State University enjoy the opportunity to study in a unique international setting abundant in natural resources and historical significance.

Sault Ste. Marie has been inhabited by Native Americans for over 2,000 years and was founded as a European settlement in 1668 by Father Jacques Marquette, a French Jesuit missionary. It was the first permanent European settlement west of the Appalachian Mountains and is believed to be the oldest continually inhabited European settlement in the Midwest. It is home to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Locks; these are four great reservoirs that enable ships to pass from the lower Great Lakes to Lake Superior. These federal locks, dating back to 1855, and other attractions turn Sault Ste. Marie into a busy tourist area during the summer, drawing tens of thousands of visitors each year.

The Locks have an additional significance for Lake Superior State University. During World War II, about 15,000 troops were quartered in Sault Ste. Marie for the defense of the Locks, which were, of course, of vital economic importance to the United States. The soldiers were installed at Fort Brady, built in 1881 on the heights overlooking the city. After the war, the former frontier post made a remarkably successful transition to an institution of higher education when the land and facilities were bought by the Michigan College of Mining and Technology (now Michigan Technological University) to be used as an overflow site to accommodate the many returning veterans seeking to attend that institution on the G.I. Bill.

This site, known initially as the Sault Branch of Michigan College of Mining and Technology, has evolved over the last 65 years into the 115-acre institution of higher education which is Lake Superior State University—a unique blend of old and new construction which is a constant reminder of both its heritage and its future. As testament to the care with which the University has sought to preserve its history, several structures on the campus are listed in the National Register of Historic Places.



## Significant Developments Since 2001

The following timeline depicts significant events in LSSU's recent history that have impacted its ability to implement strategic plans, address financial issues, provide quality programs, and support its mission.

### 2001

LSSU is re-accredited by the Higher Learning Commission for ten years.

LSSU is awarded its second Title III Strengthening the Institution grant. The focus of the \$1.7 million, five-year grant is on technology.

Groundbreaking ceremony for the \$15.3 million Arts Center is held in July.

### 2002

Dr. Betty J. Youngblood becomes the fifth president of LSSU.

Women's basketball wins the Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (GLIAC) title.

### 2003

\$1 million fiscal year 2003 budget structural deficit is eliminated by one-time and permanent expenditure reductions, by position consolidations and eliminations, and by an academic reorganization that reduces the number of colleges from five to two.

First Annual Lakerpalooza, a fair with a carnival atmosphere for area businesses, non-profit groups, campus departments, student clubs/organizations, and more, is held.

### 2004

Athletic Training Education program is accredited.

Health Care Center is renovated to provide more and improved services to students, faculty, staff, and the public.

\$4.2 million capital projects funding is made available for electrical upgrade, IT cabling and equipment, and Banner Administrative software.

Three-year implementation of the Banner administrative software system begins; new phone system is installed.

Annual Banished Words List wins in the "Reads" category of PC Magazine's Best Undiscovered Web Sites (April 2004); the magazine's editors search the Web and award the best 100 sites in twelve categories.

### 2005

LSSU Arts Center opens in September. Early performances include the Detroit Symphony Orchestra and celebrated poet and novelist Maya Angelou.

Master's degree program in Curriculum and Instruction is added, representing the first graduate degree since discontinuation of the MBA several years earlier.

Three-year study of the St. Mary's River environment begins with the support of a grant of \$715,000 from the United States Environmental Protection Agency.

South Hall closed; School of Business, Economics and Legal Studies offices relocated to Library.

### 2006

\$1.6 million project for replacement, repair, and upgrading of Central Heating Plant approved.



## 2007

Dr. Rodney L. Lowman becomes the sixth president of LSSU.

\$300,000 private campaign to replace the floor in the Cooper Gymnasium is successfully completed.

Environmental Health degree program is accredited, making it the only one of its kind in the state.

Edison Sault Electric Company donates a 16,000 square-foot, three-story building to the Aquatic Research Laboratory (ARL) which will allow the ARL to nearly quintuple its present size and modernize its facilities to enhance undergraduate training and education at LSSU.

Prototype Development Center, a not-for-profit activity of the College of Engineering, Technology and Economic Development that provides fee-based engineering services to businesses, entrepreneurs, and inventors, is established.

## 2008

Self study process for reaccreditation begins with the establishment of the Steering Committee and the selection of the five subcommittees.

SmartZone, an economic development center focused on technology and operated as a partnership between LSSU and Sault Ste. Marie, is established.

## 2009

Dr. Tony McLain is appointed as interim president; search for LSSU's seventh president begins.

**Shared Governance System** developed to improve the collaborative process by which the University moves forward; implementation begins fall 2009.

LSSU-Gaylord established as an anchor four-year public university offering baccalaureate degrees at

the regional University Center, a partnership of two community colleges, three private universities, and two offsite public universities.

## 2010

Dr. Tony McLain named LSSU's seventh president.

LSSU announces a \$5 million expansion to Norris Center complex. Ground breaking is projected for spring 2012.

City of Sault Ste. Marie receives a 21st Century Communities (21c3) grant and begins collaborating with LSSU to establish a town/gown strategy integrated with the region's economic development.

Dearborn regional site is established as a partnership with Henry Ford Community College at the Dearborn University Consortium Center, Dearborn, Michigan.

Chemistry program is approved by the American Chemical Society (ACS) Committee on Professional Training.

## 2011

State of Michigan approves funding for planning of new School of Business Building.

Living Learning Houses are established: Chemistry, Engineering, and Criminal Justice/Fire Science.

Two LSSU public school academies—charter schools—qualify for "School of Excellence" status. These are the first Schools of Excellence established in Michigan.

Two new public school academies approved: Bay City Academy and Regent Park Scholars Charter Academy.



## Lake Superior State University Organizational Structure

Lake Superior State University, as an autonomous public institution of higher education, is governed by a Board of Trustees. The Board consists of eight residents of Michigan who are appointed by the Governor, with the advice and consent of the Michigan Senate, for staggered, renewable, eight-year terms. Trustees serve without monetary compensation. The University's President is an ex-officio, non-voting member of the Board. As the source of all legal authority in the University, the Board of Trustees exercises final control over, and accepts ultimate responsibility for, Lake Superior State University's assets, financial and legal obligations, and educational programs. It meets six times a year, as does its four standing committees: Personnel, Finance, Development, and Academic and Student Affairs. The activities of the Board of Trustees are set forth in its Bylaws of the Board of Trustees. Minutes from Board of Trustees meetings are available in the Library or upon request from the President's Office.

The Board-appointed President is the chief executive officer of the University. Acting on authority delegated by the Board, the President assumes primary responsibility for all of the University's educational, financial, and administrative functions. It is the President's responsibility to ensure that the University operates according to policies determined by the Board of Trustees, to articulate the University's needs as it moves toward the future, and to relay all pertinent University matters to the entire campus community. The President serves as the chief executive spokesperson for the University as it carries out its multiple roles defined by the University's mission, vision, and goals. Lake Superior State University's current president, Dr. Tony McLain, was appointed as president by the Board in April 2010. Prior to his permanent appointment, McLain had been serving as the University's interim president since June 2009, filling the vacancy left by then-President Rodney Lowman.

Lake Superior State University's President has delegated authority over the major operational activities of the University to the following: Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs; Vice President for Student Affairs; Vice President for Finance; Vice President for Enrollment Services; and Executive Director of the Foundation.

Lake Superior State University's second-in-command is its chief academic officer, the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. Academic Affairs is organized into four Colleges, twelve Schools, and eighteen Departments. In addition to monitoring the academic programs, the Provost oversees the Division of Academic Services, Regional Centers, Sponsored Programs, Information Technology, Public School Academies (charter schools), and International Studies.

Mr. Maurice Walworth has held the position since July 2010; previous to his appointment as Provost, Walworth held the position of Dean of the College of Engineering, Technology and Economic Development for four years.

Lake Superior State University's finance and business operations are overseen by the Vice President for Finance. The Vice President for Finance administers the business and fiscal affairs of the University in the areas of business operations, financial planning, physical plant, and campus bookstore. Additionally, the Vice President for Finance serves as Treasurer of the Board of Trustees as well as Treasurer to the Foundation Board of Directors. Ms. Sherry Brooks has held the position since May 2009.



Lake Superior State University's third vice president is the Vice President for Student Affairs. As the chief student affairs officer, the Vice President oversees the development, assessment, and improvement of the campus environment along with overseeing student programs and services. Dr. Kenneth Peress has held the position since January 2007.

Enrollment Services, Lake Superior State University's fourth major operational activity, is overseen by the Vice President for Enrollment Services. As the chief enrollment and student retention officer, the Vice President provides leadership for establishing and achieving university goals for recruitment and retention of students and for the development of a campus culture of involvement in enrollment management. Mr. William Eilola has held the position since May 2006.

In addition to the Board of Trustees, President and Vice Presidents, Lake Superior State University is guided by the following councils:

## President's Cabinet

Presided over by the President, the President's Cabinet serves as an executive-level advisory group that establishes the administrative procedures necessary to implement Board policies; assists in administrative decisions; considers all budget and enrollment matters; regulates the use of University facilities; and determines the appropriate committees to study and/or make recommendations on all University-related issues. The current membership includes the four Vice Presidents, the Executive Director of the Foundation, and the Directors of Human Resources and Athletics. Cabinet meeting minutes are available by contacting the President's Office.

## Provost's Council

The Provost's Council is chaired by the Provost and consists of the five deans and two associate deans. The Council serves as the principal academic advisory body to the Provost. It formulates academic policy for the University and reviews, evaluates, and makes recommendations regarding all academic courses and programs. Provost's Council minutes can be found in the Resource Room.

## Student Government

The Lake Superior State University Student Government consists of four elected officers, twelve elected representatives, and one appointed member (Operational Manager). The Vice President for Student Affairs serves as advisor. Officers of the Student Government serve for one academic year and are not financially remunerated for their service. Representatives meet every week during the academic year and have as their stated purpose:

- 1) to provide for full student representation in all matters pertinent to student affairs;
- 2) to promote all things of value and of general benefit to the students and also the University; and
- 3) to assist in the creation and coordination of all student organizations (Constitution of the Student Government).



A revised Constitution and Bylaws of the Student Government became effective in May 1997, with amendments in February 2010, following approval by the Board of Trustees. The President of the University consults with the Student Government in appointing all student representatives to University committees. Student Government meeting minutes can be found in the Resource Room.

## LSSU Employees

Lake Superior State University's employees are grouped into one of three classifications: Administrative Professionals, Faculty, and Educational Support Professionals. The latter two classifications are guided by collective bargaining agreements with the Board of Trustees.

### Administrative Professionals

This employee group consists of all regular full and part-time employees who do not qualify for bargaining unit membership in either the faculty or support staff unions. Membership consists of the University president, vice presidents, directors, deans, coaches, accountants, information technology analysts, and several part-time employees.

### Faculty

The Lake Superior State University Faculty Association consists of 120 full-time and regular part-time faculty members, librarians, and licensed professional counselors. LSSU is affiliated with the Michigan Education Association and the National Education Association (MEA/NEA). The Faculty Association provides a forum for faculty members to discuss academic issues and policies and to make recommendations to the University. Through its elected representatives, the Faculty Association also negotiates with the University to determine all major aspects of the employee-employer relationship as set forth in a membership-ratified, three-year Faculty Agreement. The Agreement defines rights and responsibilities of both faculty and the University; it includes an academic freedom policy, a four-step grievance procedure culminating in third-party arbitration, and a delineation of the faculty's role in academic procedures. The current Faculty Agreement is in effect until August 31, 2013.

### Educational Support Professionals

The Lake Superior State University Educational Support Professionals consists of a spectrum of full-time employees, including full-time office/clerical employees; building attendants; carpenters; electricians; equipment operators; general repairmen and landscapers; painters; steam plant operators; preventive maintenance mechanics; public safety; and food service employees. This constituency organized as a collective bargaining unit in 1969 as a chapter of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME). In 1985 the group switched affiliations to the MEA/NEA and in 2006 again changed its affiliation, this time to United Steelworkers. In 2010 this employee group returned to its affiliation with the MEA/NEA. Like its faculty counterpart, the unit is governed by a three-year contract which sets forth the terms and conditions of employment and clearly establishes the rights and responsibilities of all parties involved. The current Agreement remains in effect although its original expiration date was September 30, 2009. Educational Support Professionals are represented on all major University-wide committees.



## Administrative Transitions

Since 2001, Lake Superior State University has been led by four presidents, six provosts, four financial vice presidents, four student affairs vice presidents, three deans/directors of enrollment management, one vice president for enrollment management, and three Foundation executive directors. Two vice presidential positions, one for marketing, the other for information technology, were created but subsequently eliminated. In addition, the institution welcomed eleven new Board of Trustee members, underwent three academic reorganizations, and weathered a multitude of administrative realignments. The first decade of the new century found LSSU in a state of constant flux. The frequent changes in personnel limited the effectiveness of leadership efforts and hampered communications.

## LSSU Points of Pride

Lake Superior State University is proud of its consistent focus on three major aspects of its mission that most clearly delineates its character as an institution of higher learning. These aspects encompass its educational approach, the continuity and effectiveness of its community outreach, and the scholarly success of its students and faculty.

## Experiential Learning

LSSU prides itself in its ability to offer numerous programs with significant experiential learning opportunities. Through this reflective type of learning, students are able to take the theoretical concepts they've learned in the classroom and apply the concepts to real-world situations. In most circumstances, faculty members guide the experience as mentors, resources, and evaluators. Many of the degree programs require, or offer, these experiences throughout the student's entire four years of study. Other programs utilize capstone experiences to achieve this goal.

## Community Collaborations

In its desire to be proactive, the institution has initiated several significant collaborations with the community. Some examples include: pursuit and successful designation as a SmartZone in the state of Michigan; expansion of the role of the Environmental Analysis Laboratory and the Aquatics Research Laboratory; acquisition of a Michigan planning grant (with the city) to transform Sault Ste. Marie from a city with a college to a "College Town"; creation of a speakers' bureau; support of student success programs and summer camps; and ongoing discussions for revitalization of administrative support for the River of History Museum. The collaborations have helped to promote entrepreneurship, fill unmet needs, provide summer educational experiences for middle and high school students, and generally strengthen the community.

## Student Success

LSSU celebrates the successes of its students. Whether it's job placement, earned awards, or acceptance to graduate school, LSSU strives to recognize the success of its students. Faculty routinely report student success stories to the campus community and beyond. Information is provided to the Provost's Office or to Public Relations where the story can be edited and disseminated. Whenever possible, these stories are distributed to media outlets and/or the student's hometown.



## Faculty Research

For a University whose primary mission is teaching, Lake Superior State University is still able to boast of active faculty research in many areas. Faculty members often pursue research activities in which undergraduate students act as collaborative partners. The research provides another means for experiential learning for students while providing professional development for the faculty. Most funded research has occurred in the science and engineering fields, but other areas such as the social sciences are beginning to become active in the pursuit of funds to engage students in these activities.

## Accreditation History

Lake Superior State University was established in 1946 as a branch campus of the Michigan College of Mining and Technology (now Michigan Technological University) and was accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools from 1946-68 as part of its parent institution.

In 1966, by action of the Michigan Technological University Board of Control, the Sault Branch became known as the Lake Superior State College of Michigan Technological University. In the same year, in conjunction with the Michigan State Board of Education, Lake Superior State College was granted status as a four-year, degree-granting institution and application was submitted to the North Central Association for an operationally separate accreditation.

A third successful North Central Association review in April 1981 extended accreditation for another ten-year period. At this time, the evaluation team also recommended that accreditation be granted to the new Master of Business Administration program, with a focus visit to be conducted in three years. This visit took place in April 1984 to: (1) review the current status of the Master of Business Administration program; and (2) re-examine the fiscal picture of the State of Michigan as it specifically related to Lake Superior State College in carrying out its mission, an area of some concern in the 1981 evaluation report. This focus visit resulted in no change in affiliation status, and the next comprehensive evaluation was confirmed for 1990-91.

The 1991 comprehensive visit extended accreditation for another ten-year period. Visits focusing on the MBA program occurred in 1994 and again in 1998. The 1998 team recommended that a report be submitted by January 2000 indicating that the University had corrected the remaining concerns. In April 1999, a task force appointed jointly by the President and the Faculty Association President delivered its final report, which contained a systematic assessment process to guide the decision-making process for implementing or retaining graduate programs. The MBA program was assessed by this process, and it was determined that the program did not meet the standard necessary to continue as a graduate program. A subsequent report was submitted in January 2000 on the elimination of the MBA program and the status of the teach-out plan. Affiliation status was revised to indicate accreditation at the Master's degree level, limited to the MBA until August 31, 2003, and to the MPA until August 31, 1999, to enable the teach-out of both programs

LSSU's last comprehensive review was conducted in February 2001. Accreditation was extended for a ten-year period with a progress report required on plans for and accomplishments in addressing issues of diversity and assessment. The report was submitted in April 2005 and accepted in October 2005.



In August 2004, the Commission conducted a focused visit to review LSSU’s application for approval of the Master of Arts in Curriculum and Instruction degree program. The subsequent approval required a June 2008 progress report that included assessment of the graduate students’ experience, including student learning outcomes and student satisfaction, along with LSSU’s evaluation of the program’s viability in terms of initial enrollment numbers and financial status. The Commission accepted the report with no further reports required.

For the last few years, the Commission has been concerned with the University’s low composite scores. The reported composite ratios, found in Table I, had been between 0 and 1.0 for more than two consecutive years. Ratios in this range are considered “In the Zone” which is cause for concern for the University and the HLC, requiring a review of the institution’s financial performance. The most recent year-end report, June 30, 2010, shows improvement in the composite score—calculated as 1.4, the most positive turnaround in five years. For public universities, anything above 1.1 is considered “Above the Zone” which shows a positive trend.

Table I: Composite Ratio Scores

FY 05	FY 06	FY 07	FY 08	FY 09	FY 10
1.1	0.9	0.8	0.9	0.9	1.4

The low scores of 2006-2009 are reflective of the University’s large operational deficit and its trend of declining net assets, captured in Table II. In 2010, the operational deficit was reduced by almost \$550,000. The trend of declining net assets has not reversed, but the 2010 decline was not as significant as in previous years. Both of these factors strengthened the financial position of the University as evidenced by the improved composite score for 2010.

Table II: Operational Deficit and Net Assets

	FY 05	FY 06	FY 07	FY 08	FY 09	FY 10
<b>Operational Deficit</b>	(2,064,975)	(2,025,669)	(2,913,820)	(2,479,436)	(2,343,549)	(1,794,026)
<b>Net Assets</b>	60,555,842	58,553,758	54,604,946	51,732,504	47,388,885	46,934,527
<b>Decrease in Net Assets</b>	NA	2,002,084	3,948,812	2,875,442	4,343,619	454,358

According to interim financial analysis for fiscal year 2011, the operational deficit will decrease again between \$400,000 and \$500,000. Net assets will still show a negative trend and will continue to do so in fiscal year 2011 because funds were again not available for significant capital investment. The composite score will be better than 1.1 at the end of fiscal year 2011 if preliminary estimates are achieved.

The recent improvement in financial position can be attributed to both controllable and non-controllable factors. The controllable factors include careful budgeting and monitoring. The non-controllable factors include lower utility bills due to mild weather and positive market adjustments. In addition, the University experienced a modest enrollment growth in the Fall 2010, a growth attributable to enrollment and retention efforts.

Given the fact that sources and uses of university operational funds are largely constrained, it will be necessary to receive a capital appropriation from the State or a significant donation for capital improvements to reverse the



negative trend in net assets. This is likely to occur in the next two years as the University has been approved by the State for planning its School of Business Building; in addition, the University has received a pledge of a significant donation for improvements to the Norris Center Facility.

The University also needs to fund deferred maintenance and adequately fund replacement reserves; it has begun to address this to the extent possible. The housing and food service auxiliaries have reinstated budgeting plans that call for a percentage of revenue to be allocated to reserve and replacement. This percentage was 4% beginning in fiscal year 2010 increasing to 6% for fiscal year 2012. In addition, the amount budgeted for plant improvements in the General Fund increased slightly in 2011 and 2012.

Although the institution has been subjected to budget cuts and seen limited capital outlays or improvement, it has made the adjustments necessary to prepare balanced budgets and spend accordingly with improving results.

## External Accreditations

Although the institution has been subjected to budget cuts and seen limited capital outlays or improvement from the State for new construction, it has maintained and added to its list of nationally-accredited programs. This serves as an indication that attention has remained focused on the quality of instruction. In addition to its accreditation by HLC, Lake Superior State University has programmatic accreditations by the following external accrediting bodies: the Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education (CAATE), the Engineering Accreditation Commission (EAC) of ABET, the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress, the National League for Nursing Accreditation Commission, the National Environmental Health Science and Protection Accreditation Council, the Technology Accreditation Commission (TAC) of ABET, and the American Chemical Society Committee on Professional Training.

## Response to 2001 Team Visit

When the HLC team visited in 2001, it identified four concerns that LSSU needed to address:

**Team Concern 1:** *There is no clear, consistent, agreed-upon understanding of what Lake Superior State University should do and be in the future. A coherent common vision is essential to effectively develop and manage human and financial resources.*

## LSSU Response

The 2001 team characterized planning at the University as more tactical than strategic. The Strategic Plan developed by the campus community and adopted by the Board in 2003 was clearly strategic and served as a useful guide during the budgetary challenges the University faced between 2002 and 2005.

The University's next review of its strategic plan began in October 2004. The new goals developed as a result of discussions focused on assessment, enrollment growth, and revenue enhancement. The president and provost visited each academic unit during the academic year to discuss the goals and identify objectives. The [revised strategic plan](#), finalized at a Board of Trustees retreat in July 2005, guided the institution from 2005-08.



The HLC team, while observing that the University had clear and publicly stated purposes that were understood and supported by various constituencies, noted however, “that there is no consistent and agreed upon understanding of what LSSU should do and be in the future.” In 2009-10 as part of the developing shared governance structure, the Strategic Planning and Budget Committee (SPBC) was formed. In the summer of 2010, guided by a strategic planning consultant, a cross section of campus constituencies participated in an intensive two-day strategic planning workshop. As noted in the final report, “The planning process resulted in agreement on a vision and strategy to ensure that LSSU continues to fulfill its mission and the expectations of its constituents.” The draft strategic planning document included seven strategic initiatives for future planning. During the 2010-11 academic year, the SPBC held several campus-wide small group sessions that led to the generation of a number of general activities that supported the seven strategic initiatives. Shortly after the small group sessions, the LSSU community participated in an online survey providing the SPBC with further insight as to the relative priority of the suggestions submitted during the sessions.

Parallel with this process, the SPBC purposefully set aside about \$120,000 to be used to fund activities that would allow LSSU to pursue some of the strategic initiatives. Members of the campus community were asked to submit ideas, budgets, time lines, resource needs, and projected outcomes for projects they felt would benefit the entire campus and eventually result in partial fulfillment in meeting the strategic goals. Fourteen proposals initially met the basic criteria and moved to a second round of review. Of those, six received funding totaling about \$120,000. The SPBC will track these projects over a one-to-three-year time period (depending on the proposal’s time line) and require reports on progress towards meeting the stated objectives. These activities will begin implementation starting July 1, 2011. Details regarding the evaluation process and proposals submitted will be available in the Resource Room.

Lake Superior State University appreciated the HLC team’s advice regarding its planning activities and is pleased to be able to provide evidence of its strategic planning activities since its last accreditation visit.

**Team Concern 2:** *More focused attention must be placed upon the planned recruitment, systematic development, continued support, and careful nurturing of the University’s most important resource—its faculty—for LSSU to achieve its vision and mission.*

## **LSSU Response**

Lake Superior State University recognizes its faculty as vital to its success. New procedures for faculty searches have been implemented to ensure a consistent and fair process of faculty recruitment and selection.

Starting in academic year 2011-12, a new faculty mentoring program, a training program for promotion and tenure application submission, and a new sabbatical application process will be implemented. Additionally, efforts towards developing a common instrument for faculty/course evaluation will begin.

In Fall 2010, a group of LSSU faculty came together to organize a series of peer discussions on teaching. The "It's All About Teaching" sessions have included presentations on such topics as using active-learning techniques, handling situations in which students divulge personal information, understanding instruction as



performance, and managing student evaluations of faculty members. The sessions, well received by faculty, are considered a precursor to the establishment of an on-campus Teaching Center.

Since Fall 2006 the University has started each academic year with a half to full day dedicated to faculty development. Topics covered have included assessment, risk management in experiential and service learning courses, academic writing and publishing, and various forms of learning technology.

As an incentive for further faculty development, the new indirect cost policy, instituted in July 2010, funnels 40% of the indirect cost recovered by the University back to the schools and departments for professional development activities. This action allows faculty members to see a direct connection between their scholarly activity and the University support of such activity.

**Team Concern 3:** *The significant and important campus-wide efforts to implement systematic assessment practices will not be embedded in the campus culture unless all units move beyond the collection of data. The campus must commit to the use of assessment results to assure improvement of student learning, institutional effectiveness, and delivery of services.*

## **LSSU Response**

When it accepted Lake Superior State University's 2005 progress report on assessment, the HLC staff *concluded that each unit had advanced beyond the level of assessment in which it had engaged at the time of the comprehensive visit.* The staff noted that the plan for assessment of general education outcomes was less clear and observed that *the challenge now is to demonstrate to students and stakeholders the achievement of the broader institutional outcomes.*

As will be discussed in detail in Chapter Two, in the past ten years Lake Superior State University has broadened its understanding of the multiple approaches toward assessment. It has strengthened its commitment to measuring student success by embracing educational measures that are embedded in learning activities rather than traditional course work and exams alone. A growing number of faculty members are demonstrating a willingness to engage with, and commit to, effective assessment practices. At the department level, assessment activities that have moved beyond the mere collection of data are becoming more prevalent. In late fall/early spring of the 2010-11 academic year, the Provost's Office informally administered the Higher Learning Commission's Assessment Culture Matrix. The matrix was distributed to all college deans and school/department chairs. The deans and chairs were asked to rank their school/department using the Pattern of Characteristics grid. Additionally, they were asked to describe assessment activities at the University in general by checking each descriptive statement that applied to LSSU.

The results of the survey indicate that while most deans and chairs believe that their areas are "making progress in implementing an assessment program," the University as a whole is still in the beginning stages of implementation. Based on these results, the University's next steps toward embedding systematic assessment practices in the campus culture will focus on coordinating the cross-campus assessment efforts, as well as putting in place a college-wide structure that supports, tracks, reports, and promotes these efforts. A more



detailed discussion of the University's current and ongoing plans for assessment can be found in Chapter Two's "Assesses Student Learning" and "Strengthens Organizational Learning" subthemes.

**Team Concern 4:** *The University lacks diversity in its campus community. While nearly ten percent of the University's students are Native American, diversity among employees and representation of other American minorities should be sought. Most importantly, LSSU needs to integrate a commitment to diversity through its academic curriculum and campus activities.*

## LSSU Response

In its acceptance of Lake Superior State University's 2005 progress report on diversity, the HLC staff concluded that the University *has addressed the challenges identified by the team. The staff further observed that the University realizes that its efforts must be ongoing.*

As is discussed in Chapter Three's "Serves the Common Good" subtheme and Chapter Four's "Appreciates Diversity" subtheme, Lake Superior State University has continued to demonstrate a commitment to diversity. Chapter Three identifies the various ways diversity is addressed in the University's mission and planning documents as well as in its supporting activities. Chapter Four describes the specific goals of the University's diversity planning efforts.

## Self Study 2011

Symptomatic of the multiple changes in executive leadership (discussed in Chapter One), Lake Superior State University's self study process, since its organizational meeting in January 2008, has started and stalled multiple times. The process began with a large, representative group of faculty and staff. The 38 members were divided into five criterion groups with co-chairs; a steering committee was formed and a writer/editor selected. The Criterion groups met periodically, reviewing the reaccreditation requirements and other institutions' self studies. Documents were collected and data needs began to be identified. The arrival of a new provost in the summer of 2008 generated a renewed sense of institutional commitment to the self study process and some adjustments to the timeline and process were made. A new writer/editor was assigned and the steering committee membership was revised. The self study, however, was not immune to increasingly lower morale on campus and its progress soon began to lag.

In August 2009, with the appointment of the third provost since the start of the University's self study process, an external consultant familiar with HLC's reaccreditation requirements and expectations, as well as the editor of LSSU's successful 2000 Study, was engaged. The consultant's duties included coordinating the self study process as well as the writing/editing of the report. Despite the hiring of the external consultant, progress on the Self Study report continued to stagnate. In Spring 2010, with the institution's Fall 2010 reaccreditation visit looming on the horizon, the University, in consultation with its HLC liaison, requested that the site visit be rescheduled for Fall 2011. The request was approved by the Commission.

In July 2010, with the appointment of Lake Superior State University's current provost, the fourth since the start of the University's self study process, the University reviewed and revised all facets of its self study procedures, goals, and report. The organization of the study shifted from a focus on the five criteria to a focus on the four



themes. Concomitantly, it was determined that while there were benefits to having the writing and editing of the report done by the experienced consultant, if the University was to fully embrace the self study, its coordination and development must be brought back onto campus. To that end, a committee of the four vice presidents, two deans, two faculty members and the institutional research analyst, referred to as the Evidence Team, was formed. The Provost reassigned the writing of the report to the institutional research analyst with the intent that the other members of the Evidence Team would coordinate the collection of documents and data necessary. Additionally, a professional editor would be hired. Five months into this new process, it became apparent that the successful completion of the self study would require multiple writers; hence the Provost as well as the Vice President for Student Affairs and a faculty member well versed in assessment each took charge of a self study chapter with the Vice President for Enrollment Services drafting the chapter on Federal Compliance. The editor would provide the single voice.

The addition of the Evidence Team to the self study structure of criterion groups and steering committee was originally intended to coordinate the activities of the other groups. However, after multiple attempts to engage the original members of the groups and committees, it became apparent that—given the length of time, the uneven progress of the self study process, and the “late hour” restructuring of the report into a thematic approach—the criterion groups and steering committee had become distanced from the process. All original criterion group and steering committee members continued to participate, as they so chose, as each draft of the self study was shared with them for review and comment.

One of the initial tasks of the Evidence Team was to review the self study goals. While the original goals adequately described the University’s intent, the Evidence Team chose to update and strengthen the language of each goal to better illustrate the institution’s desire that the self study be an opportunity to emphasize the importance of improvement and accountability. Lake Superior State University’s self study goals, adopted in July 2010, were as follows:

- 1) Achieve full continuing accreditation; demonstrate LSSU’s capacity to perform as an institution of higher education; create a culture of accountability.
- 2) Identify major strengths and key areas for improvement, providing focus on the areas of improvement to inform, promote, and advance the continued development of the institution’s strategic plan.
- 3) Perform a comprehensive analysis of campus-wide assessment planning structures, processes, and products in order to advance the institutional goal of shared governance and continuous improvement.
- 4) Follow clear guidelines that ensure the self study is a process that is:
  - Conducted with integrity
  - Based on evidence and data
  - Focused on departmental activities and their support of the University’s mission
  - Concise, precise, and transparent



While Lake Superior State University's self study process has been fraught with challenge, the end result has become a design for the University's future. The postponing of its reaccreditation by one year enabled LSSU's new leadership to take charge of the self study process, ensuring its success. For Lake Superior State University, the self study process was not approached simply as a requirement for reaccreditation but rather as an opportunity to reevaluate its priorities. As a result, just as it strives to *redefine the classroom*, LSSU as a whole is redefining itself as a University that will be well-positioned for the future.

## Organization of Self Study

Lake Superior State University's Self Study is built upon HLC's four cross-cutting themes that describe an organization as future-oriented, learning-focused, connected and distinctive. Each of the four major chapters addresses one of these themes. Each chapter is further organized around sub-themes established by HLC in its *Exploring the Usefulness of Cross-Cutting Themes as Context for Evaluation* document. Within this thematic framework, the Self Study discusses LSSU's strengths, challenges, and areas that require improvement. It also focuses on the five HLC Criteria at the beginning of each sub-section. Evidence of meeting each of the Criteria follows.

The University chose this non-traditional, holistic approach to its self study as a means to better describe the University and all its interrelated functions. Choosing the thematic approach has enabled LSSU to present itself in the context of what has been and what will be. The purposeful selection of the cross-cutting themes as a guide to the University's self study has resulted in a document that will continue to be relevant beyond the institution's Fall 2011 comprehensive visit.

To aid the reader in aligning the five Criteria and their Core Components with the cross-cutting themes, a [cross-walk is included in Appendix A](#).



“Redefining the Classroom” at Lake Superior State University is a theme that permeates this self study as it does the institution itself. This theme incorporates the four HLC cross-cutting themes: Future Oriented, Learning Focused, Connected, and Distinctive. In Chapter One, the Self Study documents how the University’s commitment to the future involves actions and plans that make it possible for the University to prepare its students with the requisite skills and self-confidence to face the world of the 21st century. True to its mission, LSSU provides experiential learning opportunities for its students that reshape the nature of their post-secondary education. Redefining the classroom enables LSSU graduates to move seamlessly and successfully from the world of the mind to the world of their chosen profession.

Chapter One examines the historical development of LSSU’s mission and vision statements that demonstrate a common purpose that has driven the University’s response to social, economic, and technological change over the years of its existence. The chapter details how the University implements strategic planning and aligns its resources to support lifelong learning; it also describes the transformative nature of the new technologies in the classroom.

## Sub-Theme: Lake Superior State is Driven by its Mission

In this sub-theme, Lake Superior State University provides evidence that it meets the following core component:

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

Since its founding in 1946 and its subsequent autonomy in 1969, Lake Superior State University’s mission and vision has been to serve the region and State by offering forward-looking undergraduate programs in engineering and the sciences while simultaneously providing a well-rounded liberal arts education. Since its inception, LSSU has been committed to offering applied technology and baccalaureate degrees and providing regional services and community enrichment activities.

Historically, Lake Superior State University’s adopted mission statements have clearly and broadly defined the institution’s primary mission as providing a quality undergraduate education in a small college setting. External agencies have agreed. From its initial classification as a *general baccalaureate* institution by the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) in 1985 to its current Carnegie Foundation classification as *Prof-F/NGC: Professions focus, no graduate coexistence*, Lake Superior State University has been committed to offering academically rigorous programs that not only equip students with the skills to meet their career goals but also prepare students for an informed life in an evolving and changing society.

At the time of the previous HLC visit in 2001, the mission and vision statements guiding the institution, originally adopted in 1994, were the following.

### Mission (1994 – 2002)

Lake Superior State University is a co-educational, public institution that recognizes as its primary mission the offering of challenging undergraduate programs and services to students and other constituencies from its region and from the rest of Michigan, Northern Ontario, and the near Midwest.



Lake Superior State University accomplishes its mission by presenting a personal approach to education through a small, collegial, and diverse community in which all its constituencies share in the teaching, research, and regional service activities of the institution. In this supportive environment, students, staff, faculty, and administrators demonstrate high regard for one another as valued members of the community, thus providing opportunities for emotional and social maturation as well as intellectual growth.

Every educational program at Lake Superior State University acknowledges its commitment to an integrated relationship between the professional/technical and liberal arts fields. That relationship fosters the development of students as contributing citizens, viable professionals and fulfilled, caring individuals. The University's international setting complements its efforts to present unique educational experiences, expand students' perspectives, and foster their ability to critically evaluate ideas and information.

## **Vision (1994 – 2002)**

The vision of Lake Superior State University is to provide the highest quality personal educational experience for students in the State of Michigan and beyond.

Our vision is to create and maintain a welcoming and personal environment for students, employees, alumni, and visitors from diverse backgrounds—to be a catalyst for individual and professional growth within an international setting.

Our vision is to effectively serve the needs of the region while fulfilling the University's fundamental educational mission.

In 2002 under the leadership of Lake Superior State University's fifth president, a campus-wide dialogue was begun which resulted in the Board of Trustees adopting a revised mission and vision statement in November of the following year.

## **Mission (2002 – 2007)**

Lake Superior State University empowers capable and responsible students in the pursuit of academic excellence. Faculty, staff, and students value rigorous education, collaborative learning, flexible and innovative programs, and a safe and supportive environment. Honoring the history and traditions of the people of Michigan and Ontario, LSSU offers a balanced education in arts, sciences, and professional studies. LSSU graduates are broadly educated for personal and professional success in a diverse and rapidly changing world.

## **Vision (2002 – 2007)**

Lake Superior State University aspires to be the university of choice in Michigan, Ontario, and beyond for students seeking high-quality academic programs and services in a personal and supportive learning environment. The University is committed to meeting regional needs, serving a diverse and growing student population, enhancing institutional resources, and maintaining accountability to all constituents.



In October 2007, the arrival of a new president and leadership once again led to the decision that the institution's mission and vision statement should be revisited. The process began with a campus-wide mission/vision survey. A campus committee with representatives from faculty, staff, and students was formed to review the survey results. The committee's deliberations culminated in new mission and vision statements along with, for the first time, a separate statement of institutional values. At its March 2008 meeting, the Board of Trustees approved the two statements.

## **Mission/Vision (2007 – present)**

Our principal mission at Lake Superior State University is to help students develop their full potential. We do this by providing high-quality, academically rigorous programs in an engaged, personal and supportive environment. This combination nurtures potential and sets students on paths to rewarding careers and productive, satisfying lives. We also serve the regional, national, and global communities by contributing to the growth, dissemination, and application of knowledge.

## **Values Statement (2007 – present)**

- be honest, open, forthright, and courteous
- respect and value each person as an individual
- accept responsibility for our own conduct
- be diligent in carrying out our responsibilities
- welcome diverse perspectives and remain open to change and innovation
- manage resources and facilities responsibly and with environmental sensitivity
- be vigilant about potential threats to health or safety
- work cooperatively in the interest of achieving our common mission.

Since 1994 the language of Lake Superior State University's mission and vision statements have changed, but the underlying theme has not. Lake Superior State University, as indicated by its Carnegie Classification, is an institution whose primary mission is undergraduate education in the arts, sciences, and professional studies.

## **LSSU is Engaged, Personal, and Supportive**

Just as LSSU's primary mission has not changed, neither has its educational approach. LSSU's approach to education has always been to recognize the student as an individual. Throughout its history, the institution's educational approach has been to provide a personal experience in a safe and nurturing environment for each and every student. In so doing, LSSU has redefined the classroom experience for its students.

Lake Superior State University's current mission/vision statement continues the institution's tradition of a personal education by noting that the institution's approach to education is *engaged, personal, and supportive*.

Student engagement is especially notable within the academic disciplines whether it be capstone projects, real-world experience in laboratories, or services provided to the community. A few examples of student engagement at LSSU include:



- Sociology students conduct capstone projects that include research on why adults aged 20-30 years have the lowest rate of volunteerism; how cultural differences affect perceptions of homelessness; and how ethnic self-identity and cultural participation may be used as a tool to assist in the identification of people at a high risk for suicide.
- Student nurses provide blood pressure screening clinics, do elementary school presentations on health topics, and participate in the local Community Action Agency's Senior Visiting Program and Home Safety Program.
- Fire Science students give annual fire safety presentations to elementary schools and day care centers.

Just as Lake Superior State University's approach to education is engaged, so is it *personal*. LSSU recognizes that an important component to a student's success starts with self empowerment. Through its Native American Center, Health Care Center, Learning Center, Career Services, Counseling Services, and Campus Life, LSSU actively provides opportunities for students to develop a keener awareness of healthy living, to cultivate sound study skills, and to prepare for the job market. A few examples of LSSU's personal approach to education follow:

- The Learning Center provides seminars/workshops on topics such as how to get involved on campus, how to meet with professors, how to identify one's learning styles, and how to develop effective study strategies.
- Career Services begins working with students as freshmen, providing one-on-one career preparation. Services include assistance with preparing resumes, portfolios, personal statements, and graduate school applications, as well as guidelines on networking for jobs. Additionally, small group activities include etiquette dinners, business interview etiquette, career webinars, and classroom presentations.
- The Native American Center is dedicated to servicing the needs of Native American students by providing programs that support and enhance their educational experience as they work toward their educational goals. The Center serves as a transition center/resource for students, acts as a liaison to the Native American community, and provides culturally-related services to the campus community. The Native American Center is also dedicated to preserving and teaching about local Native American culture, history, and traditions by providing a facility available for educational, ceremonial, and social activities for Native Americans as well as interested members of the public.

Lake Superior State University's *supportive* approach to education can be considered the tie that connects the engaged to the personal. LSSU prides itself on the services it offers that link students' individual needs to resources and opportunities that enable them to be successful academically.

- The Learning Center – provides academic support services and strategies for success for all enrolled students. Services include supplemental instruction, discipline-specific peer coaches, web-based learning systems, and reading, writing, and math labs.



- Disability Services – provides accommodations for students with a disability including accommodated testing, assistive learning technology support, and advocacy.
- Counseling Services – provides short-term psychotherapy, group therapy, outreach/education, resources and referrals, and consultation.
- Campus Life Services – provides an Honors house for the Honors Program students. In addition, discipline-specific housing is being developed to support Living and Learning environments for Criminal Justice/Fire Science, Engineering, and Chemistry students.

### **LSSU Serves the Regional Communities**

LSSU was originally founded in 1946 as a branch campus of what is now Michigan Technological University to meet the needs of the region. Today, its purpose is no different. Lake Superior State University's academic offerings span from one-year certificates to graduate-level studies. Public Act 26 of 1969 established LSSU as an *institution of higher education having authority to grant baccalaureate degrees*. The Public Act notes that LSSU's facilities *shall be made available equally and upon the same basis to all qualified residents of this state*. Additionally, the Act granted LSSU the authority to *offer technical, vocational, and occupational programs of less than 4 years collegiate degree level*. Other than LSSU, only three other Michigan public universities are able to confer degrees below the baccalaureate level. Over the years this authority, coupled with LSSU's post-secondary role as a regional institution, has come to be described as LSSU's "community college mission." This institutional nomenclature has been subject to much debate. Today however, it is well understood that Lake Superior State University's community college role is actually that of a regional university offering one-year certificates and associate degree programs in addition to its undergraduate and graduate degrees.

In 2004, recognizing the professional development needs of P-12 educators in the region, Lake Superior State University successfully obtained a change in its accreditation status to allow delivery of a Master of Arts in Curriculum and Instruction. The new graduate program provides educators in the region with the opportunity to complete 18 hours of graduate-level courses as required by the State for their professional teaching certification. Additionally, the new program allows provisionally or professionally-certified teachers to earn a Master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction. Previously, educators without these credentials would have to drive 250 miles south, or 180 miles west, to the nearest university to obtain professional certification or a Master's Degree.

### **LSSU Serves the National and Global Communities**

As the institution continues to meet regional needs, it also acknowledges, as reflected in the current mission/vision statement, that it *serves national and global communities*. At first blush this appears to be an expansion of the institution's mission, but it is not. It is an acknowledgement of the University's place in an evolving, global society. As borne out in the two previous mission statements, LSSU has always recognized its responsibility towards serving the larger community. Today the institution's service area is defined less by geographic borders and more by the programs it offers and the opportunities it provides. Distance Education has enabled LSSU to offer programs nationally. In addition, in alignment with its international setting, LSSU



remains committed to providing its students with opportunities, both curricular and co-curricular, that broaden their exposure beyond our borders. For example:

- Since 2008, through The College Network™, LSSU has been offering its Fire Science program to students as far away as California.
- Currently in progress is the establishment of an International School of Public Health Inspection/Environmental Health program through a partnership between LSSU and Sault College in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario. This effort is supported by the Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion as well as a local health unit, Algoma Public Health.
- Licensed Practical Nursing students gain clinical experience in Canadian hospitals in both pediatrics and women’s health. Additionally, BSN students have the opportunity to work directly with tribal peoples on both sides of the border.
- In the past four years over 50 students have participated in a for-credit summer program in China. Students explored China and experienced the culture first-hand by studying at a Chinese university and visiting four cultural and historic cities.
- In 2009, eight students representing multiple disciplines participated in an international studies course in Africa. The students designed research projects that were conducted during their study abroad as well as participated in a service learning project.
- Since 2000, over 200 LSSU students have studied abroad in 14 different countries. Many entailed faculty-led study abroad programs that involved language immersion opportunities or general education credits based on the international experience.

## **LSSU Provides High-Quality, Academically-Rigorous Programs**

As evidenced by its mission statement, Lake Superior State University understands that a student’s potential is nurtured through the combination of its educational approach and the *rigor of its academic programs*. To be successful, these programs must remain current. For example, new degree programs in Applied Geographic Information Science and Electrical Engineering Technology, both established in 2009, introduce students to new technology and applications that enable them to *seek rewarding careers* in areas where there is a growing demand for skilled employees. Similarly, students enrolled in LSSU’s new degree program, Conservation Biology, also first offered in 2009, will graduate prepared for careers in which they can make a contribution to mitigating wide-ranging environmental challenges, hence *contributing to the growth, dissemination, and application of knowledge*. Finally, recognizing that many graduates eventually assume leadership roles, LSSU has added three new degrees to its academic programming: Sports and Recreation Management, Conservation Leadership, and Business Administration–Management. The academic rigor of all three programs establishes the foundation that will enable the students enrolled to *develop their full potential*. The new programs also signal that LSSU is a forward-looking university that tries to anticipate the needs of its constituencies.



## LSSU Students Learn Social and Civic Responsibility

All three iterations of LSSU's mission and vision statements described in the Self Study report speak to preparing the student to be a productive and socially responsible citizen. Being a productive member of society demands that one be socially responsible. It means acting with concern and sensitivity and being aware of the impact of one's actions on others. Social responsibility has consistently been at the core of Lake Superior State University's mission. In 1994, the mission statement included language to describe the expectation of social responsibility: *students, staff, faculty and administrators [demonstrate] high regard for one another as valued members of the community*. In 2003 the words changed to *Honoring the history and traditions of the people of Michigan and Ontario*, but the intent was the same: responsibility to a larger society.

In 2008, based on a campus-wide survey, the Board of Trustees adopted a Values Statement that articulates the many attributes of responsible citizenry. Results of the survey are reflected in the institution's Values Statement. Lake Superior State University faculty, staff, and students first and foremost believe that behaving ethically, responsibly, and honestly are key to responsible citizenry. Secondly, the survey showed that members of the LSSU community agree that responsible citizenry includes reliability and openness. Other attributes the campus community considered a part of responsible citizenry include working cooperatively, being worthy of trust as well as trusting others, being accepting and welcoming of people from all backgrounds.

During their stay at Lake Superior State University, all students are exposed to the tenets of responsible citizenry through the completion of the general education requirements for their degrees. Additionally, many academic programs build into their discipline curricular and co-curricular activities to deepen a student's awareness of social responsibility. Similarly, many of LSSU's student organizations are involved in community projects that actively demonstrate the principles of social responsibility. For example:

- Exercise Science students promote health and fitness around the campus and community, including fund raising for other organizations/charities.
- Students Enhancing Environmental Knowledge (SEEK) is a student organization that focuses on environmental education on campus and throughout the local community.
- Campus Greek Chapters provide support and fundraise for such causes and charities as Cystic Fibrosis, Epilepsy and Diabetes, Sexual Violence Prevention Team, Breast Cancer Awareness, Testicular Cancer Awareness, and Habitat for Humanity.

Lake Superior State University's focus on providing quality academic programs has never been in question. The three versions of the institution's mission and vision statements bear this out. In 1994, the institution noted that offering *challenging programs and services* was a key element in its primary mission. In 2003, LSSU's vision was to meet the needs of students who were seeking *high quality programs*. The current mission/vision statement notes that the institution provides *high-quality, academically-rigorous programs*. In addition to its externally-accredited programs, (such as Engineering and Nursing), the high quality and academic rigor of



LSSU's programs can be demonstrated by its graduate school placements and student publications and presentations. These are discussed in the "Scholarship" subsection of Chapter Two.

## **Sub-Theme: The University Understands Social and Economic Change**

In this sub-theme, Lake Superior State University provides evidence that it meets the following core component:

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

Since the last HLC visit in 2001, Lake Superior State University has encountered many challenges in the midst of serious economic and social change. Nonetheless, the University has risen to the challenges in the broader society by reassessing its priorities and adjusting the allocation of its resources accordingly. The HLC Accreditation Criteria have been helpful in this regard.

Perhaps the most challenging aspect of the last decade has been the decline in the State of Michigan's economy and the social changes that have resulted from that decline. The State's Senate Fiscal Agency notes in its report *The Michigan Economy and State Revenue: A Ten Year History (1999-2009)* that *Michigan's economy has suffered through one of the most difficult periods in history*. The State has balanced its budget over the past decade through one-time budget fixes, federal stimulus funding, and cuts to an area that contributes strongly to economic growth: higher education.

In June 2010, Georgetown University's Center on Education and the Workforce released its report *Help Wanted: Projecting Jobs and Education Requirements Through 2018*. The report forecasts that 63% of all jobs will require at least some post-secondary education by 2018. According to the report, between 1973 and 2008, the share of jobs in the U.S. economy which required post-secondary education increased from 28% to 49%. In the coming decade, as the country shifts ever more towards a *college economy*, the report notes that high-school graduates and dropouts will find themselves left behind as the employer-demand for a college-educated workforce continues to surge.

In Michigan, the need to increase its pool of post-secondary-educated citizens is not new. Historically, the educational attainment level of the State's population of twenty-five years and older has trailed behind the nation. According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2006-2008 American Community Survey, the percentage of the U.S. population that has earned a baccalaureate degree or higher is 27.4%; for Michigan it is 24.7%. In Chippewa County, where Lake Superior State University is located, the number is a stark 18.3%. On average, the attainment rate of a baccalaureate degree or higher in the Michigan counties from which LSSU draws most of its students is approximately 22%.

### **The Cherry Commission**

In June 2004, then Governor Jennifer Granholm announced the formation of a commission on higher education and economic growth. Led by then-Lieutenant Governor John D. Cherry, Jr., it was known as the Cherry Commission. The commission was charged with identifying strategies to double the number of Michigan residents with degrees and other post-secondary credentials of value within ten years. The 41-member



commission's six month effort resulted in a report (a copy is available in the Resource Room) that included 19 recommendations. The 19 recommendations supported the Governor's three primary goals to:

- build a dynamic workforce of employees who have the talents and skills needed for success in the 21st century economy;
- improve the alignment of Michigan's institutions of higher education with emerging employment opportunities in the State's economy; and
- double the percentage of citizens who attain post-secondary degrees or other credentials that link them to success in Michigan's economy.

The repeated across-the-board reductions in state appropriations for the fifteen public institutions have, arguably, disproportionately impacted Lake Superior State University since it has far fewer students over which to spread its administrative, utility, and health care expenses. However, despite the severe cuts to its budget, there is no question Lake Superior State University and its students are positioned for the future. To achieve this end, LSSU supports the future-oriented State level Cherry Commission Goals. This support is evidenced in the institution's review and development of new programs to ensure that the institution meets these designated goals.

## Building a Dynamic Workforce

Lake Superior State University's commitment to support the first goal, a dynamic workforce, can be found in many of its academic disciplines:

- The School of Physical Sciences' Environmental Analysis Laboratory (EAL) provides expertise in environmental science and health issues. The lab, staffed in part by undergraduate chemistry and environmental science students, is the only environmental analytical laboratory in Michigan's Eastern Upper Peninsula. EAL students have successfully found employment in other environmental labs across the country.
- Students in the School of Business who participate in LSSU's chapter of Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE) gain experience in such areas as market economics, entrepreneurship, environmental sustainability, and business ethics.
- The College of Engineering, Technology and Economic Development (CETED) houses the Product Development Center (PDC) which provides engineering, technology, and business students access to real-world experiences via entrepreneurial projects. Students apply classroom theories to projects which result in numerous prototypes, new products, and innovative systems deployed throughout Michigan.
- Many students in Political and Social Science consider pursuing a career in politics or law after completing a BS degree at LSSU. The institution provides them with on-campus opportunities to test their skills in this highly competitive field. Students can work for the campus newspaper, run for student



office, participate in the College Democrats or Republicans student groups, work on political campaigns, participate in Student Government or in the Model United Nations Conference. LSSU has been very involved in the Model UN Program, successfully hosting the event in 2003 and again in Spring 2011.

- Professional educators seeking to update their teaching certification participate in a course, EDUC 605, which explores the underlying principles of inquiry, a project-based approach to teaching; they also learn how the approach can be accommodated in the classroom.

## Aligning Higher Education with Emerging Employment Opportunities

Since 2004, Lake Superior State University has added fifteen new baccalaureate degree programs that are clearly aligned with Michigan's emerging employment opportunities, the second goal of the Cherry Commission. Recent examples include:

- Geospatial technology has been recognized by the U.S. Department of Labor as a high-growth industry. A baccalaureate in Applied Geographic Information Science was added in 2008.
- In response to Michigan's Department of Natural Resources identification of a growing need for fish health expertise, LSSU began offering a degree in Fish Health in 2008. At that time there were no other known undergraduate Fish Health programs in the country.
- In Michigan there is a growing interest in building local sustainability by using energy and natural resources efficiently and equitably. A Conservation Leadership degree, added in 2009, prepares students for careers as managers of conservation organizations and community sustainability projects.
- In 2010, in response to the federal demand for professionals in Homeland Security, LSSU added a Homeland Security emphasis to its already well-established Criminal Justice degree.
- In 2005 the State of Michigan changed the professional credential requirements for practicing social work employees. In response to the new requirements, LSSU established the baccalaureate degree, Sociology-Social Services.

Many of LSSU's long established programs are also well positioned to meet the needs of the new economy. Nursing enrollments have seen significant growth, limited only by the institution's capacity to deliver the program. The School of Engineering and Technology houses one of only two undergraduate-level robotics specialization programs among the nation's public universities. Graduates of the program have a near 100% placement rate. Also key to the success of students enrolled in LSSU's engineering programs is the Product Development Center (PDC). Through the PDC, many students have the opportunity to work on entrepreneurial projects during their undergraduate education. Past projects include work for larger companies such as Energizer as well as developing innovative product ideas for local entrepreneurs.

In the sciences, Lake Superior State University has seen enrollment growth in its physical and natural sciences programs. The longstanding programs of Chemistry, Biology, Fisheries and Wildlife, and Geology all have



growing enrollments as do the newer programs in Forensic Chemistry, Medical Laboratory Science, Environmental Health, and Environmental Chemistry. Since 2009, enrollments have doubled in two of LSSU's newest programs: Conservation Biology and Applied Geographic Information Science.

## Increasing the Number of Citizens with Higher Education Credentials

The Cherry Commission's third goal of doubling the percentage of citizens with a college degree or other credentials in ten years is a necessary goal if Michigan is to remain competitive at the regional, national, or global levels. Should Georgetown University's Center on Education and the Workforce's projection (available in the Resource Room) prove correct, Michigan must reach upwards of 60% improvement in educational level by the year 2018. This is an almost 40% increase from the 2000 U.S. Census-reported educational attainment level of 27%. Striving towards the Cherry Commission goal of doubling the percentage of those holding a post-secondary degree or certificate will be critical to the region's future. Lake Superior State University understands this and seeks to increase its student enrollment to meet the Cherry Commission's goals.

Since 2006, in response to the Cherry Commission's third goal, Lake Superior State University has proactively enhanced its new student recruitment strategies to include a larger prospect pool by dividing its primary recruitment areas into territories and assigning these areas to admissions advisors. This change has increased the number of prospective student contacts. Social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube are also being utilized to attract students. As a result, LSSU has seen a significant increase in its application pool and a gradual but steady increase in its new student enrollments. Concomitant to its broad-based recruitment strategies, LSSU has increased its local recruitment activities by implementing on-site admission events at local high schools, hosting Admitted Student Receptions both on-campus and in Sault Sainte Marie, Ontario, and coordinating local school visits to campus. The result of these efforts has been an increase in applications and enrollments at LSSU.

## Ensuring Students are Prepared

Just as there are regional differences in educational or degree attainment levels across the state, there are also significant differences among its population groups. In an effort to increase its prospect pool and to retain enrolled students, LSSU has sought to tap into underrepresented populations. A population of particular interest at Lake Superior State University is Native Americans. Over the past five years, on average, LSSU's undergraduate and graduate Native American enrollment has been 8%. This concentration exceeds that of the 14 other public universities in Michigan. Most of LSSU's Native American students reside locally in Chippewa County whose Native American population is among the highest in the State.

Recognizing the unique needs of the Native American population, Lake Superior State University established a Native American Center, Eskoonwild Endaad, in 1993. Today the Center is staffed by one director and houses the grant-funded GEAR UP program. To increase the degree attainment of the Native American—or any—population, that population's participation in higher education activities must be increased. To this end, LSSU has in place programs, services, and activities that not only serve students already enrolled at the institution but also actively reach out to middle and high-school-age students. For example, in 2008 LSSU was successful in



obtaining National Science Foundation funding for its Geological Reasoning and Natives Investigating the Earth (GRANITE) program. This three-year, \$200,000 program targets Native American tenth- and eleventh-grade students. Students participating in the two-week summer geo-science program travel to a variety of important sites of geologic and Native American significance across the northern United States. Participants study, hike, and camp while learning geology field skills and using computers and other technology to study geologically interesting sites. As described in the project summary, *the program integrates Native American explanations of physical phenomena with scientific explanations so that students individually construct the linkages between ways of thinking scientifically and ways of knowing from within their culture.*

College preparedness is fundamental to an individual's success in post-secondary education. Studies show that students today are arriving at college doorsteps less prepared than their counterparts ten years ago. As more students from varying backgrounds and cultures seek post-secondary education, varied learning styles have become more apparent. Lake Superior State University's Student First/Individual Plan for Academic Support and Success (IPASS) and Michigan Campus Compact/GEAR UP programs, along with the federally funded TRIO Upward Bound program, are examples of the institution's commitment towards preparing and supporting diverse students for the rigors of higher education.

LSSU's Student First program, developed by the institution's Learning Center staff, targets new freshmen whose ACT scores and high school GPA indicate they may be at risk academically. Learning specialists work with students individually, engaging in directed and intrusive academic advising to assess a student's unique set of barriers to successful learning. This engagement results in an individualized plan for academic support and success. The IPASS program, targeting returning students on academic or financial aid probation, is similar in nature and structure but with a different target population.

Upward Bound, successfully hosted by LSSU since 1966, is a college-preparatory program for low-income and first-generation high-school students from local school districts. The program is a highly successful and sought-after service in the region. It is a federally-funded TRIO program that provides the target group of first generation and/or low income high-school students with intensive, individualized college-preparatory services.

Recognizing the growing number of students that require need-based financial aid, Lake Superior State University has reassessed its institutional aid award policies in an effort to increase the dollars available to students in financial need. The urgency of Lake Superior State University's efforts towards reviewing its need-based institutional financial program has increased significantly as the State of Michigan, in its efforts to reduce its budget deficits, has eliminated a large portion of funding historically used for post-secondary need-based aid. After some reductions in the LSSU need-based Grant Program at the beginning of the decade, the University has made a renewed commitment beginning in 2006 and has increased its annual spending from \$68,357 in 2005-06 to \$257,962 in 2009-10.

An important constituent in the State of Michigan's pursuit of doubling the percentage of the State's college graduates are adult learners who may have started working towards a college degree but did not complete it, or may never have started their post-secondary education. "Return to Learn" was a rallying cry in 2005 by then-



Governor Jennifer Granholm, encouraging adult learners to return to college to earn a degree. Declaring the month of November, “Return to Learn” month, the Governor challenged all Michigan post-secondary institutions to actively seek out adult learners. Lake Superior State University answered the call in 2005 and continues today to be responsive to returning learners. Services to adult learners include:

- *Service men and women:* LSSU maintains reduced tuition rates for active-duty members of the Coast Guard as well as for National Guard active-duty members. Additionally, LSSU offers courses at the local Coast Guard Base.
- *Michigan Works!:* The Michigan Works! System, the first unified workforce development system in the country, provides services designed to prepare job seekers for employment and provide skilled applicants to employers. LSSU has partnered with MI-Works! to provide services in the areas of career training and retraining and vocational testing.
- *The Learning Center:* Through its IPASS program, the Learning Center staff works closely with adult learners, by first developing individualized plans that address learners’ academic and skill-level needs and then monitoring learners as they progress through their course work.

## Sub-Theme: The University Engages in Planning

In this sub-theme, Lake Superior State University provides evidence that it meets the following core components:

2b – The organization’s resource base supports its educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.

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

## Strategic Planning at LSSU

Strategic planning is a vital element in the success of any organization. A strategic plan is a set of decisions about what to do, why to do it, and how to do it. With a focus on the future, the process implies that some organizational decisions and actions are more important than others. Essential elements to a successful strategic planning process include effective leadership, communication, and assessment. Unlike the typical top-down business model of strategic planning, shared governance in university management dictates that strategic planning be a consensus-building process. Effective leadership and communication encourage faculty involvement; assessment validates the consensus-building nature of the strategic planning process.

Since the Higher Learning Commission’s last visit in 2001, the institution has undertaken four distinct strategic-planning processes. In the first three processes, the essential planning elements of leadership and communication were evident whereas the presence of the third element, assessment, was marginal. The current strategic planning process, embedded within a formalized structure of shared governance, is designed to include assessment as well as the elements of leadership and communication.



The strategic plan in place at the time of Lake Superior State University's last HLC reaccreditation visit was the result of a three-year process that included over 300 faculty, staff, students, Trustees, and community leaders. The strategic plan's four goals and 53 objectives guided Lake Superior State University's decision-making processes from 1994 to 2002.

During the five-year tenure of Lake Superior State University's fifth president, Dr. Betty J. Youngblood (2002-07), the institution underwent two separate strategic-planning processes. The first one, commencing shortly after the president's arrival, was conducted by a 35 member committee comprised mostly of faculty with a few appointed members. The committee's efforts resulted in the Board of Trustees adopting a revised University mission and vision statement along with four strategic goals and their objectives. The four strategic goals follow:

- Revitalize the institution through mission-based resources.
- Provide academic programs in the arts, sciences, and professions which demonstrate excellence and relevance for students.
- Capitalize on LSSU's location in the natural and human environments of the upper Great Lakes region.
- Improve institutional outreach and collaboration with internal and external constituencies.

Each goal had two to six objectives tied to it.

In October 2004, the institution again revisited its strategic goals. This process, facilitated by a strategic planning consultant, led to a new set of goals and objectives adopted by the Board of Trustees in February 2005. The goals, drafted by a committee comprised of vice presidents, Board members, the student government president, a faculty representative and the president of the support staff bargaining unit, guided the institution from 2005 to 2008. The five goals follow:

- Provide academic programs in the arts, sciences, and professions which demonstrate excellence and relevance for students and other constituencies.
- Assess and improve other University programs, facilities, and all student services to ensure a strong focus on students as well as other constituencies.
- Increase and diversify financial resources.
- Effectively market LSSU to improve name recognition.
- Achieve enrollment growth.

Similar to the 2003 strategic plan, each goal had two to four objectives tied to it.



In 2007, with the arrival of Lake Superior State University's sixth president, Dr. Rodney Lowman, the institution returned to the initial stages of the strategic planning process once again. Like those of his predecessors, the first few months of President Lowman's tenure were spent meeting with campus departments and student government as well as becoming acquainted with individuals at the city, county, state, provincial, and national levels. The president also met with key state legislators, members of the Governor's staff, and other ranking State of Michigan personnel.

As a result of the campus discussions and an environmental scan, the President—with input from the President's Cabinet—drafted a preliminary strategic plan that was then presented to the campus community in February 2008. After further refinement, the plan was approved by the Board of Trustees in July 2008. The twelve-page [strategic plan](#) included the following four strategic objectives:

- Increase the number of students served by the University.
- Retain already-enrolled students.
- Increase revenues from non-tuition income.
- Increase net revenues through better cost and investment management.

Each strategic objective had an action plan tied to it.

In the summer of 2010, the University again chose to revisit its strategic planning initiatives. At the request of the Board of Trustees, an outside facilitator, Traverse Management Resources (TMR), was engaged to lead the Board and a broad range of campus representatives in the development of a renewed three-year strategic plan. The planning process resulted in participant agreement on “a vision and strategy to ensure that LSSU continues to fulfill its mission and the expectations of its constituents” The vision and strategy were to “provide a framework for budgeting, for operational planning, and for day-to-day decision-making” (*A Strategic Framework for Planning*, July 2010, p. 1). Parallel to this strategic-planning process, the University was in the early stages of implementing its [revised structure of Shared Governance](#). The new structure, described at length in Chapters Two and Three, formalized a process for campus-wide decision making designed to encourage broad and thoughtful input.

Since summer 2010, the Shared Governance's Strategic Planning and Budgeting Committee (SPBC) has been building on the initial work of the TMR planning session. The committee met regularly throughout the 2010-11 academic year. Additionally, the broader campus community was engaged in the planning process through surveys, workshops, and presentations. When the SPBC reconvenes at the start of the 2011-12 academic year, the development of Lake Superior State University's next strategic plan will continue.

The strategic planning of Lake Superior State University's fifth and sixth presidents included the elements of leadership and communication but the third principle, assessment, was not achieved. It was each president's intent to take the strategic plan to the next level of development and to measure its progress; however, those



efforts were overshadowed by the institution's financial distress and its steady stream of personnel changes. The strategic planning processes that are being built into the newly-instituted Shared Governance process will include a feedback loop for assessment.

## LSSU's Budget-Planning Process

Lake Superior State University began the 21st century in seemingly sound financial shape; by fiscal year 2002-03, the institution was in financial distress. At the start of the decade, the fiscal year 2000-01 operational budget deficit was \$519,210; two years later it had ballooned to \$2.8 million, a 500% increase.

During President Youngblood's time at Lake Superior State University, the University saw more than \$2 million in permanent budget reductions and the elimination of 27 positions. Over the same period of time, LSSU's base state appropriation was reduced by 10% or \$1.4 million. Despite five years of significant cost cutting and position eliminations, at the end of the 2006-07 fiscal year, LSSU's operating deficit totaled \$2.9 million. The general fund deficit remained at \$1.3 million.

During Presidents Youngblood and Lowman's tenures, a budget process was implemented in which departments presented annual budget requests to a budget committee. The budget committee's deliberations were mindful of the institution's strategic goals and objectives. However, there was no formal process tying the budget to the strategic plan. The budget reductions from 2002-07 were largely driven by position eliminations, administrative restructuring, salary freezes, and across-the-board cuts; budgeting from 2007-09 was status quo.

In 2010, using its newly established [shared governance structure and process](#), Lake Superior State University started developing budget guidelines with the goal of tying the operational budget to strategic initiatives. Additionally, the Strategic Planning and Budget Committee has established goals for the institution's budget process that include more transparency and flexibility, better realignment of institutional resources in support of mission-driven priorities, and more forward-thinking, multi-year budgeting for long-term planning.

Lake Superior State University recognizes that being engaged in planning goes beyond the institution's financial situation. Engaging in planning is critical to being a future-oriented organization. It means making decisions based not only on current budget realities but also on the development of programs worthy of investment. At LSSU, engagement in planning also includes planning for facilities and enrollment management.

## Infrastructure and Capital Improvement

Lake Superior State University's 115 acre main campus physical plant consists of 43 buildings totaling 1.2 million square feet. Twenty of the buildings predate the University with original construction dates ranging from 1901 to 1939. The institution's most recent capital projects date back to the construction of the Fine and Performing Arts Center in 2003, an addition to the Crawford Hall of Science in 2000, the new Student Activity Center in 1999, and an expansion of the Kenneth J. Shouldice Library in 1996.

Lake Superior State University's aging infrastructure combined with the institution's budget woes has meant much needed maintenance has been regularly deferred. In Fall 2010, the total bill for the institution's deferred



maintenance was \$21.4 million. Even so, despite the growing list of maintenance needs, a person who strolls around campus is able to see that it is well-cared for and that safety is a priority.

In the past ten years Lake Superior State University has invested \$39.3 million in capital and non-capital repair and maintenance. These projects include the construction of the Arts Center and the implementation of an energy management system, as well as moving forward on a variety of projects such as upgraded campus lighting, residence halls, heating and cooling systems, ice rink floor, and underground utilities. The University is currently in the planning stages for a renovated School of Business building, as well as extensive upgrades to the Norris Athletic Center; additionally, it is renovating housing for three Living and Learning Communities.

In 2003-04, then-President Youngblood convened a presidentially-appointed Capital Improvement Plan Committee. The results of the group moved the institution from a campus master planning effort that was narrowly focused on a few aspects of the institution's physical plant requirements to producing a comprehensive capital improvement plan. The comprehensive plan clarified the institution's priorities and set the direction for capital improvements.

In April 2004, as a result of a \$4.2 million savings from the Arts Center capital project, dollars became available to begin addressing the highest-priority needs identified in the Campus Capital Improvement Plan: One point four million dollars was spent on information technology cabling upgrades; \$2.4 million was allocated towards upgrading the institution's generations-old administrative computing software; \$400,000 was utilized to upgrade one of the two primary electrical systems; and the fourteen-year-old telephone system was replaced.

Since 2005-06, Auxiliary Services—by broadening its use of funds originally designated for furnishings—has been able to update and add to the student-oriented facilities in the Cisler Conference Center. In 2009, LSSU's Board of Trustees approved dedicating a portion of room and board revenues to renovation and repair funding for the auxiliary areas.

The Campus Capital Planning Committee continued its work the following academic year. While parts of the capital plan have continued to be included in the University's annual capital outlay request to the State of Michigan, the Capital Planning Committee has not been active since 2005. In its place, since 2010, is the Infrastructure Committee of Shared Governance. This committee has met and is in the early stages of developing processes for campus-wide capital improvement (minutes are available in the Resource Room).

Central to Lake Superior State University's capital improvement process is the University's Foundation. Lake Superior State University Foundation is a separate entity from the University. By mission, the 501(c)(3) organization *exists for the sole purpose of promoting, receiving, managing, and disbursing certain private donations and contributions for the benefit of Lake Superior State University*. While over the past ten years the Foundation has had its successes, its efforts have been hampered by conditions similar to the rest of the University's, i.e. staffing changes and limited budget. Since 2001, the Foundation's staffing has been reduced from 5 to 2.65. Over the same period of time, the unit's operating budget was reduced 42% from \$562,253 to \$325,305. When calculating the change in the operating budget in 2001 constant dollars, the budget reduction



becomes 53% (1.231 conversion factor). The impact of limited staffing and budget can be seen in the ten-year decline of total contributions and total donors (see Table 1.1). In real dollars, the entity has seen contributions grow a modest eight percent over ten years. When converting the 2010 contributions into constant dollars, however, the ten-year change becomes a 12% decline.

Similar to contributions in general, the total number of donors per year did not grow significantly during the ten-year period, after a peak in FY02 as the campaign for a new arts center concluded (see Table 1.1). The number/percentage of alumni donors correspondingly remained flat as the Foundation had to operate primarily in a “collections” mode of fundraising; this was due to few long-term pledges, limited resources dedicated to an emphasis on major and planned giving, leadership staff changes, and very basic annual development plans.

In Fall 2010, recognizing its limitations, and in the early stages of planning for a major capital campaign, the Foundation engaged the services of Laudick/Brown & Associates to conduct a [Development Audit](#). The results of the audit have provided the basis on which the Foundation staff is creating its own strategic plan.

Table 1.1 Lake Superior State University Foundation Statistics

	FY 01	FY 02	FY 03	FY 04	FY 05	FY 06	FY 07	FY 08	FY 09	FY 10
<b>Contributions (millions)</b>	1.5	2.0	1.1	1.5	1.2	1.0	1.4	1.5	1.2	1.6
<b>Foundation FTE's</b>	5.00	4.90	4.50	3.75	3.60	3.30	3.75	3.35	2.25	2.65
<b>Operating Expenses</b>	562,253	513,186	449,451	407,876	362,850	449,285	505,351	407,134	333,384	325,305
<b>Total Donors</b>	1,892	2,252	1,802	1,737	1,951	1,545	1,397	1,174	1,383	1,578
<b>Alumni Donors</b>	1,115	1,210	800	814	934	750	643	800	814	934
<b>% Alumni</b>	59%	54%	44%	47%	48%	49%	46%	68%	59%	59%

## Enrollment Planning

As an accredited institution that engages in active planning for its future, LSSU has extended its planning initiatives to include options for increased enrollment. As with strategic, capital, and foundation planning, Lake Superior State University has undergone multiple cycles of enrollment planning since 2001. Various enrollment management consultants and firms have been engaged by LSSU over the past ten years. Hard copy versions of the reports can be found in the Resource Room. In general, the consultants’ recommendations have concurred with the following suggestions:

- LSSU needs to define its desired enrollment state.
- A three-to-five year enrollment plan with measureable goals should be developed and communicated campus-wide.
- Program-specific and overall annual enrollment goals should be established.
- The University must develop its ‘brand.’
- A Marketing/Communications Plan should be created and implemented.



One area of notable progress is in Enrollment Management. To date, several strides have been made in admission and recruitment processes that have resulted in the institution's new student enrollment halting its decline, accompanied by some growth. The benefits of the increased number of new students entering LSSU are now being seen in the institution's overall headcount. From 2001-02 to 2010-11, Lake Superior State University's total enrollment, undergraduate and graduate, degree and non-degree seeking, declined 19%, from 3,748 to 3,053. Five percent of this decline can be attributed to the 2003-04 elimination of the Skill Trades Program and a decline in charter school student dual enrollments in 2008-09. In 2010-11, LSSU reversed its declining enrollment trend by a total headcount increase of 3% over the previous year.

Contributing to Lake Superior State University's stabilizing enrollment has been its efforts directed at improving student retention. Such efforts have included: increasing the effectiveness of academic advising; placing a greater emphasis on academic policies, degree requirements, and access to academic support resources during new student orientation; and training campus life and housing directors to work with new freshmen to establish academic goals at the start of the school year. Historically, Lake Superior State University's first-time, full-time, degree-seeking student retention rate has hovered around 68%. From 2003 to 2007 the rate dropped to the lower 60% range but has since, as a result of LSSU's retention efforts, returned to its historical average.

## Financial Resources

Along with the nation, Michigan's public universities have experienced a shift in funding from state appropriations to tuition and fees. According to a Senate Fiscal Agency report issued in October 2010, the State of Michigan spends 16.2% less on higher education than it did one decade ago. This shift has caused tuition and fees to increase at a rate higher than inflation; LSSU expects this trend to continue for the next few years while the state deals with a looming deficit and restructures priorities.

The budget for Lake Superior State University is about \$46 million with the General Fund comprising about \$36 million. The University has struggled with a structural deficit which was about \$1.3 million a decade ago and reached a peak of about \$2.4 million in 2007. By the end of fiscal year 2011, the deficit is estimated to be reduced to a manageable \$670,000. This will be accomplished, for the most part, by applying surplus revenues from unbudgeted increases in enrollment to the deficit. This strategy is outlined in the [Budget Development Guidelines for fiscal year 2010-11](#). The Strategic Planning and Budget Committee supports this strategy and advised accordingly as recorded in its June 15, 2010, minutes (committee meeting minutes are available in the Resource Room).

The deficit has been recognized in budgeting plans throughout the years but it has not been a driving force in the process. The University has been cognizant of not adding to the deficit in recent years as evidenced by balanced budgets and spending within those budgets. While it is desirable to eliminate the deficit, spending patterns indicate funding initiatives related to the University's mission have taken priority over deficit reduction.

Even with a significant deficit, the University has not experienced cash-flow problems. The working capital of the University has been more than adequate to allow the University to fund operations without relying on a line

# Chapter One: Theme - Future Oriented



of credit. As extracted from the University's audited financial statements for the fiscal years 2008-10, Table 1.2 shows a trend of increasing cash flows.

Table 1.2: Condensed Statement of Cash Flows: 2008-2010

Cash Income Area	Fiscal Year Ending		
	2008	2009	2010
Operating Activities	(12,091,223)	(12,441,057)	(12,898,919)
Non-Capital Financing Activities	14,859,300	16,206,251	17,514,578
Capital and Related Financing Activities	(2,732,260)	(3,348,308)	(3,148,994)
Investing Activities	436,467	8,859	(785,746)
Net Change in Cash & Cash Equivalents	472,284	425,745	680,919
Cash & Cash Equivalents Beginning of Year	5,027,755	5,500,039	5,925,784
Cash & Cash Equivalents End of Year	5,500,039	5,925,784	6,606,703

The General Fund had a negative fund balance of about \$1.1 million at June 30, 2010. This negative fund balance has existed at this level for at least ten years. Over that period, the General Fund has maintained a nearly balanced budget on average with any given year showing either a small surplus or deficit. However, when all funds of the University are considered, depreciation is a significant expense overshadowing all capital appropriations, gifts, and other income over the period. Table 1.3 highlights the erosion in net assets depicted in the University's audited financial statements for the fiscal years ended June 30, 2001, through June 30, 2010.

Table 1.3: Summary of Audited Financial Statements 2001-2010

FYE June 30	Net Assets Beginning	Income/(Loss) before Depreciation & Other Income	Depreciation	Capital, Appropriations, Gifts & Other Income	Net Assets Ending
2001	60,693,908	(322,356)	3,712,799	2,845,746	59,504,499
2002	59,504,499	(1,010,353)	4,337,107	2,264,776	56,421,815
2003	56,421,815	6,478	4,975,644	558,508	52,011,157
2004	52,011,157	3,342,689	4,877,101	10,721,107	61,197,852
2005	61,197,852	2,781,297	4,486,318	1,063,011	60,555,842
2006	60,555,842	2,452,770	5,349,098	894,244	58,553,758
2007	58,553,758	817,031	5,545,466	779,623	54,604,946
2008	54,604,946	1,926,716	5,386,085	586,927	51,723,504
2009	51,723,504	607,088	5,373,016	422,309	47,388,885
2010	47,388,885	4,181,677	4,959,535	323,510	46,934,537



## Revenue Sources

Table 1.4 outlines the revenue sources received for the most recently completed fiscal year for which audit results were available at the time of writing the Self Study report (recent audits are available in the Resource Room).

Table 1.4: Operating Revenues for FY 2010

Revenue Source	Amount	Percent of Total
Tuition & Fees	14,060,741.00	29.54%
State Appropriations	12,457,279.00	26.17%
Federal Grant & Contracts	5,972,523.00	12.55%
State Grants & Contracts	204,891.00	0.43%
Non-Government Grants & Contracts	2,778,116.00	5.84%
Auxiliary Activities	8,693,791.00	18.27%
Investment Income	1,389,776.00	2.92%
Other	2,037,798.00	4.28%
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>47,594,915.00</b>	<b>100%</b>

LSSU's two major sources of funding are tuition/fees and state appropriations. Per summary results of the fiscal years 2001-10 audit reports shown in Table 1.5, state appropriations have declined to 43.27% of total revenues as compared to 64.93% in fiscal year 2001.

Table 1.5: Revenues 2001-2010

Fiscal Year	Tuition and Fees	State Appropriations	Total Operating Revenue plus Appropriations	Appropriations % of Total
2001	8,257,811.00	14,355,552.00	22,110,150.00	64.93%
2002	9,027,848.00	14,229,527.00	24,317,569.00	58.52%
2003	10,024,816.00	13,707,126.00	26,132,049.00	52.45%
2004	11,921,362.00	12,429,555.00	28,798,636.00	43.16%
2005	11,255,142.00	12,631,309.00	26,067,559.00	48.46%
2006	12,616,887.00	12,461,216.00	26,821,052.00	46.46%
2007	12,710,623.00	11,224,929.00	24,804,443.00	45.25%
2008	13,779,844.00	13,993,077.00	26,558,222.00	52.69%
2009	14,600,870.00	13,075,727.00	29,001,379.00	45.09%
2010	14,060,741.00	12,457,279.00	28,791,501.00	43.27%



## Expenditures

A snapshot of the operating expenses for the most recently-audited fiscal year is shown in Table 1.6. The University's instruction and academic support expenses for the year are over 35% of the total expenses, which is typical.

Table 1.6: Operating Expenses for FY 2010

Expense	Amount	Percent of Total
Instruction	13,756,478	29.31%
Research	351,990	0.75%
Public Service	999,336	2.13%
Academic Support	2,886,747	6.15%
Student Services	2,641,628	5.63%
Student Aid	2,560,368	5.46%
Institutional Support	5,243,750	11.17%
Operation & Plant Maintenance	4,672,823	9.96%
Auxiliary Activities	8,303,789	17.69%
Depreciation	4,959,535	10.57%
Other	559,463	1.19%
Total Expenses	46,935,907	100%

## Budgeting Process

The University budgets for the General Fund, auxiliary funds, and plant funds. The budgeting process has remained somewhat consistent over the years with all departments being responsible for creating and monitoring operating budgets within certain guidelines. Academic departments have some capacity to engage in multi-year planning as they are able to carry over unspent funds at the end of each fiscal year.

Budget development guidelines are reviewed and modified each year and have most recently incorporated processes that have evolved with shared governance. Budget goals have been loosely tied to university goals but not tied to a specific strategic plan in recent years. Even before FY 2001, budgets had been developed that allowed departments to operate at an acceptable level with modest increases for information technology and infrastructure. Minor adjustments have also been made for programmatic decisions. As a new strategic plan is developed within the shared governance process, the newest budget guidelines will offer direction for tying strategic initiatives directly to the budget.

Much improvement can still be made in the budgeting process. The University's planning has been very dependent on decisions made by the State government. While most areas on campus have participated in planning activities, the activities were generally uncoordinated.

For the fiscal year 2011-12 budget year, all department budget directors were asked to prepare a "baseline" budget, described as a budget that would allow the department to function at the same level as in fiscal year 2010-11 with no enhancements. The department budget managers were instructed to look for efficiencies and other potential savings and were allowed to increase their budgets for cost increases beyond their control as well



as essential replacement items. A draft General Fund budget was prepared using the departmental information which the Strategic Planning and Budget Committee reviewed, made adjustments to as they saw fit, and identified about \$120,000 of available funding for strategic initiatives. Departments were then invited to submit their strategic initiative proposals to the Committee. The Committee selected the top proposals, up to the \$120,000 available, that best aligned with the broad goals of the [strategic plan](#) in process.

Goals for improving the budgeting and planning processes include more transparency and flexibility, better coordination and realignment of LSSU resources in support of mission-driven priorities, and more forward-thinking, multi-year budgeting for longer-term planning.

## **Sub-Theme: The University Focuses on the Future of Its Constituents**

In this sub-theme, Lake Superior State University provides evidence that it meets the following core component:

4a – The organization demonstrates, through the actions of its board, administrators, students, faculty, and staff that it values a life of learning.

To focus on the future requires an understanding of where we have been. Just as Lake Superior State University has changed since undergoing its last self study, so has the world around us. In the year 2000, the “age of terror” was unknown, New Orleans was standing proud, Barack Obama had made his first run for a congressional seat—and lost, the sequencing of a human genome was not yet complete, China was a Third World nation, and the dot.com bust was in full swing. In 2000, Facebook, Twitter, the mobile web and Wikipedia were not yet invented; software applications designed to take advantage of internet connectivity had not yet been written. Ten years later the world had become a very different place.

By 2010, Barack Obama had become the President of the United States, China had become the second-most-important country in the world, New Orleans was in its fifth year of rebuilding after Hurricane Katrina resulted in a \$125 billion economic loss, the U.S. economy was in its third year of a financial crisis triggered by the collapse of large financial institutions, and as a response to the 9/11 terrorist acts, individual privacy rights were substantially curtailed with the enactment of the USA Patriot Act, and debates regarding torture as a suitable means for extracting information from presumed terrorists became commonplace. In 2003, the cost of having completed the sequencing of a human genome was \$3 billion; by 2010, the cost had dropped to \$50,000; changes in the internet could be considered just as dramatic.

In 2000, just over 40% of the U.S. population used the internet; by 2010 over 75% of the population identified themselves as internet users. One could easily argue that over the past decade the internet—and information technology in general—has changed most aspects of day-to-day living; industries such as newspapers, magazines, books, TV, movies, and music have been transformed, and human interactions have changed; social media has become the norm. Today the dot.com industry has been replaced by a growth in smaller entrepreneurial enterprises.

Higher education has also seen its share of changes over the past ten years. A decade ago, the notion of earning a degree online seemed space-aged; today, over 3.5 million people are taking online courses, with most major



colleges and universities offering online degree programs. In the year 2000, students' college assignments were submitted on paper; today pen and paper lectures have been replaced by laptops, podcast lessons, and Blackboard learning systems. Study abroad has become commonplace; the number of U.S. students going abroad has increased 150% since 2000. Ten years ago funding for public education was largely governmental; today tuition and fees provide the greater source of revenue. Undergraduate students today, on average, are graduating in five years with a \$24,000 debt load; in 2000 the average debt carried was \$19,300 and the time to degree completion was 4.8 years. Much has changed in the world and in higher education.

What has not changed is Lake Superior State University's commitment to preparing its students, faculty, and staff for future success in their personal and professional lives.

## Life of Learning

Focusing on the future of its constituents, Lake Superior State University understands the importance of promoting lifelong learning, reviewing the usefulness of its curricula, and responding appropriately to the constituencies that depend on it for service. LSSU realistically readies itself and its students for a future shaped by multiple societal and economic trends. The institution's educational priorities include developing the capacity of its students to live and work in a global, diverse, and technological society. Likewise, it encourages its faculty, staff, and administrators to be productive contributors to the future of the organization and its students.

Promoting a life of learning is a multifaceted process. It includes curricular and co-curricular activities, the development of critical thinking skills, fiscal and social responsibility, and an organizational commitment to professional development. For students, Lake Superior State University's General Education curriculum provides the opportunity to develop basic critical thinking skills as well as begin the process of understanding social and natural phenomena. Degree programs then build upon these basic skills and awareness. Degree-specific courses use the general education courses as prerequisites upon which to build. The General Education Committee recognizes this necessary relationship as a critical step in fostering continuous growth and lifelong learning.

## Supporting the Professional Development of Faculty

Critical to Lake Superior State University's ability to prepare its students for a successful future is its preparation for its own future. Vital to the institution's continued success is its investment in human and capital resources. LSSU demonstrates it values a life of learning by providing professional development opportunities for its faculty and staff and by cultivating a campus culture that encourages professional growth.

Lake Superior State University has a long history of encouraging faculty professional development. Since 1978, each faculty member has had an annual professional development stipend; in 2010 it was \$800. This stipend may be used for equipment purchases, conferences, and research. Faculty members may also allow their professional development fund to accumulate for up to five years and then use it for large expenditures.

In addition, Lake Superior State University makes available four semesters of faculty sabbatical leave at full pay each academic year. The sabbatical provides faculty members with the opportunity for intensive study, travel to



other locations, or the completion of complex research projects. These opportunities add to the growth, application, and dissemination of knowledge by LSSU faculty. Faculty sabbaticals over the past ten years have included chemistry faculty pursuing research opportunities with universities here and abroad, geology faculty engaging in primary research and then publishing the results, sociology faculty researching service-learning and internship opportunities for students, one business faculty member working towards completion of a doctorate, and a range of faculty pursuing post-doctoral work.

## Supporting the Professional Development of Staff

Recognizing that the strength of the organization and its future success comes from the professional expertise of all its employees and not just faculty members, Lake Superior State University supports its staff seeking opportunities for professional development as well. LSSU's employee tuition waiver provides employees with an opportunity to take a single class or earn a formal degree from the institution. Non-instructional employees frequently participate in web-based conferences that relate to their job responsibilities, receive on-site training in the use of the institution's administrative computing systems, meet periodically with their peers at other institutions, and attend professional conferences.

## Increasing Grant Funding

At Lake Superior State University, the faculty and staff's pursuit of grants and contracts is another element of lifelong learning that is key not only to the institution's future, but to its constituents' future as well. A ten-year history of LSSU's grants, contracts, and awards shows an increasing number of faculty members successfully obtaining grants at the state and federal levels (report available in Resource Room). Since 2001, the total number of grants received has increased by 59%. In 2010, the total amount of grants awarded, not counting student financial aid, was \$1.4 million. Additionally, many of the grants provide opportunities for students to participate in real-world applications of knowledge through lab and field research, senior projects, or service learning. Through their participation in such activities, students develop the skills necessary for living and working in a global, diverse, and technological society.

## Learning for Youth and Elders

In some respects, lifelong learning embraces the concept that "it's never too soon or too late for learning." It means providing learning opportunities for all ages and in numerous contexts. At Lake Superior State University, lifelong learning is demonstrated not only in its degree programs but through its Superior Edventures summer camps as well as its LSSU Elders program.

Since 1994 the LSSU Elders program has provided continuous educational opportunities and activities on historical subjects, estate planning, quilting, book discussions, and more, for local residents fifty years of age or older. Since 2008 and the hiring of a Conferences and Camps Coordinator, LSSU has seen its summer camp offerings and enrollment more than double. The typically week-long summer camp offerings have included programs in science, athletics, web technology, acting, creative writing, recreation, and arts for youth in grades seven through twelve.



Lake Superior State University’s focus on the future of its constituents, and itself, goes beyond the classroom. LSSU knows this. Focusing on the future requires learning from the past while acknowledging the present. It means an organization must recognize the present needs of its constituents in order to address their future concerns and to redefine the classroom to meet those needs.

Lake Superior State University’s commitment to a prosperous future includes managing its current resources—fiscal, physical, and human—with an eye toward the future. After ten tumultuous years, LSSU knows well the critical nature of planning for its future. To ensure that its past is not repeated, the University has put into motion planning strategies and financial processes that will return the institution to financial and physical health, making it well-positioned for the future. Lake Superior State University’s commitment to planning and improvement is outlined in Chapter Four.

## **Sub-Theme: The University Integrates New Technology**

In this sub-theme, Lake Superior State University provides evidence that it meets the following core components:

2b – The organization’s resource base supports its educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.

3c – The organization values and supports effective learning environments.

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

## **Educational Enhancement through Technology**

Although Lake Superior State University has been challenged both financially and in terms of change of leadership, it still has been able to advance its implementation and use of technology both in academic programs and in administration. Since 2001 the University has implemented wireless technology across campus; installed web-based course management systems; purchased and installed SunGard’s SCT Banner software components; expanded its web presence; purchased and implemented constituent relations-management services software; and acquired and implemented a web-based system enabling students to access bills and make payments online.

## **Course Delivery**

Lake Superior State University prides itself on being one of the early adopters of technology for instruction. Long before it became popular for most universities to support distance education, LSSU was delivering classes across three counties and to its regional centers utilizing Interactive Television (ITV). However, despite its early significant investment in ITV technology, the University fell from the forefront of distance learning when online learning utilizing such learning management system products as WebCT and Blackboard became popular. To date, however, LSSU has seen the number of its faculty members using the online technology more than triple since 2003 while online course offerings have more than quadrupled. Today the University’s online learning environment includes the content management system Blackboard v8, Wimba (a collaborative learning product), Axiom software designed to enhance exam security, and MyDropBox anti-plagiarism software.



Just as Lake Superior State University's course deliveries are being transformed by technology so are its classrooms. In 2001, only a small fraction of the University's classrooms were equipped with technology that enabled faculty members and students to develop multi-media presentations. Today 95% of LSSU's classrooms are equipped with a projector, DVD and VCR players, a computer, an amplifier, and speakers. Faculty use of classroom technology ranges from giving PowerPoint presentations, watching films, using i>clickers, using document cameras, doing Skype conferencing with faculty members and students from other institutions, and participating in Webinars.

## Learning Resources

Learning resources at Lake Superior State University have also been transformed by technology. The Kenneth J. Shouldice Library has witnessed multiple and varied technology enhancements over the past ten years. The goal of having access to high-quality materials, at any time, from any location, has become the expectation of the library patron and is the only acceptable standard for many LSSU students and faculty members. The decade started with a paper collection of magazines and journals which today is dwarfed by the over 20,000 online periodicals to which the University holds a subscription. Within the past two years, the library has begun incorporating new media into its collections as well, offering students, faculty, staff, and the public online access to thousands of documentaries and podcasts. To aid in easy access of the online periodicals, the library staff is currently working with a vendor to identify which item is indexed with which tool. Additionally, the library has established agreements with other libraries, thereby increasing the numbers and types of materials available in both hard copy and electronic formats.

Lake Superior State University's library finds itself frequently challenged by budget constraints when attempting to maintain the depth and breadth of its online collection. Funding for the University's library, at best, has remained flat over the past ten years (chart available in Resource Room) and the sheer enormity of the number of online databases and their various complexities has required librarians to become technologists as well. As one librarian noted, "The only thing that's consistent [regarding online databases] is that they're all different." Selecting the best product for each of LSSU's many academic programs is a lengthy, complex process that oftentimes must be repeated annually as subscriptions expire.

Lake Superior State University's enhancements of its technology-based learning resources, in many ways, are most apparent in the Learning Center (LC). In 2001, the LC was a small academic-support center offering supplemental instruction (SI) and a computer lab housed in the basement of the Library. The LC is now a complete learning lab with more than seventy computers available for classroom and drop-in use, online math support, tutoring, supplemental instruction, and extended periods of individualized study opportunities. New instructional technology in the Learning Center includes two Smart Boards—marker boards from which student/instructor interaction can be captured for later use in studying. The Smart Boards are used for tutoring, SI, and the Math Center. The technology allows the tutors to integrate classroom material with the study sessions. Additionally, the Center has its own server which enables faculty members to provide course-specific software for student use outside of class time.



## Administrative Support

Just as Lake Superior State University's academic enterprise has seen many technology improvements, so have its administrative areas. By far the most notable was the University's implementation of new administrative computing software. Beginning in July 2004, LSSU underwent a two-and-a-half year, \$2.4 million software and hardware conversion from its existing SCT IA-Plus administrative computing system to SunGard's SCT Banner software. On a smaller scale, but of equal importance towards enhancing the efficiencies of the University's operations, was the Admissions Office purchase and implementation of Azorus, Inc.'s constituent relations software in 2010. Likewise, in 2009 Business Operations acquired and implemented the TouchNet Bill & Payment Suite including installation of new, modern credit card terminals and printers at ten locations around campus,

## Strategic Planning and Expenditures in Technology

Through judicious use of its resources, Lake Superior State University has been able to upgrade its technology over the past decade. LSSU's greatly-expanded technology base was accomplished with only a moderate increase in its information technology expenditures. Since 2001, in real dollars, IT expenditures increased 86%, in constant dollars, 51% (chart available in the Resource Room). Further, when reviewing the staffing of IT along with its budget, it becomes apparent that LSSU has been able to successfully undertake and maintain the varied technology upgrades and additions with no apparent increase in staffing or additional resources beyond the hardware/software purchases. While this is admirable, and testimony to the commitment and dedication of the University's information technology staff, LSSU recognizes that continued funding of IT in this manner will not adequately position the University for the future.

## LSSU is Future Oriented: Summary

Chapter One has demonstrated the University's commitment to a clear and current mission that both anticipates the diversity of its learners and permeates the entire organization. The current mission documents, the strategic planning updates, and the systematic curricula review ensure that LSSU is a future-oriented university. Indeed, LSSU has used the self study process itself to revitalize efforts to focus on the accomplishment of its mission with far fewer resources than in the past. Thus, LSSU is poised for change in response to both internal and external forces that challenge the University to redefine the classroom in an ongoing fashion. Keeping pace with technological change is a key factor in this important effort.

## STRENGTHS

- LSSU demonstrates continuous commitment to its mission through an educational approach that focuses on the individual and is engaged, personal, and supportive.
- LSSU's response to the social and economic trends of the region is informed by the three State Cherry Commission goals.
- LSSU has resituated its strategic planning efforts within the context of Shared Governance.



- LSSU engages in strong support of lifelong-learning strategies.
- LSSU demonstrates a commitment to actively and continually redefining the classroom.

## CHALLENGES

- LSSU needs to develop positive strategies in response to the State of Michigan's economy and its long-term consequences for higher education.
- LSSU needs to examine and adapt the budget strategies of the past to meet current and future needs of the University.
- LSSU needs to develop strategies for meeting the increasing costs of library resources and technology.



Lake Superior State University's commitment to redefining the classroom is most aptly described by the ways in which the University approaches and assesses the various types of learning that occur within its academic setting. Since the University is Learning Focused, its primary energies are directed toward the student learning that occurs and is supported by both faculty and student scholarship. In Chapter Two, the University redefines the classroom by the attention devoted to the strategies for lifelong learning as well as its own periodic self-reflective examinations to ensure the quality of its education for its students.

This chapter is divided into the five HLC subthemes: The University assesses student learning, supports learning, develops scholarship, builds lifelong learning, and strengthens organizational learning. Each of the five subthemes 1) defines the topic, 2) provides an overview of the current status of the topic at LSSU, 3) offers examples of the topic to support the claims it makes, and then 4) closes with a summary of the strengths and challenges of each topic at LSSU.

### **Sub-Theme: The University Assesses Student Learning**

In this subtheme, Lake Superior State University provides evidence that it meets the following core components:

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

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

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.

### **Changing Views of Assessment**

In the last twenty years, assessment has undergone a major shift from a primary dependence on end-based psychometric measures such as multiple-choice exams to the adoption of process-based hermeneutic models that stress the interactive components of scholarly, interpretive, and creative learning processes. This shift in assessment reflects a greater shift in instructional paradigms: a move from seeing learning as a linear process that is driven primarily by classroom lecturing to seeing learning as a transactional, multilayered, and multidirectional process. Yet, because many of the most visible models of assessment that yield hard data are based on outmoded models of learning, universities without a central office of assessment or ongoing expert training in assessment find themselves facing down a belief that assessment requires the imposition of reductive and static measures onto what most faculty members see as their own creative and dynamic processes for encouraging learning. Evaluative assessment, here as elsewhere, is greeted with some reluctance out of fear that, if not carefully developed, instruments and processes will not support current learning models.

Assessment models that work in tandem with active processes of learning need to be developed from within the culture of learning they are intended to assess. As institutions negotiate the often fraught terrain of assessment in order to find a model that supports and enhances, rather than constricts, dynamic models of teaching, they want to keep in mind the elements of effective learning outlined in the HLC guidelines that will need to be



documented and measured: providing quality educational experiences and programs, integrating and assessing both curricular and co-curricular learning experiences, making the value of the educational experience visible and accessible to the public, and working to improve the learning opportunities and environments they provide to their students.

Catherine Wehlberg of Texas Christian University pointed out in the December 2010 edition of Thriving in Academe that assessment, in its best form, operates as a transformative process that results in better learning and better teaching. But in order for assessment to provide real and usable information that allows for substantial change, it needs to be “appropriate, meaningful, sustainable, flexible, and ongoing” (p. 6). To meet these criteria in diverse programs that use substantially different methods of teaching and significantly different tools for measuring student learning, assessment then also needs to be situationally-driven. As the following discussion will demonstrate, the assessment processes that are in place at LSSU are often unique to the programs they serve. Those assessment processes have, in most cases, been developed by the faculty members within those programs, so they are generally appropriate, meaningful, sustainable, and flexible. They are, in many cases, ongoing and provide usable information that can be, and often is, used to interrogate and adapt curricula. But the documentation of these assessment efforts are often buried within departmental records and minutes that are not well-coordinated or tracked on a University-wide level. As a result, assessment activities are often not reported or recognized as assessment. One of LSSU’s tasks will be to coordinate these efforts in order to make visible, to internal and external audiences, the range of both traditional and innovative assessment activities that are taking place.

Like many other institutions, LSSU is still struggling to find models for assessing its students’ learning that mirror the complexities and nuances of the learning process itself. The following chapter sections provide an overview, with additional documentation available in the Resource Room, of the many ways in which Colleges have defined and used assessment to measure how well their students are meeting program outcomes. Examples are also provided, when they were made available, of how each College has used its assessment results to interrogate its curriculum, to modify courses or curriculum design, to add or delete courses or programs, and more.

### Summary of LSSU Assessment History

The 2001 LSSU Self Study focused much of its assessment report on summaries of student satisfaction surveys. The Self Study also noted that program assessment was ongoing in most academic units, with primary development taking place between 1993 and 2001 (pp. 209-215). The University reported the development of a formal assessment implementation plan that was approved by the NCA in 1994. This plan included the establishment of an “Assessment Steering Committee” and the appointment of a permanent Coordinator for Assessment (HLC Final Report for Visit to LSSU Feb. 5-7, 2001, p. 50).

The HLC team’s response commended the University for the growth in its commitment to assessment, yet noted that its concerns about the *variability in implementation [from one college unit to the next] and the limited evidence of systematic follow-through in using assessment results to guide decision-making or improvements* (p. 50) prompted the team to request a follow-up report. The team requested specific documentation of ongoing



assessment in all units and a report on how assessment results were being used in *unit and institutional decision-making* (p. 50).

LSSU provided its follow-up report on June 30, 2005. The first half of the report, dedicated to assessment, included: “Assessment by Academic Units”; “Assessment of General Education”; “Assessment at Regional Centers”; and “Assessment of Academic Services and Student Life.” The most comprehensive section, “Assessment by Academic Units,” contained reports from every college and department, documenting assessment strategies and the ways in which assessment results were being used or would be used in the decision-making process.

HLC accepted the follow-up report on October 20, 2005, and approved reaccreditation for LSSU. HLC’s final response did point out that plans for assessment of General Education still remained unclear and should be a focus of the University as it moved forward. In response to that concern, this Self Study document includes a comprehensive review of the development and current state of assessment within General Education as well as summaries of the current status of assessment in all other major academic areas.

### LSSU’s Ongoing Assessment Training

LSSU has offered a range of faculty workshops on assessment at its convocations and through other avenues in the last several years. Overall, faculty attendance at and engagement with these materials demonstrates a willingness to learn from and commit to serious assessment practices. Representative examples of some of the most recent LSSU-hosted seminars and educational opportunities for faculty members on the topic of assessment follow. The full descriptions of the events may be found in the Resource Room.

January 31, 2011

Webinar: "The Connection Between Student Retention and Assessment: Building a Departmental Assessment Model from the Ground Up" from [Innovative Educators](#).

August 2010. Convocation,

Presentation: “Assessing Student Learning”

August 2010. Convocation

Workshop: “Assessment Workshop”

August 2009. Convocation

Presentations and discussion: “Assessment & HLC: Parts I & II”

Faculty and administrators have also attended a range of external workshops, trainings, and conferences that focused on or included sessions on assessment. For example, the Lilly Conference on College & University Teaching, held annually in Traverse City, MI, regularly holds sessions on assessment. Several faculty members from Biology, Education, and Psychology consistently report attendance at this conference and indicate that the



sessions on assessment offer useful and engaging assistance that they are able to bring back to their own departments. In addition, the University has provided funding for the attendance of an English faculty member at two workshops on the assessment of writing held by the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) and the Writing Program Administrators Council (WPA). These two workshops assisted the English department in developing a strong program of writing assessment that enters its fourth year in the Fall 2011.

Perhaps the strongest indications of faculty members' scholarly commitment to assessment are the publications and conference presentations they have, collectively, made that contribute to the ongoing conversation in this area. Following are examples that have been culled from faculty professional development reports. (LSSU faculty members' names in bold).

- Been, Mary.** (2010, June). "New Paradigms for Writing Assessment: From Conflict to Conversation." Second Inter-Institutional Conference. Sault College of Applied Arts and Technology. Conference Theme: "Celebrating Reflective Teaching Practices." Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, Canada (published conference proceedings forthcoming).
- Brown, Lewis M., Kelso, Paul R.,** Churchill, Kim M., Mintzes, Joel J., Hongyan, Wang. (2008). "An Undergraduate Geology Program Assessment Model." Geological Society of America Abstracts with Programs 40 (5) 70.  
[http://gsa.confex.com/gsa/2008NC/finalprogram/abstract\\_137837.htm](http://gsa.confex.com/gsa/2008NC/finalprogram/abstract_137837.htm)
- Duesing, Paul and Muller, Kimberly.** (2008, October). "Lessons Learned from a Successful Multi-Level Assessment Process." Assessment Institute, Indianapolis, Indiana. This was a 75-minute invited presentation.
- Gregory, Lorraine.** (2007-2009). Michigan Mathematics and Science Teacher Leadership Collaborative (MMSTLC). A grant project that included assessment in the seminars—assessment of middle school students' math work. Upper Peninsula, various locations.
- Heyns, Terry.** (2011). "Speaking of Fire." IFSTA. Oklahoma State University, Stillwater. Forthcoming. A discussion of the process of accreditation for the Degree Assembly of the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC-DA) by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). Includes a discussion of the process of establishing and assessing outcomes.
- Knowles, Evelyn and **Kalata, Katie.** (2010, August 6). "Results from Redesigning Online Courses to Meet Quality Matters Standards." Proceedings of the 26th Annual Conference on Distance Teaching and Learning. Madison: University of Wisconsin System.
- Mokhtar, Wael and Duesing, Paul.** (2009, March/April). "Active Discovery and Engineering Problem Solving (EPS) Techniques—An Effective Approach to Teach a Freshman-Level CAD Course." Published in the proceedings for the ASEE North Central Spring Conference at Grand Valley



State University. The paper won the first place award at the conference. The final version of the paper is available in the Resource Room along with the PowerPoint presentation that was given at the conference.

**Muller, Kimberly.** (2008, May). "A Practical Approach to the Revitalization and Assessment of College Algebra." The Michigan Section of the Mathematical Association of American and MichMATYC, 84th Annual Meeting, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

**Rose, Jillena.** (2010, June). "A First Year Faculty Member Ponders Writing Assessment as Reflective Practice." Second Inter-Institutional Conference. Sault College of Applied Arts and Technology. Conference Theme: "Celebrating Reflective Teaching Practices." Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, Canada.

**Searight, Barbara.K.** (2010). "Mission, goals, planning: Take the lead." Lilly Conference on Teaching and Learning in Higher Education. Traverse City, MI.

**Searight, H. Russell, Ratwik, Susan, & Smith, Todd.** (2010). "'Hey, I can do this!': The benefits of conducting undergraduate research for young adult development." Insight: A Journal of Scholarly Teaching, 5, 106-114.

As demonstrated, LSSU faculty members have made substantial efforts to develop their knowledge of assessment and participate in the larger national conversations around assessment. They are then able to model that knowledge for their academic units. As a result, some areas have developed extremely useful assessment practices that tie directly into decision-making processes for curriculum development and more. Other areas lag behind the work of their colleagues. As pointed out at the start of this section, the multiple examples discussed in this chapter demonstrate that LSSU faculty and staff often take initiative to research and develop assessment within their own areas, but support for and coordination of these efforts has been weak or interrupted on the University-wide level.

### Overview of Current Assessment Practices at LSSU

Despite a series of starts and stops within larger University assessment practices as a whole, many individual units within the University have developed solid assessment programs.

Academic areas with external accrediting bodies have generally maintained the strongest cultures of assessment. Some of the best examples are in the Engineering majors, which have consistently met not only the requirements of their accrediting bodies, but also used their course and program assessments as the basis for making changes to curriculum when needed. For example, in the Fall of 2008, a freshmen-level computer-aided-design class was significantly changed to improve student learning. The changes were the result of assessments of student learning (via graded coursework) and student feedback. The assessment and revision process was documented and presented at a national-level conference on assessment.



Solid practices have also been developed in many areas where assessment practices are not driven by external accreditation requirements; these areas include Biology, Mathematics, Business, and English Composition. Yet the University still has areas of weakness, mostly in programs that do not undergo external review or do not have a model for such a review in other areas of their college. These programs lack the culture of a standards-based approach to setting, assessing, and achieving student-learning goals. Even in those areas that have developed assessable program outcomes, the assessment plans that are in place do not always appear to be linked to those outcomes. In other areas in which outcome-linked assessment is taking place, the connection between assessment and the use of assessment data to interrogate curriculum choices is undocumented and primarily anecdotal.

Yet, as previously stated, assessment is taking place in the majority of programs; in addition, that assessment is often multi-layered, using a variety of tools that offer both direct and indirect measures of a program's effectiveness in meeting student outcomes.

Each school organizes its assessment structures and responsibilities according to its own needs. Some units organize assessment through committee(s), in other areas it is handled by a chair or a designated assessment coordinator. A list of the people responsible for assessment in each academic area of the University can be found in the Resource Room.

### Course-level Assessment

In 2009-10, then-Provost Tony Blöse called together a group of faculty members from Engineering, Mathematics, and English who had experience with assessment and asked that group to function as an advisory committee on assessment to the Provost and to the University. That group developed a plan for gathering and tracking assessment materials from the faculty. The de facto committee also provided sessions at convocation on strategies for conducting assessment.

In Fall 2009, all faculty members were asked to develop and submit documentation of assessment of at least fifty percent of their course outcomes. Although some faculty members submitted materials, a formal process had not been developed for training faculty and tracking these assessments. Without these in place, little progress was made and further efforts were hampered by the resignation of the Provost in the Spring of 2010. The new Provost has renewed these efforts and provided a plan for assessment which is discussed in Chapter Four.

Several academic areas continued to encourage and track course-level assessment throughout the administrative changes. Mathematics and Engineering in particular have built very specific matrices in which course exam questions are tied to specific outcomes, so instructors can track how well students are doing on each outcome. Those matrices are discussed in the document "Assessment within Academic Areas" found in the Resource Room, under the discussion of Mathematics and Engineering.



Two of the Business professors have developed similar tracking systems that connect specific exam questions as well as project evaluations to the outcomes they are meant to measure in order to, again, see where students are at in their comprehension of the various outcomes. These methods are discussed in more detail in the discussion of Business that follows. One professor in Psychology has also developed a matrix similar to those in other disciplines that tracks student responses on exams to specific course outcomes. He supplements this test-based data with an open-ended set of questions to students, asking them to assess themselves on where they stand in relation to the course outcomes; he then compares the two sets of results to see how his evaluations and student self evaluations differ. His material is discussed in Social Sciences and Psychology. The School of Physical Sciences is in the process of developing similar systems. Another example of course assessment is in English Composition, in which instructors were asked to submit individual plans that demonstrate assessment of at least three course outcomes. Approximately 70% of the writing instructors submitted such plans for the Spring of 2011. The work of English Composition is discussed in the section under General Education and in English under the heading of the College of Arts, Letters, and Social Sciences.

These examples represent only some of the most well-developed individual course assessment projects in place at the University. The majority of course-assessment structures are less rigorous. In those courses without a matrix system such as those described previously, exams, essays, and projects are used holistically to assess where students are, and are not, doing well in meeting objectives; course content and focus is then adjusted accordingly on a case-by-case basis. Yet the examples outlined in the previous paragraph provide models that can be adapted by many programs, and the faculty members involved in the described projects have expressed their willingness to assist in the education and training of their colleagues.

### Program-level Assessment

In most academic areas, department chairs or assessment committees are tasked with developing, coordinating, tracking, and responding to assessment in their units. Some areas, such as the composition courses in English, have had, in the past, a designated “Writing Program Coordinator” or “Assessment Coordinator.” While the chairs in some areas have received specific training in assessment within their disciplines, many have not. Most chairs are responsive to the need for assessment; the lack of development in those areas without specific plans in place therefore seems to arise primarily from a lack of training and resources for developing such plans. Yet, even with the turnovers in administration and the multiple changes in directives that have accompanied those turnovers, course or program assessment, and sometimes both, has remained remarkably strong in many areas and provides models that weaker areas may adapt to their own uses.

### Assessment of Student Learning: Direct and Indirect Measures

In the last ten years, LSSU has expanded its understanding of the types of tools that can be used to assess student learning. The national move toward integrated and multi-layered hermeneutic processes in assessment has been reflected in the expansion of LSSU’s own assessment strategies; this growth is documented in the range of direct and indirect measures used by academic programs. Direct measures include exams, thesis and project rubrics, internship audits, and more; indirect measures include alumni and employer surveys, exit

## Chapter Two: Theme - Learning Focused



surveys, advisory committee reviews, and more. Table 2.1 documents the range of measures used in assessment by the University’s academic units.

Table 2.1: Range of Assessment Tools Used in Academic Areas

Assessment Tools	Areas Using Tool
Accreditation Review	Engineering; Exercise Science; Fire Science; Nursing
Advisory Committee Review	Athletic Training; Criminal Justice; Education; Engineering; Fire Science; Nursing
Alumni Survey	Biology; Business; Chemistry; Criminal Justice; Engineering; Fire Science; Nursing; Parks and Recreation
Capstone Course	Biology; Business; Chemistry; Computer Science; Education- Master of Curriculum and Instruction; Engineering; Environmental Science; Mathematics; Recreation & Exercise Sciences
Comprehensive Exam – Objective	Mathematics
Employer Survey	Engineering
Exit Interview	Education; Engineering
Exit Survey	Chemistry; Engineering; Recreation & Exercise Sciences
External Consultant Review	Fire Science
Graduated Student Placement	Business; Chemistry; Environmental Science, Exercise Science (all); Geology; Physical Science
Internship/Co-op Employer/Mentor Review	Education; Sports and Recreation Management
Licensing Exam/State Exam	Medical Laboratory Science; Athletic Training; Education; Exercise Science; Nursing
Oral Presentations	Biology; Criminal Science; Engineering; Honors Program
Performance Task	Fire Science; Nursing
Portfolio	Education; Sports and Recreation Management
Standardized National Test	Business (MFAT: Major Field Achievement Test); Chemistry (ACS: American Chemical Society exams); Criminal Justice ACAT (Area Concentration Achievement Tests), Engineering (FE & PE Exams)
Student Surveys	Biology; Business; Education; Engineering; English Composition; Exercise Science; Mathematics
Supervised Internship	Medical Laboratory Science; Conservation Biology and Leadership
Thesis/Final Project	Biology; Business; Chemistry; Computer Science; Engineering; Honors Program
Writing Samples	English Composition

### University-level Assessment

In the summer of 2011, prompted by the resignation of one Dean to take a new position, the pending retirement of a second Dean, and the pending return to faculty of an Associate Dean, as well as the urgent need for a University-wide coordinator of assessment, the Provost’s Council began working on an academic reorganization that would allow several units to be combined under a newly-created position: Associate Provost for Assessment, Education, and Graduate Programs. The provisional charge of the Associate Provost is that he will be “responsible to the Provost, to plan, develop, direct and administer all phases and aspects of the University’s assessment program; and oversee the School of Education and Graduate Programs.” The Associate Provost will chair the Shared Governance Assessment Committee and will “develop and manage a comprehensive



assessment program to support the University's mission and strategic initiatives regarding the continued enhancement of teaching and learning. The primary area of responsibility is academics, but some coordination of campus-wide efforts is required. Most efforts will focus on providing assistance to academic programs with the development of outcomes-based assessment plans that will inform and enhance academic decision-making and promote continuous quality improvement.”

Prior to this planned reorganization, LSSU had had no University-wide dedicated assessment coordinator or University-wide assessment committee since 2006. From 2006 to the present, the Provost was the upper-administrative person tasked with overseeing University-wide assessment. A 2010-11 search for an Assistant to the Provost for Assessment and Accreditation had been unsuccessful.

The new [Shared Governance structure](#) (found in Appendix A) includes an Assessment Committee as one of the Strategic Committees. The new Associate Provost, as mentioned above, will chair this committee. The primary charges of the Assessment Committee were drafted over the summer of 2011 and will be presented to that committee in the Fall for discussion. In draft form, those charges include:

- 1) Ensure LSSU has incorporated the accepted HLC minimal standards for assessment including the Higher Learning Commission’s five fundamental questions for institutions to use in discussing and defining assessment:
  - a. How are your stated student-learning outcomes appropriate to your mission, programs, and degrees?
  - b. What evidence do you have that students achieve your stated learning outcomes?
  - c. In what ways do you analyze and use evidence of student learning?
  - d. How do you ensure shared responsibility for assessment of student learning?
  - e. How do you evaluate and improve the effectiveness of your efforts to assess and improve student learning?
- 2) Provide a definition of “assessment” for the entire LSSU community.
- 3) Review and assist, campus-wide, in the development of assessment plans.
- 4) Review and recommend to the Provost, for approval, all course syllabi learning outcomes and assessment processes.
- 5) Review and recommend to the Provost, for approval, all academic program outcome statements and assessment processes.
- 6) Assist the Provost with the development of a process of regular program review.
- 7) Develop a common format for yearly academic reporting of assessment activity as defined by the HLC. This might include:
  - a. Statement of Program Outcomes by each program/degree.
  - b. A discussion of the assessment processes used to generate data appropriate for analysis of student success in achievement of outcomes. What measures are used? Direct? Indirect? Etc.
  - c. An overview of the feedback loop, describing how the assessment data is reviewed and by whom. What measures are in place to insure that faculty read and react or respond to the results of assessment data.
  - d. A one year summary of changes in course content, syllabi, or course requirements, etc. driven by an analysis of the assessment data.
- 8) Review and evaluate the use of assessment by institutional units and recommend improvements in their assessment processes where necessary.
- 9) Review and evaluate the effectiveness of the institution’s responses to assessment and evaluation in the form of budgetary or programmatic modifications.
- 10) Review and evaluate the use of specific performance standards by individual units for purposes of continual improvement of programs and/or services.



- 11) Assist the Provost in institutionalizing assessment.
  - a. Common report formats.
  - b. Common storage for reports.
  - c. Identification of documents to be archived.
  - d. Development of dashboards for administrative review towards meeting goals.
  - e. Development of dashboards for faculty/staff use in evaluative measures.

Assessment practices since 2006 have been developed and controlled entirely by the faculty within their own areas, except in those areas where assessment practices are mandated by an external accrediting body. Therefore, the shift to a situation where faculty assessment will be monitored and evaluated by additional organizational bodies will require patience and communication as these changes are negotiated. Overall though, most faculty members understand the necessity of developing a University-wide system that is understandable and useful. The sense is that nearly all faculty members will welcome any assistance that is offered in helping them to continue to develop and track assessment in their areas.

### Overview of Assessment within Academic Areas

The section that follows provides overviews of the assessment practices within the Schools of each College. Each school-specific discussion reviews the current status of program outcomes, then summarizes documented assessment practices by pointing to examples of direct and indirect assessment measures. At the end of each section, examples are provided (when they were made available) of how an area has used the information gathered in its assessment practices to make changes in programs. Full reports on “Assessment within Academic Areas” by College are available in the Resource Room. Those reports, in addition to supplementing the material below, reference specific forms of documentation for each College.

Since LSSU is still sorting out course-level and program-level assessment practices, the following sections discuss both levels, focusing on what has been accomplished in each area and pointing out where work remains to be done.

In no area has assessment been imposed in a top-down format from administration to faculty. Except in those areas in which external accrediting agencies mandate specific activities, faculty themselves have taken on the role of researching, developing, and maintaining the assessment that is being practiced.

### College of Natural, Mathematical, and Health Sciences (CNMHS)

The CNMHS includes the School of Biological Sciences, the School of Physical Sciences, the School of Mathematics and Computer Science, the School of Recreation Studies and Exercise Science, and the School of Nursing. The Aquatic Research Laboratory, the Environmental Analysis Laboratory, and the C. Ernest Kemp Mineral Resources Museum are also under the auspices of the CNMHS.

#### *School of Biological Sciences*

Biology has defined a clear set of program goals and has a set of ten common assessable outcomes that span all of its degree programs: Biology; Biology—Secondary Teaching; Medical Laboratory Science; Conservation



Biology; Conservation Leadership; Fisheries and Wildlife Management ; Fisheries Management—Wildlife Management; Fish Health, Marine Technology, and Natural Resources Technology.

Each specialized program within the School adds learning outcomes to the common ten outcomes that are unique to its area. The programs are directly assessed using rubrics for the senior thesis project, except for Medical Laboratory Science which is assessed with an internship and a state examination. Indirect assessments include such measures as tracking student job and graduate school placements. In response to their reviews of scores for senior thesis papers, posters, and presentations, faculty members discuss and adapt rubrics and scoring processes every year. They also discuss weak points in student presentations and review processes for how to address those weaknesses.

### *School of Physical Sciences*

The School of Physical Sciences includes the Department of Chemistry and Environmental Sciences and the Department of Geology and Physics. The School has identified six specific learning outcomes for each of its degrees: Applied Geographic Information Science; Chemistry; Chemistry (Pre-Professional); Chemistry—Secondary Teaching; Environmental Chemistry; Environmental Health; Environmental Management; Environmental Science; Forensic Chemistry; Geology; Geology—Environmental Geology; Geology—Secondary Teaching for Earth/Space Science; Integrated Science—Elementary Teaching; Integrated Science—Secondary Teaching; and Physical Science—Secondary Teaching. The School also offers two Associate degrees: Chemistry and Chemical Technology.

Four outcomes are common to all areas in the School. An additional two outcomes are further defined within each major, depending on that major's focus. One direct assessment measure is the standardized ACS (American Chemical Society) exam given by faculty members in the chemistry courses to compare LSSU student pass rates to the national pass rate for students taking comparable courses. An example of an indirect measure of assessment includes the survey of graduates to see if the curriculum has delivered the appropriate curricular content for them to be productive in their professions and their graduate programs. Examples of changes within the programs as a result of assessment include Environmental Health curriculum changes to align to the requirements of the Environmental Health Accreditation Council. Changes to the physical and inorganic chemistry courses have also been made to support the Chemistry program based on assessments through the American Chemical Society accreditation requirements and the use of the ACS standardized exams.

### *School of Mathematics and Computer Science*

Mathematics has clear and assessable program outcomes defined and tailored for each of its majors in the following areas: Mathematics; Mathematics—Actuarial and Business Applications; Mathematics—Elementary Teaching; Mathematics—Secondary Teaching.

A model of course assessment has been developed wherein test questions in exams are tracked to specific course objectives. Working from a model developed originally in Engineering, faculty members have tailored a grid that shows how questions/elements of each graded classroom activity connect to specific course objectives; faculty members are then able to use that grid to tabulate student attainment of the various objectives. Math



faculty work to review all of their “service” offerings on a regular basis, sometimes through formal assessments, but just as frequently through informal review of student and faculty satisfaction with the overall success of a course in preparing students for subsequent courses.

Computer Science has also developed clear and assessable outcomes for each of its majors in the following areas: Computer and Mathematical Sciences; Computer Information Systems; Computer Networking; Computer Networking—Web Development; Computer Science; Computer Science—Secondary Teaching. Computer Science also offers Associate degrees in Computer Science and Internet/Network Specialist.

A capstone course is required of all majors in which students complete a major project as an employee or volunteer. The students are assessed both by their employer/supervisor and by the computer science faculty. One specific change made in the Computer Science program recently was that it modified the prerequisites for the Computer Science “projects” courses, CSCI 291, 292, 418, and 419, to ensure that students entering those courses had the appropriate background (2009-10).

### *School of Recreation Studies and Exercise Science*

The School of Recreation Studies and Exercise Science offers degrees in the following areas: Athletic Training Education; Exercise Science; Parks and Recreation; Sport and Recreation Management; and an Associate degree for Health Fitness Specialist.

Outcomes are different for the various programs within the Recreation Studies and Exercise Science area. Most outcomes are closely tied to the criteria established by credentialing or accrediting agencies. Two examples of direct assessment include Board of Certification Pass Rates on BOC examinations for the Athletic Training Education area and Board of Certification Pass Rates on National Strength and Conditioning Association (NSCA) and American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) examinations for Exercise Science. As part of their indirect assessment measures, Recreation Studies and Exercise Science also track placement data for graduates in all of their programs.

One recent modification made in response to assessment via course observation was the addition of a “methods” course for both Exercise Science and Athletic Training students. This course was developed in response to deficiencies noted by the lab instructors in observing students’ ability to teach movement skills that were tailored to specific audiences based on the age and emotional/psychological readiness of that audience. The course, RECS 280: Readiness, will be offered Fall 2011.

### *School of Nursing*

The School of Nursing offers a degree in Nursing, an AAS in Health Care Provider, and a Certificate in Practical Nursing. The State Board of Nursing and NLNAC accreditors require a common set of learning outcomes for the School of Nursing. Some of these are outcomes intended for the operation of the program as a whole. Some focus on student learning. Part of Nursing’s direct assessment is the NLNAC exam that all students in the Nursing (BSN) program take. As part of its indirect assessment, Nursing also does post-graduate surveys of graduates and employers. As a result of their assessment practices, Nursing has recently streamlined



twenty program outcomes into a more manageable six, four of which were broken down into outcome subunits. In addition, they have used the results of their NCLEX-RN exam reports to match content with program levels and transitional activities.

### College of Professional Studies (CPS)

The College of Professional Studies consists of the School of Business and the School of Criminal Justice, Fire Science, and EMS.

#### *School of Business*

The School of Business includes the Department of Management, Marketing, and Entrepreneurship; the Department of Accounting and Management Information Systems; the Department of Finance and Economics; and the Department of International Business. It offers degrees in Accounting; Business Administration—Business Education; Business Administration—International Business; Business Administration—Entrepreneurship; Business Administration—Management; Business Administration—Marketing; and Finance and Economics. It also offers Associate degrees in Business Administration, Personal Computer Specialist, and Technical Accounting as well as Certificates in Information Processing and Personal Computer Specialist.

The School currently has program outcomes that list the types of knowledge and professional capabilities the School expects graduates to have upon graduation and in their professional lives. The School recognizes that it still needs to develop assessable learning outcomes for its various degrees and is in the process of developing those through its Assessment Committee. The first set to have been developed is for the International Business major. As part of its direct assessment of its majors, the School of Business administers the national Major Field Achievement Test in Business (MFAT) to Business students in their senior year. As part of its indirect assessment, it regularly solicits the input of alumni through alumni surveys. One change recently instituted by Business was in response to the recognition that LSSU student scores in the Information Technology area of the MFAT ranked below the national mean. This encouraged the School to strengthen the curriculum in this area by first introducing a “Special Topics” course in 2008 that was then made permanent in 2010:

MGMT280: Introduction to Management Information Systems. LSSU student scores in the IT areas now meet or exceed the national mean.

#### *School of Criminal Justice, Fire Science, and EMS*

The School of Criminal Justice, Fire Science, and EMS offers the following degrees in the Criminal Justice area: Corrections; Criminalistics; Generalist; Homeland Security; Law Enforcement; Law Enforcement Certification; Loss Control; and Public Safety. Criminal Justice also offers Associate degrees in Corrections and Law Enforcement. The Fire Science area offers the following degrees: Fire Science—Engineering Technology; Fire Science—Generalist; Fire Science—Generalist—Non-Certification; and Fire Science—Hazardous Materials. Fire Science also offers an Associate degree in Fire Science. EMS offers an Associate degree in Paramedic Technology and a Certificate in Paramedic Training.



The School has an encompassing set of goals for all three areas: Criminal Justice, Fire Science, and EMS. In addition, Criminal Justice has goals for each of its degree areas, but it still needs to develop specific learning outcomes for each of these areas. As they currently stand, the goals are defined in terms of what the College plans to make available for students (for example: “Provide a broad overview of the criminal justice field”; “Encourage and enhance oral and written communication skills”). These still need to be rewritten in terms of assessable student learning outcomes.

The national Area Concentration Achievement Test (ACAT) in Criminal Justice is given to students as freshmen and again as seniors to determine the level of change in their knowledge of criminal justice. In addition, pass rates for state tests/certifications are evaluated. These include Fire Fighter I and II certification, Emergency Medical Technician (EMT), Medical First Responder (MFR), and Paramedic and Michigan Commission on Law Enforcement Standards (MCOLES) certification. Recent changes made in the programs as the result of a self study for reaccreditation include Fire Science developing a system for monitoring student progress through the correct course sequences and clarifying public misperceptions of the Fire Science degree as a training program when it is an academic program. Criminal Justice recently added a focus on digital evidence collection in its CJUS411 course (Police Operations) in response to a new requirement from MCOLES. CJ has also developed a new course, CJUS203: Cybercrimes/Cyberterrorism, in response to suggestions from future employers (Chief and Sheriff) at the University’s Law Enforcement Advisory meetings.

### College of Engineering, Technology, and Economic Development (CETED)

The School of Engineering and Technology is the main academic unit within the CETED. The School includes the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, the Department of Mechanical Engineering, and the Department of Engineering Technology and Management. The Prototype Development Center as well as the SmartZone initiatives are also under the auspices of the CETED.

#### *School of Engineering and Technology*

LSSU’s School of Engineering and Technology offers degrees in the following areas: Computer Engineering; Electrical Engineering; Electrical Engineering Technology; Engineering Management; Industrial Technology; Manufacturing Engineering Technology; Mechanical Engineering. The School also offers Associate degrees in Electrical Engineering Technology, General Engineering, General Engineering Technology, and Manufacturing Engineering Technology, as well as a Certificate in Manufacturing.

The School follows a comprehensive model of assessment that integrates program outcome objectives with program educational objectives. The School also has a clear process by which its assessment data is regularly evaluated and used to interrogate and reform curricula. Engineering’s culture of assessment is, to a great degree, a result of the strict monitoring of the engineering field by accrediting agencies such as ABET. The School’s “Program Outcome Objectives” are the objectives that name the expected qualities of students at the time of graduation and apply to all graduates of Engineering. The “Program Educational Objectives” are the expected qualities that students will have after they have been practicing as an engineer for at least three years. Among the School’s direct assessment measures are the results of the Fundamentals of Engineering Exam and the



Industrial Advisory Board (IAB) assessment of senior design projects. An indirect assessment measure is the Industrial Advisory Board's input into curriculum changes. By drawing on the experience of alumni as well as Board evaluations of current programs, the College is able to determine if programs are meeting the needs of employers. The IAB meets with the School semi-annually, at which time new courses are discussed, as well as proposed course changes. The IAB input is given heavy weighting when any changes are being contemplated for the program.

One example of a recent change made in response to assessment was in the EGME141 Solid Modeling course, a first-year CAD course in Manufacturing Engineering Technology and other programs. In this case, actions were taken to improve the success rate of students when assessment showed a high rate of failure and consequent poor freshmen retention in the Engineering and Technology programs. The instructional methods of the EGME141 course were changed to promote more active learning: isolated lectures (in which students passively listen) were phased out in favor of lectures combined with labs, in which the students are actively engaged in making engineering drawings. These changes have had the desired effect of improved student performance. The ASEE conference paper by Duesing and Mokhtar, mentioned earlier, thoroughly documents these changes, their basis in assessment results, and how they were aligned with a continuous improvement plan.

### College of Arts, Letters, and Social Sciences (CALSS)

The CALSS includes four schools: the School of English and Language Studies, the School of Social Sciences, the School of Communication and the Fine and Performing Arts, and the School of Education.

#### *School of English and Language Studies*

The School of English and Language Studies includes the Department of English and the Department of Language Studies. English offers degrees in English Language and Literature—Elementary Teaching; English Language and Literature—Secondary Teaching; Literature; and Literature—Creative Writing. Language Studies offers degrees in French Studies; French Studies—Elementary Teaching; French Studies—Secondary Teaching; Spanish; Spanish—Elementary Teaching; and Spanish—Secondary Teaching. Due to the wide diversity of assessment levels within this school, each program is described separately.

*English:* Outcomes for the degree in English Literature are clearly defined in assessable terms, but as of Spring 2011, no assessment program had been developed for the degree in English Literature. A senior thesis provides for a capstone demonstration of expertise, but feedback from the thesis has not been systematized nor applied. Outcomes for the English/Creative Writing degree are also clearly defined in assessable terms. The program states its intention to assess the Creative Writing program through a portfolio, but, as of Spring 2011, no specifics of this assessment process had been defined.

*Composition and English:* The ENGL110 and ENGL111 composition courses are General Education requirements. ENGL091 is the developmental composition course for those students whose ACT scores are not high enough to place them into ENGL110. The learning outcomes for all three composition courses are clearly defined in assessable terms. A program of regular assessment has been in place for all courses in the English



Composition program since Fall 2008. Two tools are currently being used: 1) a departmental reading of random final essays from all classes using a common departmentally-devised rubric that links to the course outcomes and 2) a survey of student uses and perceptions of the writing processes they have used that also link to the course outcomes. One area of weakness that has been documented as a result of these assessments is the lack of instructor and student clarity on what constitutes a college-level source and its appropriate uses. A plan for developing a response to this area of weakness was rejected in the Fall of 2010; a new plan and attempt to address this weakness will be developed in Fall 2011. A discussion of English Composition is provided in the General Education section of this chapter.

Data that tracks the progress of students who begin their composition courses with ENGL091 (the developmental course) compared to those students who begin their composition courses with ENGL110 started being gathered in the Spring of 2011. That report is pending, awaiting the accumulation of additional data and the determination of responsibilities for writing assessment come Fall 2011.

*French:* The outcomes in French are primarily a list of the activities engaged in by students in the process of earning the degree. In their present form, faculty members will have difficulty assessing these outcomes. Some evidence of assessment is documented in the form of exams and class activities, but the connection between assessment and stated outcomes is currently unclear.

*Spanish:* Outcomes in Spanish are presented as holistic goals of the program. They will require additional definition in order to make them assessable. As in French, some evidence of assessment is documented in the form of exams and class activities, but the connection between assessment and the stated outcomes is currently unclear.

### *School of Social Sciences*

The School of Social Sciences includes the departments of History, Political Science, Psychology, and Sociology. The School of Social Sciences offers the following degrees: History; History—Secondary Teaching; Political Science (with tracks in General, Prelaw, and Public Administration); Political Science—Secondary Teaching; Psychology; Social Studies—Elementary Teaching; Social Studies—Secondary Teaching; Sociology—General; Sociology—Secondary Teaching; and Sociology—Social Services. The School also offers Associate degrees in Social Work and Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment as well as a Certificate in International Studies.

*History:* The five outcomes for the History degree are stated as goals in holistic terms that make them difficult to assess. They will need further definition to turn them into learning outcomes that are assessable. Currently, the program has no direct assessments in place for its degree in History. Those students taking History as part of their Secondary Teaching degree in History take the Michigan Test for Teacher Certification (MTTC) in History; in the past, the program used this test as the primary measure of effectiveness for the degree program as a whole. As of May 2011, the program does not list any indirect measures of assessment. One recent change that



has been made to the BA in History is the designation of a single faculty member as the director of all senior theses in order to ensure consistent measures across all capstone projects.

*Political Science:* Of the Political Science program's five outcomes, some are assessable and some are too broad for specific assessment measures ("thorough understanding of American politics and government..."). The program has, in the past, tracked placement data for its students, but does not appear to have any regularly reported direct or indirect assessment measures currently in place.

*Psychology:* The five program outcomes for Psychology are generally stated in clear and assessable terms, although some phrases such as "knowledge of" should be redefined in measurable terms. Psychology has, in the past, administered a major field test that was given at the end of the senior year. The test provided percentile scores by which LSSU Psychology majors could be compared with a national sample. The test has not been administered since 2007. Using other forms of measurement, the department provides a clear, step-by-step rubric for students' senior research projects. One ongoing assessment practice by the department is a "senior thesis 'needs' assessment" distributed to students at the outset and at midterm. In response to the results in the 2009-10 academic year, one professor developed modules on: Organizing Research Reports; Professional Poster Format; and Professionalism in Interacting with Research Participants that are now used by all senior thesis directors. Additional assessment instruments (surveys, focus groups) are used with students that result in course and program modifications.

*Sociology:* The academic program in Sociology has five outcomes and the applied program an additional two. Most are stated in assessable terms, although two could be defined with more specific and measurable terms (instead of "knowledge of" and "have an understanding of"). The primary method of assessment in Sociology as of Spring 2011 is an evaluation of the internships undertaken by the students in the Applied Concentrations; students are evaluated by their agency supervisor.

### *School of Communication Studies and the Fine and Performing Arts*

The School of Communication Studies and the Fine & Performing Arts includes the Department of Communication Studies, the Department of Fine and Performing Arts, and the Department of Humanities and Philosophy. It offers degrees in Communication Studies, Fine Arts Studies, and an Associate degree in Liberal Studies.

*Communication Studies:* Communication presents a mission statement as well as a general set of goals and objectives that combines what the program plans to do for students as well as what kinds of overall skills students should have practiced by the time they leave the program. Not all of these are assessable. As of Spring 2011, no assessment processes appear to be in place for the Communication Studies degree program.

*Fine Arts Studies:* The degree in Fine Arts Studies is an integrated, bi-national program offered by a three-member consortium situated in Sault Ste. Marie, MI and Sault Ste. Marie, ON: Algoma University, Lake Superior State University, and Sault College of Applied Arts and Technology. Many of the courses at LSSU are



taught by adjunct faculty. The combination of the consortium model as well as the dependence on part-time faculty has led to a lack of definition of clear outcomes or assessment processes, although some areas within the degree (for example, Dance) have developed basic outcomes and assessment practices. As of Spring 2011, the Fine Arts Studies degree as a whole does not have a mission statement, outcomes, or an assessment process in place.

### School of Education: Undergraduate Degrees

The School of Education offers a Bachelor of Science or Arts in Education with options in Elementary Teaching or Secondary Teaching. Elementary Teaching offers minors in English Language and Literature, French Studies, Integrated Science, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Spanish. A new degree in Special Education/Learning Disabilities has recently been introduced. Secondary Teaching offers education majors and minors in the following field areas: Biology, Chemistry, Computer Science, Physical Science, English Language and Literature, French Studies, Geology—Earth/Space Science, History, Integrated Science, Mathematics, Political Science, Social Studies, Sociology, and Spanish. Education also offers a Master of Arts in Curriculum and Instruction.

Each Education major and minor is based on the content area the student selects for endorsement. The curriculum for each content area is developed using the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) state standards. The MDE evaluates proposed endorsements and approves them based on the quality of the program proposed. All majors and minors for the School of Education undergraduate program have passed this process.

The outcomes for the undergraduate program in Education are a combination of learning outcomes for the students and goals for the program. Not all are assessable in their current format. The School uses student scores on the Michigan Test for Teacher Certification (MTTC) examination as its primary direct assessment tool. Student teaching (internship) is the culminating event that provides, via a 15-week supervised placement in their chosen discipline, the final assessment to determine if the student has met the requirements of the program.

The results of the MTTC are provided to each discipline. Those disciplines examine the data and determine in which areas students are not meeting the objectives. In consultation with the Education department, the faculty in the discipline determine if there needs to be an adjustment in curriculum. For example, the Biology department developed a new course to assist Education students in understanding the material they need to teach the topic.

The School of Education is currently updating a plan of correction in response to their status of “at risk” being lowered to “low performing,” by the Michigan Department of Education in 2011, based on their Teacher Preparation Institute (TPI) scores. To assist in the development of that plan, LSSU hired a consultant from the Teacher Preparation Institution to meet with the LSSU School of Education and associated faculty, staff, and administrators in an effort to identify key opportunities for improvement. The consultant’s visit took place in May 2011. The consultant provided seventeen specific recommendations for LSSU’s School of Education to pursue to address its problems. Several of these have already been addressed.



The Provost has notified all faculty members of the consultant's report in his June 2011 update and has made the link to the full report available from his web page. The Provost has begun meeting with deans, chairs, and individual faculty members to discuss and address the consultant's recommendations. The [consultant's report](#) is available in Appendix A.

### School of Education: Graduate Degree

The Master of Arts in Curriculum and Instruction (MA-C & I) is comprised of a core in educational research and curriculum and instruction, with electives in the areas of learning theory, special education, educational leadership, technology, and reading. In addition, discipline-specific coursework is required to increase breadth and depth of candidates' content knowledge. A capstone project with public presentation and oral defense is required for graduation. Each candidate works with a graduate advisor from the School of Education to develop an individualized program of study designed to complement the student's past development and educational needs. The Master of Arts has defined goals and objectives for the program, but because the focus of the degree is on individualized programs of study, learning outcomes have not been defined for its students.

### Honors Program

The Honors Program has a mission statement but does not have defined and assessable outcomes for its program as of Spring 2011. There is currently no formal matrix for assessing the Honors Program. There are, however, informal mechanisms in place to ensure that the Program encourages student achievement and achieves the program's stated mission *to foster an approach to education that incorporates the qualities of self-directed learning, a positive response to demanding work, and an appreciation of knowledge for its own sake.*

For example, beginning in 2009, the Honors Council (an advisory group of five faculty from various disciplines as well as the Honors Director) made a small, but significant, change to its senior thesis policy. The senior thesis is a capstone experience for its students, but the level of preparedness and execution among students had varied to a great degree. The Honors Council discussed the problems they had noted, then worked to establish a stronger set of common expectations for the Honors Thesis. The Council also decided to institute a one-credit honors thesis course in the Spring semester of the student's junior year. This new course requirement culminates in a thesis proposal by April of the junior year, rather than in November of the senior year. The Honors Council and four elected student representatives from the Student Honors Organization assess this competence based on the student's written and oral April proposal defense. An adviser from the student's discipline, along with the Honors Council, makes the determination of whether or not a student has passed the proposal defense. The majority of the Honors Council must support the document and presentation in order for it to pass. In practice, unanimous consent is required since anyone on the Council can request "approval with modification," which requires reworking the project until it is satisfactory. The faculty members on the Honors Council have noticed that the students' finished products have improved by about 20% in the areas of literature reviews and creativity over similar students just a few years before. Students are now better prepared than previously to work on their Honors Thesis as they go into their senior year; in addition, they are more thoughtful and deliberate about their thesis execution.



## The Role of External Accrediting/Certifying Entities

Many areas within Lake Superior State University’s academic units have external field exams linked to licensing or certification that are incorporated into assessment processes. Students generally take these exams as seniors or shortly after graduation to meet the requirements for becoming practicing professionals. Several reporting agencies notify LSSU of its students’ exam results even after graduation. For example, Education students take the Michigan Test for Teacher Certification (MTTC) prior to graduation. Students in the Athletic Training program take the National Strength and Conditioning Association (NSCA) exam after graduation. Engineering students take the Fundamentals of Engineering exam during their senior year or after graduation, and Nursing students take the National Certification Licensure Exam (NCLEX) once they complete the program. Along with the results being reported to the sponsoring agencies, the results of these exams are also reported to the associated academic units within the University, where faculty members use them as one of the direct measures of assessment for determining how effectively they are meeting the outcomes of their programs. Table 2.2 below lists the various accrediting and certifying agencies used within academic areas.

Table 2.2: Status of Accredited/Certified Program Visitations

College	Program	Accrediting/Certifying Body	Date Accredited/ Certified	Next Accreditation/ Certification Visit
CALSS	Education	Michigan Dept. of Education	August 2011	March 2012
CNMHS	Nursing	National League for Nursing Accreditation Commission	October 2008	2016
	Environmental Health	National Environmental Health Science and Protection Accreditation Council	August 2007	August 2013
	Chemistry	American Chemical Society	2010	Annually
	Athletic Training Education	Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education	March 2009	March 2019
CETED	Manufacturing Engineering Technology	Technology Accreditation Commission of ABET	2004	Visited in 2010 Final Report Due: Summer 2011
	Computer Engineering	Engineering Accreditation Commission of ABET	2006	2012
	Electrical Engineering	Engineering Accreditation Commission of ABET	2006	2012
	Mechanical Engineering	Engineering Accreditation Commission of ABET	2006	2012
CPS	Legal Studies	American Bar Association, Standing Committee on Paralegals	Discontinued	
	Business Administration Legal Management	American Bar Association, Standing Committee on Paralegals	Discontinued	
	Fire Science	International Fire Service Accreditation Congress	October 2008	2014
	Fire Science (AAS)	International Fire Service Accreditation Congress	October 2008	2014
<b>CALSS:</b> College of Arts, Letters, and Social Sciences				
<b>CNMHS:</b> College of Natural, Mathematical, and Health Sciences				
<b>CETED:</b> College of Engineering, Technology, and Economic Development				
<b>CPS:</b> College of Professional Studies				



### Assessment: Summary

LSSU has demonstrated a growth in its internal commitment to assessment, as well as a growth in faculty knowledge of and participation in assessment. The framework for developing University-wide assessment processes and tracking those processes is now being set in place. The strengths and challenges listed here summarize the cultures and practices already in place that make effective assessment possible as well as the work that still remains to be done.

### STRENGTHS

- **Faculty knowledge and commitment.** Faculty members in most areas demonstrate a knowledge of, and commitment to, real assessment. Their professional work in this area is quite strong (conferences, papers). This commitment and knowledge is most evidenced through their ongoing work in assessment even as the University underwent multiple changes in administration with attendant upper-tier re-imaginings of the assessment process. In many areas among the teaching tiers, however, the process of collecting data quietly continued.
- **Multi-layered and embedded assessment.** In most areas, assessment is multi-layered. Learning has become measured by multiple tools, accompanied by a growing understanding of how to embed assessment in the actual work that students do rather than depending primarily on an externally-constructed, end-term, “normative” assessment model. Useful assessment has become increasingly understood as a measure that needs to mirror the situationally-driven, dynamic, and experiential learning process that it measures.
- **Cultures of assessment.** With minimal guidance and support, two of the four academic colleges have established generally strong cultures of assessment. The College of Natural, Mathematical, and Health Sciences along with the College of Engineering, Technology, and Economic Development have both developed strong assessment practices in most areas and are well on their way to addressing the few remaining areas that still need work. In addition, the School of Business within the College of Professional Studies is in the process of developing strong models that can be used to guide the School of Criminal Justice, Fire Science and EMS.

### CHALLENGES

- **Administrative commitment and consistency.** LSSU administration has begun to put in place the funding, staff, and structure needed to lead University-wide assessment. However, the University still needs to develop a University-wide assessment education and support program; it will also need to create clear guidelines for the documenting and reporting of the assessment processes that faculty members develop and conduct.
- **Staffing and charging the Shared Governance Assessment Committee.** The Shared Governance Assessment Committee needs to be charged and staffed as quickly as possible, with its attendant responsibilities in relation to the responsibilities of the new Associate Provost for Assessment clearly



defined. The working draft of charges outlined earlier for this Committee will need to be thoroughly vetted and discussed to ensure that the concerns of all constituencies are adequately addressed.

- **Training and support.** Assessment is being addressed in only a few isolated areas within the College of Arts, Letters, and Social Sciences: Education (though it needs clarification and streamlining), English composition, and Psychology. Most other areas still need assistance in learning about and developing useful assessment practices.
- **Committing to assessment.** Faculty and administration must work towards developing a campus-wide culture of assessment and committing to assessment as a valued and necessary professional practice. Professional organizations such as the American Association for Higher Education (AAHE) define theoretical and applied research in assessment as a matter of scholarship rather than service. Stanley Katz of Princeton, in his Summer 2008 article “Assessment and General Education” in Liberal Education suggests that work in developing assessment be counted as a contribution toward teaching rather than service. LSSU should seek avenues beyond contract language in defining assessment as a contribution to scholarship or teaching.

### Sub-Theme: General Education

In this sub-theme, Lake Superior State University provides evidence that it meets the following core components:

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

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

3b – The organization values and supports effective teaching.

4a – The organization demonstrates, through the actions of its board, administrators, students, faculty, and staff, that it values a life of learning.

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

### History of General Education

The General Education program at LSSU is constructed to help students make connections between the specific content of their programs and the challenges they face as free and responsible citizens. The General Education Committee is the body vested with the contractual authority to “promote and initiate curriculum development and instructional innovation in general education” and to determine “whether courses proposed for the general



education curriculum will help achieve the outcomes of general education,” an authority established as part of the original 1978 faculty unionization and collective bargaining process. The Committee is comprised of thirteen faculty members elected by their respective colleges or departments, the Provost, two Deans, and two students chosen by the student government. All proposals for curricular change must be approved at the departmental level. The specifics for curricular change are spelled out in the Agreement between Lake Superior State University and Lake Superior State University Faculty Association MEA-NEA, Section 14, which can be found in the Resource Room.

A revised format for General Education was established in 2000, but it soon became clear that the number of courses that were accepted to satisfy General Education requirements under this format was becoming unmanageable, and several courses satisfied more than one criterion. As a result, effective Fall 2003, a new format was adopted and, with a few modifications, is still in effect. The General Education Bylaws (found in the Resource Room) were established in 2003 and govern the process for general education revision.

### Connection between General Education Mission and University Mission

LSSU recognizes that the fostering of general knowledge is a critical component of its larger mission to “help students develop their full potential.” General Education provides much of the framework for a student’s ability to engage fully with the “academically-rigorous program” of her or his choosing and to be able, within that program, to articulate concepts clearly for diverse audiences, as well as to comprehend and analyze ideas within artistic, social, scientific, and mathematical contexts. Strength in these areas lead, collectively, to professionals who will be able to bring both ability and integrity to their respective fields; in addition, a fully-rounded general education paves the way for “lifelong learning” when students move into their roles as thoughtful and engaged citizens of ever larger civic communities.

### General Education Mission Statement and Outcomes

The faculty members at Lake Superior State University have collectively agreed upon the following General Education Mission Statement and Outcomes:

*In a diverse and changing world, college graduates must be prepared for a lifetime of learning in a variety of fields. In order to meet this challenge, general education requirements foster the development of general skills and knowledge that are further developed throughout the curriculum. LSSU graduates will be able to:*

- Analyze, develop, and produce rhetorically complex texts (Communication Skills).
- Communicate competently in a variety of contexts (Communication Skills).
- Analyze, evaluate, and explain human aesthetics and its historical development (Humanities).
- View the world from cultural perspectives other than their own (Diversity).
- Incorporate empirical evidence in the analysis of the causes and consequences of natural phenomena (Natural Science).
- Think critically and analytically about the causes and consequences of human behavior (Social Science).



- Analyze situations symbolically and quantitatively in order to make decisions and solve problems (Mathematics).

### General Education Course Options

Some General Education outcomes are fulfilled with required courses; for the others, students choose from selected groups of courses that meet the General Education outcomes and that have been approved by the General Education committee. The full list may be found in the LSSU Catalog or in the Resource Room.

### Transfer Credits and General Education

Students transferring to LSSU from another college or university in Michigan or Ontario, Canada, may fulfill their General Education requirements by taking equivalent course work accepted by LSSU in fulfillment of the requirements. For instance, students transferring from community colleges may earn a Michigan Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (MACRAO) stamp on their transcript, indicating the transfer of up to 30 semester credits to meet the general education requirements. LSSU has a similar agreement with Sault College in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario. The guidelines for the MACRAO stamp and the agreement with Sault College are available in the Resource Room.

### General Education and Assessment

From the Fall of 2000 until 2005, the Academic Profile Test (APT) served to assess the general education outcomes of LSSU students. Based on anecdotal evidence, the exam was not consistently given in all areas and was required in fewer and fewer areas in its last years. The Academic Profile test was discontinued by ETS in 2005.

### The ETS (MAPP) Exam

The General Education Committee began seeking an alternative to the APT in 2006. In 2008, the Committee chose the Educational Testing Service (ETS) test as its primary measurement of General Education student outcomes because it could offer simple baseline data to begin evaluating General Education outcomes in English, Math, Social Sciences, Natural Sciences, and Humanities. The ETS does not measure for Communication or Diversity outcomes, so additional discipline-specific questions were developed by the appropriate subcommittees and added to the exam in these areas. Beginning in the Fall of 2009, the ETS Measure of Academic Proficiency and Progress test (MAPP) was given to incoming freshmen. The exam was administered to graduating seniors for the first time in the Spring of 2010. See Table 2.3.

As of Spring 2011, two rounds of freshmen/senior exam data have been gathered. The first two semesters of freshmen data and the first semester of senior data have been analyzed. Although a majority of freshmen were tested in the Fall of 2009 and 2010, the senior testing groups have been relatively small and not a good representative sampling. As a result, the General Education Committee has been limited to basic evaluative assessments of its freshmen groups; the comparison of freshmen to senior data is much more tentative.



Table 2.3: LSSU students taking ETS/MAPP exam

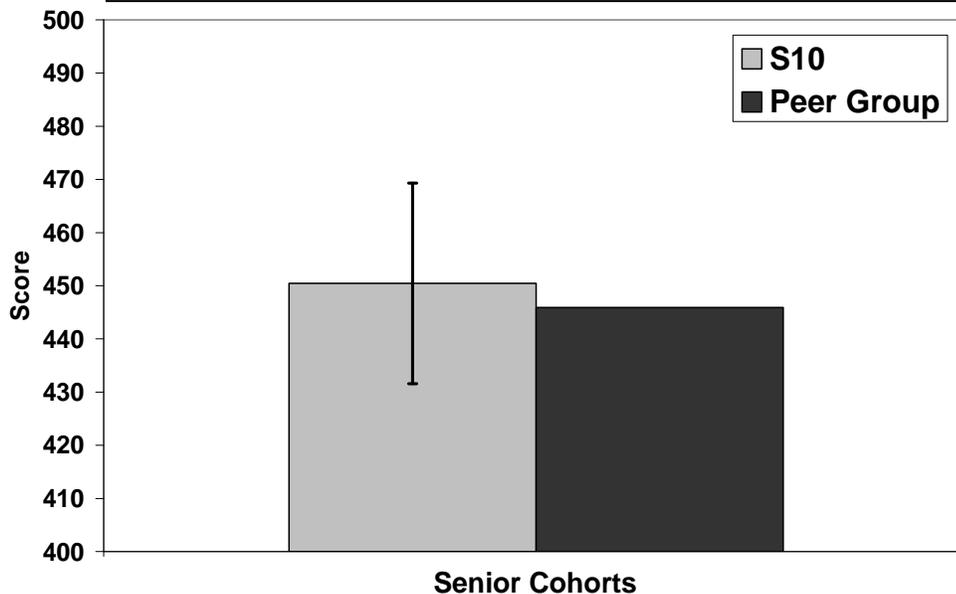
Fall 2009 Freshmen	Spring 2010 Seniors	Fall 2010 Freshmen	Spring 2011 Seniors
406	145	470	182 (as of 4/13/11)

## Summary of Composite ETS Results

Composite freshmen scores were higher in F10 (440) in comparison to F09 (438). The scores of graduating seniors are harder to assess. The small non-random sample size limits rigorous statistical comparison but initial results do suggest that LSSU seniors generally compare favorably with their peer institutions. All LSSU senior scores are numerically higher than the means of peer institutions' senior scores (Figure 2.1), supporting the effectiveness of the LSSU General Education curriculum in these areas.

The results to date suggest that LSSU freshmen and seniors compare favorably with their peer institutions in terms of incoming and exiting scores as well as in terms of the increase in composite scores. For the same reasons stated previously, however, these snapshots need to be viewed with caution until additional data can be gathered.

Figure 2.1: A Comparison of LSSU Senior and Peer Group Mean Scores.



The full data found in the Resource Room includes comparisons between freshmen and senior LSSU student cohorts (by semester) and normative data provided by ETS.



### Conclusions Based on ETS data and Plans for Future ETS Assessment

A more in-depth assessment using the ETS tool will require a larger and more representative sample size for the senior exam. In Spring 2011, the General Education Committee decided to focus its efforts on educating faculty members about the importance of encouraging all graduating seniors to take the exam. By 2013, the General Education committee plans to have a system by which to perform paired analysis between freshmen and senior scores of the same students.

After consideration of the ETS results, the General Education Committee recommends the following actions:

- 1) the committee should continue collecting ETS data for freshmen and seniors in order to develop longevity of data, and
- 2) the committee should take action to address the sampling bias in the senior testing data to enable stronger statistical comparisons to be made.

### Summary of Student Survey Data on General Education

Starting in the Spring of 2010, the General Education Committee distributed surveys to graduating seniors to determine their perceptions of how well LSSU had met its stated General Education outcomes. The survey listed the outcomes for General Education and asked students to identify whether—for each outcome—they felt LSSU had prepared them “not at all,” “poorly,” “adequately,” or “well” to meet each outcome named. The General Education committee received 110 responses in 2010 and 94 responses in 2011, a return rate of 24% and 22% respectively. A copy of the survey and the full results are available in the Resource Room.

In 2010, students reported the most favorable results for how well their Communication courses had prepared them to meet the General Education outcome; 91.3% of students reported that the Communication courses they took “prepared me adequately” or “prepared me well” to *communicate competently in a variety of contexts*. The highest-ranked outcome in 2011 was in the Natural Sciences, in which 84.1% of students reported that their courses prepared them “adequately” or “well” to *incorporate empirical evidence in the analysis of the causes and consequences of natural phenomena*.

The least favorable results, for both 2010 and 2011, were in the Humanities. In 2010, 26.3% of students reported that the Humanities courses they took “did not prepare me” or “prepared me poorly” to *analyze, evaluate, and explain human aesthetics and its historical development*. In 2011, 24.5% reported that their Humanities courses “did not” or “prepared me poorly.”

### Assessment within Courses and Programs in the General Education Outcome Areas

In 2010-11, each outcome-area subcommittee in General Education was asked to prepare a report that addressed the following points:



1. Internal and external departmental assessment tools used in measuring the related General Education outcome
  - a. Courses used to assess the outcome
  - b. Titles and descriptions of instruments used
  - c. Process of administration of these tools
  - d. Current status of these assessment processes
2. Summary of results of department-based assessments
3. Plans to “close the loop” (respond to departmental assessment findings) to better meet General Education Outcome Statement
4. Summary of ETS results
5. Connections between ETS results and General Education Outcome Statement (The committees were asked to assess how useful the ETS results were in helping them to determine whether or not they were meeting their General Education Outcome.)
6. Plans to use/change/adapt use of ETS results to help “close the loop” on meeting their General Education outcome

These reports document that internal assessment has been well developed and is ongoing in four out of seven areas: English, Communication, Mathematics, and Natural Science. The internal assessment processes of English, Mathematics, and the Natural Sciences are also able to contextualize and balance the data they gather with the data gathered with the ETS/MAPP exam. ETS does not measure for oral communication skills, so the General Education Committee depends primarily on the internal measures developed in that area to assess its Communication outcome.

The internal assessment processes for Diversity, Humanities, and the Social Sciences are still being developed. The ETS exam provides some data in the areas of the Humanities and the Social Sciences from the scores it provides, although the correlation between what it measures and LSSU’s stated outcomes is not direct. The General Education Diversity Sub-committee experimented with developing and adding its own questions to the exam, and the results from these suggest there is some increase in understanding of Diversity between freshmen and senior years. At the same time, these internally-developed and untested questions (a set of seven), are not a highly-reliable indicator for testing the outcome. The General Education committee acknowledges these weaknesses and plans to continue working to address them.

The full reports from all General Education subcommittees are available in the Resource Room.

### **Tracking General Education Outcomes in Syllabi**

Starting in the Fall of 2010, General Education committee members began examining the syllabi of all courses that fulfill General Education requirements to determine whether those syllabi identify the General Education outcomes for that course. The results of those examinations suggest that most areas are taking seriously the need to state the General Education outcome that a particular course meets as well as clearly state consistent course



outcomes in all General Education courses. As the General Education Committee worked to educate the faculty members on the importance of identifying outcomes on syllabi, the number of those meeting that goal climbed from less than 10% of syllabi identifying a given course as meeting a General Education outcome in the Fall of 2010 to almost 70% by the Spring of 2011. The outcome-specific development of General Education in meeting this goal is detailed in each subcommittee's report.

One of the next steps in the ongoing process of examining syllabi is to look closely at content and course outcomes to determine how closely course content reflects the intended General Education outcome. The General Education committee has been in discussion about how to enact this next stage and intends to pursue a closer examination of syllabi as one of its projects for 2011-12.

### General Education Assessment: Summary

In summary, the General Education Committee has made great strides in developing a working program of assessment in comparison to its position ten years ago. On the basis of what has been accomplished, the committee now has a good understanding of what it needs to do next to develop a stronger program of assessment. It also has started to determine patterns of strengths and weaknesses in its General Education curriculum, patterns it plans to address in the coming year now that reliable assessment data has started to be gathered.

#### STRENGTHS

- Choosing and implementing an external assessment tool (ETS), and beginning the evaluation of ETS data for five of seven General Education outcomes: Communication (written), Humanities, Mathematics, Natural Science, and Social Science.
- Developing strong internal assessment processes in four outcome areas. In three areas, those processes supplement and contextualize the ETS data: Communication (written), Mathematics, and Natural Sciences. Communication (oral), an area not covered by the ETS exam, has also developed a strong internal platform for assessment.
- Reviewing and standardizing syllabi for the appropriate identification of General Education courses and their outcomes.
- Developing an internal assessment tool (student survey) to measure students' perceptions of how well they are being prepared to meet their General Education outcomes.

#### CHALLENGES

- Increasing the sample size of senior data for the ETS exam in order to have stronger comparative data to freshmen scores.
- Developing a plan for paired tracking of (anonymous) freshmen/senior ETS scores in order to track actual LSSU entering/exiting General Education scores.



- Developing stronger internal assessment strategies for Diversity, Humanities, and Social Sciences.
- Examining the outcomes of courses meeting General Education requirements to determine how well course learning outcomes align with General Education learning outcomes.
- Examining the results of student surveys that report lower-than-average satisfaction with how well they are being prepared to meet General Education outcomes in Humanities and developing follow-up to determine and address the sources of these lower scores.

### Sub-Theme: The University Supports Learning

In this sub-theme, Lake Superior State University provides evidence that it meets the following core components:

3b – The organization values and supports effective teaching.

3c – The organization creates effective learning environments.

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

4a – The organization demonstrates through the actions of its board, administrators, students, faculty, and staff, that it values a life of learning.

### Defining “Learning”

“Learning” is a process whose definition has gone through several metamorphoses: from B.F. Skinner’s theories of behaviorism with their focus on conditioning, to cognitive theories of learning that stress the functions of memory, to constructivist approaches that emphasize experiential learning, to Paulo Freire’s concept of conscientization in which the dichotomous roles of teacher and student break down in the process of making meaning. These, and many more, are the schools of thought out of which higher education’s faculty, staff, and students emerge as they work to make their own teaching and learning processes effective.

As educators strive to make learning more than just the assimilation of knowledge, they find that methods to support learning need to be as varied as the many schools that have contributed to our understanding of what learning entails. LSSU has taken several large steps in the last ten years toward creating an environment that supports varied models and styles of learning, an environment that offers students a range of options to choose from in helping them to shape their own learning experiences.

LSSU offers a variety of opportunities for students who enter the University with strong learning and study skills. At the same time, it offers support in many forms for academically-struggling students. The University makes ongoing and systematic efforts to educate students about the types of support available in the forms of tutoring and study sessions, advisors and mentors, honors programs, research funding, awards and public recognition for accomplishments, and more. Many of these forms are described in the next section. Collectively, these support systems strengthen the ability of LSSU students to meet their learning outcomes.



### The Learning Center

The Learning Center (LC) provides academic support services and strategies for success for all enrolled students. Their services assist students in achieving academic success, gaining scholastic independence, improving self-esteem, and preparing for graduate study. Learning Center staff have been members of the National College Learning Center Association (NCLCA) since 1995.

### Student Success Seminars

The Learning Center offers regular sessions through its Student Success Seminars on basic college-survival skills such as time management, study strategies, studying for math, note taking, stress management, test anxiety, and more. These sessions are conducted in small, friendly groups.

### Academic Support

One-on-one and group tutoring along with Supplemental Instruction (SI) are the cornerstones of student-oriented academic support offered through LSSU's Learning Center. Tutoring includes three areas: the Writing Center, the Math Center, and class-specific tutoring. The tutors and SI leaders are trained to advise students to think beyond their most pressing assignment to help them develop independent approaches to study and test preparation that will serve them in all of their courses.

### Supplemental Instruction (SI)

Supplemental Instruction (SI) is an academic support program that uses peer-assisted study sessions to enhance student success in larger, historically difficult courses at LSSU. SI sessions are regularly scheduled out-of-class review/study discussion sessions that are open to any student enrolled in a course for which SI is offered (attendance is voluntary).

Supplemental Instruction sessions are facilitated by SI Leaders, students who have successfully completed the course(s) for which the SI is offered and who are recommended by the professor. A full listing of courses for which SI sessions are available is located in the Resource Room.

### Tutoring

The College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA) certifies effective tutor training programs at colleges and universities. Three levels of certification training are available through the CRLA. Each level requires ten hours of training and 25 hours of contact tutoring. The LSSU Learning Center requires that all tutors and SI leaders complete at least Level One (standard) training/certification for promotion. Tutors must be enrolled full-time at LSSU, have maintained at least a 3.0 GPA, have successfully completed the courses to be tutored, and have received the professor's recommendation to tutor each course. The tutoring program provides individual and small-group tutoring for many 000-, 100-, and 200-level courses. The full list of courses for which tutoring is currently available can be found in the Resource Room.

The Learning Center has adopted the use of WebCT and Blackboard for Online Course Assistance (OCA) in the historically large and difficult classes in order to reach students who are unable to attend SI or tutoring sessions.



Students who use OCA or SI continually do better by at least 8-10 percentage grade points than students in the same class who do not use tutoring services. The full data can be found in the Resource Room.

The Learning Center (LC) currently has over seventy computers, printers, and scanners available for student use. The Learning Center also places classroom software on specific LC computers so students can work on classroom projects outside of regularly scheduled times. For example, Biology students who use Biopac in their lab classes can gain access to the software through the LC outside of class times.

### IPASS and Student First

In addition to the academic assistance services described previously, the Learning Center also has systems for academic intervention that occur through two programs: the Individual Plan for Academic Support and Success (IPASS) Program and the Student First Program.

IPASS is a student-retention program designed to work on an individual basis with students who are on academic and financial aid probation. Learning specialists engage in directed and intrusive academic advising to assess a student's unique set of barriers to successful learning and develop an individualized plan for academic support and success. The plan includes—but is not limited to—tutoring and supplemental instruction, required study time in the Learning Center, and one-on-one advising regarding study strategies, time management, test preparation, and critical reading skill building. Students enrolled in this free program are paired with a peer mentor enrolled in the same field of study. The mentor and student meet regularly to discuss challenges and successes the student is experiencing. Participants also meet with learning specialists regularly throughout the semester and are advised to make changes in learning strategies as necessary.

Student First is a pro-active program similar in focus and structure to the IPASS program; however, the target population is different. Student First is focused on the First Time in College (FTIC) population. The program staff targets incoming freshmen with a cumulative ACT of 22 or below and a High School GPA of 2.5 or below and invites them into the program before the Fall semester begins.

With the combination of the IPASS and Student First programs and the services provided by the Learning Center to all students on campus, LSSU meets the developmental needs of all main campus students. The goal of both programs is to adequately equip students to create their own plan for success each semester, incorporating study strategies and Learning Center services to help students meet their personal needs and reach their goals. A full description of these programs is available on the IPASS/Student First website.

The Learning Center also serves LSSU students taking classes at the two regional centers, the first housed at Bay College in Escanaba and the second at North Central Michigan College in Petoskey. Many of the developmental and academic needs of these students are able to be met by services offered at the two centers, but, when requested, LSSU's Learning Center also provides online assistance to those students requesting help. Most requests for additional help are for assistance with writing, and these requests are able to be met through online writing center services.



### Testing Center

The Testing Center is located on the main floor of the Library. The primary purpose of the Center is to allow students to take a make-up examination or take a test other than at the regularly-scheduled class time. During the academic year, well over 200 such tests are often taken on a monthly basis. Complete data for the 2009-10 academic year is available in the Resource Room. Other than illness or extenuating circumstances, students need the prior approval of the faculty member. Students can make appointments via a web-based scheduling program, email, phone, or just by stopping in and making an appointment in person.

### Resource Center for Students with Disabilities

The Resource Center for Students with Disabilities (RCSD) houses an Ability Center for Exceptional Students (ACES). The RCSD provides accommodations for students with disabilities; provides assistive learning technology support; provides advocacy and assistance in obtaining testing and documentation; and supports filing such documentation. A proactive approach is incorporated assuring compliance with ADA and Public Law 504.

RCSD's latest full set of assessment data, gathered through surveys of students and faculty, is from 2007-2008 (available in the Resource Room). In the synopses, the RCSD office creates a list of issues that the data and comments raise and then lists plans for resolution of those problems.

### Advising Systems

New faculty members are introduced each fall at their orientation to the advising processes, although most are not expected to begin formal advising duties until their second year. Advising training is supported yearly with workshops at staggered times and days; these workshops are available to all faculty and staff. Additional trainings on specific advising issues such as suicide prevention, retention, first-year experience, career advising, and more are held on a regular basis. A list of special advising workshops and the attendees for the last five years as well as the Advising Handbook made available to all faculty members may be found in the Resource Room.

In addition to LSSU-based trainings, the Advising, Retention and Orientation Office subscribes to webinars and online presentations that it makes available to faculty and staff. One recent example is a workshop on the advising and retention of returning veterans: "When Johnny Comes Marching Home: Reintegration Problems and Concerns of Military Service Members Returning from Combat." The attendance records (when available) and a full description of the presentations are in the Resource Room.

### Counseling Services

LSSU's Counseling Services, which provides a variety of free mental health services to the campus community, plays an important role in supporting students' academic success. Nearly 40% of students who sought out counseling at LSSU during the 2010-11 year cited "academic concerns" as one of the main reasons they were prompted to seek services. The Fall 2010 *American College Health Association National College Health Assessment* provided data on the factors students reported as affecting their individual academic performance. The top ten factors, listed in descending order, include: stress; sleep difficulties; anxiety; cold/flu/sore throat;



internet use/computer games; work; concern for a troubled friend or family member; depression; relationship difficulties; and participation in extracurricular activities. Of these ten factors, seven are directly and routinely addressed by Counseling Services through individual services and outreach/education.

### Honors Program

The LSSU Honors Program admitted its first 18 students in the Fall of 1995. The Program averages 50-60 students enrolled per year. Small seminar classes (15-18 students) facilitate strong student/faculty interactions; honors seminars are interdisciplinary in focus and incorporate experiential learning activities.

This community fosters an approach to education that underscores:

- the importance of self-directed learning,
- a positive response to demanding work, and
- an appreciation of knowledge for its own sake.

The Honors Program provides an important dimension of the University's commitment to excellence in teaching and learning. The Honors Program, through special housing as well as programming, seeks to create a community of scholars characterized by strong student and faculty interaction, creativity, and enhanced learning opportunities.

### Student Access to Research Labs and Performance Spaces

LSSU works to make student use of laboratory, practice, and performance spaces available to its students. Since most disciplines require senior projects that include original research, making lab space available to those students in particular becomes a priority across all areas. Each area establishes its own policies about student access to research labs and performance spaces. Some of these are unwritten policies and simply involve receiving permission from the appropriate lab manager or department chair. Summaries and/or examples of the policies and guidelines that are currently in place are available in the Resource Room.

### Kenneth J. Shouldice Library

The Kenneth J. Shouldice Library is an instructional resource center for the students and employees of LSSU, and members of the community and region. The collection consists of over 130,000 physical volumes; 850 paper periodical subscriptions; over 6,000 streaming films and documentaries; 75,000 microforms; and almost 1,000 other items in various formats. The library also offers 26,000 online books and approximately 20,000 full-text magazines and journals. Patrons use the online catalogs to find library materials or access one of the more than 100 online databases to search for periodical and book information. To access materials the library doesn't own, it participates in the Michigan MelCat system and the international Online Computer Library Center, Inc. (OCLC) system. Library computers provide access to the Internet, the Microsoft Office Suite, and printing.

There is ample room to study comfortably in the library, with seating for over 350, as well as individual and group study rooms. There are a few meeting rooms used to hold faculty, staff, and student meetings, as well as community sessions such as the Lake State Elders and Social Security hearings. Several rooms in the library are set up to serve as Sprint Certified Interactive Television Rooms and as satellite television display rooms.



The library is open nearly 100 hours a week allowing students, staff, and community time to use all the resources. The main webpage for the library offers access to all public information.

### Library Computers

Students actively and regularly use the library's computers and wireless network. It is rare to walk through the library and not see students using both the desktop computers and the wireless system through their laptops. For students who have laptops, but not wireless cards, the Audio Visual Center will lend wireless cards to students for in-library use.

### Library Staffing

LSSU librarians have faculty standing. Currently, the Library, overseen by a Dean, has three full-time librarians with MLS degrees, an acquisitions clerk, a cataloguing assistant clerk, and one circulation clerk.

### Library Instructional Support

LSSU librarians actively reach out to faculty through email notifications, convocation sessions, and one-on-one office visits to inform faculty about new acquisitions and services. Librarians also work closely with faculty to tailor library educational sessions to course-specific needs.

### *Bibliographic Instruction*

In 2009-10, librarians provided 55 library instruction sessions for 12 academic areas, with most sessions (30) offered for English courses. In these sessions, librarians try to focus on the immediate needs of the students, based on consultation with the faculty member. In 2009-10, they also chose to focus on three areas in response to discussions with faculty:

- Introducing students to Credo Reference
- Showing students how to use the database tools to generate citations
- Helping students identify scholarly research

### *Library Informational Sessions*

Library personnel regularly invite faculty members and staff to test pilot programs, investigate new acquisitions, and attend informational/training sessions on how to access and use new technologies or services. For example, six separate Fall 2010 informational sessions were scheduled at varying days and times (mornings, afternoons, evenings) to accommodate as many faculty as possible. Questions addressed included: How do you get to all 20,000 full text journals available through the library databases and subscriptions? Can I put a link on my webpage so that students can read selected journal articles? What is Films on Demand and how can I use it in my classes? What is Credo Reference and how has it changed since last year?

### Financial Aid and Scholarships for Students

Despite a significant drop in enrollment over the last decade, the amount of institutional financial aid has doubled from \$2,169,911 to \$4,885,857. The chart that includes a breakdown of all aid is available in the Resource Room.



Through the Financial Aid website, students may find information on the costs of tuition and housing, federal aid, LSSU scholarships, and loans. Almost 90 individual LSSU Scholarships available to LSSU students are also listed there. Scholarships are searchable either by ranking of student (in-state, out-of-state, incoming, or returning) or by discipline.

### Support for Student Research

As demonstrated, student research is supported through a variety of venues, perhaps most immediately visible through LSSU's commitment to senior research projects mentored by fulltime faculty, student access to labs and performance/practice spaces, and student/faculty collaborative scholarly research (discussed in "Scholarship"). A recent addition to the prevailing practice is the establishment of a dedicated fund for undergraduate research administered by the Undergraduate Research Committee.

### Undergraduate Research Committee (URC)

The Undergraduate Research Committee (URC) is charged with promoting and recognizing the student research efforts that already occur across campus, as well as encouraging new efforts. The committee consists of faculty members from various academic disciplines and is chaired by the Dean of the College of Natural, Mathematical and Health Sciences.

One of the main roles of the URC is to oversee the Undergraduate Research Fund, a program sponsored by the LSSU Foundation that awards grants of up to \$500 to students to support research-based equipment, supplies, and travel. The student grants are awarded once each semester. The award is competitive and meant to help fund students' undergraduate senior research projects.

The first set of six students to receive the grant in the Fall of 2010 came from a variety of disciplines: Communication, Biology, Fisheries and Wildlife Management, and Environmental Health. A second set of five students received awards in the Spring of 2011; these awards were granted to students in Chemistry, Environmental Chemistry, Exercise Science, and Fisheries and Wildlife Management. A complete listing of the senior projects supported by the funds is available in the Resource Room.

### Grant Funding that Includes Support for Student Assistants in Research

Twenty-six different grants, primarily from the sciences, allowed LSSU to employ approximately 58 students between the years 2008 and 2010. Several of these students took the skills and knowledge they acquired as part of their work on the grant-funded project and developed them into senior research projects. In many cases, these experiences provided students with the opportunity to apply their theoretical knowledge to real-world problems. These are good examples of how LSSU is redefining the classroom for its students.



A few examples of the many grants that have included funding for student research or assistance follow:

- Potential of reed canary grass as a biofuel in the Eastern UP. 2007-2009. Funded by Michigan Biofuels Initiative, Biofuel Program, MI Dept of Labor and Economic Growth. G.Zimmerman, PI. This project examined yield and energy content of a weedy grass species common in the EUP as a potential pellet fuel along with making and burning such pellets. Dr. G. Zimmerman supervised a student and a part-time technician under this grant. ***Two senior thesis projects spun off of this research.***
- Binational Public Advisory Council for the St. Mary's River Area of Concern. 1999 to present. Various grants averaging \$3000 per year funded by the Great Lakes Commission to provide logistical and office support for the citizen's advisory group for cleanup of the St Mary's River. Project includes Annual Environmental Summit which brings local resource agencies, academics, and residents together to review progress on remediation of local environmental problems. G. Zimmerman, PD. ***Each semester, a student has been hired on this project.***
- Integrity of a wetland on a local military base. 2005-2006. \$20,000. Funded by Michigan Department of Military Affairs. G. Zimmerman, PI. ***One student was hired on this grant and completed her senior thesis on this project.***
- USEPA/GLNPO grant entitled "Biotic and Chemical Integrity of the St. Mary's River, AOC." Field work started in Summer of 2005. Analysis of samples continued until Spring 2007. This grant was for a total of \$715,000. M. Werner, PI. The final report was submitted in Fall 2008. ***Employed 12 students*** and funded seven researchers over the course of the study.
- "Current Sediment Quality in the St. Mary's River AOC (MI:USA)" from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Great Lakes National Program Office. \$86,285 during 2002-2004. B. Keller, P.I., with R. Back of SUNY Oswego. ***Employed three students.***
- Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment. Exploratory freshwater mussel surveys in streams of the central and western Upper Peninsula, 2010-2011. \$26,750. A. Moerke, P.I. ***Employed four students.***
- US Environmental Protection Agency. St. Mary's River monitoring for TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Loads -pollution) development, 2010. Co-PIs: G. Steinhart (lead), B. Keller, J. Westrick. \$201,500. ***Employed three students.***



## Support for Teaching and Learning with Technology

Many members of LSSU's teaching and learning community assist with training faculty, staff, and students in the multiple crossovers between teaching, learning, and technology: information technology specialists, librarians, and individual faculty members trained in specific forms of technology all contribute to this conversation.

## Online Teaching/Learning

LSSU has greatly expanded its online learning offerings in the last few years. From Fall 2003 to Fall 2010, the number of courses created in Blackboard format increased from 55 to 241, while the number of faculty/staff using Blackboard increased from 35 to 104 in the same period. A more complete listing of data is available in the Resource Room.

The Online Learning website provides informational links for the three main user groups: potential students, current students, and faculty.

## Faculty and Staff Training in Online Teaching/Learning

LSSU employs one fulltime Information Technology Specialist who manages much of the training for faculty and staff use of Blackboard and Online Learning. In addition, one librarian assists part-time with online training. They, along with experienced faculty, regularly present workshops and training sessions at Fall Convocations and throughout the year on specific elements of online teaching. Below are some representative examples that, in themselves, demonstrate the arc of concerns and learning about online teaching and learning over the last four years:

### Fall 2006 Convocation

Teaching and Learning Online

Panel Discussion

Does LSSU need to offer online classes? What resources are required for online instruction? What do students think of online classes? Is the quality of online instruction a concern? A panel of faculty and staff members shares their experiences as teachers and students as the University grapples with the question of delivering online courses.

### Fall 2008 Convocation

Online Learning: A Multi-user Perspective

Panel Discussion

What resources are required for online instruction? What role does or should various offices play on campus? What do users think of online classes? Is the quality of online instruction a concern? A panel of faculty, staff and administrators share and respond to questions concerning online courses.



## Fall 2009 Convocation

What's new in Blackboard CE8

Sara Devaprasad (IT)

What are the newer features available in Blackboard CE8? Find out by attending this informative session. The features covered are: Acxicom, Scholar and i>clickers, and the re-introduction of SafeAssign.

In addition, Information Technology staff regularly schedules training sessions throughout the year on “Designing a Course,” “Managing the Gradebook,” “Working with Groups,” “Conferencing with Wimba,” and more. Online tutorials are also available in these areas through the LSSU Blackboard webpage. Additional sessions on specific topics may be added, prompted by staff or faculty request. The Instructional Technology staff at the University has also developed a set of four online courses that faculty and staff may access at any time about how to get started using Blackboard:

1. Designing Your Course
2. Assignments and Assessments
3. Teaching Your Course
4. Taking Your Course to the Next Level

## Teaching with Technology

In addition to online courses, LSSU faculty members have looked to other forms of technology to supplement traditional forms of classroom teaching. Training sessions, offered by faculty members, information technology staff, and others, range from the use of i>clickers in classrooms, Wimba technology for conferencing and group meetings, interactive whiteboards for group problem-solving and brainstorming sessions, and more. Although some of these are intended primarily for use within Blackboard, all can be adapted for use either inside or outside of the Blackboard environment. A few representative examples follow:

## Fall 2006 Convocation

Learning is the Goal, Technology is One Tool

Dave Myton (Chemistry/Education)

Technology, from the mechanical pencil to the fully interactive web-delivered course, has changed the face of education. An introduction to the use of the i>clicker (adopted as the LSSU standard for classroom presentation systems) as a tool to increase student learning and promote an active engaged classroom. Other topics include podcasts and other web-based support, along with ways to use the tablet PC.



## Fall 2008 Convocation

### i>clickers: Keeping it Simple and Innovative

Jason Garvon (Biology)

The i>clicker is a wonderful tool, however, as with many tools the multitudes of features can make it seem intimidating and difficult to use. Presented here are the basics of course setup and student registration, using i>clickers for quizzes/attendance, and some innovations not presented in the manuals.

### DIY Interactive Whiteboard and Presenter for Under \$100

Brian Snyder (Mathematics)

In this session we will begin by examining the basic concepts behind an interactive system. We will examine several computer applications within the interactive environment. Finally, we will see how to build an interactive system using readily available components that cost less than \$100.

## Fall 2009 Convocation

### Wimba

Beth Hronek (Librarian)

Advanced Wimba: This session is for faculty who have used Wimba. Beth will serve as a moderator as Wimba users share ideas, successes, and issues. Please come and participate in what we hope will be a lively discussion of Wimba for users.

## Teaching Excellence: Workshops and Seminars

Development days, held at the start of each Fall semester, include seminars on teaching effectiveness. Specific members of the faculty are invited or volunteer to lead a session. Topics range from presentations and discussions of experiential and service learning, problem-based learning, technology and teaching, issues of academic honesty, and more. The Office of Advising and Retention also subscribes to online seminars that it makes available to faculty. Topics include motivating students, supporting returning veterans, and connecting retention and assessment. Examples of some of the most recent convocation and webinar sessions are listed here:

## Fall 2010 Convocation Sessions

### Problem Based Learning: Benefits and Potential Pitfalls in Undergraduate Instruction

H. Russell Searight (Psychology)

Problem-based learning (PBL) is a small-group pedagogical technique widely used in fields such as business, medicine, engineering, life science, and architecture. In PBL, pre-written cases are used to teach core course content. PBL advocates assert that course content is more likely to be retained and applied when presented as cases reflecting "real life" applications of class material. However, rather than traditional lecture-discussion, PBL encourages student autonomy in analyzing cases, with the instructor serving initially as a structuring facilitator before gradually becoming less active as students



take more responsibility for their learning. Participants will “work through” sections of a PBL case written by the presenter which are used for the undergraduate course "Psychology of the Exceptional Child." Students in the course typically include psychology, special education, and human service majors who have positively evaluated this technique as a teaching tool.

### Best Practices for Risk Management in Experiential and Service Learning

Michelle Thalacker (Student Services)

As colleges and universities provide more opportunities for students to gain practical knowledge outside the classroom, we find ourselves facing potential lawsuits for failure to protect. Learn about some recent court cases and join an open discussion on how to mitigate the risks in experiential and service learning at LSSU.

### Webinar

“Facilitating Student Motivation and Engagement: Institutional Values and Best Practices for the Classroom and Support Services”

*Overview:* This presentation focuses on an obstacle to student success at the college level, as reported in research on learning and retention: lack of motivation and/or engagement in learning. The opening to the session will focus on a definition of the two terms, working against generalized misconceptions about motivation and engagement as internalized factors in learning that cannot be addressed or remedied. A second segment of the presentation will focus on conditions in educational settings that are not conducive to motivation and engagement: institutional structure, mission, and values; practices within advisement and student services/student life functions; and the centerpiece in all discussions on the topics: the teaching/learning experience in the classroom.

In addition to these workshops and seminars, an “It’s All About Teaching” luncheon series was introduced in Fall 2010. In these programs, faculty members attend a luncheon (held once or twice monthly) in which individuals or faculty groups talk about a particular topic or strategy in teaching. These are sometimes very informal presentations with two or three faculty members talking about a topic such as strategies for getting students engaged and then opening up the topic for discussion. At other times the talks are more formal with faculty members reporting on research or summarizing a conference presentation.

### **Teaching Excellence: Yearly Teaching Award**

Each year, an awards committee comprised of students and faculty select a member of the faculty from student, faculty and staff nominations for the Distinguished Teaching Award. The Award Committee is comprised of graduating seniors with the highest grade point average in their colleges/schools and previous Distinguished Teaching Award recipients that are current faculty members. Students and faculty submit the names of professors they would like to nominate, along with an essay explaining why this professor should receive the award. A full list of all faculty members who have received the award as well as the nominating process materials are available in the Resource Room.



### Supporting Learning for the Organization as a Whole: Tuition Assistance/Remittance

Lake Superior State University is committed to lifelong learning and scholarship. As part of that commitment, full-time employees, their spouses, and dependent children have the opportunity to participate in this process with the tuition remission benefit. Lake Superior State University full-time employees receive full tuition remission for themselves for any course in which they are formally registered. Dependents and spouses receive fifty percent tuition remission.

This benefit offers opportunities for all members of the University community to share in the unique advantages of working at an educational institution. Historically, the benefit tends to be used more by dependents of staff than by staff members themselves.

### Support for Learning: Summary

Lake Superior State University has built a strong framework for its students in the forms of student services, support for research, and effective teaching models. More though remains to be done, as reviewed in the strengths and challenges that follow.

#### STRENGTHS

- **Faculty commitment to quality teaching.** Despite the high turnover in leadership at the University, as well as the impositions created by the limits in state funding, staff and faculty have found ways to maintain high standards of teaching and active conversations about effective teaching and learning in their courses.
- **Support for student research.** The support for student research, as evidenced by activities such as the number of grants that allow for student employment and participation in research projects, student access to expensive equipment in labs for research, as well as the program of grants for undergraduate research, point to an ongoing commitment to high academic standards and opportunities for students.
- **Strong peer-to-peer tutoring and academic support systems.** The regular use of tutoring services by students as well as student use of (and high evaluations of) the supplemental instruction systems speak to well-trained tutors and committed academic support systems in the Learning Center.
- **Strong early intervention programs.** The development and demonstrated success of early intervention programs such as IPASS and Student First are strong indicators of the types of effective programs that can be developed even on small budgets.

#### CHALLENGES

- **Decline in library funding.** Library funding has been flat for ten years, a problem compounded by the fact that the number of academic programs has increased from approximately 70 programs ten years ago to between 120 to 145 (depending on how one defines “programs”) in 2010. Action is needed to properly align budgetary resources with programs being offered and costs of services.



- **Minimal support for teacher training and teacher advising.** Support for new and innovative teaching methodologies comes primarily from low and no-cost faculty-driven initiatives and seminars. Surveys of faculty members express strong support for some form of a “Teaching Center,” yet attempts to secure internal or external funds to develop and support such a center have been unsuccessful. In addition, although demands for research and assessment by faculty continue to grow, little infrastructural support has been created to support these increases in faculty workloads.
- **Outdated reimbursement policy for development and teaching of online courses.** The lack of a reimbursement policy for developing and teaching online courses that reflects the changes in and demands of those technologies has caused many faculty members to hesitate at taking on such courses. As Lake Superior State University reviews how much online teaching is appropriate for the type of engaged teaching/learning it embraces, a policy will need to be developed that guides and supports future online course development.

### Sub-Theme: The University Supports Scholarship

In this sub-theme, Lake Superior State University provides evidence that it meets the following core components:

3b – The organization values and supports effective teaching.

4a – The organization demonstrates, through the actions of its board, administrators, students, faculty, and staff, that it values a life of learning.

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.

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

### Defining “Scholarship”

Lake Superior State University defines itself as a teaching institution rather than as a research institution. Faculty teaching loads of 12 credits translate into four courses per term for faculty teaching three-credit courses, or three courses per term for faculty teaching four-credit courses. Even with this teaching load, many faculty members maintain a surprisingly strong record of scholarship. This record becomes even more meaningful when the number of articles and presentations that showcase or include student authors are counted; for an undergraduate teaching institution, LSSU graduates a substantial number of students with at least one publication or professional conference presentation to their credit. These students have a strong understanding of the role and purpose of scholarship as the means of organizing and transmitting knowledge.

In the last ten years, LSSU has shifted in its teaching, learning, and assessment strategies from a focus on linear and end-based models of learning to a focus on process-based and experiential learning models. In this time, LSSU has grown into a new sense of its commitment to education by incorporating an increasing number of



educational measures that are embedded in learning activities rather than in exams alone. The report that follows provides representative highlights that demonstrate only a fraction of the work that LSSU students have produced while engaging in original and hands-on research, guided directly by a professor in their field. Nearly all majors have incorporated individual student capstone research projects/theses into their curricula; several disciplines have also integrated these projects into their assessment practices. Through its commitment to these kinds of higher-level teaching and learning practices, LSSU demonstrates dedication to its mission of helping students *develop their full potential...by providing high-quality, academically-rigorous programs in an engaged, personal, and supportive environment.*

Working from the Boyer model that includes discovery, integration, application, and teaching as forms of scholarship, the majority of the scholarship produced by LSSU faculty and students would fall within the categories of the “scholarship of discovery,” the “scholarship of integration,” and “the scholarship of teaching.” LSSU faculty members are also quite active in the area that Boyer defines as the “scholarship of application,” *where theory and service practice...vitaly interact, with one renewing the other.* Yet language in the Faculty Agreement, at this time, does not recognize such work as scholarship unless it has been formally developed and documented, vetted, and then presented through an external agency; as a result, scholarship within that category has not been included in the documentation that follows unless it has been formally presented to an external audience.

### Support for Faculty Scholarship

All fulltime instructors receive \$800/year by contract to assist with their professional development. The funds may be used for professional memberships, technology support, conference or research travel and fees, or any other purchase associated with professional development. Faculty members may allow their funds to accrue, since any unused amounts roll over, up to a maximum of \$4,000. Section 15.3 of the Faculty Agreement describes the guidelines for the use of professional development funds.

### Scholarship by Faculty

LSSU faculty members have maintained a strong commitment to remaining current in their fields, both in the content of their discipline and in the research and application of teaching pedagogies. In order to present the research of LSSU faculty as simply as possible, the counts of papers, presentations, grants, etc. listed in this section are organized into two groups: discipline-based scholarship and teaching-based scholarship. These scholarship counts are shown in Table 2.4. Understandably, some scholarship bridges both areas; in these cases, the paper or presentation was placed within what seemed the most appropriate category. An additional category later lists student scholarship in the various disciplines, much of it co-authored with faculty members, so those publications and presentations may appear in both the faculty and student lists.

The counts are based on the work reported by faculty members in vitae for the years 2001 and after. The scholarship of faculty members who arrived at LSSU after 2001 have their work counted only since their year of hire. The work of faculty members who left LSSU between 2001 and 2011 is not included. The counts are not absolute, as in some cases a vita did not make clear what type of presentation was being given, and/or because papers that had two or more LSSU co-authors may be counted more than once, but the counts offer a generally



accurate snapshot of the patterns of scholarly work produced by LSSU faculty. Some types of work such as the number of patents granted are not included in these listings, but are listed in individual faculty vita.

Table 2.4: Scholarship Counts by College

College	Activity	Number of Activities
<b>CALSS</b>	<i>Discipline-Based Scholarship</i>	
	Scholarly Publications	37
	Conferences/Presentations	51
	Public Creative Productions/Performances (Dance, Theatre, Music)	32
	Creative Writing Publications	24
	<i>Teaching-Based Scholarship</i>	
Publications	12	
Conferences/Presentations	39	
<b>CNMHS</b>	<i>Discipline-Based Scholarship</i>	
	Scholarly Publications	195
	Conferences/Presentations	188
	Grants	74
	<i>Teaching-Based Scholarship</i>	
	Publications	29
Conferences/Presentations	36	
Grants	13	
<b>CETED</b>	<i>Discipline-Based Scholarship</i>	
	Scholarly Publications	12
	Conferences/Presentations	9
	<i>Teaching-Based Scholarship</i>	
	Publications	2
Conferences/Presentations	19	
<b>CPS</b>	<i>Discipline-Based Scholarship</i>	
	Scholarly Publications	6
	Conferences/Presentations	35
<b>CALSS:</b> College of Arts, Letters, and Social Sciences		
<b>CNMHS:</b> College of Natural, Mathematical, and Health Sciences		
<b>CETED:</b> College of Engineering, Technology, and Economic Development		
<b>CPS:</b> College of Professional Studies		

A few highlights of faculty scholarship are listed here. LSSU faculty members' names are in bold. Extended reports on the materials that populate the counts in Table 2.4 can be found in the Resource Room (Faculty and Student Scholarship by College).



### Discipline-Based Faculty Scholarship: Publications

- Berchem, K.** (2010). "Nursing Care of Patients with Heart Failure." In *Understanding medical- surgical nursing* (4th ed., Ch. 26). Eds. L. Williams and P. Hopper. Philadelphia: FA Davis.
- Brunt, C. S.** and Jensen, G.A. (June 2010). "Medicare Part B Reimbursement and the Perceived Quality of Physician Care." *International Journal of Health Care Finance and Economics*, 10 (2).
- Gadzinski, E.** (Fall-Winter 2007). "'the hardest game we'd ever played': Baseball as Metaphor in Four Vietnam War Poems by Dale Ritterbusch." *Aethlon: The Journal of Sport Literature*.
- Iretskii, A. V.,** Sherman, S. C., Angueira, E. J., and White, M. G. (2005). "Arene Formylation in Perfluoroalkanesulfonic Acids." *Leading Edge Catalysis Research*. Ed. L. P. Bevy. New York, NY: Nova Science Publications, Inc.
- Mauldin, R. K.** (2008). "Alienation: A Laughing Matter." *International Journal of Humor Research*, 21(3): 313-45.
- Moening, J.P.,** Georgiev, D.G., and Lawrence, J. G. (2011). "Focused ion beam and electron microscopy characterization of nanosharp tips and microbumps on silicon and metal thin films formed via localized single-pulse irradiation." *Journal of Applied Physics*, 109, 014304.
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- Searight, H.R.** (2010). *Practicing Psychology in Primary Care*. New York and Berlin: Hogrefe and Huber.
- Steinhart, G.B.,** Dunlop, E.S., Ridgway, M.S., and Marschall, E.A.. (2008). "Should I stay or should I go? Optimal parental care decisions of a nest-guarding fish." *Evolutionary Ecology Research* 10: 351-371.
- Swedene, J.** (2010). *Staying Alive: The Varieties of Immortality*. Rowman and Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc.: Lantham, MD.
- Voutsadakis, G.** (2009). "Categorical Abstract Algebraic Logic: Subdirect Representation for Classes of Structure Systems." *Advances and Applications in Mathematical Sciences* 1(1): 37-64.
- Wright, D. D.,** Frazer, T.K., Reinfelder, J.R. (2010). "The influence of river plume dynamics on trace metal accumulation in calanoid copepods." *Limnology and Oceanography*, 55(6): 2487–2502.



### Discipline-Based Faculty Scholarship: Creative Productions

#### Coppelia

The Lake Superior State University's Dance Program presented its first major production, "Coppelia," a comedic ballet, on April 14-16 2011 in the LSSU Arts Center auditorium. The production was **choreographed by Deborah Choszczyk, LSSU dance professor.**

The production included more than 50 dancers, actors, and special guests, including appearances by LSSU President Tony McLain and his wife, Melissa, ten children from the community, as well as many LSSU students. Saturday's performance was "Bring your children to the Ballet Night" and featured special events for children, including an opportunity to meet the dancers and on-stage photo opportunities. The production was sponsored by the Duncan MacLaren Family Fund for the Performing Arts, the P. Clarence Ratwik Stagecraft Fund, and the School of Communication Studies and the Fine and Performing Arts.

#### Icarus

For the start of its Fall 2010 theatre season, **performance and communication arts professor Patrick Santoro Ph.D.** selected a modern retelling of the classic Greek tale, "Icarus." Show dates were November 4-7, 2010. The play was performed in the LSSU Art Center's Black Box Theater, a space typically reserved for performances that are experimental. The play drew on the talents of students from several disciplines; it starred one Engineering student, one Fisheries and Wildlife student, two Psychology students, and one Communication/Theatre student. Three of the five performances sold out.

#### Macbeth

Lake Superior State University's theatre company concluded its successful run of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* Mar. 29-Apr. 1 2008 to an estimated audience of nearly 1,000 people. **Gary L. Balfantz Ph.D., associate professor of communication and drama** and (then) chair of the LSSU Dept. of English and Communication (now dean of CALSS), directed the play. He was **assisted by Steve Uger, a senior at LSSU** from Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, who majored in French and elementary education.

### Discipline-Based Faculty Scholarship: Conferences/Presentations

**Barbour, C.** (February 2010). "Captain America as Indian: Reimagining American History." Southwest/Texas Popular Culture and America Culture Association Conference, Albuquerque, NM.

**Denger, G.** (November 2010). "Bridging politics, progress, and preservation: An Abbeyesque analysis of President William Jefferson Clinton's 'Environmental' public address" (co-authored with Prof. Raymond Quiel of Eastern Michigan University). National Communication Association Convention. San Francisco, CA.

**Molenaar, A.** (2010). "Integrating Sport Biomechanics and Exercise Physiology for Training Collegiate Athletes During a Competition Season." Paper presented at International Symposium for Biomechanics in Sports (ISBS) at Northern Michigan University, Marquette, MI.



**Schaeffer, J.** (February 2008). "The Black Flame: Gender, Arson, and the Circumscribed Authority of African Americans during the Revolutionary Era, 1750-1840." Conference of the Consortium on the Revolutionary Era, Huntsville, AL.

### Teaching-Based Faculty Scholarship: Publications

**Muller, K.** (February 2010). "How Technology Can Promote the Learning of Proof." *Mathematics Teacher* 103 (6): 436.

**Searight, H.R. & Searight, B.K.** (2009). "Implementing problem-based learning in an undergraduate course." *Insight: A Journal of Scholarly Teaching* 4: 69-76.

**Yang, G.** (2006). "Preservice Teachers' Knowledge Development in Reading Instruction." In *Excellence In Teaching And Learning: Bridging The Research, Theory, Practice and Policy Gap*. Ed. A. Salhi. Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group.

### Teaching-Based Faculty Scholarship: Conferences/Presentations

**Been, M.** (April 2008). "The Co-opted Rhetoric of Sustainability: Unmasking the Assumptions Behind the Arguments." NCTE National Council of Teachers of English. Conference on College Composition and Communication. New Orleans, LA.

**Kelso, P.R.** (August 2007). Teaching Geophysics workshop-presentation: "Using Geophysical Field Studies as the Basis for a Problem-Centered Learning (PBL) Course in Introductory Geophysics." 5-day workshop sponsored by the *National Science Foundation* and *National Association of Geoscience Teachers*, Camp Davis, Jackson, WY.

**Mokhtar, W. and Duesing, P.** (June 2008). "Using Research and Applied Projects to Enhance Learning in Mechanical Engineering Design Courses." 15th International Conference on Learning. University of Illinois at Chicago.

**Ratwik, S.H. and Searight, H.R.** (January 2011). "The Senior Research Project: A Model for Addressing Core Competencies in Undergraduate Psychology." National Institute on the Teaching of Psychology. St. Petersburg, FL.

### Sabbaticals

By contract, the University grants a total of up to four semesters of sabbatical leave per year at full pay (except for 2006-07, when the faculty accepted a freeze on sabbaticals as a result of financial constraints). A tenured faculty member is eligible for a Sabbatical Leave after five academic years of employment as a faculty member at the University, so long as the faculty member has not had a Sabbatical Leave within the previous five years. A Sabbatical Leave Committee, comprised of two Deans appointed by the Provost, and five faculty members elected by the faculty, considers the applications for sabbatical leave and makes recommendations to the Provost.



Following the lead of Boyer's definitions of scholarship, sabbaticals are granted for all four forms that Boyer defines: the scholarship of discovery, integration, application, and teaching.

Per the Faculty Agreement, the criteria used to assess the strength of a sabbatical application are the following:

1. The strength of the relationship between a sabbatical leave proposal involving applied or theoretical research related to professional activities and the advancement of knowledge within disciplinary areas.
2. The strength of the relationship between a sabbatical leave proposal involving an external, professionally-related experience/study in a business, industrial, health care, scientific, or educational setting and the improvement of instruction/professional activities at the University.
3. The strength of the relationship between a sabbatical leave proposal involving travel or advanced study and its yield in improving the quality of instruction at the University.

The full contract language regarding the awarding and guidelines for sabbaticals may be found in the Faculty Agreement in Section 15.4. Examples of sabbaticals that have been awarded in the last ten years may be found in the Resource Room.

### Scholarship by Students

Because of LSSU's size, it is able to offer many unique research opportunities to its undergraduate students by offering active hands-on student learning. In many of the disciplines this includes hands-on experience in labs, in the field, and in undergraduate research. These opportunities are incorporated into classes and seen as important components for turning classroom learning into lifelong learning. In addition, these experiences can open career opportunities to students. Regardless of what career path students choose upon graduation from LSSU, research at the undergraduate level is a valuable experience. Students value research because it allows them to join the scholarly conversation of their discipline's community and models the formats for that conversation. Employers value research because it demonstrates the ability of a student to design and complete a project involving analytical and written skills. Graduate schools view undergraduate research experience as an advantage that students will need to complete Masters or Ph.D. theses.

### Undergraduate Research Committee

Undergraduate research is an integral part of the student experience at Lake Superior State University. In fact, the University mission and vision statement emphasizes LSSU's role in helping students develop their full potential, as well as contributing to the growth, dissemination and application of knowledge.

The Undergraduate Research Committee (URC) is charged with promoting and recognizing the student research efforts that occur across campus, as well as encouraging new efforts by providing grants to assist student scholarship. Funding for the grants was provided by a private donor through the LSSU Foundation. The award is competitive and meant to help fund the student's undergraduate senior research project. Currently, the award is capped at \$500 per project.



The URC consists of faculty members from various academic disciplines and is chaired by the Dean of the College of Natural, Mathematical and Health Sciences.

Examples of some of the awards made by the URC in the 2010-11 academic year include the following:

- **Cheryl Baudoin**, a senior from Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, adapted Diane Gilliam Fisher's Kettle Bottom: A Book of Poems into a performance that used the LSSU Arts Center 50-seat capacity Black Box Theatre. This venue offered an intimate space for experiencing the lives and trials of coal miners and their families during the 1920-1921 coal mine wars of West Virginia. The production – conceived, adapted, and directed by Baudoin – was presented on Feb. 17, 18, and 19, 2011. The cast and crew included the following students: Lauren Moore, secondary education/English literature; Lindsey Cooley, psychology; Sarah Becks, secondary education; Emily Perrault, elementary education/English literature; Hailey Bolin, education/ English; Roxanne Morris Gobles, communication; Hannah Connor, biology; Tim Castillo, communication; and Eleisha Perrault, art management. The proceeds from the production went to the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy. Baudoin recently completed a dual major in communication and history with a minor in humanities.
- **Heather Millard**, a senior in biology from Plainwell, Michigan, with a pre-professional concentration, researched the bacterium *Aeromonas salmonicida*, which poses a major threat to Atlantic salmon, an important species for both sport fishing and aquaculture on the Great Lakes. Millard's project included infecting the fish with the bacterium and then taking blood samples at various time intervals and analyzing the levels of infection. A better understanding of the pathogen-host interaction between *A. salmonicida* and Atlantic salmon could help minimize mortality of cultured fish.
- Amphibians are experiencing worldwide population declines, yet little research is testing the negative effects of common chemicals on their populations. **Nicole Powers**, a senior in fisheries and wildlife management from Holt, Michigan, observed the effects of glyphosate, a chemical ingredient found in many household and commercial herbicides such as Roundup. Powers followed the agent's effects on amphibian egg survival and tadpole mutations resulting from adult exposure in the fall and egg exposure during development. Using lab experiments and field observations, she estimated egg hatch success and the percentage of tadpoles mutated from two collection sites at Portage Point, near Escanaba, Michigan. One site was treated with Roundup in the Fall 2010; the other collection site was not treated.
- Heavy metal pollution of rivers and streams in the United States is a prominent environmental concern, particularly in the St. Mary's River, which was designated an Area of Concern by the US EPA in 1985. Despite meeting water quality guidelines, many natural waters still carry the potential to have metal levels that result in toxic effects on wildlife. **Jordan Ernst**, a senior in chemistry from Pickford, Michigan, worked in cooperation with the Chippewa/East Mackinac Conservation District to determine the distribution of heavy metals in the Munuscong River Watershed, which drains an area of approximately 384,000 acres before emptying into Munuscong Lake, an embayment of the St. Mary's River.



### Student Publications, Presentations, Awards, and Internships

One of the results of giving students opportunities to work with faculty on grant-funded research, discussed earlier, is that many students graduate from LSSU with one or more publications or awards from professional organizations listed on their resumé. In addition, students receive opportunities to present their work at professional conferences. Others build on their experience in LSSU laboratories by interning with a range of regional, state, and federal agencies. The examples listed here present only a sampling of the publications, presentations, awards, and internships of LSSU students in the last few years. Student names are in bold. More examples can be found in the Resource Room (Faculty and Student Scholarship by College).

#### Biology

**Best Student Poster**, Michigan American Fisheries Society

- 2010: **J. Kosiara**
- 2009: **T. Buchinger**
- 2008: **R. Namespetra**

**Best Student Paper**, Michigan American Fisheries Society

- 2008: **S. Collins**
- 2006: **B. Rook**

#### Business

**Letitia Phillips**, a Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan native, Sault High graduate, and 2010 LSSU graduate, presented her paper "A Viability Study of the French Luxury Fashion Industry" at the 2010 Global Marketing Conference held in Tokyo in September.

She wrote the paper for her capstone business policy class with Prof. Ralf Wilhelms, who was co-author of the paper. The paper was accepted for a poster presentation at the conference, which was held in the Hotel Okura Tokyo. The theme of the conference was "Marketing in a turbulent environment." Phillips said the Korean Academy of Marketing Science sponsored the conference along with the *Journal of Business Research*, the *Journal of Global Academy of Marketing Science*, the *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, the *Journal of Global Fashion Marketing*, and others.

#### Chemistry

Chemistry and Environmental Sciences students have completed internships in a variety of geographical areas and under the auspices of a range of external agencies. Examples include:

**Bellmore, Rebecca.** (Environmental Management) – interned at the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, Lansing, MI

**McCallister, Andrea.** (Forensic Chemistry) – interned at the Centre of Forensic Sciences Northern Regional Laboratory, Ontario, Canada



**Szlag, Victoria.** (Chemistry, Environmental Health) – interning during the 2011 summer at Fagatele Bay National Marine Sanctuary, American Samoa

**Tuller, Renae.** (Environmental Science) – interned at Northwest Michigan Horticultural Research Station, Traverse City, MI

**Walker, Misty.** (Chemistry)– interned at the Michigan State Police Forensic Science Laboratory, Grayling, MI

**Zoppa, Benjamin.** (Chemistry) – interned at Bay Mills Indian Community/ Biological Services, Bay Mills, MI

### English

**Peter Pietrangelo**, a 2010 LSSU graduate in Liberal Studies with a concentration in English Literature, presented a portion of his senior thesis project as a paper at the 2010 John Burroughs Nature Writing Conference and Seminar held at the State University of New York in Oneonta. Pietrangelo’s senior thesis, "Ecocriticism and the Uses of Upper Peninsula Nature in Jim Harrison's *True North*," was an examination of how the novelist Jim Harrison represented the historical impact of logging and mining on the environment of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan in his fictional work. Pietrangelo was the first student from LSSU to make a presentation at the conference and was one of only two undergraduates whose work was accepted for presentation. His trip was funded by LSSU Student Government. Pietrangelo will be attending Wayne State University Law School starting in the fall of 2011, where he plans to study environmental law.

### Geology

Seventeen LSSU students have appeared as primary or co-authors in geology-related publications since 2001. A sampling is below.

**Bancroft, Alyssa M.,** L. M. Brown, and C. B. Rexroad. (2007) Pennsylvanian (Desmoinesian) Conodont Biostratigraphy from Two Cores in Posey County, Indiana, *Indiana Academy of Science Conference Program and Abstracts*, 35.

Brown, L. M., C. B. Rexroad, and **Alexander Zimmerman.** (2011) Conodont Biostratigraphy of a Shale Lens Overlying the Bucktown Coal Member of the Dugger Formation Pennsylvanian, Desmoinesian), Pike County, Indiana, *Indiana Academy of Science Abstracts with Programs*, 126<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting: 12-13.

Brown, L. M., C. B. Rexroad, P. K. Kelso, **Vincent S. Nowaczewski, Monica E. Witucki, and Mary K. Witucki** (2009) Conodont biostratigraphy of the Porvenir Formation (Desmoinesian, Pennsylvanian), southeastern Sangre de Cristo Mountains, New Mexico: *Geol. Society of Am. Abstracts with Programs* 41 (4): 69.



**Englebrecht, Amy C.**, J. J. Mintzes, L. M. Brown, and P. R. Kelso (2005). Assessment strategies for a university-level physical geology course: utilizing concept maps and interviews, *Jour. Of Geoscience Education* 53 (3): 263-270.

Kelso, P.R., L.M. Brown, **Amy C. Englebrecht**, and J.J. Mintzes, (November 2001). A geology program revised, *Geotimes* 46 (11): 19, 51.

### Psychology

#### Publication

Searight, H.R. and **Perkins, S.** (2011). Autonomy: A cross cultural perspective. In S. Loue and M. Sajatovic (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of Immigrant Health*. New York: Springer.

#### Presentation

**Hemming, M.E.**, Rajewski, C., Rose, J., and Smith, T. (2009). Enhancing student learning through institutional support and team-teaching initiatives. Proceedings of the Conference, Teaching and Learning in College and University. Sault Ste Marie, Ontario.

#### Accepted for Publication—In Press

Searight, H. R., **Vanier, D.**, and Pavlov, A. (2011—in press). Documentary Films. In M. Alexander, P. Lenahan, A. Pavlov (Eds.), *Cinemeducation: A Comprehensive Guide to Using Film in Medical Education* (Second Edition). Oxford, UK: Radcliffe Publishing.

Searight, H. R. and **Shinabarger, C.** (2012—in press). Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (AD/HD). In J. Christensen & M. Feldman (Eds.), *Behavioral Medicine: A Guide for Clinical Practice* (4th Ed). New York: McGraw Hill.

### Sociology

**Kapp Award Recipient: Kathleen Holstege**, one of LSSU's 2010 Sociology graduates, won the Kapp award for her senior research project, "The Varying Effects of Active and Passive Parental Involvement on Delinquency," presented at the Michigan Academy of Science, Arts & Letters, in the Spring of 2010. Kathleen will be honored at the 2011 Michigan Academy's annual meeting and will have her paper published in the Academy's quarterly journal, *The Michigan Academician*.

The Kapp Award is awarded for the most outstanding piece of undergraduate research across all categories and schools. Kathleen was competing with students from universities throughout Michigan and in all disciplines. In the 2009-2010 years, LSSU sociology students presented fifteen original research projects to the Academy, with six more presentations accepted for the 2011 conference. Since graduating Spring 2010, Kathleen has been



working with at-risk adolescents in a therapeutic wilderness program in Central Virginia and will be simultaneously pursuing a Master's Degree in Social Work and a degree in Law.

### Recognition for Student Work

LSSU faculty members make a point of creating public ceremonies to acknowledge their students' work. Late April and early May are filled with departmental receptions and recognitions of student achievements: awards and placards for highest GPA, most improved, best research, best essay, and more. Friends and family are invited to these receptions. In the weeks leading up to graduation, students also present their research in public forums in which faculty, friends, family and more have an opportunity to admire posters or projects and ask questions. In addition, student achievements, both scholastic and non-scholastic, are regularly featured on LSSU's web pages, stories that are often picked up by and reproduced in the local paper.

### Support for Scholarship: Summary

Maintaining a tradition of scholarship in a geographically isolated and underfunded state institution can be a serious challenge, but LSSU faculty and students have established a strong and growing record of scholarship of which they are proud. Yet, as seen in the listing of challenges, there is still much left to do.

### STRENGTHS

- LSSU's fine and performing arts faculty members maintain a strong and ongoing body of creative and scholarly work.
- LSSU's performing arts faculty members have an ongoing tradition of making students the directors, co-directors, and producers of their own and others' creative work.
- The majority of LSSU faculty members in the sciences: biological sciences, chemistry, environmental sciences, and geology maintain a strong and ongoing body of research and scholarship.
- LSSU faculty members in the sciences maintain a tradition of foregrounding students' roles as primary and co-researchers in scientific work; faculty members then assist students in presenting that work in public forums.
- Faculty members in Psychology are establishing a history of strong internal scholarship as well as a tradition of making students' work visible by assisting students in presenting that work in public forums.
- A tradition of faculty scholarship is becoming established in some previously-challenged areas: business, criminal justice, English, mathematics, psychology, and sociology.
- LSSU emphasizes the importance of student scholarship through the creation and support of senior research capstone courses and projects in nearly all disciplines.
- The creation of an Undergraduate Research Committee supports and celebrates students' creative and scholarly projects.



### CHALLENGES

While the wilderness of the Upper Peninsula offers unique advantages for some areas of research such as biology and environmental science, the isolation of Sault Ste. Marie also poses particular challenges to faculty and students who need access to conferences and research sites that are far removed. With only two flights a day (in good weather) from the local airport, and with flights to almost anywhere from LSSU's isolated location being quite expensive, faculty in particular are very dependent on their professional development funds to support them in maintaining currency in their fields through attendance at professional conferences and gatherings.

#### *Financial support for professional development*

As demonstrated by the plethora of research and publications noted earlier, most LSSU faculty work hard to maintain currency in their fields and to be part of the scholarly conversations that go on in their respective disciplines. In fact, the "Scholarship" section documents that LSSU faculty members have made important and substantial contributions to those conversations.

Much of the most recent growth in scholarship is due to the previous decade's focus on hiring faculty with Ph.D.s, in particular those Ph.D.s who demonstrate a record of or potential for scholarship. Yet the funding for professional development has remained flat (\$800/ year for eight years); as a result, most faculty who engage in serious scholarship are left with little choice but to support their professional development with personal funds. In addition, some longer-term tenured faculty members who are not as engaged in research as their newer colleagues let their professional development funds lie dormant. The answer seems to be two-fold: seek for stronger funding for incoming, untenured faculty and open a conversation about pathways for distributing professional development funding that would better support tenured faculty members who are engaged in active research.

Until then, untenured faculty, in particular, remain under pressure to develop and/or maintain strong professional credentials if they hope to achieve tenure. At the same time, the hiring of more Ph.D.s means that the University is also hiring more faculty members with often heavy debt loads from graduate school. The ability of faculty to pay for professional development out of personal funds becomes further circumscribed when salaries are frozen, as they are under the current contract (2011-13). The collision of these forces—under-funded professional development; ongoing demands for research and public presentations of that research; frozen salaries; heavy graduate school debt burdens—creates great stress and sometimes poor morale, in particular among the younger and newer faculty.

#### *Public acknowledgement of faculty professional development*

Very few forums exist for the recognition of the professional achievements of the faculty. These could take simple and inexpensive forms, but sincere public acknowledgment of and thanks for that work would be greatly appreciated. One initiative undertaken by the Provost is the semesterly report to the Board of Trustees of recent faculty publications, presentations, creative productions, grants, unique teaching projects, and other initiatives. This public recognition of faculty work lays a welcome foundation for what is hoped to be an ongoing and developing practice.



### *Support and mentoring for academic research in under-represented areas*

Some disciplines in the University do not have a tradition of formal scholarship and seem to be struggling to establish one. History, humanities, language studies, political science, and criminal justice all do professional work in other forms (community service, academic activities with students, etc.), but if one of LSSU's goals is to establish University-wide academic credentials, these areas might need extra support.

### **Sub-Theme: The University Creates the Capacity for Lifelong Learning**

In this sub-theme, Lake Superior State University provides evidence that it meets the following core components:

1e – The organization upholds and protects its integrity.

4a – The organization demonstrates through the actions of its board, administrators, students, faculty, and staff, that it values a life of learning.

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.

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

### **Defining “Lifelong Learning”**

The HLC's description of lifelong learning uses the word “connections,” along with variants on that term, several times in its definition of lifelong learning: “connections between curricula... and the lives students will pursue”; “fit between learning and living”; “connection between the life of the mind and the life of work.” Lifelong learning, in other words, is learning that is not contained: within disciplines, within specific zones. It crosses sectors; it creates communication across, between, and within disciplines, cultures, and fields of knowledge. In fact, it bridges boundaries of many kinds.

It is appropriate that the discussion of lifelong learning follow the discussion of scholarship. Scholarship is traditionally defined within disciplines, whereas learning is generally understood to take place within a more interdisciplinary and multimodal framework. Lifelong learning is about knowledge that allows its participants to assess, critique, understand, empathize, change, and grow, no matter what they do or where they are. Lifelong learning is a process in which an institution, as well as its residents, must participate.

### **Changes in Curriculum: Interdisciplinary Approaches and Recognized Needs**

Changes in curriculum involve responses to changes in social, economic, or technological conditions. LSSU has made multiple curricular changes in the last decade in response to these types of changes; several incorporate a focus on interdisciplinary connections.

One example of adjusting curricula to meet a specific environmental/social need was LSSU's response to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources' identification of a growing demand for fish health expertise. In



response, LSSU began offering a degree in Fish Health in 2008. At that time there were no other undergraduate Fish Health programs in the country. In another example, the U.S. Department of Labor has recognized geospatial technology as a high growth industry for this decade. In 2008, LSSU added a baccalaureate in Applied Geographic Information Science to its science curriculum. In addition to being a degree area, training in GIS is now also a required element of the new Conservation Leadership degree as well as the new Conservation Biology degree, both added in 2009.

The degree in Conservation Leadership prepares students for careers in global, national and community environmental conservation and advocacy programs. This multi-disciplinary program combines a strong core in the biological sciences with classes in geographic information systems, communications, business and economics, and political science. Students also take a year of a foreign language, and students are encouraged to gain international experiences. The program is flexible, allowing students to select classes that best match their educational and career goals. Students conclude their program by completing an environmentally-related service-learning project for an environmental organization, unit of government, or business.

The degree in Conservation Biology prepares students for careers in which they can make a contribution to mitigating wide-ranging challenges such as invasive species, altered landscapes, species extinctions, or degraded aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems. LSSU's selection of rigorous field-based courses in watersheds, soils, forestry, ecology (general, fish, wildlife or plant), and organisms (mammalogy, ornithology, ichthyology, or entomology) offers an unparalleled set of foundational courses in the natural sciences. Combining this coursework with interdisciplinary courses in social dimensions, political science, sociology, business/economics, communication, and GIS technology adds the breadth needed to integrate biological, economic, and policy issues in the formulation of sustainable solutions. Electives allow students to tailor the program to their interests and their senior thesis to specific types of sustainable solutions.

The degree in Environmental Health is accredited by the National Environmental Health Science and Protection Accreditation Council. The degree in Environmental Health is offered in response to strong student, state, and local government demand for an academic program to prepare students for careers in public health, environmental health, and related fields. This program is similar to the successful environmental science degree, but includes elements that are specifically directed to public health. These include courses in geographic information systems and global positioning systems, hydrology and groundwater, toxicology and epidemiology, public health care and public administration. Students participate in an applied research project in close collaboration with faculty members to address meaningful environmental health problems.

The recent establishment of a degree in International Business is LSSU's response to increasing globalization. This degree focuses on developing students' ability to meet the challenges of the global business environment, highlighting the identification of, and the development of, appropriate solutions for challenges that are unique to the global economy. Students in this program participate in an approved international experience such as study abroad, work, or internships.



Changing foci in existing programs and developing new programs are only two of the ways in which LSSU demonstrates institutional learning. The development of institutional projects that draw on the expertise of multiple disciplines and provide opportunities for multi-disciplinary partnerships is another.

### Cooperative/Interdisciplinary Initiatives: Highlights

The following projects stress interdisciplinarity and cooperation. The projects described draw on the expertise of multiple disciplines and ask the students involved to observe and participate in learning that is embedded in a synergistic web of connectedness.

#### Vermilion Point

Vermilion Point is located west of Whitefish Bay in Michigan's Eastern Upper Peninsula. The Vermilion project is conducted in partnership with the non-profit land trust company, Little Traverse Conservancy (LTC) and is an interdisciplinary project among the members from Engineering & Technology, Biology, and Parks & Recreation at LSSU. The present group of faculty has been working on the project since the Fall of 2009. Currently, Vermilion Point is a remote nature preserve that has no external electrical power and minimal communication to the outside world. The ten-year vision for Vermilion Point is to transform the old on-site life saving station into a self-sustaining facility (in terms of energy, water, waste, and food) for environmental, energy, and recreational research as well as educational outreach.

#### *Phase 1: Weather and Energy Data Collection, Communication Link*

Vermilion Innovation Providers of Energy Research Solutions (VIPERS), an Engineering Senior Projects team from 2009-10, included Mechanical and Electrical Engineering students who were tasked with the first phase of the project. The two main goals in the first phase of the project were to provide the communication infrastructure for Vermilion Point and to complete a feasibility study for future work. The expected final outcome will be a fully functional communication link that will allow data transfer between the newly installed on-site weather sensor station (which was part of VIPERS' project) and LSSU. The network, in its final stage-one form, will need to be capable of transmitting data logger (weather) information along with Microsoft Word and Excel files with an occasional picture. Future network capabilities have been requested so that Vermilion Point can one day implement live web cams of areas around the nature preserve and possibly give on-site researchers the ability to use Skype or a similar program.

The second outcome is an assessment of how the current and future energy needs can be met by various alternative energy sources (e.g. wind, solar, etc.). Currently, the only source of electrical energy is a diesel generator; heat is supplied via burning wood. The feasibility study results will be supported through the weather and energy-use data collected, while minimizing the financial and environmental impacts of the options explored.

#### *Interdisciplinary Nature of Initiative*

As previously mentioned, the working group draws on expertise in a range of disciplines. This has benefited both the faculty members as well as the students involved in the subprojects. For faculty members, the result has been to be able to pursue the modifications to the Vermilion Point buildings in a more holistic way. The students



have also benefited by being challenged beyond their normal technical work to consider environmental impacts as well. In addition to faculty support, the engineering VIPERS team also worked closely with a GIS specialist from the Little Traverse Conservancy.

### *Financial Support and Use of Funding*

At present, the Vermilion Point Project has had two sources of funding. The first source was a \$1,000 donation from LTC. These funds were utilized by VIPERS to purchase and install a weather station on the cupola of one of the Vermilion Point buildings.

The second source of funding is money that was allocated from the Vermilion Point Endowment Fund, of which \$5,000 has been budgeted to VIPERS. Other grant funding is currently being pursued by the faculty members of the project. To date, all funding has been utilized for the Senior Project in the form of equipment for the site and travel expenses to and from Vermilion. In May, both the team and their faculty advisor utilized project funds to travel to Mt. Pleasant, Michigan, to present their results at the regional American Society for Engineering Education (ASEE) conference.

A portion of the same money from the Vermilion Point Endowment Fund will also be utilized in the next couple of years to fund future Engineering & Technology Senior Projects that will implement projects to enable the site to use less energy, utilize alternative energy resources, and provide feedback about how the energy is being used. In the future, it is hoped that funds for the project will also enable the buying out of faculty members' time to pursue research in the different sustainability aspects at the site.

### International School of Public and Environmental Health

In 2007, Lake Superior State University was approached by Algoma Public Health in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, about the possibility of working together with Sault College, a technical college in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, to establish an International School of Public and Environmental Health. This request was in direct response to LSSU gaining national accreditation for its Environmental Health program and a shortage of certified public health inspectors in Ontario. Since that initial contact, administrators and faculty members from LSSU, Sault College, and the Algoma Public Health unit have met and established an international committee. The committee has been working to create an international program that will meet the criteria for accreditation by the Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors (CIPHI). This School will be the first of its kind, in that it will be accredited internationally, in the United States and Canada. At the present time, this proposed international program is under consideration by CIPHI for accreditation. It is hoped that the School will become fully accredited within the year.

### Ecology and Management of Sub-Saharan Africa Wildlife Areas

BIOL400 - Special Topics: Study Abroad (Summer 2009)

Students spent 22 days traveling throughout southern Africa (South Africa, Botswana, and Zimbabwe) while learning about the culture, ecology, and management of parks and ecosystems. While driving in a 4x4 truck/bus and camping along the way, students visited Kruger National Park, Makhadikgadi Salt Pans, the Okavango



Delta, Moremi Game Reserve, Chobe National Park, and Victoria Falls National Park. Students were expected to develop and participate in a service learning project (e.g., collecting items for needy children) as well as a research project.

Students from Recreation Studies who were studying Land and Expedition Management and National Parks as well as students from Biology studying General and Wildlife Ecology participated in the project.

### Enhancing Education through Sailing: The Tall Ships Program

A collaboration between Lake Superior State University and Inland Seas Education Association, the courses in the Tall Ships Program include traditional classroom components during the Summer session, complemented by the educational sailing events described below. The program, currently in its second year, has struggled with low enrollment, partly due to the additional tuition costs of the sailing portion of the course. Both of the courses below were able to run in the summer of 2011. The project's organizers hope to continue this very creative program through supplementing enrollment with area educators who can take the courses to gain continuing education credits.

#### Native Cultures of North America

Sailing July 18-21, 2011 on the 77' double-masted schooner Inland Seas. Cost: \$850 per person covers accommodations, meals on board, and transportation between Sault Ste. Marie and Sutton's Bay.

SOCY225 Native Cultures of North America, 3 credits (3,0)

Instructor/Antropologist: Dillon Carr. Fulfills General Education diversity elective.

The public has the opportunity to join LSSU students on the sail portion of the Native Cultures course. In addition, area educators can earn two continuing education units (SBCEU) as part of this program focusing specifically on Native Cultures of the Great Lakes Region.

Participants who sail on the four-day, three- night voyage have the opportunity to visit important cultural sites on Beaver and Garden Islands as well as others in the Mackinac Straits. Along with these site visits, daily lectures and discussion provide a comprehensive overview of the history of indigenous peoples of the Great Lakes region prior to European contact. The instructor also reviews the experiences and struggles that indigenous peoples have endured to preserve their cultural heritage since European contact.

#### Oceanography

Sailing August 1-5, 2011 on the 77' double-masted schooner Inland Seas. Cost: \$1,000 per person covers accommodations, meals on board, and transportation between Sault Ste. Marie and Sutton's Bay.

NSCI 116 Oceanography 4 credits (3,2)

Instructor: Dr. Derek Wright. Fulfills General Education science elective.

The sailing component of this class commences in St. Ignace MI on August 1, 2011. Students investigate physics, chemistry and biology of the open water on Lake Michigan. After five days at sea, students disembark in Suttons's Bay on August 5th. Enrollment is limited to nine students.



### Learning Options

Students at LSSU are encouraged to participate in avenues of learning that may not fit traditional models of classroom learning. Senior research projects and service learning projects are two areas in which students may be asked to participate in activities that challenge traditional notions of classroom learning.

### Mentored Senior Research

The discussions of the multiple avenues open for student research and learning in the “Scholarship” section has already documented LSSU’s commitment to the senior project, in the form of honors projects, research opportunities, internships, and more, as an integral part of student learning. The requirement within the degree in Conservation Leadership for a service learning project as senior research, as well as International Business’ faculty members commitment to an international experience as part of research, are examples of the many ways in which LSSU continues to expand and deepen its definitions of learning.

### Service Learning

In addition to integrating service learning into degree programs such as the degree in Conservation Leadership, LSSU has been developing pathways by which its students can create links to local area high school students who may not have had a chance to be in direct contact with university students. In 2008, LSSU applied for and received a 2009-10 Michigan Campus Compact (MCC) College Access grant. As part of this grant, LSSU students created “showcase experiences,” learning modules that placed LSSU students in near-peer mentoring moments with high school students. Over 95 LSSU students were involved in this project which saw the creation of 28 College Access Showcase Experiences involving 758 secondary students (282 LSSU GEAR UP cohort students, 52 non-LSSU GEAR UP cohort students, and 424 non-GEAR UP cohort secondary students; a modest number of students, approximately 59, had repeated exposures). Some experiences addressed larger groups of students who visited the LSSU campus as part of a class or school grade-level visit. Other experiences reached into the school campus and brought LSSU students together with secondary students at the school site. These experiences included activities such as students modeling the connections between activities with which the high school students were familiar and career pathways to which those activities could link.

A recent example of a reach-out project to connect university students with high school students, and one that garnered a good deal of positive support in the community including local television and newspaper coverage, was the “Kids Against Hunger Project” that occurred in November 2009. In conjunction with this project, LSSU students met with a Sault Area High School instructor and then assisted in delivering a learning module about area hunger to approximately 100 students in the school. Following that presentation, the high school students together with the school staff engaged in a “Kids Against Hunger” food packaging project creating 10,000 meal kits. Later that same day, LSSU students, faculty and staff united with secondary students from a second area high school, the Ojibwe Charter School, and packaged an additional 10,000 meal kits, creating enough food kits in that single day to serve 120,000 people. Typically the food kits are distributed with two-thirds going into the third world and one-third destined to high poverty areas in the United States. However, given economic challenges within the local region, demonstrated in part through a free and reduced lunch rate of 30% at Sault Area High School, 63% at Sault Ste. Marie’s Malcolm High School and 72% at Bay Mills’ Ojibwe Charter



School (according to the National Center for Education Statistics), one-third of the meal kits were set aside for local distribution under the guidance of the secondary-school students.

Within this project, LSSU students and secondary students worked shoulder-to-shoulder many times, allowing for multiple opportunities to positively reinforce the university experience. Over 100 LSSU students were trained within the MCC College Access Showcase Experience grant to be college-positive leaders for the area's secondary students. In March 2010, LSSU hosted an on-site College Positive Volunteer Training through the Michigan Campus Compact to train additional LSSU volunteers.

### Ethical Use of Knowledge

In preparing LSSU students for their future, academic integrity is considered a key component of the core values taught at the University.

### Scholastic Standards

All members of the University community are expected to be honorable and ethical and observe standards of conduct appropriate to community scholars. Students are also expected to behave in an ethical manner. Academic dishonesty is not tolerated. Such dishonorable behavior includes, but is not limited to, cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, and obtaining an unfair advantage. Appropriate sanctions may include failure of an assignment or exam, failure of a course, or dismissal from the University. A copy of LSSU's Academic Integrity statement may be found in the Resource Room.

To ensure the academic integrity of students attending LSSU, a system of academic review has been instituted. The Scholastic Standards Committee is the appeal agency at LSSU for students who have been on academic probation or dismissed for academic deficiencies.

The LSSU Scholastic Standards Committee is charged with the following:

- Recommend policies on academic, credit, grading, probation and dismissal of students.
- Approve substitutions or waivers of General Education requirements.
- Review student scholarship, discipline, grading situations for at risk students.
- Review re-admittance requests from students.

### Intellectual Property Rights and Acceptable Use Policy

The Faculty Agreement contains the following language on intellectual property rights:

#### 11.11 Intellectual Property Rights.

*Video material, CDs, DVDs, web-based material prepared by a faculty member for classroom instruction, using University materials or equipment, shall not be used by the University or faculty member without mutual consent. At the time of separation of a faculty member from the University, all such material may be erased at the discretion of the faculty member.*



In addition, guidelines on Acceptable Use may be found within the Information Technology Policy. Copies are available in the Resource Room.

### Animal Care and Use in Research

The LSSU Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) ensures that LSSU research projects involving animals are compliant with the Animal Welfare Act of 1966 which is administered by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). LSSU's Care and Use Manual identifies five objectives that guided the preparation of the manual:

1. To provide the reader with an appreciation and basic understanding of the regulatory process and means by which compliance can be assured, and the responsibilities that one assumes when choosing to use laboratory animals.
2. To provide a concise, up-to-date accessible source of information about the University's program for animal care and use to personnel involved with the program.
3. To facilitate good communication among animal users in the interest of good research and responsible animal care and use.
4. To document LSSU's commitment to ensuring the humane use and care of animals required in the various research and teaching programs of the University.
5. To document, in part, the University's responsibility for ensuring that all personnel involved with animal care and use are appropriately trained, experienced, and qualified to perform their respective duties.

The manual, as well as a copy of the application for the Use of Vertebrate Animals (AUVA) for both invasive and non-invasive procedures, are available in the Resource Room.

The most recent chair of the IACUC took over the chairmanship in the 2009-10 academic year. The Chair reports that, since that time, the committee has had 15 applications for vertebrate use; 14 from students and one from a faculty member. These applications are reviewed by the IACUC membership and given one of three responses: Approved; Conditionally Approved (pending minor or major revision/clarification); Rejected.

Of the 15 applications received from the Fall of 2009 through the Spring of 2011, 12 were Conditionally Approved, one was Rejected, and two are pending initial review by the IACUC during the Fall 2011 semester. Of the 12 Conditionally Approved applications, 11 were revised, re-submitted, and then Approved. One Conditionally Approved application was subsequently withdrawn by the applicant.

### Human Subjects Institutional Research

Learning about the ethical use of human subjects in research allows students to understand the long, and often disturbing, history out of which Human Subjects Institutional Research Review Boards (HSIRB) have evolved. Rather than seeing their own proposals and meetings with the Board as simply another obstacle to



accomplishing their research tasks, students learn the importance of taking direct responsibility for the ethical treatment of their research subjects. By understanding the roots of HSIRBs in the extraordinarily brutal, and recent, misuse of human subjects under such conditions as the Tuskegee syphilis experiments, students see their role as researchers in a historical light and become more aware of the possible pressures they might encounter in real world situations to cut corners or gloss over ethical concerns.

At LSSU, the HSIRB committee is chaired by the Dean of the College of Natural, Mathematical, and Health Sciences and populated by faculty members from several physical and social science disciplines, as well as a professor with advanced training in ethics and philosophy. The committee reviews all proposals to determine that the methods proposed are compliant with CFR Title 34, Part 97 for the Protection of Human Subjects supported by the U.S. Department of Education.

In the 2010-11 academic year, the committee reviewed proposals from 46 students and eight faculty members. A complete list of proposals, a copy of the full packet that must be read and completed by all Principal Investigators for submission to the Committee, as well as the HSIRB meeting minutes, are available in the Resource Room.

### **Curricular and Co-curricular Activities**

Students at LSSU participate in a wide range of activities that link their study in their disciplines to wider social issues of environmental degradation, poverty, disease, and more. As noted under “Service Learning,” 95 LSSU students participated in reach-out projects to local youth who might not otherwise have had the opportunity to directly connect with university experiences.

In another recent project, the members of the group “Students for a Sustainable Lake State” proposed, in the Spring of 2011, eliminating the use of trays in the school’s major cafeteria in order to cut down on food waste and the water/energy used to wash trays. Working together with staff in Dining Services, the students measured and recorded the food and liquid waste at breakfast, lunch, and dinner for one week. When trays were present, food and liquid waste totaled 561.3 pounds for the week. After the trays were taken away, the overall food and liquid waste amounted to only 278 pounds—a difference of 283.3 pounds.

In addition to the reduction in food and liquid waste, Dining Services staff noticed a reduction in their usage and purchases of chicken patties, french fries, hamburgers, and fresh potatoes by 50%. They also saw a reduction in the usage of foods prepared—such as roasted red potatoes and pasta for the pasta bar—by an average of 30%. Minimizing food waste helps to minimize carbon dioxide emissions, and dining services also reduced its use of fresh water by running the dishwashing machine less. LSSU Food Services donated fifty cents per pound of food saved to two local food banks: the Salvation Army and Cedar Post. Dining Services is preparing to go trayless permanently beginning the Fall of 2011. Students for a Sustainable Lake State continue to research initiatives that will allow LSSU to have a lighter footprint on the Earth.

Another student group that has made an impact on the local community by using its discipline knowledge to create positive social change is Students In Free Enterprise (SIFE).



### Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE) Connect Business Skills with Community Needs

Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE) is an international non-profit organization that brings together leaders of today and tomorrow to create a better, more sustainable world through the positive power of business. Through projects that strive to improve the lives of people worldwide, university students, academic professionals, and industry leaders who participate in SIFE work to demonstrate that individuals with a knowledge and passion for business can be a powerful force for change.

LSSU houses one of more than 500 SIFE programs in the United States. Participating students use business concepts to develop community outreach projects that improve the quality of life and standard of living for people in need. In the 2009-10 academic year, the LSSU SIFE team organized numerous projects in the twin Saults, including a passport fair, an income tax assistance program, and the construction of a raised garden for elderly residents of a Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, housing complex.

LSSU's chapter took top honors at the SIFE USA Regional Competition held during April 2010, in Chicago. The event was one of twelve regional competitions held across the United States during March-April 2010 and was the third year that LSSU SIFE won a regional championship.

One of SIFE's most highly-regarded projects is its tax assistance program. LSSU accounting majors and SIFE members help people in the community with their tax returns through the Voluntary Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program. Six to eight LSSU accounting majors schedule clients for several weeks in February and March in an LSSU classroom. To prepare, students either take the personal income tax course offered through LSSU or are certified online through the IRS website.

The group project came about as the result of a meeting in Fall 2006 among area human service agencies that were looking for a way to provide free tax preparation services to low income wage earners and senior citizens. The students took their lead from the community resource coordinator with the Chippewa County Department of Human Services in Sault Ste. Marie, who coordinated transportation for clients unable to get to appointments on their own.

The "passport fair" is another project conducted by SIFE. The fair helps LSSU students and area residents adjust to travel restrictions imposed on cross-border travel between Canada and the United States as a result of the United States' Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative. Working with the Chippewa County Clerk's office, a local commercial photographer, and the U.S. Customs and Border Patrol, more than 375 people have obtained passports through the SIFE project. LSSU's SIFE team has held four "one-stop" passport fairs since Fall Semester, 2007. Student Government assisted with the funding for this venture.

### Lifelong Learning: Summary

Through their contact with audiences, activities, and travel outside their usual experiences, LSSU students are able to discover forms of learning that resonate beyond the classroom into the lives they will live as members of a family, community, region, and world. They begin to understand the kinds of responsibilities that come with



being an educated member of a community as well as the particular and unique pleasures of interconnection that such education can bring.

### STRENGTHS

The Physical Sciences area has taken a strong lead in making interdisciplinary connections an explicit goal for several of its programs. Both students and faculty members in those programs have taken significant steps in developing the connections between the life of the mind and the life of work, evidenced perhaps most vividly in the student-initiated move to trayless dining. The students who founded the “Students for a Sustainable Lake State” were members of a “Human Environment” class; they took what they learned about human/environmental interactions in that class and translated it into specific actions to lighten the University’s carbon footprint.

Students in SIFE have made similar connections through the development of programs such as helping to build raised garden beds that provide opportunities for accessible outdoor low-stress exercise and fresh produce for the elderly. The programs that provide tax assistance to low-income residents as well as passport fairs that allow for a one-stop passport application process have been welcomed by residents and have provided business students with opportunities to see that business skills can be used for building community in ways that are not immediately visible as “business.”

Students in Sociology, Psychology, and Biology gain an understanding of the need to accept lifelong responsibility for the ethical treatment of the animals and humans studied in their projects. By learning the guidelines for ethical use of human subjects in research, they come to realize that their research has repercussions beyond the immediate project. They write their own HSIRB proposals and must meet with the HSIRB committee to answer any outstanding concerns before their projects are approved. Students in the sciences and social sciences engage in the same process through applications for the use of animals in research with the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC).

General Education, discussed previously, underscores in its learning outcomes that its commitment to “general” education is really a commitment to the type of lifelong learning that is foundational human education. Rather than listing specific skills, the outcomes use language such as *think critically and analytically*, *analyze situations symbolically and quantitatively*, and *incorporate empirical evidence in analysis* to promote its commitment to educating students for their roles as vital and active citizens.

### CHALLENGES

Although many areas within the University have developed strong links between students’ academic learning and lifelong learning, more areas need to emphasize these connections. Many student groups participate in fundraisers for local charities, but this location of “civic engagement” within the realm of the “extra-curricular” serves to reinforce the notion that the engaged citizen is external and peripheral to a student’s future role as engaged professional. The connections between the life of the worker and the life of the citizen need to be developed more explicitly within additional disciplines.



An ideal audience for providing information about LSSU’s effectiveness in teaching lifelong learning would be alumni. This connection would seem obvious, but it only came about as a result of the discussions connected to the self study. The self study “evidence team” has noted this need. The Provost’s [Academic Improvement Plan](#) (AIP) discussed in Chapter Four provides information on the methodology by which the University will be able to solicit input from alumni on this question.

### Sub-Theme: The University Strengthens Organizational Learning

In this sub-theme, Lake Superior State University provides evidence that it meets the following core components:

- 1d – The organization’s governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the organization to fulfill its mission.
- 2c – The organization’s ongoing evaluation and assessment processes provide reliable evidence of institutional effectiveness that clearly inform strategies for continuous improvement.
- 2d – All levels of planning align with the organization’s mission, thereby enhancing its capacity to fulfill that mission.
- 5a – The organization learns from the constituencies it serves and analyzes its capacity to serve their needs and expectations.

### Defining “Organizational Learning”

Organizational learning, to borrow terms from the HLC’s own language and the language of a number of organizational management scholars, is the ability of an organization to transfer learning from the level of the individual to the level of the institution and vice versa. In the case of education, this might be reframed as the translation and application of discipline-level knowledge into institutional practice. For this transfer/translation/application from one level to another to take place, two conditions must exist: a structural mechanism that allows and promotes the transfer of knowledge, along with a culture that encourages and supports, in Meinolf Dierkes’ terms, “habits of inquiry, experimentation, and reflection” (Dierkes, M., *et al.* (2004) [Handbook of Organizational Learning and Knowledge](#). Oxford University Press).

LSSU, as has already been established in Chapter One, has experienced multiple reinventions of its structural mechanisms through a series of changes in administrative personnel and multiple attendant structural reorganizations. From 2002 to 2007, LSSU saw multiple reorganizations during a time of administrative constriction. Several patterns of reorganization of academic and administrative units can be chronicled via the University organizational charts found in the Resource Room.

As a result of these changes, LSSU’s attempts to develop structural mechanisms that would work as conduits for the transmission of organizational learning have been interrupted in major ways over the last decade. As long as LSSU depended on the administrative composition of the University to operate as the structural mechanism for promoting organizational learning, it was put in the awkward position of rerouting and relearning those



pathways of information every time the University was reorganized. But with the introduction of Shared Governance, an alternative structure became visible, one that will be minimally affected by University-wide reorganizations. As a result, LSSU has finally found a stable framework that will be able to transmit organizational learning: a structural mechanism that will allow and promote the transfer of knowledge. The next step will be to develop the culture of communication that supports *habits of inquiry, experimentation, and reflection*.

### **Shared Governance (SG): Structural Mechanisms and a Culture of Communication**

In 2009-10, LSSU took its first steps toward establishing a system of shared governance. The University defines its Shared Governance mission as the following:

*Shared governance embraces the University's mission. It recognizes and supports the leadership role of the President and Chief Academic Officers, the guidance of the Board of Trustees and the critical interface of the Faculty, Administration, Staff, and Students. Broad institutional representation within this body of shared decision-making allows the University to be nimble and responsive. Shared governance:*

- A. Creates a dynamic, vibrant, and engaged institutional culture.*
- B. Provides a forum for faculty, administration, and support staff to address shared concerns.*
- C. Provides a mechanism for coordinating policies and, where appropriate, provides input into decision-making processes.*
- D. Improves the University's ability to carry out its mission through shared objectives.*

The mission statement and charges of shared governance point to the University's attempt to create the conditions for effective institutional learning as defined at the start of this section: establishing the structural mechanisms for the transfer of knowledge and establishing a culture that encourages and supports that transfer. The LSSU Shared Governance website has links to clearly defined mechanisms and processes for its advisory and decision-making capacities as well as a flowchart that marks out the steps for all decision-making processes. Issues that have been resolved or are in discussion are also documented on the website, with the current status of that decision process indicated. The [Shared Governance documents](#) may be found in Appendix A.

Shared Governance allows for organizational learning to occur, perhaps most visibly, through the population of its various committees. Members of the shared governance structure serve either through election by peers or by administrative appointment. Representatives are appointed or elected by the members of a given academic division, administrative unit, or other designated entity. The Oversight Committee, for example, is currently chaired by a member of the Biology faculty. The members include the Faculty Association President (a faculty member from Business), a Psychology faculty member, two members from the Administrative/Professional Staff (Registrar's office and Public Relations), one Educational Support Employee from the Physical Plant, and the Provost. This combination of University personnel from all areas creates opportunities for communication pathways that did not exist under the previous structure. Although Shared Governance is still new, the possibilities are slowly becoming obvious to more and more members of the University community as they see that the structure will exist in much more than just name.



As yet, the transition to shared governance is one that is still not entirely embraced by all constituents, and the process of educating faculty and staff about what SG can and cannot do has been somewhat attenuated by the focus on preparing for the HLC visit. As a result, the term “shared governance” has become something of a floating signifier: representing impending loss of faculty authority and an administrative ‘grab for power’ in some eyes, while representing opportunities for dynamic and creative opportunities in curricular and institutional development in others. As the campus community becomes more aware of the SG process, the University will need to continue to work towards changing the culture and encouraging more member involvement in the shared governance process. In that spirit of open communication, LSSU may want to take a lesson from Gary Olson’s July 23, 2009, article, “Exactly What Is ‘Shared Governance?’” in The Chronicle of Higher Ed, in which he writes:

*The key to genuine shared governance is broad and unending communication. When various groups of people are kept in the loop and understand what developments are occurring within the University, and when they are invited to participate as true partners, the institution prospers.*

Olson’s comments point to one of the major failures of organizational learning at LSSU prior to the self study: in terms of assessment, few departments knew what the others were doing. In addition, they weren’t sure what they should be doing with the data they were gathering, who should be receiving it, and in what form. With the plan for appointing an Associate Provost for assessment and the chairing of the Assessment Committee by that Associate Provost, discussed earlier, the basic pathway becomes clear and the specifics of communication and responsibility can be worked out by the people involved.

With the processes and structures of shared governance now being worked out, LSSU is in a stronger position to argue that its “governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the organization to fulfill its mission” and that it will be able to use “reliable evidence of institutional effectiveness [to] clearly inform strategies for continuous improvement.”

### Strategic Planning

One of the primary committees for Shared Governance is the Strategic Planning and Budget Committee (SPBC). In July of 2010, the members of this committee, along with a cross section of LSSU employees and the Board of Trustees (BOT), met for one and a half days and developed seven goals that support the mission and vision of LSSU.

Goal 1: Collaborative, committed campus community

Goal 2: Competitive, desirable school of choice for students and families

Goal 3: Bridges to and from the community that create pride and prosperity for both

Goal 4: Superior services and facilities for students designed to respond to changing student needs



Goal 5: Excellent programs that maximize regional assets and opportunities

Goal 6: High value, up-to-date educational resources that work

Goal 7: Strategy for long-term financial stability

The SPBC is working to solidify those goals by developing action plans for each. The committee has been meeting with representatives from all of LSSU's constituencies to create the action plans, to identify how the action plans will be measured, and to determine which areas across campus will have the responsibility to ensure the action plans are carried out as intended.

The SPBC made a presentation at Convocation 2010 to inform the University community as a whole about its work and to solicit input. The PowerPoint presentation given at that time is available in the Resource Room.

### Learning From Its Constituencies

LSSU also participates in organizational learning through learning from the constituencies it serves. As discussed earlier under "Lifelong Learning," LSSU has partnered with multiple external organizations in response to prompts from those organizations or from its own environmental scans. The partnerships with Little Traverse Constituency in developing the Vermilion Project, and with Algoma Public Health in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, in establishing an International School of Public and Environmental Health, are just two examples. In addition, as will be discussed in Chapter Three, LSSU has partnered with the local Coast Guard agencies in making classes available to its service members at the station and on those members' schedules as well as establishing an Environmental Analysis Lab that is able to serve local needs while providing onsite laboratory experience for students. All of these partnerships lead to richer academic lives for students, faculty, and staff along with underscoring the importance of the synergistic relationship between town and gown.

### Organizational Learning at LSSU: Summary

Many of the topics discussed earlier in this study are linked to organizational learning, since nearly all of them inform the university's mission and its goals. As a result, the strengths and challenges that are listed here are, to a great degree, recaps of what has been discussed both in this sub-theme and in earlier sections, but now viewed through the lens of how they play a role in organizational learning specifically.

### STRENGTHS

- Periodic reviews of academic units have contributed to improvement of the organization. Academic program reviews are conducted by many specific agencies such as National League of Nursing, ABET, Association for Computing Machinery, and others. These reviews have continued through the last decade and have been, in most cases, conducted with successful results, with changes to programs made in response to the accrediting body's requirements.
- As discussed under "Assessment," LSSU's programs without external accrediting agencies have a mixed record of assessment, with engineering, mathematics, and the physical sciences developing fairly



strong assessment practices overall, while the humanities, arts, and social sciences are still working to develop strong assessment practices. So this is a mixed strength/challenge area.

- General Education, starting in 2009, has developed a working program of assessment that continues to be modified as the committee receives feedback on its efforts. This history and process is outlined in full detail under “General Education.”
- All faculty members are evaluated by students in their classes near the end of each semester. These student evaluations play a strong role in the tenure and promotion process. In addition, untenured faculty members are evaluated annually by their immediate supervisor while tenured faculty members are evaluated once every five years. Section Eight of the Faculty Agreement outlines the evaluation process of faculty members.
- The development of Shared Governance is a step in the direction of stronger and better Organizational Learning. The structural mechanisms are now in place and have started working to ensure active internal communication processes.

### CHALLENGES

- Faculty and staff will need to be clearly informed about the purpose and possibilities of Shared Governance in order for the structure to grow in effectiveness. Now that the mechanism is in place, LSSU needs to work on developing the supporting culture.
- As discussed in “Assessment” at the start of this chapter, the informational loop of the assessment process—gathering, tracking, reporting, interpreting, and applying—needs to be made clear to all and an infrastructure put in place that makes this process as seamless and as efficient as possible.



A university that seeks to redefine the classroom must be one that is connected—one that sees its role as serving the larger society. Chapter Three examines Lake Superior State University’s work in addressing issues of diversity, serving its internal and external constituents, creating a culture of service, collaborating with other educational institutions, and maintaining healthy internal communications. The University continues to make a concerted effort to increase programs and practices that promote an understanding and acceptance of a multi-cultural society. Lake Superior State University serves its constituents and community through its academically-related programs, its physical resources, and its status as an institution of higher learning. The final section of Chapter Three specifies the opportunities the University offers to ensure healthy internal communication, a process that is essential to its success. The recent institutionalization of a shared governance system moves LSSU forward on its path toward ensuring that the University remains connected in an ever-changing global society.

### Sub-Theme: The University Serves the Common Good

In this sub-theme, Lake Superior State University provides evidence that it meets the following core component:

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

As an institution of higher learning, Lake Superior State University upholds the four tenets of its mission document: 1) to provide *high quality, academically rigorous programs* 2) in an *engaged, personal and supportive environment* 3) that *nurtures potential and sets students on paths to rewarding careers and productive, satisfying lives* and 4) *serves the regional, national, and global communities by contributing to the growth, dissemination and application of knowledge.*

As valuable as these particular tenets are, the University serves a higher purpose as well: the common good. While the University focuses on preparing its students and constituents for professional and personal success, it does not neglect the ideal of building human communities. Lake Superior State University participates in the social and philosophical goal of educating the citizenry, thereby elevating the level of discourse about the needs and values of the greater society. This serves the common good by encouraging social responsibility and developing a culture that values knowledge both for its own sake and for the good it can do. It is through its commitment to the growth and dissemination of knowledge that LSSU evidences its value for learning and for supporting intellectual and educational endeavors that create a humane culture and civilization.

The self study process enables the University to recalibrate its role as a repository of human knowledge, traditions, and cultures. As noted by the HLC in its Statement of Diversity, it is the universities that must prepare their students to develop the *capacity* to live *in a culturally pluralistic and interdependent world.* To achieve that goal, Lake Superior State University must embrace the concept of diversity as well as its practice.

After the current mission and vision statement was developed in 2008, a statement of values was created for the LSSU community using the mission and vision statements as a guide. The LSSU values statement seeks to articulate the personal and organizational behavior required to build community:



- *be honest, open, forthright, and courteous;*
- *respect and value each person as an individual;*
- *accept responsibility for our own conduct;*
- *be diligent in carrying out our responsibilities;*
- *welcome diverse perspectives and remain open to change and innovation;*
- *manage resources and facilities responsibly and with environmental sensitivity;*
- *be vigilant about potential threats to health or safety; and*
- *work cooperatively in the interest of achieving our common mission.*

The stated values include two elements that embrace a diverse community and encourage efforts to expand campus discussions to include local, national, and global issues. These two value statements—*respect and value each person as an individual* and *welcome diverse perspectives and remain open to change and innovation*—are reflective of the activities outlined in the diversity plan included in the University’s 2005 *Progress Reports to the Higher Learning Commission*. Although this plan was not formally executed, LSSU has maintained a constant awareness of the necessity to identify and address the needs of its diverse populations both within the student body and the community at large. The Lake Superior State University mission statement, planning documents, and activities demonstrate how LSSU addresses diversity, functions in a multi-cultural society, and honors individuals with diverse needs and points of view.

Lake Superior State University’s goal is to help all students, regardless of their background, ethnic origin, financial status, religious belief, sexual orientation, etc., develop to their full potential. This is accomplished through *an engaged, personal, and supportive environment*. The institution recognizes that its students come from diverse backgrounds as indicated by the demographic information included in the Institutional Snapshot.

With its goal of diversity in mind, Lake Superior State University has implemented a variety of activities and supported a number of events and on-campus groups to encourage diverse thought and promote an acceptance of a diverse population across campus. The following paragraphs will delineate how activities in campus programming, graduation ceremonies, the Library, the Native American Center, food service, and general education serve the common good by exposing students and the local community to the cultures, thoughts, beliefs, and traditions of the diverse, multi-cultural society in which we live.

### Diversity Activities

Diversity programming for LSSU students and the local community has traditionally been funded through yearly allocations from LSSU’s Issues and Intellect Fund, Cultural Affairs Fund, and Student Activities Board. These funds have been used to bring many programs of a multi-cultural nature to the campus and the Sault Ste. Marie community. The activities have ranged from speakers on critical issues (e.g., American–Islamic relations, the plight of oppressed peoples, and addressing racist and hateful behavior), to cultural presentations (e.g., Native American art, music, and storytelling, Sandip Burman, Kiyoshi Nagata Ensemble, Maya Angelou), to celebrations of the efforts and accomplishments of individuals who have taken a stand to address oppression and hate (e.g., Martin Luther King Jr., Harriet Tubman, Paul Rusesabagina). Mary Robinson, former president of



Ireland, as well as its first female president, and former United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, addressed some of these issues when she spoke on campus in April 2011.

From the time students enter Lake Superior State University right through the graduation ceremony, LSSU students are exposed to diverse cultures and ideas. Both the U.S. National Anthem and the Canadian National Anthem are sung at sporting events. The same is true at graduation. Furthermore, each year since its first graduation ceremony, LSSU has enlisted Native American drummers to perform an Honor Song and the Irish Duncan Family to play bagpipes. These actions reinforce recognition of our diverse student body and our unique proximity to both Native American and Canadian cultures and values.

The city of Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan and its surrounding regions are rich in Native American culture and heritage. Native American students comprise approximately 8% of the student population at LSSU. The University has committed resources to Eskoonwid Endaad, also known as the Native American Center, as a place to provide cultural outreach and awareness in addition to many other services. In addition, the Native American Center also serves as a multi-cultural center in response to the increasing diversity on campus. Eskoonwid Endaad offers a “home away from home” for Canadian and commuter students as well. There are cooking facilities, a computer lab, copier, fax, and message phone available to students. The facility is available to students 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Also housed in Eskoonwid Endaad is a student advisor who provides academic and non-academic support services for students. The Center serves as a brokerage entity for resources for student support, both academic and non-academic. The facility also serves as a transition center for students with unique needs in making the transition to the campus.

To further serve the Native American population, the LSSU Geology Department and the Native American Center staff collaborated on a grant project to recruit Native American students into the geosciences field. The program involves interaction between high school seniors and LSSU faculty and staff, a variety of tribes, and high school Geology teachers and counselors. The program provides opportunities for students to experience geological outings into the field as well as career counseling and interaction with geoscience professionals.

In another effort to encourage interest in diversity, the University’s Food Services has featured heritage months since 2007. During each of these months, a sign is posted at the front entrance of the Quarterdeck (central cafeteria) to inform students that Lake Superior State University is celebrating a specific heritage. A newsletter is also distributed to students with information about the group being recognized. Students enjoy the feature foods that represent the heritages being celebrated. Quarterdeck managers also receive diversity training as part of the program. Since beginning this feature, the Quarterdeck has celebrated the heritage of Native Americans, Africans, Indians, Austrians, Germans, Cajuns, the American South, the American Southwest, Hispanics, African-Americans, Hawaiians, Chinese, and many more. When possible, local individuals with appropriate backgrounds plan and participate in the event to guide the food services staff.



### Diversity in Academic Programs

In addition to campus activities, the University incorporates diversity into its academic programs. The Lake Superior State University General Education requirements include a diversity component. Students may choose from a list of approved diversity courses. These courses enable LSSU graduates *to view the world from cultural perspectives other than their own*.

The Lake Superior State University General Education Committee believes that understanding diversity is not a matter of advocacy on behalf of any specific group or category of people. Nor is it a matter of learning a specific theory of political, social, or economic relations—such theories may be only transitory products of particular schools of thought. The enduring skill that will help students throughout their lives—both professional and personal—is a capacity to see the world through the eyes of those who are fundamentally different in some way. Students should be able to hone this skill in any course that provides a relatively in-depth examination of any of the divergent cultures that exist within and across societies and that are sometimes also associated with differences in race, gender, class, religion, national origin, and sexual orientation. Developing this lifelong skill enables students to embrace cross-cultural boundaries with which they were previously unfamiliar.

Finally, by establishing a shared governance process in 2009-10, the University embraced the first of the values noted previously: *to respect and value each individual*. This is accomplished by ensuring that all voices of the university community are heard. The oversight group for Shared Governance and its individual committees made a point of sharing their deliberations by conducting open meetings and numerous surveys to secure as broad a reaction to issues as possible. This process has been embraced by the Student Government as it, too, makes an effort to inform students of its deliberations (e.g., open meetings, bulletin board in Student Center with Resolutions) and decisions. Additionally, it is not unusual for the various Student Government committees to send out questionnaires or to set up tables at strategic points on campus to secure student input.

### Special Events

Within its constricted budget, LSSU also attempts to bring in speakers who engage with communities both large and small, on and off the LSSU campus, to introduce this primarily white, rural region to a range of views and ideas that might not be a part of people's everyday experiences. Below are examples of three such events.

Scholar Dr. Rachida El Diwani arrived on the LSSU campus October 22, 2005 for three weeks of talks with LSSU students in classrooms and special forums, as well as meetings with a variety of community groups. She came to the community as a Fulbright Visiting Specialist, whose two-fold mission was to help American colleges and universities enrich their international programs and courses of study, and to provide opportunities to the surrounding communities for conversations about the ways in which Islamic civilizations and the West interact. El Diwani, a Ph.D. in French Literature, gave talks in Sociology, Humanities, Philosophy, History, French, and Nursing classes where she provided insight to subjects as diverse as Islam and the arts, media, health, human rights, and more. She was involved in lectures at LSSU and in public outreach programs at these venues: St. Joseph Parish (in Sault Ste. Marie), Sault High School, North Central Michigan College, Bay Mills Community College, Lake State Elders, and others. Dr. El Diwani said of her mission: "It is fulfilling to me to



build bridges of understanding and respect between Americans and the Muslim world, especially in these days of crisis." A complete listing of the events and talks is available in the Resource Room.

Maya Angelou, internationally known poet and author, was the keynote event for the fifth annual Superior Festival, a showcase of stage performances Oct. 13-15, 2005, at Lake Superior State University's Arts Center. Angelou, hailed as one of the great voices of contemporary literature, spoke at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, Oct. 13. A poet, educator, historian, best-selling author, actor, playwright, civil-rights activist, producer and director, Angelou is known for her ability to connect with all races and classes. Her address at LSSU was part of Superior Festival V. The 2005 festival explored the use of performance as a means by which to teach and foster cultural literacy. Other performers included Donna Marie Nudd of Florida State University, Terry Galloway of the Mickee Faust Club of Tallahassee, Florida., Laila Farah of DePaul University, Chicago, and Omi Osun Olomo/Joni Lee Jones of University of Texas at Austin. They were featured in three days of performance, lecture, and discussion.

Paul Rusesabagina, whose actions inspired the Academy award-nominated movie "Hotel Rwanda," presented a talk entitled "The Real Effects of Discrimination and Public Complacency," at 6 p.m. on Oct. 30, 2008 in LSSU's Arts Center. Admission was free and the event was open to the public. Rusesabagina single-handedly prevented the slaughter of more than 1200 refugees at the Mille Collines Hotel for 100 days during the Tutsi genocide in Rwanda from April-July 1994. The program was sponsored by LSSU's Student Organization for Diversity, Issues and Intellect, Student Activities Board, Gaining Early Awareness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) and King-Chavez-Parks Visiting Professor Fund. Rusesabagina's talk was preceded the week before by a free showing of the film "Hotel Rwanda," followed by a discussion of the events in the film. Rusesabagina also attended a Sociology class where he engaged with students who had seen the film and read about the surrounding events.

### Diversity-focused Academic Projects

The Fall of 2011 will see LSSU's production of "The Laramie Project," Moisés Kaufman's play about the 1998 murder of gay student Matthew Shepard in Laramie Wyoming. LSSU theatre professor Patrick Santoro is working to make the production a university-wide event. He has sent out a call, asking professors, where possible, to build the play into their Fall curriculum. He has written and posted a study guide to the play for those who are unfamiliar with the work and has offered to assist professors in developing projects and discussion around the play that would fit their discipline. As of July 2011, he has received responses from professors in criminal justice, business, and English who plan to teach the play and/or build a project around the themes of the play and ask students to attend the production.

### Study Abroad

Another facet of Lake Superior State University's commitment to diversity is its attempts to foster study abroad experiences. LSSU's effort to increase the number of international students (other than Canadian students) has met with inconsistent success. In 2008-09 a relationship was initiated with Northwest University in China and a pilot program was established that enabled 22 Chinese students to attend LSSU that year. The intent was to continue to have a fair number of students spend a year at LSSU and then return to China. Other programs were



discussed which would have allowed Chinese students to spend more than a year at LSSU and earn degrees from both institutions, but this idea has not taken hold. Of those students who came in 2008, two returned and graduated in Spring 2011. In the summer of 2010, President McLain visited a number of Chinese campuses (including Northwest University) in an attempt to reestablish this and other programs. While the 2008-09 program was well received by the students from Northwest University, the program was not continued as a mutually satisfactory agreement between Northwest University and LSSU could not be negotiated.

As the 2010-11 academic year began, LSSU purposefully invested resources into the development of its Study Abroad program. The Director of Financial Aid, the Registrar, and the Provost worked together to develop policies and procedures for both faculty and staff who were interested in study abroad. LSSU also developed a new website for study abroad, joined two study abroad consortiums, and allocated a budget to provide support for campus activities that promote study abroad. Although in its infancy, there does seem to be growing interest among students and faculty for study abroad opportunities.

While evidence of diversity activities is readily available at Lake Superior State University, a culture of diversity that permeates everyday life is far more elusive. In the report “Toward Inclusive Excellence at Lake Superior State University: A Provisional Profile on the Status of Campus Diversity and Equity,” the author notes that *diversity at LSSU is an ‘absent presence’....There appears to be no integrated systemic approach to addressing diversity, inclusion, and equity concerns at Lake State.* The report, written in Fall 2010 by Gordon Nakagawa, Ph.D., a Visiting Professor of Diversity and Communication, further notes that while there is an opportunity for the University to define and prioritize its diversity commitments, this will happen only if *there is a demonstrable and decisive institutional commitment advanced by campus-wide leadership in advocating and acting upon diversity and equity initiatives.* [A copy of the report is available in Appendix A.](#) Further discussion of LSSU’s diversity concerns and plans for improvement can be found in Chapter Four.

### Sub-Theme: The University Serves its Constituents

In this sub-theme, Lake Superior State University provides evidence that it meets the following core components:

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

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

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

Lake Superior State University is connected to a wide variety of external constituencies to support *the growth, dissemination, and application of knowledge.* This goal is evident in our mission statement and by the number of external agencies with which we work. With a limited research program and a primary focus on undergraduate teaching, Lake Superior State University is most active in the areas of dissemination and application of knowledge as will be demonstrated through several examples provided in this section. This sub-theme is divided



into two major parts: 1) serving constituents through the use of academic and academically-related resources and 2) serving via traditional brick and mortar resources.

The following paragraphs review the services Lake Superior State University provides to the community through the use of its academic and academically-related resources. In these examples, LSSU utilizes its faculty, staff, students, labs, and specialized equipment to meet the needs of external constituents. In some cases the University has created service entities after review of external demands. In other cases, the community has approached LSSU about unmet needs, and the University has responded by providing access to the resources necessary to meet those needs. It is important to note that LSSU is not able to meet all requests. For instance, LSSU generally does not enter into pure research projects or projects that do not have the potential to positively impact undergraduate students as these do not comply with our mission.

### Aligning Resources with Community Needs

Lake Superior State University's success in providing services of mutual benefit comes from its ability to clearly identify its constituents, to learn from them, and to align its resources and programs with their needs. Recent examples of Lake Superior State University's engagement with its constituents can be found in its science and engineering programs. In each area, connecting students and faculty expertise to the needs of the community has resulted in measureable and effective engagement. Four such examples are the Environmental Analysis Laboratory (EAL), the Product Development Center (PDC), the Exercise Physiology Laboratory (EPL), and the Aquatic Research Laboratory (ARL).

### Environmental Analysis Laboratory (EAL)

In 2002, after discussion with local and regional agencies, the faculty in Lake Superior State University's Department of Chemistry and Environmental Sciences determined that establishing an Environmental Analysis Laboratory (EAL) would result in mutual benefit. Leading up to 2002, the department had obtained funding for expensive analytical instruments through successful grant-seeking. However, as the institution's budget constraints remained persistent, maintaining and replacing the equipment became problematic. The department recognized it needed an alternate source of funding if it were to continue to be able to properly maintain its equipment. There was also a steady stream of requests from external agencies for environmental testing that had to be addressed during the summer months when faculty and staff had more time to work on the projects. Establishing an environmental analysis laboratory was proposed as a solution. For LSSU, the lab enables activities to occur year-round, employs and utilizes students in an applied learning activity, and results in income to maintain equipment. Further discussions with local and regional agencies determined that establishing the lab would result in faster response times for several types of routine analyses that were otherwise sent downstate; the lab could also provide access to specialized equipment not available elsewhere in the region. The main partners in the initial discussions were the School of Physical Sciences, Chemistry Faculty, and the Chippewa County Environmental Health Department. With strong support, documented need, and potential benefit to all parties, LSSU created the EAL.

Since its inception, the Environmental Analysis Lab has flourished and matured into a fully-functioning analytical laboratory. In its first year, it served only three-four clients, analyzing about 500 samples and



generating very little revenue. Currently the lab analyzes approximately 8,000 samples per year, generating close to \$50,000 in annual revenue which is used to maintain and upgrade the facility. Today its customers come from all parts of the world and all levels of government and community. Typical clients include local and regional health departments, state water districts, state environmental protection agencies, the US Environmental Protection Agency, local tribal organizations, algal supplement companies, and private individuals. The EAL's benefit to Lake Superior State University is not solely economic; it is also educational. The lab provides real-world working experience for science students, experience that undergraduate students at other institutions rarely receive. The success of LSSU's Environmental Analysis Laboratory's engagement with its constituents is, without question, effective and measurable.

### Product Development Center (PDC)

Another example of effective and measureable engagement can be found in LSSU's College of Engineering, Technology and Economic Development. In a similar story to that of the EAL, LSSU's School of Engineering & Technology conducted senior projects that were often solicited from industries throughout the state. Projects needed to coincide with the LSSU academic calendar and be well defined so that teams of four to six students could understand and ultimately complete the project in about six months. After several years of a steady and growing flow of entrepreneurial project requests that did not fit this model, the School considered opening a Prototype Development Center. The Prototype Development Center would be able to work with small businesses and entrepreneurs year-round and could employ students, faculty, and staff to address clients' needs.

A proposal was written in collaboration with the Michigan Small Business Technology Development Centers (MI-SBTDC) and the Michigan Economic Development Center (MEDC) to fund the startup of the Center, and in 2007 the Center opened with two full-time employees. The Center has since been renamed as the Product Development Center (PDC) and is housed in the College of Engineering, Technology and Economic Development.

The PDC, operated in cooperation with the Michigan Small Business and Technology Development Center, is a not-for-profit activity that provides fee-based engineering services to businesses, entrepreneurs, and inventors. The PDC is focused on applying the resources of the LSSU School of Engineering and Technology to practical projects supporting entrepreneurs and businesses. While this relationship between LSSU and its constituents is still in its early years, its mutual benefit has already been demonstrated. Since 2007, the PDC has met with over 250 potential clients, completed 47 projects, and helped create new jobs in Michigan. Descriptions of sample projects can be found in the Resource Room.

### Exercise Physiology Laboratory (EPL)

The third specialized laboratory recently established at Lake Superior State University to meet the needs of its constituents is the Exercise Physiology Laboratory (EPL). The mutual benefit to LSSU and the community is apparent in the EPL's primary mission of providing an applied-learning setting for students. The EPL recognizes that direct application of knowledge towards improving community wellness not only benefits the student but the community as well. While still in its infancy, it already provides fitness training, physical testing for sports



teams, and senior exercise programs services. The EPL also anticipates providing additional services such as worksite wellness programs, individualized programming for the elderly population, and sports team training to enhance performance.

A goal of the Exercise Science faculty is to transform the EPL into a performance laboratory that is comparable to, or even better than, those at other universities. To accomplish this goal, much-needed equipment must be acquired. Faculty will write grants, organize fundraisers, and seek the support of the University. A proposal to fund the first round of equipment essential to the success of the EPL was submitted to the SPBC, with \$21,000 approved in the 2011-2012 budget.

### Aquatic Research Laboratory (ARL)

The fourth example of an academic program partnering with an external constituent to meet regional needs is Lake Superior State University's Aquatic Research Laboratory (ARL). Established in 1977, the laboratory could be considered the institution's hallmark of effective and measurable engagement. Initially, the ARL's focus was on the sustainability of local fish populations and water quality. In the mid 1980's, the laboratory began a partnership with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources to produce Atlantic salmon for release in an attempt to create a highly-sought-after sport fishery. Today, the Atlantic salmon rearing program continues at the ARL, but activities have evolved and broadened to create additional educational, scientific, and outreach opportunities for LSSU biology students, scientific researchers, and the local community.

In its mission statement, the ARL defines its goals as the following:

The mission of the ARL is to combine education and research on aquatic biota and their associated habitats within the Great Lakes basin to serve the academic, scientific, and public communities. The specific goals of the ARL are to:

- provide scientific information to further advance our understanding of regional water bodies and issues of concern.
- provide logistical and technical support for faculty and researchers from LSSU and other institutions engaged in freshwater research.
- promote and conduct hands-on training for undergraduate students in freshwater science.
- foster information transfer between scientists and local communities regarding water resources of the northern Great Lakes region.

As evidenced by its many research collaborations and a substantial increase in external funding support, Lake Superior State University's Aquatic Research Laboratory is another example of the University's commitment to serving its constituents. Specifics on the ARL's goals and objectives are outlined in its Strategic Plan, available on the ARL website.



### Responding to Social and Educational Needs of the Region

Lake Superior State University's effective and measurable engagement with its constituents extends beyond the traditional classrooms and technical laboratories. Just as the institution is actively engaged with its community on issues of health, environment, and technology, it is also responsive to the social and educational needs of the region. Through Upward Bound, GEAR UP, LSSU Elders, a variety of summer programs, and agreements with local agencies, LSSU utilizes its academic resources to meet the needs of external constituents.

#### Upward Bound

One of the ways LSSU meets the needs of educationally-disadvantaged youth in the area is through the Upward Bound program. This is a college-preparatory program for low-income and first-generation high-school students from four area school districts: Sault Ste. Marie, Brimley, Pickford, and Rudyard. The program is a successful and sought-after service in the region. It is a federally funded TRIO program that has been successfully hosted by LSSU since 1966. Since its inception, this Upward Bound program has served over 1,600 participants, providing intensive, individualized, college preparatory services such as: academic enrichment and instruction (in mathematics, laboratory sciences, composition and literature, and foreign languages), tutoring, advising, mentoring (both peer and professional), cultural enrichment, career exploration, work study opportunities, and financial literacy training. Participants also receive instruction designed to improve their ACT/MME scores, assistance with the completion and submission of scholarship and college applications, and help with FAFSA submission.

#### GEAR UP

In addition to Upward Bound, LSSU is home to the King-Chavez-Parks College Day/GEAR UP Program which targets a specific cohort of underrepresented students to provide career exploration, college preparation, and service-learning opportunities. KCP/GEAR UP currently serves the tenth grade cohort of students from Sault Area High School and the Ojibwe Charter School in Brimley, Michigan. Service, however, is not limited to these schools and does not function only as a college preparation platform. Beginning in 2007, in partnership with the School of Mathematics and Computer Science, this program has hosted an annual Pi-Day & Math Bowl competition for students in grades 8 through 12. The 2010 competition featured four rural area schools with eight teams from the Eastern Upper Peninsula participating.

#### LSSU Elders

Lake Superior State University recognizes that community education is not exclusive to the school aged but extends to all ages, including the adult population. LSSU Elders is an association of Lifelong Learners, started in 1994 for area residents age 50 years or older. The Association is dedicated to providing continuous learning and social opportunities tailored to the interests of older adults. It offers opportunities for personal growth, camaraderie, and a sense of community. A wide variety of usually weekly classes and activities are sponsored each semester as a result of membership input. Typical events might consist of lectures on and discussions of current events, historical subjects, religion, estate planning, geology, birding, horticulture, quilting, classical music, poetry, literature, or travel, sometimes accompanied by trips to nearby sites.



By hosting the Elders program, Lake Superior State University keeps in contact with constituents who value a life of learning in the same way the institution values it. Although not in the traditional sense of semester-long study of rigorous, in-depth topics, the program does provide constituent-relevant topics covering a wide variety of interests. The program utilizes speakers from both within and outside the University and typically brings the group to campus for its meetings.

### Summer Programs

At Lake Superior State University, meeting the educational needs of the community is not limited to the traditional school year; it is a year-round commitment as demonstrated by its summer camps offerings. Prior to LSSU's hiring of a Conferences and Camps Coordinator in early 2008, summer activities for local youth were for the most part limited to athletics and engineering. In its first year the LSSU's summer camps program, entitled Edventures, offered seven camp programs, serving 113 local youth. Two years later (summer 2010), the program had more than doubled in size, offering 13 programs with over 270 students participating. In addition, Edventures provided three one-week-long programs for LSSU's charter schools. Typical camp offerings include: Aquatic Ecology, Biomedical Science, Criminal Justice, Cross Country, Elementary Science Camps, Environmental Science, Field Ecology, Fire Science, Forensic Science, Fisheries Science, Outdoor Adventures, Summer Dance Intensive, and Web Fusion: Integrating Web Technologies.

The camps offer both overnight and day venues, providing participants the opportunity to experience campus life through residence hall lodging and food services. In addition to the benefits to the students, Lake Superior State University also benefits. First, the summer camps have proven to be self-supporting, thereby becoming a good investment for the University. Second, student reviews have been overwhelmingly positive, and an increasing number of participants are later applying to LSSU for admission. In the past three years, the number of summer camp students applying to and enrolling at LSSU increased from four to twelve, a 200% increase. It is expected that Fall 2011 will also see an increase in applications to LSSU from summer camp students. More information about LSSU's summer camps can be found in the Resource Room.

Lake Superior State University's longest-running educational summer programs are its Robotics Camp and Women in Technology Program. These programs have been offered since 1991 and 1992 respectively. Both programs are designed for gifted and talented students ages 12-18. During each program, faculty members and staff discuss future opportunities in these areas and present current applications of technology utilizing state-of-the-art equipment. Typically each summer there are two Women in Technology programs and three Robotics Camps serving students from across the country and Canada. Additionally, the University offers a Robotics Camp specifically designed for the students of its Advanced Technology Academy charter school in Dearborn, Michigan.

### U.S. Coast Guard and MI National Guard

Another outreach effort involves the Coast Guard and National Guard, both of which have well-established bases in Sault Ste. Marie. Service personnel are routinely called to active duty or required to move to new locations during their enrollment at Lake Superior State University. In working with these agencies, LSSU has



policies in place to make the transition as easy as possible for members of the military. Furthermore, LSSU maintains reduced tuition rates for active duty members of both services. In addition, the Coast Guard agreement has been amended to include families. This agreement, originally for service personnel only, began in 2009 with six students participating. As of Fall 2010, over 31 students were participating in the program. In Spring 2010, at the request of the Coast Guard, LSSU took one more step to meet its constituents' needs and offered two courses on the Coast Guard base itself.

### Criminal Justice and Fire Science Engagement

Due to the unique location of Lake Superior State University—abutting an international border, two Native American reservations, a major waterway, and a deep water port—the community has an abundance of service providers including: City, County, Tribal, and State Police; Fire and EMS services; Border Patrol; Customs; National Guard; Coast Guard; and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. LSSU works closely with all of these agencies to coordinate activities and training exercises, even sharing resources in times of crisis. Criminal Justice faculty members are used as consultants for the City of Sault Ste. Marie Police Department to provide promotion exams for officers. They also act as consultants for the Bay Mills Police Department to assess fitness standards for potential employees. The company that was granted the federal contract to operate security at the Soo Locks, DK Security out of Grand Rapids, worked with faculty and staff of LSSU to develop the training schedule for their new hires. Lake Superior State University is also the site of a Michigan Commission on Law Enforcement Standards (MCOLES) approved police academy. The police academy has been in operation since 1978 and has provided academy training for the majority of the police officers in the Eastern Upper Peninsula.

The Sault Ste. Marie Fire Department has loaned the university several pieces of equipment which are stored at LSSU and used by the students in the Fire Science program. If the equipment is needed by the Fire Department, it is quickly brought back into service. LSSU's fire science equipment has also been used by the Sault Ste. Marie Fire Department on numerous occasions. In the winter particularly, air packs will not last long before they need to be refilled. LSSU equipment is brought to the fire scene and used to replace the Fire Department air packs. Fire Science faculty members are the training officers for the Sault Ste. Marie Fire Department. LSSU faculty members have also been involved in the hiring and promotion proceedings at the fire department.

### Community Research Center (CRC)

The CRC seeks to involve faculty and students from across all schools of the University in research conducted in collaboration with community partners. It places a special, but not exclusive, emphasis on communities in Michigan's Eastern Upper Peninsula. Supported research must involve a formal community partner and must produce scholarship at the same time as it yields knowledge useful to the community. Priority is given to redressing issues of disparity, inequality, and injustice in society. Research topics may include education, the economy, housing, the environment, and health. In all cases, the CRC works at the request of external agencies to provide an unbiased review of social programs for the purpose of continued or proposed funding. Three recent studies evaluated the efficacy of health centers in Eastern Upper Peninsula Intermediate School District's (EUPISD) schools, conducted a survey for a grant application to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and made an assessment of a project for the Sault Tribe.



### Testing Institute

The Testing Institute is part of Testing Services at Lake Superior State University. Testing Services provides support for both students and external constituents, with the Institute focusing on external constituents. The mission of the Testing Institute is to provide a wide variety of testing services to the many diverse populations within the geographic area. These client-driven programs provide services to a variety of populations including—first and foremost— the student and academic community, then companies, governmental agencies, and organizations within the region. An example is the Prometric Center, a computer-based exam service, which has administered over 1,000 exams in FY2010 through the Testing Institute.

While the previous examples highlighted direct academic engagement, the following examples show how Lake Superior State University utilizes many of its brick and mortar resources or its influence as an institution of higher learning to meet the needs of the community. Although LSSU is first and foremost an educational institution, it recognizes that its resources are not fully utilized in meeting its primary mission. Many structures were designed with the community in mind, and others are under-utilized during breaks and summer. Unlike the previous examples in which faculty, staff, and students were the primary resources, the following examples show how the institution's infrastructure and university status support the community.

### Kenneth J. Shouldice Library

The Lake Superior State University's Kenneth J. Shouldice Library is an instructional resource center for the students and employees of LSSU and members of the community and region. The Library staff is available to the community to meet their various informational and computing needs. Patrons use the online catalogs to find library materials or use one of the many online databases to search periodical indexes for article citations or full-text articles.

The University's library has provided library instruction to many high schools in the area including: Sault Area Schools, St. Ignace, Engadine, Pickford, and Elliot Lake, Ontario. The Library is able to give the high school students a preview of what they should expect when they make the transition from high school to college. The Public Services Librarian has also gone into the schools to provide professional development to the teachers regarding the various library resources that are available to the students through the Library of Michigan MEL databases, etc. The Library has also hosted various groups including Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Lake State Elders, and others for instruction in how to use the resources available in the library.

During the 2010-11 year, Lake Superior State University obtained a grant to become a member of the Foundation Center's Cooperating Collection. A key initiative of the Foundation Center is to reach under-resourced and underserved populations throughout the United States where there is a need for useful information and training to develop successful grant-seekers. In response, the Kenneth J. Shouldice Library of LSSU provides students and visitors with free public access to a core collection of materials for grant seekers, including online resources such as [The Foundation Directory](#) and [Foundation Grants to Individuals](#). The Foundation Center also provides access to databases that provide information on the nearly 100,000 foundations, corporate donors, and grant-making public charities in the U.S. Because the Library has this resource, it is



expected to provide instruction about how to use the databases. This year, several informational sessions were held on the basics of grant writing; these sessions were advertised to the community and attended by 30 residents of the area at no charge to the individuals.

The Library also supports Interactive-TV (ITV) and Audio Visual requests from the community. ITV external customers such as the Social Security Administration and Michigan Rural Development contact LSSU seeking to save time and money by holding conferences and hearings via live interactive television. The Social Security Disability hearings have been steady customers, holding disability reviews at least once a month. The Library has accommodated its needs by opening another small interactive room in the library for conferences of this size. Audio Visual external customers include local theatre groups requesting video productions of performances. Other external customers include the Great Lakes Captains Association. Each year the Library creates, produces, and evaluates surveys for their annual meetings. The Women Today Conference, held each spring, is another large external customer requiring rental of equipment, video, and audio production services. Both local businesses and their customers periodically rent AV equipment from the Library.

Finally, the Library is home to a small art gallery. The gallery exhibits artwork from local artists. The Chippewa County Historical Society has approached the library about hosting several traveling historic photographic displays in addition to an exhibit featured in the Library's Art Gallery called "Chippewa Images: 19th Century Ojibway and Scenes of the Sault." The exhibit included framed lithographic prints of Ojibwe men and women from the Great Lakes area and five drawings by Wharton Metcalfe depicting Sault Ste. Marie in 1850.

### Planetarium

The Ben Long Planetarium, located in Lake Superior State University's Crawford Hall, provides periodic shows for the community. The facility offers both scheduled and private shows, and approximately six to nine shows are offered every year. Such organizations as area K-12 schools, charter schools, and summer camps have enjoyed the Planetarium shows.

### Norris Center

The Norris Center complex offers community members the opportunity to utilize any of its many resources. Users of the facility can enjoy the racquetball and tennis courts, the indoor track, the swimming pool, the ice rink, the basketball courts, weight rooms, saunas, and many other options in the multi-purpose building. Due to the large size of the facility, it has been used by the community for conference/exhibition activities including the annual Sault Ste. Marie Spring Show, the Michigan Industrial and Technology Education Society, the Eastern Upper Peninsula College Fair, and several K-12 athletic events.

### Fine Arts Center

The Fine Arts Center provides an auditorium capable of seating 750 people and is used regularly by local dance groups for large performances, a local church for worship services, and University-funded productions and performances that are open to the community. The facility was even used for a wedding within the last year. The Center also houses a private Native art collection on display daily and has supported the Sault International Arts



Festival, which brings together artists from both sides of the St. Mary's River for a summer-long program of shared interests.

### Cisler Center

The Cisler Center is the social hub of the campus. Major areas include the Peacock Cove (a multipurpose student lounge and recreation area), the Galley (a snack bar, convenience store, and coffee house where performances and activities are regularly scheduled), the Superior Ballroom, the Great Lakes meeting rooms, the Soo Locks meeting rooms, and on-site catering services. The facility also houses the student newspaper, student radio station, the Student Organization Center (SOC), and the Quarterdeck cafeteria, which is available for public use. Community members routinely utilize the Cisler Center for meetings, conferences, and social events. Over this reporting period, the Cisler Center has provided service for over 600 external customers. The activities have included weddings, business meetings, retirement parties, holiday celebrations, training sessions, public meetings, political rallies, blood drives, and many other events.

The previous examples verify that Lake Superior State University is a connected institution serving constituents locally and throughout the state. Either through the use of its physical resources, ties with academic programs, or the expertise of its personnel, LSSU serves constituents through a wide variety of activities. New activities in the areas of research, entrepreneurship, summer programs, environmental studies, economic development, and education have expanded LSSU's ability to connect to the region and the state. Most currently-active initiatives are less than five years old but have continued to grow over their limited lifespan. With reduced state funding, Lake Superior State University will need to carefully review its commitments and prioritize its activities in order to ensure continued community engagement.

### Sub-Theme: The University Creates a Culture of Service

In this sub-theme, Lake Superior State University provides evidence that it meets the following core components:

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

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

Lake Superior State University prides itself on the number of faculty and staff that give back to the community. In recent years, as service to community has become increasingly recognized as an important facet of education, the University has seen an increase in community service projects inside and outside the classroom. Typically, student service is widely recognized by the institution. Staff service, though, has seldom been noted. Service by faculty members is sometimes recognized at the department and school level and is required for promotion or tenure.



The structures and processes at LSSU offer opportunities for service-oriented connections with our community. Program leaders, administrators, and faculty can engage in service-related activities as they see fit, provided it does not interfere with their daily responsibilities. The degree to which service is supported, recognized, and encouraged varies from area to area. The following paragraphs review the service activities by groups: students, faculty, and staff.

### Student Community Service

LSSU supports a variety of co-curricular student organizations on campus that enlist students from diverse academic and social backgrounds. These organizations include, but are not limited to, academic, recreational, political, professional, and special interest groups. Four examples of how the student organizations connect to the community follow.

#### School of Recreation and Exercise Science

Students from the School of Recreation and Exercise Science are active in the local community in a variety of ways. Their activities have included an annual Polar Plunge to raise funds for Special Olympics, walking dogs at the local animal shelter, sponsoring needy children during the Christmas season, and raising money for breast cancer support. Students in the School's Sports and Recreation Management and Parks and Recreation programs also conducted adventure outreach activities for elementary school children in Grand Rapids and Lewiston during the Spring 2011 semester.

#### Residence Life

Since 2004, the Residence Life area has worked with the Resident and Community Assistants to include service activities as part of the programming model it uses to get students involved in campus life. The activities undertaken over the years have included clothing and food drives for local families, fund raising for a variety of causes, and volunteer work at local agencies (e.g. a nursing home and the local animal shelter). In the past few years, Residence Life training has included a morning or afternoon spent in service to a local agency.

#### Communication Studies and the Fine and Performing Arts

The programs of the department offer regular performance presentations and exhibits across many genres of art for the campus and larger community. The Superior Festival is a performance event and colloquium, hosted by the department since 2000. To date, there have been ten festivals. All the performances, lectures, and workshops are open to the general public as well as LSSU students, faculty, and staff. Local performers also make group and solo presentations. Often the festival is designed with the larger community in mind. Two examples include the festivals on storytelling and the performance of history.

#### Student-Athlete Advisory Committee and Athletic Teams

The Athletic Department requires community service hours in most of its sports. Many community service projects are student-generated through the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee. This committee is comprised of two to three student athletes from every athletic team. In the past year this group, along with other student athletes, raised over \$500 for the Make-A-Wish Foundation and \$600 to purchase Christmas gifts for local



families in need. The athletes also worked at various soup kitchens, volunteered with local youth athletic organizations, spent Wednesday evenings playing Bingo with residents of a local long-term care facility, read to various local elementary schools during Reading Week, and volunteered for various campus activities to promote student life.

### Student Co-curricular and/or Professional Organizations

In nearly all academic areas, students are encouraged to become members of co-curricular and/or professional organizations. Each organization has an advisor and access to funding through the LSSU Student Government. Beyond pursuit of purely academic activities, these organizations are active in the local community. Typical examples of student group activities include:

#### Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE)

The LSSU chapter of Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE) provides extensive outreach to the local community. Focused on a mission of *dedication, cooperation, passion, and drive*, LSSU SIFE is committed to making a difference in the Twin Sault cities and surrounding areas. Comprised of LSSU students from various degree programs, the LSSU SIFE chapter is a free enterprise team intent on making an impact in the region. SIFE is advised by a Business Advisory Board consisting of faculty and business professionals from both the States and Canada. The program provides a solid foundation that features an ideal blend of scholarship, entrepreneurship, and international perspective. SIFE provides services and activities which have included free tax preparation, selling rain barrels to support Habitat for Humanity, and offering passport fairs.

#### Student Alumni Involved for Lake State (SAILS)

The members of SAILS are Lake Superior State University ambassadors. One of its roles as an ambassadorial group is to meet and greet visitors to campus and at other Lake State events. Sometimes, this is nothing more than a friendly face and greeting at the door with directions to desired destinations. Other times, it involves campus tours, dinners, and meetings with VIPs and guests. SAILS also hosts a yearly breakfast in which each member nominates a “Teacher who has made a difference” in her or his life. The nominating students and the hosted professors are introduced, the students say a few words about how their hosted professors made a special impression, and the professors are awarded certificates of thanks and small golden pins.

#### Alpha Phi Omega and Upward Bound

In 2008, in an effort to provide Upward Bound participants with an option for community service that was meaningful, on-going, and truly a service to area residents, Upward Bound joined with Alpha Phi Omega (an LSSU service fraternity) to establish a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT, which is part of Citizen’s Corps, an emergency-preparedness function of Homeland Security). Since 2008, members of the LSSU/UB CERT have operated first aid stations, assisted at community flu clinics, and engaged in on-going training. In 2010, participants attended the state-wide Citizens Corps Conference. The LSSU/UB CERT was featured as a model of community service among TRIO programs in a national magazine, *Equality* (a publication of the Council for Opportunity in Education) in 2009.



### Curricular Programs/Organizations

Lake Superior State University students are connected to the community both through co-curricular activities and academic programming. Faculty members in many disciplines work closely with the students to provide theoretical knowledge and practical skills, preparing the students for entry-level positions in their fields or for graduate school. LSSU prides itself on experiential learning, a method of education that is both personal (connected to the students) and practical (connected to the needs of society). These opportunities include unpaid internships, practica, or clinical experiences in which students are placed in the community under the guidance of faculty to prepare for their careers and to provide a service to the community. Although LSSU realizes that these experiences require substantial time commitment on the part of the faculty and the associated cost of faculty oversight, there has been and continues to be a strong commitment to this pedagogy. It is part of our commitment to redefining the classroom. Some examples of service connected to academic programming follow.

### School of Engineering and Technology

All students in this School are required to participate in a capstone project. The projects enable students to interact with other engineering and technology students with diverse educational backgrounds as they complete a project sponsored by an external industry, business, or client. Students are mentored internally by a faculty advisor and externally by the industrial customer as they design, build, and test a new piece of hardware or software for their industrial customer. Students receive evaluations from their faculty, their peers, and their customer(s) as they prepare for employment in the field of engineering or technology.

### School of Nursing

Students in the School of Nursing are required, at several points during their academic career, to engage in clinicals at a wide variety of healthcare-providing institutions. These carefully monitored clinicals (typically six students with one faculty member) provide timely and unique experiences that could never be duplicated in the classroom. Through these experiences, students learn to carefully evaluate and make decisions in critical care situations.

### School of Physical Sciences

Students in Environmental Health and Environmental Management are required to complete an internship working in their field. Students have spent summers working for public health departments, tribal agencies, municipalities, townships, state agencies, Ontario public health agencies and private businesses. Although students in Chemistry, Forensic Chemistry, Environmental Science, Environmental Chemistry and Geology are not required to do internships, many have elected to complete them to gain real world working experiences. During summers, these students have worked for municipalities, state agencies, private industries, and federal agencies. Several students in the physical sciences have been the recipients of competitive summer research fellowships through the American Chemical Society, United States Environmental Protection Agency, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.



### School of Criminal Justice, Fire Science, and EMS

Criminal Justice students spend hundreds of hours in training and internships in the area of law enforcement. Typical assignments include working with local police, border patrol, customs, LSSU security, state police, and tribal security. Due to LSSU's unique international location and the University's close ties to the tribal community, the students can experience a wide variety of law enforcement experiences as they prepare for their future. Fire Science students work closely with local firefighting agencies and have access to a University-owned and operated burn-building.

### College of Arts, Letters, and Social Sciences

Students in this College engage in various internships that connect students to external agencies. Representative examples include internships in journalism, photography, public relations, sports information, and counseling.

### Faculty and Staff Community Service

Faculty members are required to spend a portion of their time in service to the University and the community. Their service is a component of the tenure and promotion process. A newly-established process for collecting and publicly reporting faculty as well as staff service has encapsulated a wide breadth of activities that represent Lake Superior State University's mission in action. Examples include: board memberships, event planning, unpaid consultancies, community trainings, conference organizing, competition judging, and one instance of volunteer firefighting. A full list of service activities is available in the Resource Room.

Lake Superior State University recently established a Speakers' Bureau through the Provost's office. To date, thirty faculty and staff have signed up to be speakers. Community members contact the Bureau directly to arrange for talks, campus tours, site visits, or a variety of other activities at no expense to their organization. Recent presentations have included discussions of admissions processes, robotic and Biopack demonstrations, and special sessions for Native American secondary students to spark their interest in attending the University.

In summary, redefining the classroom at Lake Superior State University includes the active participation of students, faculty, and staff in service to the community. Furthermore, faculty, staff, and administrators are involved in a wide variety of service activities, serving not just the local community, but also the state. However, while student success and service have generally been well publicized, service by other members of the campus community has not. It is the University's intent to demonstrate that service is not just an individual activity but a campus-wide demonstration of LSSU's mission to *serve the regional, national and global communities by contributing to the growth, dissemination and application of knowledge.*

### Sub-Theme: The University Collaborates

In this sub-theme, Lake Superior State University provides evidence that it meets the following core components:

- 1d – The organization's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the organization to fulfill its mission.



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

Maintaining Lake Superior State University’s unique identity, while providing seamless transitions both into and out of the institution, is a worthy challenge. Students expect a seamless transition from a K-12 system, community college, or other university to LSSU. Likewise, they expect the transition from LSSU to graduate school or employment to be made with similar ease. Recognizing that the University’s policies, procedures, and expectations may vary from its collaborating institutions, Lake Superior State University emphasizes the importance of clearly articulating its policies, procedures, and expectations to its current and prospective students.

### **Collaborative Practices with External Constituencies**

Students arrive at Lake Superior State University to begin or continue their college education. They come from different educational backgrounds that include numerous K-12 systems, home schools, charter schools, community colleges, other universities, and military service training schools. In order to provide ease of transition, the University maintains on its website an interactive tool that enables prospective students to confirm which of their courses will transfer successfully. Additionally, to aid students in their academic planning, LSSU also includes on its website the Degree Program Transfer Guides, enabling the prospective students, at the start of their community college course work, to determine what community college-level courses will meet the degree requirements of specific LSSU baccalaureate programs. LSSU students starting their college career at a community college may complete a Michigan Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admission Officers (MACRAO) Transfer Agreement as part of an associate degree or as a stand-alone package. Once the specified set of courses is completed, the students are able to transfer the course work directly towards meeting the general education requirements at participating Michigan public universities. For Lake Superior State University, the MACRAO agreement allows students to satisfy all their general education requirements at a community college prior to enrolling at LSSU.

Lake Superior State University’s collaborative efforts with community colleges are further demonstrated through its relationship with its regional sites. Since the late 1980’s, the University has maintained regional sites in Escanaba and Petoskey, Michigan (175 miles west and 94 miles south, respectively). Through degree offerings and services provided at both sites, LSSU’s collaboration with the host community college creates a seamless transition for students seeking a baccalaureate degree. The collaboration results in a cost-effective degree for the students as they are able to fulfill their general education and lower division coursework at the community college. Regional Center students have access to the University’s library resources and can utilize the Writing Center’s support through email services. At both Escanaba and Petoskey, Lake Superior State University’s site director works closely with the community college personnel to ensure that student needs are met in a timely fashion.

In addition to Lake Superior State University’s two longstanding regional centers, two more sites have been added, with HLC approval. In 2008 the University joined the University Center at Gaylord (UCG), a partnership of colleges, and, in 2010, opened its doors as a member of the Dearborn University Consortium Center (DUCC).



Both sites, 115 miles and 300 miles, respectively, from the main campus, are still in their infancy in terms of student enrollment; however, the potential for collaboration is clearly available. In Gaylord, LSSU has already established positive working relations with the four community colleges in the region. In Dearborn, Lake Superior State University is working with its local charter school as well as other community colleges in the area to develop programs and course offerings that meet the needs of the region.

Another long-standing collaboration is the University's membership in the Japan Center for Michigan Universities (JCMU), a consortium that features the fifteen state universities in Michigan and is located in Hikone, Japan. The JCMU study abroad program is a product of the strong sister-state relationship between the State of Michigan and Shiga Prefecture. The program is dedicated to building relationships among Japanese, Americans, and other nationalities through active learning opportunities and participation in language, culture, family life, and society. JCMU has been welcoming students of all majors since 1989. An additional Japanese collaboration which has developed from the Michigan-Shiga sister-state relationship brings students from the University of Shiga Prefecture to LSSU for a two-week period each summer. Several volunteers from LSSU arrange educational activities, English language studies, and sight-seeing excursions for the group. Volunteers also house the Japanese students over one of the weekends that they visit in order to learn more about daily life in the U.S. and Canada.

The University, in 2011, joined two international study consortia in order to assist LSSU students who wish to study abroad. The Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE) and the College Consortium for International Study (CCIS) allow LSSU students to participate in international study opportunities in over 50 countries through partnership with other colleges and universities.

Beyond these opportunities available to any student, Lake Superior State University also has collaborations exclusive to specific student populations. These include collaborations with the US Coast Guard, US Army National Guard, Midwest Higher Education Compact, Eastern Upper Peninsula Intermediate School District, and LSSU's charter schools. Each of these agreements addresses the specific needs of an organization or clearly identified group of students. The collaborations are reviewed on a regular basis.

### Coast Guard and National Guard

With bases located in Sault Ste. Marie, both the Coast Guard and National Guard are important constituents of the University. LSSU was recently designated as a Military Friendly School by GI Jobs Magazine. This means that LSSU is considered to be in the top 15% of all schools nationwide in supporting service personnel and that we offer several opportunities and services to support our veteran (e.g., the training video: "When Johnny Comes Marching Home"). To further this collaboration, LSSU offers reduced tuition rates to active duty Coast Guard and National Guard members.

### Intermediate School District

The Eastern Upper Peninsula Intermediate School District (EUPISD) serves 19 school districts in 6% of the land mass in Michigan, but with less than 0.6% of the state population. The EUPISD is the largest geographic



intermediate school district of the 57 in Michigan at just under 4,000 square miles. It is clearly important to provide higher education opportunities to these geographically-isolated students. Lake Superior State University supports the efforts of the EUPISD to provide dual-enrollment college-level courses at these widely distributed locations via face-to-face lectures and distance education.

### Midwestern Higher Education Compact

The Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC) is a compact created by the Midwestern Legislative Conference of The Council of State Governments in 1991. It serves 12 Midwestern states: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. The Compact's three core functions include cost savings and containment, student access and success, and policy research and analysis. One program offered through the MHEC that directly benefits students is the Midwest Student Exchange Program (MSEP). At Lake Superior State University, students from any of the other MHEC states can enroll at LSSU at a reduced out-of-state tuition rate. The University's MSEP enrollment for the past three Fall semesters has averaged 25 students.

### Public School Academy

In an arrangement similar to the one with the EUPISD, Lake Superior State University offers reduced tuition to students at its Public School Academies (PSA). Generally, students enroll in college-level courses, taught at the PSA location, at the beginning of their high-school year and continue throughout the entire academic year. In effect, university courses that are offered over 15 weeks on the campus of LSSU are taught over a 34- week period at the PSA.

While the previous information concerned academic collaborations relating to a prospective student's enrollment at Lake Superior State University, the following section outlines the services provided to students actively seeking employment as they transition out of LSSU and into the work force or on to graduate school. Also included is the University's collaboration with an external agency to aid nontraditional students seeking to upgrade their skills.

### Career Services

Assisting students to prepare for subsequent employment begins in their freshman year. All of the University's services are offered on a walk-in basis in the Career Center. Most career preparation services are provided during one-on-one sessions. The Career Services office created a Career Success Checklist to encourage students not to wait until their senior year to consider an employment search. The list provides details that should be considered during every year of a student's time at LSSU.

The office also has several online resources, such as Career Spots (3-minute job search videos); expert advice from leading employers on many topics ( Importance of Networking, Top 10 Interview Mistakes, Great Resume Tips, etc.); The Perfect Interview (practice interviewing online); and e-Recruiting (an online recruiting system).



The Center does not just focus on Lake Superior State University students; it also works with local high-school students to provide information about career choices. Since 2001 Career Services has hosted an annual grant-funded Occupational Education day for regional area students during their junior year in high school. Involving students from three counties, the program invites 11 area schools, 10% of which are designated as rural populations, to participate in the Occupational Day. Over the past six years, an annual average of 240 students has attended this event. As part of the program, students are transported to campus where LSSU students, faculty, and staff present information about a variety of degree choices that will lead to specific careers. Program presentations range from college preparation to course content in specific majors and career information, such as preparation and aptitude for specific fields.

### Michigan Works!:

With high state unemployment rates, many students are returning to higher education for either a career change or just to retool. Lake Superior State University has collaborated with Michigan Works! (a unified workforce development system) to make many programs available for funding through the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). LSSU adds or updates approximately twenty programs a year in the Career Education Consumer Report, an integrated, electronic gateway to the labor market for job seekers and employers. This option has allowed over 75 students each semester to attend the University through receipt of Michigan Works! or WIA funding.

### Sub-Theme: The University Engages In Healthy Internal Communication

In this sub-theme, Lake Superior State University provides evidence that it meets the following core component:

1d – The organization’s governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the organization to fulfill its mission.

Many options for communication are available today; we can send email, tweet, use Facebook, blog, text, post to a website, use a listserv, send out a newsletter or memo, write a letter, or use a cell phone. Of course, there is still the option of speaking face-to-face. Everyone has a favorite format and within those formats are several choices. With so many options, communication is a task that should be easily achieved and utilized to lead an organization. Just as the HLC notes, *the connected organization shows that it understands that the health of connections within its community is key to its success*. Lake Superior State University recognizes that regular communication is crucial to healthy engagement. The University also understands that while communication between administration and faculty, the Board of Trustees and LSSU at large, or faculty and students may occur on a regular basis, a recent campus-wide survey indicates that communication is an area in which institutional improvements are needed.

In Fall 2010, the University administered the HLC Four Fundamental Themes survey that assessed LSSU’s ability to incorporate the four themes established by the HLC; the survey also examined the sub-themes within each theme (available in Resource Room). Of the 21 sub-themes associated with the four main themes, the idea that LSSU “engages in healthy internal communication” ranked lowest for regional center students and LSSU staff. It ranked second lowest for LSSU faculty. Only on-campus students felt the University was engaged in healthy communication. As LSSU students frequently describe their experiences at the University as friendly



and personal, the student response came as no surprise. Likewise, as the past ten years have been a period of tumultuous change for the University, it is not surprising that communication between administration, faculty, and staff has suffered.

In light of this finding, Lake Superior State University has put in place communication processes that build on current successes while addressing the shortcomings. Keeping lines of communication open and transparent is a goal that the campus community shares. Through such services as a student ombudsman and such processes as shared governance, various campus constituencies will become more engaged in healthy communications.

The use of a student ombudsman, one example of the University building on current success, began in 2011. Prior to that time, the position was informally executed by a student/faculty relations committee. The LSSU Ombudsman is a senior faculty member appointed by the president and provost to assist students in resolving student conflicts or disputes within the University. The Ombudsman carries out these duties in a neutral, impartial, confidential, informal, and independent manner. The process is an active demonstration of Lake Superior State University's personal and friendly environment.

Lake Superior State University strives towards open communication for the purposes of planning and dissemination of information. Examples include the issuance and discussion of yearly financial reports, periodic review and updating of the [LSSU Master Plan](#) (infrastructure), centralized review and modification of general education, common review of curriculum for the creation and deletion of courses and programs, the Provost's monthly updates, Fall Convocation, and the general issuing of minutes from the many committees across campus. For the most part, these items are available either via a common storage area referred to as the "O" drive or within the University's common communications platform referred to as "Groups."

Each of the past presidents has, in some fashion, engaged the University in open dialogue concerning LSSU's future, strategic planning, and allocation of resources. Although each plan met with some level of success, generally the plans were not well-received across campus nor were they necessarily feasible, given the severe constraints on institutional resources.

Beginning in 2008 and working through 2009, Lake Superior State University began to re-think the process by which information was gathered and disseminated in an effort to develop more effective leadership. A model was sought that encouraged open and widely-circulated review of existing and proposed policy by all constituents. A formal process of shared governance was developed. This system yielded the opportunity for campus-wide input into the decision-making process. In the 2009-10 academic year, the structure was approved and committees were created and staffed.

Shared Governance acts as a conduit of information and consultation between the President and Board of Trustees as well as with the greater institution, i.e. the faculty, students, staff, committees, and other constituencies. The Shared Governance Oversight Committee disseminates information to the greater institution and its constituencies from the Committee itself, the President, and the Board of Trustees. Within this transparent information flow, the mission of the institution is embraced and strengthened. While ultimately all



decisions are made by the University's administration and Board of Trustees, the Shared Governance process has begun to play a significant role in how decisions are reached. The [Shared Governance document](#) in Appendix A includes a chart of LSSU's Shared Governance structure and how the process enables the University to make informed decisions regarding planning and aligning resources.

While there is need for improvement, Lake Superior State University does engage in communication at all levels and among all areas. The current process of shared governance allows for dialogue to take place on any issue, and more importantly, to gather input from all areas of campus in the decision-making process. In addition to Shared Governance, pathways exist within the administrative structures to gather and disseminate information. Vice Presidents and Directors have standing meetings with the areas concerned, delegating responsibilities as necessary and where appropriate to carry out defined tasks. Faculty members share in the responsibility for development and assessment of the curriculum. While policy making lies appropriately with administration and the Board of Trustees, these policies are under review by broadly staffed committees. Administrators and governance bodies keep the strategic plan and mission of the University in sight as plans are developed and policies are implemented.

### LSSU is Connected: Summary

Chapter Three has demonstrated that the University is connected to a variety of its constituents by embracing its shared values and committing its resources to support its mission. The chapter specifies the policies and activities the University supports in its efforts to demonstrate an institutional commitment to diversity. The chapter offers many examples of the University's connections to and collaborations with the local and regional constituencies that value its service. It also points out that the entire academic community is involved with its external community. Finally, the chapter has delineated the organizational structures that provide effective leadership and promote healthy communication. Attention to these details all support LSSU's initiatives to redefine the classroom.

### STRENGTHS

- LSSU demonstrates a strong and continuous commitment to the community and region by its administration, faculty, staff, and students.
- LSSU effectively collaborates with other educational and professional organizations.
- Due largely to the implementation of a shared governance process, LSSU demonstrates a commitment to improved channels of communication across campus.

### CHALLENGES

- LSSU needs to address the perception that cross-campus communication is not fully transparent and inclusive.
- LSSU needs to find ways to maintain support for contacts and collaborations with the communities that rely on the University for service, given the expected budget cuts.
- LSSU needs to demonstrate improved institutional support for the concept and practice of diversity on campus.



Redefining the classroom is one of the primary ways that LSSU remains a distinctive organization. This has been true throughout the sixty-five years of its history, even as the University has matured and developed an identity distinct from its parent institution, Michigan Technological University. Through the processes of periodic self-reflection, LSSU has proved itself to be accountable to its many constituents and committed to continual improvement at every level of the organization. Although many of these processes need to be institutionalized more formally, LSSU is, nonetheless, a vital and thriving organization that anticipates and meets social and economic change with energy and resources. Even in difficult times, the University never swerves from its commitment to making the classroom a supportive and engaging environment for its students. This chapter outlines the next steps the University will take to remedy areas of concern identified throughout the Self Study.

### **Sub-Theme: The University has an Unambiguous Mission**

In this sub-theme, Lake Superior State University provides evidence that it meets the following core components:

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

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

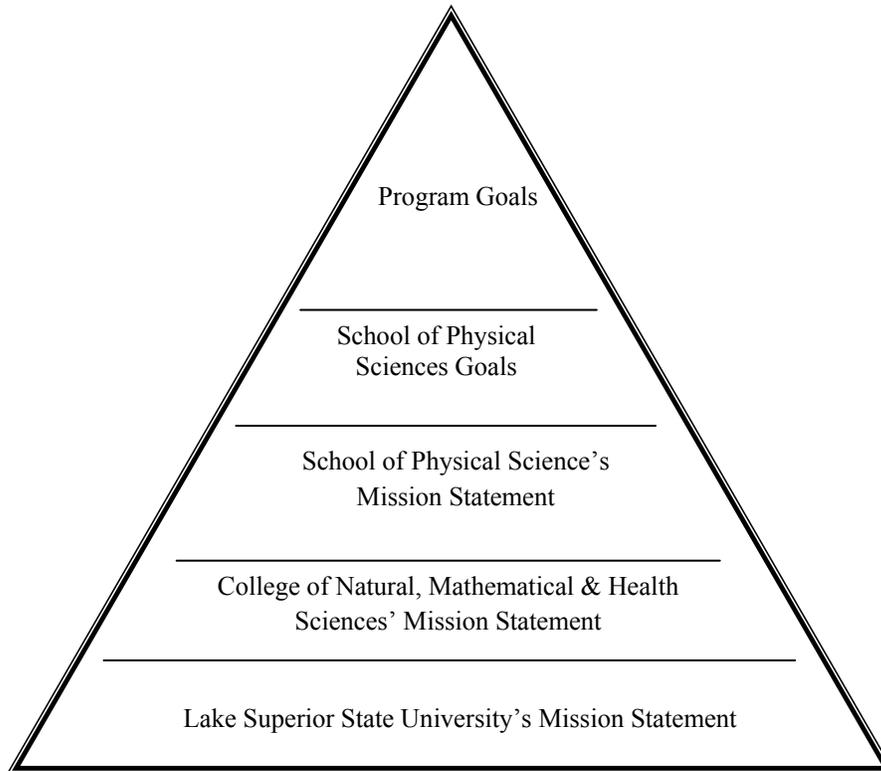
Since the October 1966 signing of the Joint Memorandum of Agreement between the State Board of Education and Michigan Technological University (MTU) that stated the desire of both parties to develop *a program of education and planning so that the Sault Ste. Marie Branch may fulfill the needs of the region which it serves as an accredited institution and to contribute to the total system of higher education in Michigan*, Lake Superior State University’s mission has been unambiguous. LSSU is a regional university that serves the region academically, culturally, and in stewardship while also filling a vital role in Michigan’s system of post-secondary education. Whereas MTU’s Board of Control may have sold LSSU to its Board for a mere dollar in 1970, the institution’s value to the region, the State, and to the students who cross its threshold has been priceless.

Clarity of mission and vision can be found in Lake Superior State University’s mission documents. The mission/vision statement describes the region served, the quality of programs provided, the anticipated learning outcomes, the vehicles for delivery of its programs, and the institution’s commitment to the communities beyond its region. LSSU’s values statement outlines the manner in which it will conduct its affairs while its strategic planning process provides the road map by which the institution will achieve its mission. The institution’s mission documents guide the institution from the present towards the future. The mission statement specifically identifies its constituents and the services that will be offered to them.

In addition to Lake Superior State University’s overarching mission documents, many of the institution’s Colleges and Schools and several non-instructional departments have also developed mission statements, goals, and objectives. As illustrated in the following chart using the School of Physical Sciences within the College of



Natural, Mathematical, and Health Sciences as an example, academic program mission documents (administrative departments as well) build on the foundation established by the institution's mission statement. The focus of the documents narrows as it moves from the broader institution to individual program. The pyramid demonstrates how understanding of and support for the mission pervade the organization. A further description of each level can be found in the Resource Room.



An important element in the pervasiveness of an institution's mission documents, as well as its integrity, is their accessibility. Lake Superior State University's mission/vision statement, posted in many of its campus buildings, can also be found on its website, in its course catalog, and in most external publications. College, School, and Departmental mission statements are displayed on the University's website as are other mission documents such as LSSU's strategic plan and academic program goals and objectives.

The examples that follow demonstrate the ways in which areas across campus express their adherence to the four tenets of LSSU's mission: provide high-quality, academically-rigorous programs; provide an engaged, personal, and supportive environment; set students on paths to rewarding careers; and serve regional, national, and global communities.

### **LSSU provides high-quality, academically-rigorous programs**

The following academic programs are accredited or nationally approved:

- Fire Science: International Fire Service Accreditation Congress



- Athletic Training: Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education
- Electrical Engineering: Engineering Accreditation Commission of ABET
- Mechanical Engineering: Engineering Accreditation Commission of ABET
- Computer Engineering : Engineering Accreditation Commission of ABET
- Manufacturing Engineering Technology: Technology Accreditation Commission of ABET
- Nursing: Approved by the Michigan Board of Nursing and accredited by the National League for Nursing Accreditation Commission
- Chemistry: American Chemical Society (nationally approved)
- Environmental Health: National Environmental Health Science and Protection Accreditation Council

### National Licensure and Other Tests

- **Business:** Results from the 2008 Major Field Test in Business, an objective, end-of-program test designed for students majoring in business degree programs throughout the country, show that LSSU students scored in the top 5% of schools in the nation in the fields of accounting and economics, and the top 15% or better in the fields of international education and legal/social education. LSSU was among 618 institutions of higher education that tested seniors during capstone courses. LSSU's results in each area were significantly above the average national scores with eight areas scoring in the top 20% in the nation. Questions in the two-hour test represent a wide range of difficulty and provide an in-depth assessment of a student's achievement level.
- **Engineering:** The Fundamentals of Engineering (FE) exam is a voluntary exam that engineering students take. The test is the first step in becoming a registered professional engineer. It is graded on a pass/fail basis, with the national pass rate averaging around 70%. The pass rate for LSSU graduates who took the test in 2009 and 2010 was 100%.
- **School of Criminal Justice:** The Area Concentration Achievement Test is given to incoming freshmen and then again to graduating seniors. Freshmen consistently enter LSSU with an overall percentile rank ranging from 10th to the 26th percentile (2006-10 results). The post test indicates that the students have improved their percentile ranking so that the senior class averages in the 72nd to the 75th percentile. This is a significant improvement considering the data is based on a comparison of criminal justice programs across the nation. Given the low percentile at which our students begin their studies, the wide margin of increase in student learning can be seen as a measure of the academic rigor of LSSU's program.

### Senior research projects are required by the following areas:

- **Engineering:** For all majors, projects are completed by a group and many undertake projects for companies or individuals outside of the institution. Examples of the projects include developing medical equipment, automotive systems and equipment, robotics lines, etc.



- **Biology, Chemistry, and Environmental Sciences:** All majors conduct their research under the guidance of a faculty mentor and then present their research in public venues with poster and PowerPoint sessions.
- **Nursing:** Multiple clinical rotations replace senior research. The experiences occur in a wide variety of health care facilities (including one in Canada) and focus on training the students to evaluate and make decisions in critical care situations.
- **Sociology:** All majors conduct research, write a thesis, create a poster presentation, and present their research both on and off campus. A 2010 graduate's research won a Kapp Award for Outstanding Undergraduate Research by the Michigan Academy. The research paper will be published in the Academy's quarterly journal, The Michigan Academician. This is a significant honor, as the paper was chosen from among 400 submitted at the 2010 conference by students in all disciplines and from more than 30 universities throughout Michigan. [http://www.lssu.edu/whats\\_new/articles.php?articleid=2179](http://www.lssu.edu/whats_new/articles.php?articleid=2179)
- **Fine Arts:** Final project spans two semesters. The first semester involves planning and research, making basic sketches, drafts, or mockups for an artistic presentation. The second is devoted to the actual production of the art, music, drama, etc. A reflective essay and discussion accompanies a formal exhibit of the artistic endeavor.
- **Psychology:** Professors work with the students to determine which projects will be presented at the Michigan Undergraduate Psychology Research Conference.
- **Communication, English, History, and Political Science:** Senior research projects/papers are required. In those areas that have a public presentation requirement, the presentations typically occur at the end of the Spring semester. In some cases, poster presentations are part of the process. In Spring 2010, a section of an English student's senior research project on ecocriticism and Upper Peninsula-based fiction was accepted for presentation at the 2010 John Burroughs Nature Writing Conference and Seminar held during the summer at the State University of New York at Oneonta. His was one of only two undergraduate papers accepted for presentation. [http://www.lssu.edu/whats\\_new/articles.php?articleid=2077](http://www.lssu.edu/whats_new/articles.php?articleid=2077)
- **University Honors Program:** All of the Honors graduates, which include students from a range of disciplines, write and present an honors thesis in their discipline. The honors component of the thesis must expand on and exceed the disciplinary requirements.

### LSSU provides an engaged, personal, and supportive environment

- Faculty members provide academic advising services to students in their major discipline.
- Food Services address individual special dietary needs as reported/requested by students.



- On a monthly basis, a food committee is convened which is open to students in general. This committee addresses any issues raised as well as securing student input on food-related matters. One example of the way in which this activity has been effective is that recycling and composting programs were discussed with students and implemented with their support. In Spring 2011, the department worked with a student group interested in sustainability and tested the effectiveness of a trayless operation. As a result of this test, trayless dining is expected to begin in Fall 2011.
- Like Food Services, the Campus Life and Housing departments are auxiliary operations. To that end, all improvements in their infrastructure are completed without General Fund support. These departments have, in the past decade, invested in providing and then upgrading wireless capabilities for all residence halls. Additionally, they have collaborated with a variety of departments outside of Student Affairs (Information Technology, Learning Center, and the Norris Center) to improve aspects of their environments to better support their work with students. In addition, the Campus Life area has collaborated with the Student Government to improve the Student Organization Center and the Peacock Cove areas of the Cisler Center.
- The new student orientation programs include faculty members and staff from different areas of campus who work together to ensure that parents and students are informed of academic policies and procedures prior to the new student's first semester enrollment.
- The Office of Advising, Retention and Orientation coordinates training workshops for academic advisors. These workshops bring advisors up-to-date on changes in the Banner System and also help with developing and expanding advising skills. Two workshops were held during the Fall Semester 2010.
- The Admissions staff travels throughout Michigan to present information to admitted students and their parents during Admitted Student Receptions. These presentations ensure that students are informed of the necessary steps to enrollment and have the tools they need to be successful.
- The Residence Life area has provided an Honors House for the Honors program since 1996. Honors students are invited to reside in historic housing as an incentive to participate more fully in the Honors Program.
- In Fall 2011, three Living Learning Houses are being initiated: Chemistry, Engineering, and Criminal Justice/Fire Science. All three have designated faculty advisors and all will establish goals that focus on increasing the opportunities for academic dialogue outside of the classroom. These houses will also engage all students in those majors in co-curricular and extracurricular activities.

### LSSU sets students on paths to rewarding careers

- The Product Development Center (PDC) hires students (typically Juniors and Seniors). While most student employees come from the areas of Engineering and Engineering Technology, projects sometimes



require skills in Business, Marketing, and Computer Science. Most PDC projects involve pre-patent prototypes which cannot be made public. These projects provide the opportunity to work with inventors on novel product concepts.

- The Environmental Analysis Laboratory (EAL) is staffed in part by undergraduate chemistry and environmental science students.
- The Aquatic Research Laboratory (ARL) provides students with employment opportunities, assisting with routine hatchery operations involving the culture of Atlantic salmon and maintenance of existing stocks of lake sturgeon.
- The LSSU Health Center works with the Athletic Training and Exercise Science programs to provide a clinical rotation site for their students.
- The LSSU Campus Safety department hires Criminal Justice majors to work as auxiliary officers for the department. They work with full-time officers and engage in all aspects of the operation including patrol, dispatch and switchboard, response to emergency and other requests, parking, and traffic. In emergency operations, some of the more senior students have roles that include coordinating specific activities in response to the emergency.
- Campus Safety works with Fire Science majors to address needs related to fire safety and the institution's need to comply with all ordinances (e.g., checking of fire equipment, fire drills, etc.). In 2008, two Fire Science majors assisted Campus Safety and Physical Plant to inventory all chemicals used on campus and developed a system to maintain and review material safety data sheets in an effective manner.

### **LSSU serves regional, national, and global communities**

- The Environmental Analysis Laboratory (EAL) provides a service to the local community, as it is the only environmental analytical laboratory in Michigan's Eastern Upper Peninsula. Samples are also received from around the world and throughout the United States.
- The Health Center staff serves on many local and regional committees. Examples include: Sexual Violence Prevention Committee, Pandemic Influenza Coordinating Committee, Chippewa County Advisory Board, Regional Coordinated School Health Advisory Board, Community Action Agency Head Start Program, and the Drug Enforcement Task Force.
- Food Services has routinely worked with local agencies and campus groups to support their efforts by conducting fund-raising events. Examples of the agencies include The Diane Pepler Shelter and Women's Health Awareness programs such as Pink in the Rink.
- The Cisler Center is regularly used for meetings of many local and regional groups. Activities range from religion-based activities, to public school competitions, to tabletop exercises that address emergency



concerns by local law enforcement groups. Space is typically given at no cost for local blood drives and for informational town meetings.

- LSSU's Upward Bound and GEAR UP programs and the University's Financial Aid office have all made efforts to engage and aid local and regional students who are considering post-secondary education. The Financial Aid Office has provided an annual workshop on campus for local students and their families to make them aware of the availability of financial aid and to work with them to complete the FAFSA application. Another example of the reach and the exposure provided by the GEAR UP program can be seen in the May 2011 Mind Trekkers EUP program. This program was delivered by university students from LSSU, Michigan Technological University, and Bay Mills Community College. An invitation to participate was extended to all secondary students in the 19 Eastern Upper Peninsula school districts.
- The Financial Aid Office presents nine Financial Aid Night programs a year and one College Goal Sunday program. These programs provide information for financing a college education for parents and students in the Eastern Upper Peninsula and Northern Lower Peninsula.

As is demonstrated by the clarity and availability of its mission documents; by its understanding and support of its mission; and by its operating with integrity, there is no question that Lake Superior State University's mission is unambiguous.

### Sub-Theme: The University Appreciates Diversity

In this sub-theme, Lake Superior State University provides evidence that it meets the following core components:

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

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

### Diversity's Strategic Goals

In Chapter Three, the discussion regarding the mission and values statements created by the University identified two primary elements that addressed the diversity efforts at LSSU: the respect and value afforded individuals, and a welcoming environment for diverse perspectives that allows for change and innovation. The strategic goals developed in 2005 to address diversity issues included four major elements, all of which affect the community's appreciation of and support for diversity.

### Representation of Minority Cultures

The first of these goals focused on increasing representation of minority cultures and ensuring equal access and opportunities. To that end, the University has engaged in a number of activities that have included: the updating of publications to better reflect the nature of campus diversity; funding visits of Lake Superior State University



charter schools with large minority populations to campus, and creating and implementing summer camp opportunities for the University's charter school students. While the visits and the camps have been in place for a number of years, the number of charter school students who have enrolled remains small. New efforts are in development (e.g. opening of a regional site at the Dearborn campus and new leadership camps for charter school students) with the intention that these efforts will expose more diverse populations to an LSSU education.

Support for the University's largest minority population, Native American students, remains a primary focus for the Director of the Native American Center (NAC). Over the past decade the center has seen the staffing level decrease (2003) and then increase (2006) with the availability of grant funding. Much of the activity at the NAC is directed towards interacting with current and potential Native students and with the local tribe's educational offices. The most recent grant was for the support of a GEAR UP program which has a cohort of 231 pre-college students that includes 79 (34%) students who are Native American.

### Faculty, Staff, and Administrative Diversity

The second goal focuses on the diversity present among the faculty, staff, and administration. As was reported previously in Chapter Three, the activities undertaken over the past ten years have resulted in modest increases, especially among faculty members. In Fall of 2010 Dr. Gordon Nakagawa was hired as a one-semester visiting professor as part of a King-Chavez-Parks (KCP) matching grant program. Dr. Nakagawa taught two sections of a diversity course and also served as a speaker/trainer on the topic of diversity and leadership to various campus groups (e.g., Student Affairs staff, Resident Assistant staff, etc.). Additionally, Dr. Nakagawa was extremely accessible to the campus as he was living in an apartment in the Campus Center and regularly took his meals in the main dining facility. After a semester on campus, Dr. Nakagawa was asked if he might offer his observations about diversity at LSSU. When his report was received in March 2011, it was distributed, initially, to the Diversity Committee and the President's Cabinet ([report is available in Appendix A](#)). Both bodies were asked to review and discuss the report. In April 2011 the Diversity Committee used the report to refine its efforts for the following year.

### Campus Activities Recognize Diverse Cultures

The third goal of the strategic plan focuses on creating and sustaining an environment that reflects Lake Superior State University's commitment to diversity. This goal has been the most successful of the four in the plan as noted by the following:

- The number and breadth of activities that have been brought to campus since the development of the plan. (See Chapter Three)
- The funding of these events offers insight about the way in which the commitment has been embraced as departmental, institutional, and student government budgets have all contributed.
- The Native American Center has monthly open house/potluck meals at which they typically have a Native American speaker, artist, or musician present.



- The commencement ceremony celebrates the local culture of both Sault Ste. Maries, Ontario and Michigan, as it includes both a bagpipe group from Ontario, and a Native American drum group from either Michigan or Ontario as integral parts of the celebration.

### Curriculum Reflects a Commitment to Diversity

The fourth and final goal, ensuring that the curriculum reflects a commitment to diversity, is apparent as the General Education requirement for graduation includes a three or four credit course in diversity. The outcome intended by this requirement is that students will be better able *to view the world from cultural perspectives other than their own*. A total of fourteen courses in nine different departments are offered to fulfill this requirement. Many other courses have been developed in addition to those that fulfill the diversity requirement. These courses span a number of departments and include either a diversity or multi-cultural focus or have embedded these elements in their syllabi. In addition, the Nursing program has a specific course offered for the BSN, and all clinical courses have an element of diversity included in their operation and syllabi. (list of courses is available in the Resource Room). Dr. Nakagawa, during his semester on campus indicated that “it was clear that many (faculty) teach conventional courses integrating diverse perspectives and content, as well as pedagogical and instructional strategies appropriate to diverse constituencies” (p. 30 of Dr. Nakagawa’s report).

The International Studies Program also works to incorporate diversity into the curriculum. Although efforts at increasing opportunities for international travel and study abroad are, at present, somewhat limited, the University has had success with summer programs for students traveling to Mexico, Costa Rica, Africa, France, and China. However, a broader range of opportunities is being investigated to provide students with the opportunity to study abroad during the Fall or Spring semesters. To that end, the offices of the Provost, Registrar, and Financial Aid have agreed to work more closely with students interested in going abroad. Additionally, the University has recently secured membership in both the Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE) and the College Consortium for International Studies (CCIS) to afford students more choices for these study opportunities. LSSU has also had a long time membership in the Japan Center for Michigan Universities (JCMU). These programs are discussed in the preceding chapter.

The previous discussion indicates that Lake Superior State University has married its mission and values to activities that help the community to better appreciate diversity. The 2005 diversity plan has provided the framework by which the University is able to assess its needs. While much has been accomplished, LSSU’s effort still has some shortcomings (report available in the Resource Room).

### Strengths and Challenges

The five items that follow identify some of the more pressing needs and focus on activities that will be implemented to enable the University to embrace diversity both as a concept and as a practice.

- The University lacks a statement of diversity and inclusion that includes a definition of diversity, its role and function in the mission and vision, and its role in the structure and culture of the University. Dr. Nakagawa, noting that the University’s recent strategic planning processes included concern for diversity



and equity, suggests that such a statement will help identify diversity as an institutional core priority, translating policy into practice.

- Accomplishments recorded in the 2005 plan were not conducted through a coordinated, campus-wide effort. In many cases, items were accomplished by individual departments or through some collaboration. The diversity plan has not, until recently, been viewed from a more central perspective. One recommendation coming from the Diversity Committee is that the LSSU Strategic Plan be reviewed annually to identify goals met and activities undertaken in support of diversity. Working within the Shared Governance structure, the Committee will establish new goals (as appropriate) and new priorities for the coming year.
- The breadth and number of multi-cultural activities and events that have been brought to campus over the past five years is impressive. Attendance at those events was not nearly so impressive. LSSU has to develop a way in which there is broad support by the faculty so that students not only attend, but also have the opportunity after the programs to engage in reflection and debate in their classes. Dr. Nakagawa suggests that this initiative is best achieved by coordination between the academic and student affairs areas.
- The make-up of the Diversity Committee should be reflective of the campus in that membership should include all constituencies. However, it also needs to have a decidedly stronger representation of faculty members to better support and strengthen campus efforts to bring programs and activities to campus and to encourage attendance and discussion about the activities. The Diversity Committee has recommended that the committee have 12 members, six of whom would be faculty members with representation from each of the four colleges. The other six would be drawn from the students, staff, and administrative professionals.
- A variety of assessments need to be conducted both initially and annually. These include both a diversity audit and a climate study that are both broad-based and focused.

### Sub-Theme: The University is Accountable

In this sub-theme, Lake Superior State University provides evidence that it meets the following core components:

1e – The organization upholds and protects its integrity.

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

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

In 2005 the National Commission on Accountability in Higher Education released its report, “Accountability for Better Results: A National Imperative for Higher Education.” The forty-two page report, published by the State



Higher Education Executive Officers Association, notes that improved accountability in higher education is imperative; however, how to improve accountability is not so readily apparent. *Real improvement*, the report states, *will come when accountability in higher education is a democratic process through which shared goals are explicitly established, progress is measured, and work to improve performance is motivated and guided* (SHEEO 2005, p.7).

Accountability is a concept with several meanings, often used interchangeably with responsibility and answerability. In leadership roles, to be accountable is to acknowledge responsibility for actions, decisions, and policies in administration and governance. Accountability encompasses the obligation to report, explain, and be answerable for resulting consequences. Lake Superior State University is a public institution that operates with integrity and is held accountable at multiple levels and in varying ways.

Evidence of Lake Superior State University's Board of Trustees and administration's accountability and integrity is demonstrated through actual performance and by how the institution's mission permeates both its day-to-day and long-term activities. Accountability is the feedback loop to the institution's various constituents that the actions taken are clearly tied to mission. Integrity is demonstrated by the process used to determine institutional priorities and departmental activities. Accountability and integrity are tied together through a rigorous system of shared responsibility and measured progress. Lake Superior State University's model of Shared Governance, implemented in 2010, is the vehicle by which the institution will embrace its mission with integrity and accountability.

The seminal work, "Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities," jointly published in 1966 by the American Association of University Professors, The American Council on Education, and the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, states:

*The variety and complexity of the tasks performed by institutions of higher education produce an inescapable interdependence among governing board, administration, faculty, students, and others. The relationship calls for adequate communication among these components, and full opportunity for appropriate joint planning and effort.*

In short, the success of an academic institution is a direct result of joint effort. Joint effort acknowledges that important areas of action at one time or another require participation of all campus constituencies, yet the weight of each constituency may not be equal. The weight of a constituency's contribution to an institutional matter will be determined by the extent of its responsibility in that particular matter. Appropriate joint planning and effort acknowledges the fluidity of the decision-making relationships among campus constituents. In a shared governance model, the interests of all are coordinated and related.

### Shared Governance

Shared governance exercises a delicate balance among faculty, staff, administration, and student interests in the planning and decision-making processes. At the heart of an institution of higher education are its educational goals. In shared governance, the establishment of educational goals is driven by the institution's mission,



objectives, and resource capacity; input is broad-based and fairly equal among constituents. However, once the educational goals are established, it becomes the purview of the faculty to determine and implement the appropriate curriculum and pedagogy to support those goals.

Similarly, one of the most important undertakings of that same institution is its short- and long-range planning. In a shared governance model, effective planning necessitates that the broadest possible exchange of information and insight should occur. A channel of communication should be established and maintained through joint effort. However, that does not mean that every constituency participates at every stage, nor does any single constituency exercise complete control over the process. The successful shared governance model ensures that various stakeholders participate in well-articulated parts of the decision-making process. Lake Superior State University recognizes the interdependence among its campus constituencies and understands the importance and value of joint effort.

Shared Governance at Lake Superior State University is an open, transparent, and deliberative process. Within its deliberative function, it addresses strategic planning, review of academic programs, formulation of policies, appraisal of initiatives, evaluation of student activities, review of budget considerations, and other pertinent issues. Through the communication channels of the Shared Governance process, LSSU will be able to better document, in a credible and understandable manner, how the goals embedded within its mission are achieved:

- Providing high quality, academically rigorous programs
- Creating an engaged, personal and supportive environment
- Positioning students for rewarding careers and productive satisfying lives
- Serving regional, national and global communities

### Assessment

Closely tied to institutional integrity and accountability, if not fundamental to it, is the assessment of student learning. In the past, accountability and assessment were only loosely connected. While accountability is the external presentation of an institution's performance, internal assessment is the analytical tool used to evaluate such performance. Today, it is recognized that assessment is key to institutional accountability. An institution's framework of accountability should include students' demonstrated ability to apply their learning to complex problems as well as issues related to their chosen careers. A system of assessment should be designed to deepen and strengthen student learning, not just to document it. Lake Superior State University understands this and discusses the topic thoroughly in Chapter Two.

Establishing a culture of assessment is much more than developing a plan and documenting its results. It is about building trust among faculty members and administrators; it is the result of a steady, good faith effort over a number of years. It is about individuals' attitudes and behaviors, from the president on down, towards the assessment of student learning. A culture of assessment exists when faculty members and administrators recognize that assessment activities produce results that relate to student learning and institutional accountability. In Fall 2010, Lake Superior State University measured its assessment culture by asking each academic school and department chair within its four colleges to identify their disciplines' placement on the

## Chapter Four: Theme - Distinctive



continuum of assessment goals. The ratings were based on each discipline’s perception of its assessment culture. Using the HLC Assessment Culture Matrix that listed patterns of characteristics by stages of implementation, each area rated itself as “beginning implementation,” “making progress in implementation,” or in the “maturing stages of implementation” in regards to its area’s assessment culture, shared responsibility, area support, and efficacy of assessment.

The survey results mirror Chapter Two’s in-depth review of Lake Superior State University’s assessment practices— i.e. progress in assessment is occurring at the department or school level but institutional support of assessment, in general, is lacking. Table 4.1 charts the Academic Chairs’ perception of their school/department’s assessment culture. In most categories, the majority of the chairs responded that their areas were making progress in each category surveyed. In the “Mission” category, the majority of chairs felt their assessment practices were maturing. This suggests that most programs have a published statement of purpose and have developed assessment program materials that emphasize the importance of the Mission Statement when identifying learning expectations and assessment outcomes. The chairs’ responses to “Resources” and “Structures” indicate that while institutional support is available, there clearly is room for improvement. Perhaps the measure that best indicates where the school/department chairs view Lake Superior State University on the assessment culture continuum is “Efficacy”; 64% of the chairs indicated that while their areas are collecting data and the faculty members are becoming more engaged in assessment activities, the closing of the assessment loop, i.e. effecting change, is still in the early stages.

Table 4.1: Academic Chairs’ Evaluation of School/Department Assessment Culture

<b>N=22</b>	<b>Beginning Implementation</b>	<b>Making Progress</b>	<b>Maturing</b>
Collective/Shared Values	19%	57%	24%
Mission	19%	29%	52%
Faculty	14%	59%	27%
Administration and Board	22%	56%	22%
Students	26%	58%	16%
Resources	48%	43%	10%
Structures	33%	52%	14%
Efficacy	23%	64%	14%

When asked to evaluate Lake Superior State University’s assessment culture from an institutional perspective, the school/department chairs were not so positive. Again, using the HLC’s Assessment Matrix tool, the chairs were asked to select statements they felt best described the University’s assessment activities. As Table 4.2 indicates, no category was ranked beyond “Beginning Implementation” status, with the institutional support of “Resources” and “Structures” as well as “Efficacy” receiving significantly low ratings. As the number of statements varied from rating to rating (Beginning Implementation, Making Progress, and Maturing), the methodology used for this analysis gave each rating a weight by dividing the number of statements within the rating by the total number of statements within the category (Collective/Shared Values, Mission, Faculty, etc.).



This result was then multiplied by one for “Beginning Implementation,” two for “Making Progress,” and three for “Maturing.”

Table 4.2: School/Department Chairs' Perception of Institutional Assessment Culture

N=18	Collective/ Shared Values	Mission	Faculty	Administration and Board	Students	Resources	Structures	Efficacy
Average	1.39	1.61	1.12	1.22	0.99	0.77	0.91	0.87
Median	1.4	1.5	1.07	1.1	0.83	0.52	0.86	0.72
STD	0.677	0.737	0.869	0.844	0.806	0.771	0.613	0.704
Beginning Implementation = 1								
Making Progress = 2								
Maturing = 3								

### LSSU’s Service to External Constituencies

Concomitant to the institutional accountability derived from measuring student learning is the accountability that comes from measuring the usefulness and effectiveness of service to external constituencies. An important part of measuring Lake Superior State University’s performance is evaluating the depth and quality of its engagement with its community. Do external constituents find value in the services LSSU offers?

The Center for Social Research (organization name changed in 2011 to Community Research Center), an organization housed at Lake Superior State University and staffed by University faculty members, has conducted a citizen survey for the town of Sault Ste. Marie on three occasions. The surveys asked residents of the city to rate eleven programs or activities available in Sault Ste. Marie, rating the importance of the program/activity and the current quality of each. The programs and activities included the following:

- K-12 Education,
- Local health care services
- Lake Superior State University
- Park system
- Cable/satellite television
- Entertainment options
- Sporting activities
- Cultural activities
- Air transportation services
- Soo Theater project and associated activities
- International bridge bus

In each case, LSSU achieved a mean importance score of 4.4 out of a possible 5. Dr. Richard Conboy, former Director of the Center, offered the following assessment of the results:

*Based on the results contained in the 2008 City of Sault Ste. Marie Citizen Survey, the city’s residents rate the importance of LSSU to the community as a 4.4 on a 5 point scale. Of the eleven institutions listed, this places LSSU as the third-highest-rated organization. The two higher-rated institutions had a score of 4.7. On the question of the quality of LSSU, the residents rated it a 3.5 on a 5 point scale, which ranked it second among the eleven institutions.*



*These ratings indicate that LSSU is highly valued by its neighbors, the citizens of Sault Ste. Marie. The University is seen as an important resource for the community and is recognized for the quality of its work by the city's residents.*

To better understand why LSSU is highly valued, one only has to look at the many ways in which the University serves its local, regional, and state constituencies. Much of this work has been documented in detail in the previous chapter but deserves to be repeated and highlighted here to further demonstrate how the institution is accountable to all of its constituencies.

- Environmental Analysis Laboratory: works locally, regionally, state-wide, nationally, and globally. Local, regional, and state clients include health departments, water districts, environmental protection agencies, and tribal organizations.
- Product Development Center: works locally, regionally, and nationally. Local and regional entrepreneurs and companies have engaged the PDC since 2007. Products that have been worked on by the Center have included items that have potential for impact nationally and globally (e.g. projects have included items for professional sports, medical use, and portable power). The PDC is closely aligned with the Sault Ste. Marie SmartZone (SSMart). The SSMart designation came about as a result of a collaborative effort by the city of Sault Ste. Marie and LSSU.
- Exercise Physiology Laboratory: works locally with campus clients and local community members.
- Aquatic Research Laboratory: works locally, regionally, and state-wide. Works with the Michigan DNR as a hatchery for Atlantic salmon and engages with agencies and the public to do research, investigate environmental issues, or make presentations.
- Upward Bound: works locally and regionally. Aside from the cohort in the program, the staff has assisted local and regional schools with ACT preparation for their students. It has also worked with local students to complete and submit scholarship and college financial aid applications. The Director of the program has also worked with Public Safety to train teenage students as Community Emergency Response Team members.
- GEAR UP: works locally and regionally. Besides working with the cohort assigned to the program, the Coordinator collaborated with faculty members to co-host an annual Pi Day and Math Bowl competition. GEAR UP has expanded its reach further by engaging LSSU students in college access programming for secondary students both inside and outside the GEAR UP cohort group. This has been accomplished through securing a number of Michigan Campus Compact grants, which have allowed LSSU students to engage in mentoring activities presented through “College Access Showcase Experiences.”
- LSSU Elders: works locally. Since 1994 the University has sponsored and supported this association that provides continued learning and social activities tailored to adults over fifty.



- Campus Safety, Criminal Justice and Fire Science Departments: work locally, regionally, state-wide, and internationally. These departments frequently host joint training activities for law enforcement local, state, federal and Canadian agencies. Faculty members have acted as consultants to many local agencies as well.
- Community Research Center: works locally and regionally. In addition to the research reported on previously, this Center conducts surveys and secures data on topics ranging from education and the economy to housing, the environment, and health. The focus of research efforts is typically the Eastern Upper Peninsula (EUP) but is not limited to that area.
- Norris Center, Cisler Center, and the Fine Arts Center: work locally and regionally. All three facilities offer a variety of events and activities to the communities of the EUP and Ontario. In the last 10 years, the Cisler Center has recorded use by over 600 local customers and has been the location for a number of annual K-12 regional school activities.
- Shouldice Library: works locally and regionally. The staff provides instruction to many local and regional schools and supports Interactive TV and Audio programs that assist a variety of federal and state agencies and local groups. The library also has a small gallery that frequently sponsors shows of local artists.
- Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response (HAZWOPER): works locally and regionally. The LSSU Chemistry department provides refresher training for local scientists and businesses.
- Senior Projects: work locally, regionally, state-wide, and nationally. Projects undertaken in the sciences and engineering have ranged from campus-based initiatives to entrepreneurial and corporate assignments that have national and international potential.

In 2010, the Michigan Municipal League (MML) approached the City Manager of Sault Ste. Marie and asked if the city would be interested in participating in a pilot program of the League's Center for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Communities (21c3). The city agreed to participate, and the first activity involved bringing members of critical organizations (including LSSU) in the area together to engage in a discussion of eight asset areas identified by the MML as essential to creating a sense of place and, as a result, attracting people and businesses to those areas. The MML gathered data from *group meetings, secondary internet research, and direct personal interviews conducted by phone and in person with various stakeholders on site.*

The MML completed data collection and issued a report (available in the Resource Room) that discussed each of the eight asset areas as they applied to Sault Ste. Marie, identifying both the assets and the opportunities for each. After review and discussion, the city and the MML determined that the 21c3 project for Sault Ste. Marie would focus on K-16 education with the following description of the project's vision: *Transition Sault Ste. Marie from a 'town with a university' to a vibrant university town in which students are fully integrated within the community and consider it their home, and the community engages the full range of opportunities provided through their key anchor institution.* In the spring of 2011, the city of Sault Ste. Marie engaged a consultant,



Marga Associates, to assist with the development of a strategic plan to achieve the vision. It is expected that the plan will be developed and implemented in Summer or Fall 2011.

That Lake Superior State University is an accountable organization in Michigan's Eastern Upper Peninsula is supported by its successful collaboration with many local and regional entities. This collaboration provides much value to local businesses and agencies while affording LSSU students significant, hands-on learning opportunities.

### **Sub-Theme: The University is Self-Reflective**

In this sub-theme, Lake Superior State University provides evidence that it meets the following core component:

1d – The organization's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the organization to fulfill its mission.

Experience is a powerful teacher. Self reflection is an opportunity to ask: what worked and what didn't; how does the experience relate to others; what can be learned from the experience; and, if given the opportunity, what should be done differently the next time. Reflection should pose a question, suggest alternative scenarios, and seek deeper meaning from the event or situation. Effective leadership and collaborative processes are key reflective elements.

### **Strategic Planning**

Lake Superior State University's governance and administrative structures provide opportunities for effective leadership and collaborative processes. It is within this structure that suggested solutions are intellectualized, ideas are synthesized, and a hypothesis is developed and tested. During the past ten years, LSSU's strategic planning processes have started with suggestions, which moved into discussions of feasibility, and ultimately became part of a strategic plan.

### **Shared Governance Supports Strategic Planning**

In 2009, the Board of Trustees, the President, and the two collaborative bodies (the President's Cabinet and the Provost's Council) at Lake Superior State University formalized a Shared Governance structure and process, one that enables the University to carry out its mission. The new structure provides a framework within which existing university committees can function co-operatively. Prior to the implementation of a formal shared governance structure and process, LSSU had the following committees:

By contract

- Curriculum
- General Education
- Promotion and Tenure
- Sabbatical



### By special focus

- Orientation
- Retention
- Developmental Education
- Commencement
- Honors Council
- University Service
- Distinguished Teacher Selection
- Shared Governance committees

### For administrative guidance

- Banner Improvement Group
- Banner User Group
- Financial Aid
- Scholastic Standards
- Arts Center
- Parking and Traffic

### Committees that met as needed

- Human Subjects (Institutional Review Board)
- Institutionalized Animal Care and Use
- Individualized Studies
- Cultural Affairs and Issues and Intellect
- Data Standards
- Intercollegiate Athletics

Under Shared Governance, these committees are still present and active; however, instead of being considered stand-alone entities, the various committees now operate within a framework that encourages an open and transparent deliberative process. Previously, while all committees conducted their business in a manner appropriate to their charge, there was no uniform manner in which the results of their efforts were communicated to the campus; nor was there a process in place to encourage broad participation in the committees' decision-making processes. Also, noticeably absent from the committee structure were committees for addressing diversity, assessment, and infrastructure planning.

Based on the process of self reflection, LSSU recognized the lack of an overriding governance of its committees. In late 2008, it began discussions on how best to formalize a model of Shared Governance and on how it could be implemented. Early in 2009, a core committee comprised of the President, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, one Dean, one faculty member, one administrative professional, and the support staff union president was formed. In the fall of that year, the results of its efforts and deliberations were presented to the entire campus community. Later that same fall, after the Shared Governance core committee



met with the Faculty Association and the President, the document describing the Shared Governance structure and process was adopted by the University.

Lake Superior State University's Shared Governance acts as a conduit of information and consultation among the President and the Board of Trustees and the greater institution. The mission of the institution is embraced and strengthened by the structure's transparent flow of information. Lake Superior State University's Shared Governance structure consists of three major committees: Oversight, Strategic, and Task. Committee membership—representative of the institution as a whole—is by election of one's peer or by administrative appointment. Elections and appointments to the committees within the three major categories of LSSU's Shared Governance structure were completed in winter 2010.

Fall 2010 saw the University's first utilization of the Shared Governance structure for deliberation and decision making. Examples of this process follow that describe some of the activities undertaken by each of the four primary strategic committees of the Shared Governance process.

### Academic issues and policies

- **Grade change requests:** When the Provost undertook a review of grade change requests over the previous two years, he discovered that these were received by his office at a rate of one or two per week. Reviewing the data, he felt that the reason for this large number of requests was due to a combination of "I" grades and a lack of awareness among faculty members and students of the grade change policy. The Provost wrote up a history of the topic, summarized the data, and provided a recommendation to the Shared Governance Oversight Committee. The Oversight Committee could not identify an appropriate existing committee to review and make recommendations about the issue and so decided to ask a combined group of deans and school chairs to conduct a review. This group reviewed the materials provided that included input solicited from registrars and provosts throughout the state system. After consideration, the deans and chairs reported their recommendations to the Oversight Committee, which, in turn, reviewed the recommendation and then passed along its review and recommendation to the President for review and approval.

The process for resolving this academic issue resulted in a question about the process itself. Specifically, if a Vice President has the authority to rule on the issue in question, why should the matter go to the President for resolution after deliberation by the Shared Governance group? The Oversight Committee, Provost, and President met to discuss the matter and a change in process resulted. Specifically, all Shared Governance recommendations would now be routed to the appropriate Vice President and/or President. Further, if the Shared Governance Committee disagreed with a Vice President's decision, the committee could ask the President to conduct a review.

- **Certificates:** At present, any academic area can issue certificates without University oversight, knowledge, or approval. The Provost, again, provided the Shared Governance Oversight Committee with details, data, and a recommendation. An ad hoc committee was formed but, as of the middle of Spring 2011, has not yet reported out the results of their review and recommendations.



- **Excused Absence Policy:** This issue was raised by the Athletic Director and the NCAA Athletic Certification Officer. Once again, students and faculty members were unclear about the roles and responsibilities when addressing approved absences (previously the approval came from the Provost's office). As before, the Oversight Committee asked the ad hoc deans/chairs group to review the matter and more clearly define the responsibilities. Recommendations and policy language were developed and sent back to the Oversight Committee. The policy was then approved by the President.
- **Academic Policies and Procedures Committee:** The Shared Governance Oversight Committee was asked by the Provost to create an Academic Policies and Procedures Committee to address a multitude of policies and procedures that have previously been the purview of the Provost. The current Provost decided that this approach was needed given that many areas outside of academic issues are affected by these policies and procedures. Examples include: room and office allocations, special fees, special tuition rates for specific groups (e.g., international "sister" schools, ISD, PSA staff, military, etc.), course scheduling, reporting dates, grading items, class meeting requirements, assessment, evaluations, sabbaticals, etc.

### Non-Academic Policies

- **Medical Marijuana:** The Campus Life staff raised the issue of use of medical marijuana in the residence halls. The Director of Campus Life and Housing researched and gathered information from Michigan public institutions, which was summarized and presented to the Shared Governance Student Affairs Committee along with the department's recommendation. The committee deliberated on the matter, approved of the recommendation, and requested that policy language be developed for further review. The language was presented at the next committee meeting, reviewed, and approved by the Committee and forwarded for consideration by the Cabinet.
- **Michigan Residency (as defined for tuition purposes):** The Vice President for Enrollment Services asked the Shared Governance Student Affairs Committee to review the LSSU residency policy to provide consistency with other Michigan universities. Information from other public institutions was provided and, as of the middle of the Spring 2011 semester, deliberation and discussion continues.
- **Club Sports Policies:** A draft of the policies that provide oversight for club sports was shared with the Shared Governance Student Affairs Committee. The committee reviewed the document and gave feedback and recommendations. The draft, as of the middle of Spring 2011, continues to be revised.

### Strategic Planning and Budget

- Shortly after the membership of the Strategic Planning and Budget Committee (SPBC) was established in February 2010, the group discussed how they would approach strategic planning. After researching the matter, the SPBC distributed a survey to students, faculty, staff, and alumni soliciting their responses regarding goals and values and what LSSU represents to its constituents. A tentative Core Values Statement resulted and was shared with the community.



- In the summer of 2010, the LSSU Board of Trustees engaged a consultant to begin the strategic planning initiative at LSSU. Participants included members of the SPBC, members of the Board of Trustees, the President and Cabinet, and student leaders. Seven goals resulted from this exercise. The SPBC then conducted 13 small group meetings with faculty, staff, students, student government, and alumni to secure comments from which strategic initiatives were developed. Refinement of the initiatives was accomplished through a survey process and distributed to the campus and the Board of Trustees.
- In 2010, the SPBC was included in a review of the budgeting process for the University. The committee was provided with both general budget information and budget requests from all departments. The committee was asked to review requests and make recommendations. While this effort offered an opportunity to broaden the budgeting process, it revealed flaws which were then addressed in the 2011-12 process.

### Infrastructure and Campus Planning

- Since its creation, the Infrastructure and Planning Committee (IPC) has worked to review projects and concerns that affect the University's infrastructure. Discussions have included:
  - Large and small capital projects
  - Renovations and repairs
  - Americans with Disabilities Act projects
  - Sustainability issues
  - [Campus master plan](#) and campus signage
- Committee members engaged in a walking tour of facilities to better understand maintenance issues facing the University.
- Committee secured a professional architectural firm to provide an educational presentation that included elements on:
  - Facility Assessment
  - Master Planning
  - Capital Outlay Process
  - Capital Campaign Assistance
  - Sustainability

Those attending the presentation included members of the SPBC, the President's Cabinet, and other community members. The PowerPoint of the presentation was placed on the IPC web site.

- Committee meetings recorded one critical recommendation: to prioritize capital outlay projects when presenting them to the Michigan legislature. The Committee forwarded the two funding priorities: the School of Business building and the Aquatics Research Laboratory.



- Committee reviewed and provided its support for the renovation of Huron Hall as a themed Living Learning project (Chemistry).
- Committee worked with a consultant and other constituents to develop campus space planning principles and a Space Utilization Plan, available in the Resource Room.

Though in its infancy, the shared governance process has begun to both broaden and improve the efficiency of decision making on campus. The process and positive interactions of the Shared Governance Committees with the existing structures (e.g. President, Cabinet and Provost's Council) have resulted in decisions, recommendations, and actions that enjoy broad support. The Board of Trustees has demonstrated its support by underwriting a strategic planning effort and by its request for and discussion of updates on Shared Governance activity. As a result, Lake Superior State University's new self-reflective and collaborative governance and administrative structures enable the institution to fulfill its mission through more effective leadership.

### Sub-Theme: The University is Committed to Improvement

In this sub-theme, Lake Superior State University provides evidence that it meets the following core components:

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

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

As an institution of higher learning, Lake Superior State University is constantly evolving. The evolution comes in part as a response to external factors as well as a result of internal pressures. As has been previously discussed, the external factors and internal pressures influencing LSSU have been significant. The institution's evolution, in many cases, has been driven by reactive rather than proactive responses to circumstances. The multiple cuts to the University's state appropriation and the many changes in executive level leadership have made it difficult for the institution to remain focused on continuous improvement. The almost constant state of severe financial strain and leadership turnover consumed much time and energy. However, in the past eighteen months, the stabilization in top leadership positions and the implementation of a formalized shared governance process over the last two years has enabled LSSU to once again turn its focus towards continuous improvement. Although Lake Superior State University, along with the other 14 Michigan universities, will see a 15% reduction in its 2011-12 appropriation, LSSU is nonetheless well-positioned to build on existing processes and to envision new ones designed to continually improve all facets of the University.

### Academic Improvement Plan

The area of Lake Superior State University that will be seeing the greatest level of activity in the next two years is academic programs. During the 2011-12 academic year, for the first time, the University will be taking steps toward implementing an [Academic Improvement Plan](#) (AIP). The plan is comprised of three major initiatives:



program prioritization, program assessment and review, and implementation of a process to remove roadblocks that hinder implementation of the AIP, called “opening pathways.”

### Program Prioritization

Data collected during the program prioritization phase will enable the University to evaluate all its programs, ranking them so that resources can then be allocated according to the value the institution places on the program. LSSU’s program prioritization process is modeled after that found in Robert Dickeson’s book, Prioritizing Academic Programs and Services. Currently, LSSU has posted a new position for a Data and Report Analyst. This individual, who will report directly to the Provost, will work to create publicly-available common data sets. This data, as well as data gathered by academic departments, will be used to prioritize all academic programs. Commencing Fall 2011, the process will take about one year.

### Program Assessment and Review

Through program assessment and review, Lake Superior State University will address academic units in which limited assessment activities have taken place. To guide this phase of the AIP process, an Assessment Committee will be formed during summer 2011. The committee’s initial task will be to develop a method for periodic review of all course syllabi. It is the University’s intention to have all course syllabi submitted to the Assessment Committee for review by the end of the first week of each semester. With the Assessment Committee charged and active, LSSU will also be able to move forward with the creation of an academic program review schedule. A key component of the academic program review will be the evaluation of the currency and relevancy of all University courses and programs. Information and data regarding these evaluations will be gathered during the data collection phase of the AIP process.

Lake Superior State University’s Assessment Committee, inactive for a number of years, will, in many respects, become the heart of the academic enterprise. Its charge includes reviewing all program outcome statements, confirming that the statements are measurable, appropriate for the level of study (undergraduate or graduate), and structured so as to warrant designation as a program outcome. Another charge of the Committee includes ensuring that all departments have a ‘closed loop’ assessment process in place. LSSU recognizes that the cross-campus reception of the AIP and the Assessment Committee’s role will be mixed; even so, the institution needs to ensure that all departments begin to engage in quality assessment practices.

Lake Superior State University is forming and charging its Assessment Committee and has reorganized its academic structure to create an Associate Provost position as a leader for this process. As discussed in Chapter Two, the Associate Provost will be expected to lead the Assessment Committee, work closely with faculty members and departments in developing their assessment plans, and organize workshops, seminars, and other activities that will nurture an institution-wide culture of assessment.

### Opening Pathways

In a process parallel to Program Prioritization and Program Assessment and Review, Opening Pathways will seek to remove obstacles to implementing the AIP. This process will entail examining a variety of committees, activities, policies, procedures, resources, and contractual agreements that could potentially act as roadblocks in



the implementation of the various components of the Academic Improvement Plan. Some of these include the role of the Board of Trustees and the upper-level administration, processes for resource allocation, General Education and Curriculum Committee procedures, as well as the procedures for the granting of tenure, promotion, and sabbatical. The process will be ongoing and other issues may surface as the AIP moves forward. The goal of this initiative is to provide clear support for the AIP, deliver consistent messages concerning the importance of the AIP, and ensure open and clear communication exists in all LSSU policies and procedures.

### Developing Plans for Financial Improvement

Of equal importance to Lake Superior State University's Academic Improvement Plan is its plan for financial improvement. The University's financial situation has been a source of concern for a number of years. LSSU has been struggling with a structural deficit, eroding net assets, and low composite ratios. Even the University's Standard and Poor's bond rating has declined to BBB+. However, in the past two years, LSSU's financial status has seen improvement. The deficit has been lowered, net assets are eroding to a lesser extent, and the composite ratios have improved to an acceptable level. Standard & Poor's is currently reviewing the financial stability of the University and it is anticipated that LSSU's improved financial status will be reflected in its next report.

The financial plans for Lake Superior State University are encompassed in several documents and initiatives on campus including, but not limited to, the University's [Budget Development Guidelines](#), [Program Prioritization](#), [Master Plan](#), [Foundation Development Audit](#) and, most importantly, the evolving Strategic Plan. Lake Superior State University's financial plans will build on the University's conservative approach to budgeting and careful budget monitoring which has been instrumental in achieving its more recent positive financial trend. An example of conservative budgeting is that, in preparing the fiscal year 2010-11 budget, enrollment growth was budgeted flat ignoring indicators of slight potential growth. Although actual enrollment increased over 2%, operating expenditures were not increased accordingly. The resulting net increase in revenue was used to reduce the University's deficit.

The [Shared Governance structure](#) serves as the foundation for tying expenditures to strategic goals and objectives. The Shared Governance Strategic Planning and Budget Committee now reviews departmental baseline budget proposals and determines priorities for strategic initiatives. The budget process was incorporated into the Shared Governance structure in the 2011-12 budget plan. The next improvement to financial planning will include a process within the Strategic Plan to formalize tying strategic objectives to the budget. In addition, the Strategic Plan will include an action item to develop a Financial Plan which will bring all of the current successful practices and procedures together with future initiatives, such as prioritizing academic programs and developing a multi-year budget plan, in one comprehensive document.

A more immediate response to bolstering Lake Superior State University's lagging financial strength has been the University's increased allocations to deferred maintenance. In fiscal year 2011-12, in total an additional \$713,000 has been built into the general and auxiliary fund budgets. The amount spent on deferred maintenance and capital improvements has increased in the last two years and noticeable improvements have been made throughout the campus. The Financial Plan will include strategies to increase funding for deferred maintenance to more closely correlate with annual needs identified in the [Master Plan](#).



The most difficult financial aspect to control is the apparent erosion of net assets. In order to stop the erosion of net assets, capital projects or improvements should be, at a minimum, equal to annual depreciation. One could argue that recorded depreciation exceeds actual physical depreciation on a campus with so many historical buildings still in use. That argument aside, it would be difficult for any public university that has not had a capital appropriation from the State in over eight years to achieve growth in net assets. However, early in 2011, the State approved planning for a new School of Business for LSSU. The renovation/construction project will cost approximately \$11 million. This project will create desirable space for many programs across campus, as outlined in a recent space utilization study. In addition to the School of Business planning, extensive planning work has been undertaken for a new \$12 million Aquatic Research Laboratory which is expected to be built with a combination of Federal and private funds. These two capital projects, coupled with a committed \$5 million private donor-financed upgrade to the University's Norris Center, will improve LSSU's financial strength over the next several years.

The LSSU Foundation will be instrumental in the future financial success of the University and has numerous challenges as well as opportunities for improvement. The Foundation is in the early stages of implementing some of the many suggestions outlined in the [2010-11 Development Audit](#); these suggestions will provide direction for capital campaigns, annual fund campaigns, and general fundraising for the University.

In addition to improvements in its financial position, there has been an ongoing need for better financial reporting systems at Lake Superior State University. Currently, LSSU uses Banner, Banner Self-Service, Oracle Discoverer, and Excel for financial reporting, with less than desirable results. While the University's annual reporting is excellent, resulting in unqualified audits, there is a campus-wide need for regular, consistent information and data for a variety of purposes; this financial information must be made accessible to those who need it. In response to a recommendation from the University's auditors, LSSU will be purchasing a report writing software package such as Argos to meet these needs. Once the software is in place, the University will be able to develop customized reports, including budget reports for managers, various data-driven reports, and dashboards.

### Enrollment Services

Assessment of Enrollment Services' processes has included a variety of approaches. The approaches have included surveys, analysis of longitudinal data, focus groups, and benchmarking. Information gathered included primary survey data, benchmarking of best practices, primary operational data, and secondary research compiled by other organizations. Each of the four Enrollment Services areas (Admissions, Financial Aid, Office of Advising, Retention and Orientation, and Registrar) conducts its own analysis and also meets regularly to discuss cross-functional improvements. All the activities and processes are focused on delivering excellent service in support of Lake Superior State University's goal to increase recruitment and retention of students.

Two examples of improvements made in Enrollment Services, as a result of assessment and cross-functional discussions, are the establishment of regional recruiters in southeast and southwest Michigan and changes to Lake Superior State University's merit scholarship programs. Both changes were a result of benchmarking best practices and analyzing LSSU's current operations.



Analyzing recruitment gaps and trends, and using high school level longitudinal data, has aided the Admissions Office in identifying which high schools and regions it recruits from successfully. The Financial Aid Office gathers data from current students and also benchmarks best practices from other universities and national associations, enabling the office to improve its service to the campus community. In the Registrar's Office, improvement efforts are underway to automate degree audits for graduation, significantly improving the turnaround time for degree audit requests. In an effort to improve its service to transfer students, the Advising, Retention and Orientation Office will be reviewing data gathered by the Admissions Office. This review will evaluate services provided to transfer students during registration and orientation.

### Student Affairs

Just as Lake Superior State University's Enrollment Services is actively involved in improving service to students, so is Student Affairs. Student Affairs' commitment to improvement is based on assessment efforts and on-going interaction with students, faculty, and staff. The efforts of the eight offices within the division (Health Care Center, Food Services, Upward Bound, GEAR UP, Disability Services, Campus Life and Housing, Public Safety, and Counseling Services) are guided by the philosophy that staff should always be alert to ways they can expand their efforts to support the academic mission of the University.

The assessment and improvement tools used by Student Affairs include regularly scheduled surveys, forums with students, benchmarked surveys, staff meetings, and annual goal-setting discussions. Two of the divisions, the Health Care Center and Food Services, conduct surveys and reviews multiple times during the year. As a result of its assessment efforts, the Health Care Center has been able to provide improved billing information and access to health providers. The Center is currently assessing how best to expand the availability of its services. Assessment surveys and a review of scheduling and budget will provide insight about this issue.

Lake Superior State University's Food Services department, managed by an outside vendor, Sodexo, conducts multiple assessments during the year. Comment cards are reviewed and responded to daily; a food committee meets with students three times a semester; twice-yearly opinion surveys of resident and commuter dining area users are conducted; and an annual client review includes key members of the University and results in goals and activities being set for the upcoming year. A recent example of Food Services' response to student concerns has been the transition to a more environmentally-sustainable department. Student input has directed activities that include greater recycling and a move to trayless dining in Fall 2011.

Campus Life and Housing at Lake Superior State University is in the third year of utilizing a resident student assessment instrument, jointly developed by the Association of College and University Housing Officers – International and Educational Benchmarking Incorporated. The survey, conducted in late spring, encompasses housing operational issues, residence life issues, and campus life issues. In Summer 2011, Campus Life and Housing staff will be using the results from the surveys for training and activities to improve results for key predictors of overall program effectiveness. The Office of Public Safety will also be reviewing the survey results seeking ways to improve its service to the campus community.

Addressing deferred maintenance and targeting areas for improvement has been a major concern for Student Affairs. In response, the University established a restricted budget line item for renovation and repair in 2009-10



at 4% of room and board revenues. The intention is to target an additional 1% annual increase to the line until it equals 8%. In 2011-12, the revenue transfer will be 6%. Food Services and Campus Life and Housing are working with the Shared Governance's Infrastructure Committee to determine what projects should be undertaken as funds become available.

Surveying students in an effort towards continuous improvement is an activity also undertaken in Disability Services and Counseling Services. Both areas have implemented changes as a result of the feedback. For example, Disability Services has improved its accommodated-testing based on survey results, and Counseling Services has been able to evaluate its student usage and provision of direct service compared with national data. While responses to the Counseling Services survey were overwhelmingly positive, Counseling Services will, nonetheless, focus its attention on improving services such as personal and group counseling, training, and outreach in the upcoming year.

LSSU recognizes its need to formalize its commitment to a culture of diversity. [Dr. Gordon Nakagawa's report](#), referenced earlier, offers cogent suggestions in that regard. While the University can celebrate the many curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular activities the institution has provided, these efforts have not been centralized, nor supported by outstanding attendance. To begin to redress these shortcomings, the Diversity Committee will expand its membership to include six more faculty members. LSSU believes that active faculty participation is essential to supporting a strong culture of diversity on campus. Faculty participation might include leading discussions or designing classroom activities that encourage students to engage in the issues raised by the need to appreciate the role of diversity in a multi-cultural world.

The Diversity Committee will further promote an interest in diversity by creating a clear and succinct Diversity Statement for LSSU. Preliminary to the creation of Lake Superior State University's Statement of Diversity, a diversity audit and campus climate study will be conducted. With a statement to rally around, the Committee will be able to build on the 2005 Diversity Plan. Activities will include broad distribution and discussion of issues and the establishment of an annual review cycle of plan accomplishments.

### **LSSU is Distinctive: Summary**

Redefining the classroom by its continued focus on experiential learning opportunities makes Lake Superior State University distinctive. This focus allows LSSU to provide a rigorous education that highlights individual learning strategies and strong engagement in the education process. Experiential learning exposes LSSU's students to diverse learning experiences throughout their undergraduate education and prepares the students to meet the challenges of future employment and their role of responsible citizens. Expanded study abroad opportunities contribute to the students' ability to function well in an ever-changing society.

Another distinctive feature at LSSU is its strong and vital commitment to the local community, region, and beyond. As the anchor post-secondary educational institution in the Eastern Upper Peninsula, the University is accountable for providing services that benefit its constituencies; continued participation with these constituencies indicates that the University's services are both recognized and valued.



Accountability also relies on assessment of student learning and the integrity of University policies and procedures. The occasion of the self study has enabled LSSU to revitalize its efforts in this regard. New structures and practices are being instituted to achieve a centralized support system for campus-wide assessment. The [Academic Improvement Plan](#) (AIP) discusses these efforts in detail. Plans for financial improvements also support these new efforts.

The University has also recommitted itself to establish and support a culture of diversity on campus. The Diversity Committee is tasked with writing a Diversity Statement and then developing procedures and practices to bring about this goal.

The practice of self reflection enables the University to determine its strengths and challenges in carrying out its mission. The newly adopted Shared Governance structure resulted from such activity. Its deliberative process involves greater transparency and inclusiveness in decision making. In so doing, LSSU poises itself for the future as a thriving institution ready to address the challenges that the future will bring.

### STRENGTHS

- LSSU's unambiguous mission offers an academically rigorous education in a redefined classroom setting for its students.
- LSSU has increased its resources for Study Abroad activities.
- LSSU has developed future planning documents that outline a comprehensive Academic Improvement Plan and a clear Financial Plan.
- LSSU has a strong commitment to working with integrity, to being self-reflective, and to remaining accountable to its constituencies.
- Despite financial challenges, LSSU has demonstrated a commitment to addressing deferred maintenance.

### CHALLENGES

- LSSU needs to enhance the institution's commitment to diversity, beginning by developing a Statement of Diversity and empowering the Diversity Committee to formulate a centralized structure for implementing the University's commitment.
- LSSU needs to improve campus support for the University's efforts to create a culture of diversity.
- LSSU needs to enhance and extend a culture of assessment across campus and in every program.
- LSSU needs to develop a strategic plan that is practical, measurable and has campus-wide support.



Lake Superior State University is proud of its many accomplishments during its first 45 years of existence and, despite the challenging decade it has just come through and the challenges that remain in the decade to come, it is optimistic about its future.

This self study process has offered LSSU an opportunity to step back and examine itself through a prism that split the University body into its constituent parts. The perspectives yielded have been, at times, disconcerting, sometimes even painful, but ultimately extraordinarily useful.

The self study has given the University an opportunity to feel a justifiable pride in what it can report about its many community collaborations (social, scientific, artistic, and environmental collaborations), as well as its commitment to creating experiential learning for its students, a learning that perhaps articulates itself most notably in the awards won by our students, the research published by our students, the creative work of our students, and much more. In addition, the University is proud of the work of its faculty and staff: their commitment to their students, to their region, to their research and scholarship, and to their creative work.

Lake Superior State University has conducted its self study in a spirit that honestly examines the University's mission, programs, processes, and facilities. The institution believes that this process has revealed a Future-Oriented, Learning-Focused, Connected, and Distinctive organization.

The self study process has also given the University the opportunity to define and begin to address what are its most pressing challenges; these are perhaps seen most starkly in the need for stronger strategic planning and budgeting, stronger university-wide assessment plans, and stronger plans for developing a culture of diversity.

This Self Study outlines strategies already undertaken for addressing these challenges as well as plans for strengthening areas listed as additional challenges at the end of each chapter. The LSSU community recognizes that meeting these challenges will require ongoing and open communication among all stakeholders as well as a great deal of work. We are ready to address these issues and look forward to the resulting outcomes.



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