

### *Looking Back to 2000-2001*

Drury University received full continued accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission during the 2000-2001 academic year. The two year process that led up to the site visit in September 2000 was, by nearly every measure, tremendously successful. The conclusions of the site visit report are summarized below:

#### **Strengths**

- Support services and resources to ensure the success of day school students are comprehensive, well utilized, and appear to be effective.
- The University enjoys a strong culture of mutual respect and close collaboration between faculty and students, between faculty and administration, and among all the constituencies of the University community.
- Collegiality and morale among students, faculty, and staff at Drury University are excellent. The University community as a whole is strongly committed to institutional mission and goals.
- Drury University has made great progress in technological services and computing. Registration and records modules are upgraded, functioning well, and about to be updated again. Students, faculty, and staff have access to computing resources.
- Assessment has become a priority across Drury University. Assessment procedures are in place and increasingly incorporated into review and planning processes.
- Drury University's commitment to the integration of liberal arts with all professional and liberal disciplines is pervasive and strong throughout the University, and its recently implemented, interdisciplinary general education curriculum is well conceived and shows early signs of success.
- An unusually strong and committed adjunct faculty core supports the University.
- The strength of the University's leadership is remarkable and is widely recognized on and off campus, as is the admirably and uncommonly long tenure of those in the chief leadership positions.
- Drury's physical plant is maintained at an enviably high level; and this is more noteworthy given the age of many of the University's buildings and the relatively small size of the staff of those responsible for maintaining the University's buildings and grounds.
- The University is fortunate to have a Board of Trustees whose members are committed to Drury, knowledgeable about all aspects of the University, wisely aware of the need to grant freedom to the University's administrative leadership to manage Drury, and deeply appreciative of all of the University's administration, faculty, and staff are doing to improve the quality of a Drury education.
- The University has a documented history of sound fiscal management, which continues to characterize the institution.

#### **Areas of Concern**

- Support services and resources to ensure success are not easily accessible to students in the evening college or at off-site locations.
- The time of faculty, staff, and administration at Drury University is extended to the limit. Institutional goals of increased enrollment, stable (or slightly increasing) student/faculty

- ratio, an ambitious curriculum, more graduate programs, and increased faculty research might exceed current available time of faculty, staff, and administration.
- The University's reliance on its adjunct faculty in the evening programs is approaching a level that concerns faculty and administration. This concern extends to the University's employment practices relating to adjunct faculty as well as the cohesion of academic programs that are offered in the evening.
  - There is unevenness on behalf of the Drury faculty in the oversight both of the curriculum of the College of Graduate and Continuing Studies and also in the selection and evaluation of the adjunct faculty who play so prominent a role in teaching this curriculum.
  - While the presence of a significant number of international students has added greatly to the diversity of the Drury student body, the absence of diversity among the University's faculty, administration, staff, and Board of Trustees remains a concern.

### **Advice and Suggestions**

- Drury's remarkably effective administrative leadership has served the University with such continuity over the past two decades that it has been some time since Drury faced the need to contemplate a future with different leadership. We recommend that the University take steps soon to plan for Drury's future leadership.
- Central to the aims of the University is meeting the career and intellectual needs of adults in the Southwest Missouri area through the offerings of the College of Graduate and Continuing Studies. Even though the University has considered recently the possible reorganization of the academic division, we recommend that this issue be revisited with concern for the role of the Dean of the College of Graduate and Continuing Studies.
- Owing to the very lean operation of the University and the resultant heavy loads that many in the University community support, many infrastructure systems of the University have not been documented but remain in the minds and memories of those who administer the systems. The University, however, is approaching a size and complexity where the infrastructure will need to be backed up by documented systems. We recommend that the University give attention to backing up its systems with documentation that will support and assure smooth and reliable operation.