

**Report to the Faculty, Administration, Trustees, and Students
of**

American University

Washington, District of Columbia

By

**The Evaluation Team representing the
Middle States Commission on Higher Education**

**Prepared after review of the Self Study Report and a team
visit to the campus on March 23-26, 2014**

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Section I. Context and Nature of the Visit

A. Institutional Overview

American University (AU) is a private doctoral research university located in Washington, D.C. It was chartered by Congress in 1893 as a graduate institution to train and support public servants, and was founded under the auspices of the United Methodist Church; it began offering undergraduate education in 1925. Today AU has seven schools/colleges: Arts & Sciences, Communication, Public Affairs, International Service, Business (the Kogod School), Law (Washington College of Law), and Professional and Extended Studies. American’s mission has remained true to its roots and is expressed in its “Statement of Common Purpose,” which identifies its distinctiveness as a university that turns ideas into action, and action into service, by emphasizing the arts & sciences and connecting them to issues of contemporary public affairs writ large (government, communication, business, law, international service).

The University developed a strong and ambitious strategic plan in 2008 under the direction of its relatively new president, Neil Kerwin. The plan, “American University in the Next Decade: Leadership for a Changing World,” was developed through very broad consultation and is a living document that is assessed and updated annually. Through strong leadership from President Kerwin and Provost Bass, and with broad support, AU has undergone substantial change consistent with the Plan and in response to both the changing world and emerging opportunity. Key initiatives have been undertaken—and progress realized—in areas including reformed and more transparent governance processes, the culture of assessment, the size and composition of the faculty, greater expectations for and support of faculty scholarship, and diversity of the undergraduate student body, and these have changed American University in important ways.

Given the central role of the strategic plan and the relatively fundamental changes that have occurred at AU, the University chose to use the Middle States decennial accreditation process as an opportunity to take stock and obtain external perspectives of the progress made and the choice points facing the University and higher education more broadly. As such, the review is a comprehensive one, with standards grouped functionally as is our evaluation in the narrative presented in Sections IV and V.

B. Scope of Institution at the Time of the Evaluation

- i. **Degree Levels:** Postsecondary Certificate, Associate’s, Bachelor’s, Post-Baccalaureate Certificate, Master’s, Doctor’s—Professional Practice, Doctor’s—Research/Scholarship
- ii. **Branch Campuses:** None
- iii. **Active Additional Locations:** Freddie Mac, McLean, VA (see Section V.6 for a report)
- iv. **Distance Learning:** Yes
- v. **Self Study Process and Report**

The self study was shaped by the implementation of the University’s strategic plan, launched in 2008 but updated regularly and actively used as guidance for strategic decisions. The self-study process, taking the plan as its point of departure, was very

inclusive of all American University constituencies. The Self Study Steering Committee and its working groups held numerous meetings on campus in assembling their reports. The institution opted for a comprehensive review given the significant transformations that have occurred over the past five years.

Section II. Affirmation of Continued Compliance with Requirements of Affiliation

Based on a review of the self-study report, interviews, the certification statement supplied by the institution, and a review of other institutional documents, the team affirms that the institution continues to meet the requirements of affiliation in “Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education.”

Section III. Compliance with Federal Requirements; Issues Relative to State Regulatory or Other Accrediting Agency Requirements

Based on the separate verification of compliance with accreditation-relevant provisions of the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 and, as necessary, review of the self-study, certification by the institution, other institutional documents, and/or interviews, the team affirms that the institution meets all relevant and state regulations and the requirements of other Department of Education-recognized accreditors.

Section IV. Evaluation Overview

Given the major transformations that have transpired at American, the University elected to have a comprehensive accreditation review. The site visit team organized its review and evaluation to match the structure of the Self Study, in which the Middle States Standards were grouped as follows:

- 1. Advancing and Supporting the Mission of American University** (Standards 1, 2, 3, 7)
- 2. Leadership, Shared Governance, and Administration** (Standards 4, 5)
- 3. Faculty** (Standard 10)
- 4. Admitting, Supporting, and Retaining Undergraduates** (Standards 8,9)
- 5. Undergraduate Education** (Standards 11, 12, 14)
- 6. Graduate and Professional Education** (Standards 8, 11, 14)
- 7. Other Educational Initiatives** (Standard 13)

Section V is organized around these seven chapters and contains the explicit statement of compliance. In what follows in this section and the next, **Accomplishments**, **Suggestions**, and **Recommendations** are bolded and designated with **[A]**, **[S]**, and **[R]**, respectively.

American University—inclusive of its trustees, administrative leadership, faculty, staff, students, and alumni—has been deeply engaged in a transformation exercise since 2008. The institution’s “Statement of Common Purpose” remains the same, as does its fundamental nature as a research university with a strong leaning toward the social sciences and related professional programs, and in its focus on

providing a high-touch, high-impact experience for its students. Almost everything else about the University has changed based upon the ambitions of the leadership, a living strategic plan deeply rooted in AU's values and realities, widespread benchmarking, the willingness of the faculty and staff to assess their programs and activities and then modify them, and a healthy dose of creativity. Overall, the transformation exercise has been an extremely successful one, with stronger board governance, an exceptional leadership team including many new deans, a larger and demonstrably stronger faculty, a transparent and widely supported change in the mix of faculty, greater support for research-active faculty, a more diverse undergraduate student body that is now reflective of the values of the institution and more consistent with the demographic future of the nation. **The entire American University community is to be commended for its efforts and its success; American University is stronger, more vibrant, more relevant, and better positioned as a result of what has transpired over the past six years. [A1]**

The changes at AU have been significant and rapid, especially relative to the usual pace in higher education. Some of the changes are substantive enough that the institution must be particularly attentive to their sustainability and to unforeseen deleterious consequences, some of which can play out over a longer period of time than expected. The ultimate success of the "new" American University requires strong monitoring, assessment, and evaluation in several key areas and we therefore make the following three recommendations:

- **In light of the changing demographics of the undergraduate student body, the University as a whole—inclusive of Campus Life, Academic Affairs, Enrollment Services, schools and colleges, and business units— should carefully consider how best to support the more diverse student body and ensure that its engagement in AU's special opportunities, sense of belonging, degree of satisfaction, and retention and graduation rates is carefully monitored and regularly assessed. [R1]**
- **The increased investment in the Scholar-Teacher ideal brings with it greater expectations for scholarly impact and, as a result, the University should establish clear goals and detailed assessment protocols at the individual and the unit levels to ensure that the University's expectations are being realized. [R2]**
- **The aggressive move to a new mix of tenure-line and term faculty also bears attention and careful tracking both for long-serving faculty and those who will enter American University under this new paradigm. AU should monitor the evolving faculty perceptions and degree of satisfaction in this new environment and make adjustments in the model as necessary over time. [R3]**

AU's reward for its hard work and its accomplishments is simply more of the same. American University is more agile now than ever before. It needs to be still more agile. American is more entrepreneurial now than ever before. It needs to be still more entrepreneurial. American is more interdisciplinary now than ever before. It needs to be still more interdisciplinary. The world in which we live and the higher-

education sector are both increasing their rate of change, and American must continue to plan carefully and act boldly. The University is very well-positioned to do so successfully and, as it does, it is encouraged to continue to innovate by fully unleashing the entrepreneurial spirit of its administrators, faculty, and staff. This is particularly important in areas that can increase and diversify revenue while also enhancing AU visibility, including:

- Advancement/development, where greater investment and broader buy-in will be critical in the decades ahead;
- Professional graduate and executive education, where a more intentional approach that blends central coordination, local planning and execution, and appropriate incentives can provide both revenue opportunities and greater exposure for AU’s distinctive academic strengths; and
- Science-driven sponsored research, where an evolving “science and policy” strategy can increase externally sponsored research and enhance visibility in key areas (see Section V.7 and [S7]).

The Middle States visiting team has been uniformly impressed by the integrity with which American University conducts its business and, as an example, with the manner in which trustees, administrators, faculty, and staff have conducted themselves during this Middle States decennial review process. It is well-known that major ethical lapses in the (previous) president’s office were discovered shortly after the last decennial accreditation review. All reports of the response of the institution at the time are exemplary, especially the actions of the Board of Trustees and the then-newly appointed interim president. The lessons from this traumatic event seem to be deeply ingrained in the fabric of American University today and the restructuring of the Board of Trustees and their embrace of a more active and transparent fiduciary role have set the tone for expectations of all members of the community to conduct themselves with integrity. There is no evidence of any lapses in institutional integrity at AU; rather, there is significant evidence to the contrary, that AU has strong values and high integrity: in its recruiting of students, in its treatment of faculty and staff, in ensuring that all members of the University community have a voice in key planning exercises, and in its internal and external reporting.

Section V. Compliance with Accreditation Standards

In the team’s judgment, the institution appears to meet Standards 1-14. Evidence and findings for each standard, grouped by chapter as done in American University’s Self-Study Report, are provided below, as are **accomplishments, suggestions, and recommendations**. Comments on Standard 6 (Integrity) are offered above in Section IV.

1. Advancing and Supporting the Mission of American University

Standard 1: Mission and Goals

Standard 2: Planning, Resource Allocation, Institutional Renewal

Standard 3: Institutional Resources

Standard 7: Institutional Assessment

Since the period of the Board of Trustees governance reform in 2005-2006, American University has been engaged in a period of concentrated self-examination and institutional assessment in the broadest sense. The Strategic Plan, initiated by newly inaugurated President Kerwin in 2007 and approved in 2008, was one of several initiatives designed to better articulate institutional goals and the standards against which American University would measure itself. Over the next several years, American University rewrote the faculty manual, overhauled and streamlined academic policies, revised tenure and promotion guidelines, hired approximately half of the current faculty, and implemented forward looking interdisciplinary initiatives through the AU2030 process. This impressive investment in institutional improvement was accomplished while maintaining the University's financial health. Indeed, AU's credit rating, a sign of financial strength, was upgraded by Moody's to A1 in the midst of this progressive reconfiguration and during a period in which the global economic crisis and its aftermath had negative consequences for many institutions. The current leadership team has not allowed the institution's uniqueness to be a roadblock to benchmarking endeavors. In identifying itself as a "college-centered research university," American University seeks to better understand its position and its peer set within the landscape of higher education.

Given the numerous changes in processes, programs, and leadership within the University; dynamic market conditions; and lingering softness in the economy, it is especially appropriate that American considers the strategic plan as a "living document" to be refreshed on a biennial basis. American University's constituencies seem to have good familiarity with the strategic plan, and are involved in thinking about how to bring goals into fruition. The fact that strategic plan objectives are incorporated into the budget is noted and appreciated by campus constituencies. **American University's strategic plan has penetrated all levels of the University to a remarkable degree. [A2]**

The University has adequate financial resources to support its programs. The operating budget and reserves are important components of its financial underpinnings. Endowment performance has been good over the past decade, and the University targets transfers from operations into quasi endowment annually.

American University is characterized by sound financial management. The University has in place relevant management staff and financial controls, and no material weaknesses have been noted in recent external audit management letters. There is an ongoing track record of positive operating margins, which has enabled the University to transfer an amount equal to 1-2% to quasi endowment annually. Budgets are developed conservatively with several categories of "safety" contingencies, which mitigate risk of short-term budget shortfalls. The institution has been able to accumulate reserves which also provide stabilization funds.

The University's facilities planning is guided by a Master Plan. A multi-year capital plan encompasses projects to expand and renew facilities. AU is in the midst of a program in which academic spaces are being renovated and/or replaced. Funds are allocated annually for facilities renewal (deferred maintenance), and a program to renovate residence halls has been undertaken over a ten-year period. It is widely understood that Instructional science laboratories are in need of upgrading. **Additional needs**

in the facilities domain are recognized by the University and remain to be funded. This points to the need for careful prioritization and focus on fundraising. [S1]

The budget process is well understood, and resource allocation is aligned with the strategic plan. The process is transparent with opportunities for constituent input at many levels. Careful budget management has enabled the University to provide seed funding for new initiatives and other priorities identified in the strategic plan. Allocations of funds in support of strategic plan objectives are clearly delineated in the president's budget message document.

The culture of American University is clearly data-driven, and this is evidenced at many layers of the institution. As one member of the American staff described, "Nothing is done without data." The President and the Provost are both eager consumers of data and regularly initiate important conversations with their reports based on key performance indicators. Much of their information is supplied to them by the highly effective and efficient office of Institutional Research and Assessment, which also provides information to other academic leaders in the units, and works directly with individual faculty members to support the assessment of student learning outcomes. **The Office of Institutional Research and Assessment performs an extraordinary service to American, delivering information to many constituencies across the campus with sophistication, nuance, and a high degree of efficiency. [A3]** The data-driven culture at AU is further enabled by long-standing, widely used, and functional data reporting systems. A nascent business intelligence (BI) reporting system holds some promise to extend and enhance the use of data by diverse decision-makers across campus, though it may be important to scale and direct the BI effort such that it is clearly focused on the most relevant information needed for effective planning and to inform key operational decisions.

The experience of American University over the last decade is testimony to the fact that an investment by the leadership in planning and process improvement yields real fruit in academic quality and the delivery of the academic mission of the University. [A4]

While American University's dependency on tuition for revenue meant that American did not feel a keen impact from the market declines in 2008-2009, such a high degree of tuition dependency ultimately limits American University's reach. It is appropriate that the University identified revenue diversification as a key strategic objective and has made some modest progress in that area. Alumni giving has increased, and research funding seems to be edging in the right direction. That said, both the development and research areas of the University have historically underperformed, and recent progress has been incremental rather than transformative.

As AU seeks to diversify its sources and as it succeeds in its ascendancy as a research institution, the endowment will play an increasingly important role. **As a precondition of endowment growth, the development function should become an institutional priority and become more fully integrated into the fabric of the University. [S2]** A strategy of leveraging an entrepreneurial faculty and their academic leadership in the advancement effort should be encouraged.

The University should continuously evaluate its resource allocation processes to ensure that there are appropriate incentives for the academic units to engage in the kinds of entrepreneurial activity that will advance programmatic goals and help increase revenue diversity. [S3]

As the University continues to evolve, care must be given to ensure that the nature and quality of support services are appropriate to the new environment. [S4]

2. Leadership, Shared Governance, and Administration

Standard 4: Leadership and Governance

Standard 5: Administration

Following the presidential transition in 2005-2006, AU revised its governance structure to be more “effective, transparent and participatory.” [A5] A comprehensive review took place facilitated by a representative of the Association of Governing Boards (AGB). As a result, the University’s system of governance is now well defined through its by-laws, organization chart, academic regulations, and faculty manual and is transparent and participatory through its practices of communication and committee structures. A revitalized board, supported by new leadership in the appointments of President Kerwin and Provost Bass, has refocused on its fiduciary responsibility and has enhanced its engagement with the campus community. The board, the president, and the provost are leading American University to a higher level of quality and recognition as a college-centered research university. **To ensure continued board renewal, it should consider instituting term limits. [S5]**

The Board’s committee structure is comprehensive and robust. A member of the president’s cabinet is assigned as a resource person for each committee with additional staff serving as needed. Student representation and attendance has been encouraged. The Board Statement of Commitment and Responsibilities makes clear AU’s expectations of board members and a conflict of interest policy elaborates on these expectations.

Representatives from the deans, the Faculty Senate, the Student Government, the Graduate Leadership Council, the Alumni Association, the Staff Council, and the Student Bar Association serve as resources on board committees in addition to the two faculty members and one student who serve as non-voting members of the board. **The broad representation of University constituencies in governance contributes to a campus culture of commitment to AU’s advancement in quality and reputation. [A6]**

In 2012, continuing its commitment to assess its effectiveness periodically, the Board conducted a comprehensive self-evaluation with the assistance of the AGB, which resulted in a list of proposed improvements in structure and trustee engagement, to have board and committee meetings focus more on strategic rather than operational issues, and for moving to a higher level of board performance. The Trusteeship Committee has been following up on the recommendations to ensure they are being addressed. The comprehensive self-evaluation is scheduled to take place every five years while annual evaluation of individual trustees continues.

The Board is concerned with its own diversity in terms of experience, age, gender, race, ethnicity, comfort with technology, and geographic representation related to the University's changing sources of students. The Trusteeship committee is responsible for orienting new trustees which it does through a voluntary mentoring system and assistance from the president's cabinet. The Board also works with the president and cabinet on succession planning with a current focus on reviewing the responsibilities of the CFO position and filling that vacancy.

The Board carried out a comprehensive assessment of the president's performance in 2010 and this is planned every five years in connection with the renewal of the president's contract. Interim reviews are carried out annually. Internal and external auditing activities and processes have been enhanced including a quarterly audit of the president's expenses.

The openness and transparency of governance at AU has been carried forward consistently under the leadership of President Kerwin since he took office. [A7] As part of the Board's initiative to be more engaged with the campus, trustees interact more regularly with the faculty and staff and are noticeable in their attendance at campus events. The deans and academic leadership express confidence in the President and Provost and value the role of the Faculty Senate, which seems highly effective.

The new leadership and leadership team combines those with institutional knowledge and new hires who bring fresh outside perspectives. They have led institutional renewal through a new strategic plan, developed through an open and participatory process, and its subsequent implementation, including special projects such as AU2030 and the Facilities Master Plan.

A revamped Performance Management Program for staff was introduced in fall 2012 to be phased-in over a couple of years. The objective of the program is to link more effectively annual performance review with achievement of strategic plan objectives. Innovations in 2012 included performance goal setting taking into account three levels of staff and a competency dictionary. The matrix of core and job competencies across the three staff levels provides a clear and transparent structure that is consistent across the University. Staff development and training are being enhanced with the support of the information technology area and staff feel engaged in the advancement of the University. Staff turnover has been reduced from 29% to 16% in the past three years. **The University should continue to track staff turnover and monitor the effectiveness of the revised annual staff performance review process. [S6]**

3. Faculty

Standard 10: Faculty

President Kerwin is an AU alumnus, a lifelong faculty member, and the former provost; he has worked diligently with Provost Bass and other senior leaders to grow the size and productivity of the faculty and better position them to conduct scholarship and achieve teaching excellence that can in turn increase the ranking, visibility, and impact of the University. Since his arrival, the Provost—an experienced and respected academic leader—has worked with the President, deans, and faculty to spearhead the

articulation and implementation of a variety of policies and initiatives that are consistent with the strategic plan and have led to real transformation. This process has been marked by open and transparent dialog, shared governance, and consensus building. It has also been aided by a restructuring of the Office of Academic Affairs, which now includes a number of [new] vice provosts with specific areas of responsibility: academic affairs (led by the senior vice provost and dean of faculty), undergraduate studies, undergraduate enrollment, and graduate studies and research.

The full-time faculty cohort is comprised of 495 tenure-line and 353 term faculty, a total increase of 31% since 2008 (+16% tenure-line, +58% term). The University's presence in Washington provides an invaluable source of term faculty and adjunct professionals from the government and the corporate sectors, who add considerably to the experiential and "real-life" learning for the students. Most, but not all, of AU's adjuncts are now represented by SEIU.

The overarching tasks pursued at AU have been to advance the faculty toward the "scholar-teacher ideal," enhance the infrastructure for supporting and promoting high-impact faculty scholarship and teaching excellence, and focus faculty hiring on strategic goals including diversity objectives and cross-unit coherence. The effort encapsulated in Project AU2030 to advance AU's research and academic programs by identifying emerging interdisciplinary areas and incentivizing faculty hiring has positioned AU well to hire leading faculty and increase the relevance of their efforts nationally and internationally. While it is projected that such new faculty hiring will be carried forward at a slower rate than the past five years, the philosophy of interdisciplinary hiring and building critical mass around strategic University priorities seems to have taken root. The provost and his staff will need to carefully track the success of AU2030 so that adjustments can be made as necessary to ensure the vision is achieved.

In the effort to strive for the scholar-teacher ideal, the institution has raised expectations for faculty with respect to high-impact scholarship, creative work, external funding, and teaching excellence. The newly adopted reduction in teaching load for research-active faculty has been central in providing additional time for scholarship and the development of funded programs, as well as serving as a visible and meaningful signal of the institution's commitment to and expectations of the faculty. The reduced teaching load was made possible through an increased allocation of courses to term faculty—hired almost exclusively for teaching and service purposes—and their number has grown substantially. The term faculty members appear to be highly valued by the administration, the tenure-line faculty, and the students, and their overall integration into the University and its faculty is a national model.

While the quality of teaching and learning is addressed in two other sections in this report, namely the undergraduate and graduate education sections, it is worth noting here that the enhanced approach to hybrid teaching, development of learning outcomes and assessment tools tailored to specific disciplines, the revamping of the honors program, a revised and robust general education program, and undergraduate research mentorship are some of the major outcomes of the teaching reduction and higher faculty engagement in curricular reforms. Another outcome of the teaching load reduction appears to be an increase in annual R&D funding, with AU's ranking moving from 376 nationally in 2003 to 204 in 2011.

The adaptability of some of the senior tenured faculty to new high-impact, high-productivity scholarship expectations has been challenging, and this might be addressed by giving them one-time course reductions or other support to enable them to enhance their teaching effectiveness or to contribute more deeply in service as part of key University initiatives. AU has used Academic Analytics since 2008 as one way to evaluate faculty scholarly productivity, and the deans and administration are striving to ensure that all departments and programs have strong bases and metrics for faculty evaluation.

The collaborative development—including faculty, the administration, and trustees—and adoption of the new Faculty Manual by the Faculty Senate (2010 & 2011) that codifies among many topics the tenure and promotion protocols for both tenure-line and term faculty, is commendable. [A8]

The average teaching load, reduced from five to four courses for all tenure-track faculty and for tenured faculty active in research, is a milestone to allow more time for higher impact scholarship; [A9]

The American University Board of Trustees has remained committed to ensuring that faculty salary is commensurate with the AAUP-1 level for private non-unionized universities. The administration also tracks and compares AU salaries by faculty rank with a number of select private benchmark universities without medical or engineering schools. The average FT faculty salary has progressed despite the financial challenges faced by the nation since 2008. Faculty salary (Fall 2012) is among the highest in the group of benchmark institutions reported, up to 12% higher in certain disciplines and ranks when compared to the benchmark or AAUP-1 level. The Faculty Senate Budget and Benefits Committee engages regularly with the administration to discuss salary and benefits matters and discuss other faculty concerns. The current 2014-15 budget cycle has reserved a 2.5% merit pool for faculty raises. Special budget funds are also earmarked to address market-driven compensations for adjuncts, term faculty, and promotion increases.

Overall faculty satisfaction is rising, as illustrated by a 44% response rate to a recent faculty satisfaction survey compared to the prior rate of 29% and the actual job satisfaction, which has increased from 69% to 78% in recent years.

Whereas the leadership is cognizant of, and committed to, recruiting, nurturing and retaining a diverse faculty body that mirrors the increasingly diverse student population, this remains a work in progress, but one to which there is a deep commitment. For instance, the University hosted a faculty retreat three hours away in Fall 2012, where more than 300 faculty participated voluntarily to discuss diversity and devise ways to enhance inclusion. This was followed up by a January 2013 conference on the same subject. A range of diversity objectives intended to attract, nurture and retain a diverse faculty body is a strategic emphasis in faculty searches.

The changes in the composition of the faculty, the increased level of support made available to them, and enhanced expectations for their scholarly impact are all highly significant and lead to the two overarching **recommendations on the faculty** presented in Section IV, [R2] and [R3].

4. Admitting, Supporting, and Retaining Undergraduates

Standard 8: Student Admissions and Retention (undergraduate)

Standard 9: Student Support Services (undergraduate)

Enrollment Services and Student Support Services appear to provide a good, standard menu of programs and services organized to meet the needs of the students of American University. AU made clear in their Self-Study Report that they chose to highlight and emphasize *a selection* of offices and services that work with students, and the measures they take to support their success.

There is evidence of basic planning and assessment activity taking place in key enrollment and student support areas, most specifically through (a) the Undergraduate Marketing and Enrollment Task Force (UMET) and the final 2012 report it released entitled “*Creating a Culture of Inclusivity*”, (b) the development of annual reports in each area, and (c) the administration of surveys designed to obtain student feedback and outcomes data, ranging from the Campus Climate Survey to the National Survey on Student Engagement (NSSE). A review of the Campus Climate Survey results from May 2013 offers evidence of basic utilization and satisfaction assessment with campus services and other areas of the University. A review of the NSSE survey results provides evidence of the following outcomes relative to the campus environment: (1) the campus environment provides the support students need to help them succeed academically (Quite a Bit & Very Much): freshmen response: 86%, senior response: 75%; (2) the campus environment provides the support students need to strive socially (Quite a Bit & Very Much): freshmen response: 45%, senior response: 33%. While these scores appear modest relative to benchmarks, the site visit revealed the presence of a staff committed to progress. The enrollment section of Chapter 5 notes mission-related progress in the recruitment and enrollment of increasing numbers of *underrepresented students of color* (7.9% in fall 2008 to 18% in fall 2013), and Pell eligible students (7.7% in fall 2008 to 19% in fall 2013), all of which seems to flow from the well done analysis, decisions and recommendations provided by the Undergraduate Marketing and Enrollment Task Force. **AU is to be commended for the great and purposeful progress they have made in the recruitment and enrollment of increasing numbers of underrepresented students of color and Pell-eligible students.** [A10] Results are also noted in the area of transfer recruitment, and the recruitment of students from distant markets, notably southern and western markets in response to changing demographics.

While it is clear that many of the traditional student support services are made available to American University students, and that there are assessment initiatives underway in some of these areas, what is less evident is: (1) a sustained program of assessment across all areas of enrollment and student support services that is focused on obtaining more specific outcomes data related to student satisfaction and the effectiveness of services and programs in meeting student needs, and (2) a more general visibility of certain key areas of student support services that are important to student success and satisfaction. A third observation that was highlighted in Chapter 5 of the self-study report and recommendations merits emphasis here: the increased pressure on all support areas for at-risk populations given their now larger representation at AU.

On the first point: while it is not evident in the Self-Study that a broad-based culture of assessment has been developed within all of the different administrative areas of enrollment or student support services, discussion with the administrative leaders on campus gives confidence in their quality and indicates that there is emphasis and activity taking place in the assessment arena. Related to the first observation, the second point reflects the disparity between the questions posed for the community as part of the self-study design and the fact that roughly 50% of the student support services offered by AU were not addressed in the self-study report itself, including key areas such as student activities, athletics and performing arts. Certainly, these areas can make important mission-related contributions to student learning, quality of life, satisfaction, and retention. The self-study omissions raise the question as to the level of emphasis and attention given to these areas by the institution and the level of support they receive in the institutional planning process, and without prejudice, the team simply notes here the critical role they play at American and the quality with which they are being delivered.

Finally, the self-study notes the changing demographic make-up of the student body, while at the same time offering several observations related to retention pressures and the identification and support of at-risk students. The enrollment metrics and retention figures cited in the report are solid, but the latter are beginning to show signs of slight deterioration that will require focused monitoring and support. In wide-ranging discussion with staff and students, it appears that there could be a number of underlying variables contributing to these trends, including but not limited to the following: (1) student financial challenges; (2) uneven academic advising that is decentralized and that might benefit from greater coordination; (3) various initiatives that seek to identify early warning signs for at-risk students that do not 'feel' coordinated to students; and (4) service-intensive needs of a changing population and a growing residential one. Indeed, the students we met with uniformly cited financial challenges and financial aid as the number one reason that students leave American, and they frequently emphasized the unevenness of decentralized academic advising as a concern. The students were very complimentary of the Campus Life staff and units, noting the responsiveness of these areas and their willingness to listen to their concerns and take them seriously. They were less complimentary of other areas of the University in this respect. Staff noted the need for greater coordination among the various initiatives that seek to identify at-risk students, and there was general recognition of the intense service demands presented by a changing student population that will become increasing residential. It seems that there is work to be done to ensure that the institution will be able to meet these demands.

Accordingly, and in line with the recommendations made in Section IV [R1], American will need to: **(1)** plan appropriately for the intense student service, campus life, and infrastructure demands that will continue to be presented by a changing student population that will become increasing residential in the coming years, and **(2)** provide stronger institutional support for and commitment to the facilitation and creation of a culture of assessment in the enrollment and campus life areas, the overarching goal of which should be to obtain more specific outcomes data related to the effectiveness of programs in supporting student success, satisfaction, retention and achievement, as well as supporting and advancing the mission of American University.

As American continues with the commendable progress made on the recruitment of underrepresented students and students from distant markets, both of which are strategies that are responsive to

changing demographics and market conditions, they are also encouraged to pay careful attention to the underlying retention trends and the issues that may be contributing to these. We encourage the identification and monitoring of the contributing issues and then action to address them accordingly. This includes the vigilant pursuit of their own recommendations cited in this chapter of their self-study, specifically the affordability issue and the use of financial aid in the recruitment and retention process, and the identification and support of at-risk student populations.

5. Undergraduate Education

Standard 11: Educational Offerings (undergraduate)

Standard 12: General Education

Standard 14: Assessment of Student Learning

Chapter 6 of the Self-Study, “Undergraduate Education,” covers general education programs, “high impact” co-curricular educational programs (internships, study abroad, etc.), and support for assessment and learning outcomes. These aspects of undergraduate education have been developed to be seamlessly coordinated and provide an unusually comprehensive and carefully-monitored learning experience for students at American University.

The **General Education** program (GenEd) follows the historical five-area distribution that reflects and helps to shape benchmarked undergraduate curricula across the U.S. It focuses on creative arts, traditions that shape the Western World, global and cross-cultural perspectives, natural sciences, and humanities. Students must successfully complete ten courses from a large number offered under the GenEd designation, two from each area. In revisiting General Education in the context of the entire undergraduate experience, the American University faculty followed the advice offered as part of the Association of American Colleges & Universities’ (AAC&U) LEAP initiative (Liberal Education and America’s Promise), the nationally recognized undergraduate revitalization program that also guided AU’s work on “high-impact” educational opportunities. Envisioning the GenEd program in the context of LEAP, the faculty followed the suggestion that advocates for a “common intellectual experience that includes a set of common courses or vertically organized general education program that includes advanced integrative studies and/or required participation in a learning community.”

Once the outlines of GenEd were in place, AU developed eight learning outcomes for the program. Assessment centers on these outcomes, that when achieved provide students with “intellectual skills and resources that help you to understand the complex dynamics of an increasingly connected global environment” (as described on the Provost’s website). The expectations for undergraduate learning outcomes include the successful development of aesthetic sensibilities, communication skills, critical inquiry, diverse perspectives and experiences, innovative thinking, ethical reasoning, information literacy, and quantitative literacy. Course-based assessment of these outcomes are enhanced and enriched by correlation with the assessment of student involvement in co-curricular “high impact” programs (see below) in which nearly all undergraduates participate.

To provide entering students with an overview of what they should expect at AU, the faculty in GenEd have authorized the creation of a website highlighting specific information that a student needs to know before entering the program and why it will be central to his or her educational experience at American University. This electronic resource is supported in print by an impressive GenEd booklet. On the website, the five GenEd areas are separately and fully explored with clearly-stated learning objectives, lists of GenEd courses are included and are up-to-date, and resources for students and faculty are made available. The site is a model of how to explain and highlight a series of learning offerings and expectations for learning outcomes in accessible and useful ways.

In support of student proficiency in writing and math, the faculty assesses both writing and math early in a student's entry into the University. The writing program has a strong assessment history and will join with the Education Testing Service (ETS) to develop a new computer-based writing assessment plan. Math assessment after student placement seems to be based on the results of perceptual studies. The Self-Study observes that "General Education courses frequently are amenable to innovation, allowing librarians to test new pedagogical ideas or trends in the profession." This statement says excellent things about the devotion to innovation found among the GenEd faculty and to the hard work and flexibility of the librarians, as well. **The General Education Program, faculty-developed and monitored, is commended for its scope and depth and for serving as the basis for University-wide learning assessment. [A11]**

There are 68 majors and 70 minors at AU including new programs in public health; environmental science; Arabic studies; business, language and culture; and computational science. More than half of the class graduates with more than one major and/or minor. As one might expect of a university situated in Washington D.C. and sporting a proud reputation in educational programs that support international service, public policy and public affairs, international law, and human rights, the most popular majors and minors are in these noted areas of study.

Perceptual studies of student responses to the NSSE showed that students were below their peers in the percentage who say that the campus environment emphasizes studying. AU therefore instituted a new set of academic regulations in 2012 that includes: limiting the pass/fail option, reducing the maximum length of probation, revising the limits on GenEd completion, and raising the GPA to be eligible for dean's list and Latin honors. The results of these changes were not explored in the Self-Study and may not yet have been directly assessed at the time of its submission, but anecdotal evidence suggests that, as regards general education in particular, the change that requires students to complete the program (10 courses in 5 domains) by the end of the sophomore year has had a salutary effect.

American University coordinates its course and program offerings with co-curricular activities with a thoroughness that attests to its commitment to promoting community service and to creating opportunities to understand diverse perspectives. Undergraduate students have the chance to experience its "**high impact**" **experiential programs** including student learning communities that were developed to enhance practical skills and essential knowledge. University College provides small-group living-learning opportunities to a group of new students (400 in Fall 2012). Small, 20-student classes are

taught by full-time faculty in University College, and each class is mentored by an upperclassman associate who lives in the same residential community. Since the application rate continues to grow, AU has created the University College Cooperative (UCC). Much like University College, this living-learning opportunity is anchored in an academic course, some linked to majors, and the students are housed in the same hall as the original University College cohort. The 2012 NSSE results are positive for living-learning communities and are praised in focus groups; they fare well in program evaluations, too. UC earned an award from the admissions, orientation and first-year experience group of the college personnel profession association for “Outstanding Collaborative Initiative” in 2012.

The Honors Program at AU celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2009. In 2011, it was reviewed and found to need revision. The new Honors Program will welcome 45 students and be instituted in fall, 2014. The program was developed to focus on problem-solving courses that integrate several disciplines (as suggested by LEAP) and include early engagement in research, professional experience, innovation, connection to faculty, and exceptional development of oral and written skills. The Honors Program is an important example of innovation and change starting from within the context of a time-honored, but outdated, program.

The Frederick Douglass Distinguished Scholars Program provides support to exceptional undergraduates, many of whom are first-generation-to-university. Besides financial support, FDDS scholars are given individualized time and attention by the director and faculty, and these students are widely seen as leaders on campus.

Following LEAP’s focus on the importance of internships to the undergraduate educational experience, 87 percent of AU’s graduating students in 2013 participated in an internship as an undergraduate. Protocols for placement and monitoring are well in place; employer evaluations are administered by the Career Center. AU graduates figure significantly amongst Presidential Management Fellows and the Peace Corps. According to the Self-Study, the changing socioeconomic diversity of the AU undergraduate body has created a cohort of students who are challenged to meet the costs associated with unpaid internships. The University is working to address this issue, including through fundraising.

Again following a LEAP suggestion, AU has created programs that give students the opportunity to both apply what they are learning in real-world settings and to reflect their service experiences in the classroom. These opportunities are many and far-ranging, from job-shadowing to the creation of oral histories to the support of service-learning trips abroad, and more. On-campus undergraduate research experiences are another LEAP-endorsed practice that appears to have been embraced by American.

The Self Study reports that all programs in which AU students participate abroad for academic credit have been evaluated by AU as meeting University-commensurate academic standards and goals. As of 2011-12, 72% of undergraduates studied abroad during their time at American, an enviable participation rate. Some academic units have partnerships abroad for undergraduate experiences, particularly in the Far East; there are opportunities in Cuba, India, and Jamaica, among others, and there are new and noteworthy opportunities for study abroad in the summer. A site visit to the AU program in Brussels

verified the high quality of their international programs, and made clear both the innovative nature of the program and the value added to student learning and toward strong outcomes.

Student learning assessment is an integral part of institutional assessment at AU and, in 2013 AU drafted a set of University-wide learning outcomes. The evidence suggests that learning outcomes and assessment are part of program and course development and are routinely submitted for review; from 2011 to 2013, several hundred specific changes were made as a result of assessment. Administrative actions were used to follow up and standardize instructional practices across sections and other follow-up activities were connected to curriculum changes. In other words, the impact of assessment of learning outcomes was both extensive and productive. There is clear evidence that as it stands, the student learning assessment program is fully institutionalized and the programs requiring more work have been identified. While curriculum mapping has begun—GenEd has mapped its courses and most programs have done some mapping to program outcomes—AU reports that wide-scale mapping is still to come, as is improved communication of learning outcomes to students. It is helpful that AU has identified these as focus areas, as the University has an excellent track record in achieving its objectives in assessment.

6. Graduate and Professional Education

Standard 8: Student Admissions and Retention

Standard 11: Educational Offerings

Standard 14: Assessment of Student Learning

Over the 129 years since its founding as a graduate-only university, American has maintained a focus on graduate and professional education. Today, it boasts offers 54 masters programs, 11 doctoral programs (including a new communications PhD), 4 law programs, and several graduate certificate programs across its seven schools and colleges. Representing 42% of the overall AU student body, it enrolled 5,477 graduate students in fall 2013. Total enrollment in graduate programs is projected to increase in the foreseeable future.

One of the 10 transformational goals of the strategic plan is to "demonstrate distinction in graduate, professional, and legal studies." AU's graduate and professional programs will continue to require a careful marketing strategy, high achievement in student learning outcomes, and successful job placement. Administrative colleagues are at the heart of AU's marketing and job placement services, while learning goals and learning outcomes assessment protocols for graduate programs are being set from the bottom up, with faculty driving and managing the processes.

An analysis of the self-study report indicates that the graduate programs are well managed. AU administrators are actively working on adjusting the balance of central planning and support for graduate program marketing and enrollment with local (usually department-based) admissions and enrollment activities, with a recognition that some additional central coordination may be helpful if AU-wide graduate enrollment growth targets are to be achieved. AU senior management is cognizant of the changing graduate marketplace, and in line with AU's enabling goal of "diversifying revenue sources,"

new programs are being conceived and developed to offset possible declines in MBA and JD programs and the possible closure of a customized master's program.

We spoke with graduate department and division heads—including for PhD programs in communication, psychology, history, and international service—to learn about AU's admission processes. The process allows faculty committees to review applications and transmit successful applicants to be admitted to the University.

American University doctoral enrollment figures are steady, in part due to its new PhD in communication. AU is taking the initiative to keep its PhD programs robust and relevant, as demonstrated by the newly designed PhD program in behavior, cognition, and neuroscience launched as an interdisciplinary science program in 2009, and the PhD in communication, started in 2011. These Ph.D. degree programs appear to move AU's doctoral education opportunities in new strategic directions and are designed to match faculty capabilities with student interests.

AU has undertaken innovative programs to maintain healthy enrollment in an era of decline in some professional graduate areas. For example, it has introduced an MS in sustainability management, an MA in political communication, an MA in comparative and international disability policy, an MS in audio technology, an MA in international media, an MA in media entrepreneurship, an MA in social enterprise, an MPA for GS13 Federal managers, and an MS in organization development. While graduate programs in business are shrinking nationally, American University has not yet experienced a serious decline, although it did right-size its MBA program several years ago to protect its quality. AU continues to work on plans to maintain its enrollment in Kogod.

American University has been affected by the national trend of declining law school enrollment, with its total law enrollment down despite modest growth in the LLM programs and the SJD program. As is true nationally, careful management of enrollment is critical to achieve revenue targets while at least maintaining quality. The program's location in DC and its diversity of programs are strategic advantages that the Washington College of Law is leveraging to good effect.

The team understands American University's intention to grow the graduate student population by 5% every year for the next 10 years, effectively increasing the graduate population by 1000, as one way of diversifying revenue. We encourage that this growth be done strategically and in alignment with key graduate and professional programs that reflect emerging and longstanding research strengths in the institution. American University maintains its graduate tuition discount rate at about 29%, which is relatively modest and will help them withstand some of the graduate enrollment challenges to be faced.

AU reports that it performs external review of all graduate programs, and there is also evidence that they are actively using Academic Analytics (AA) to identify both its top-ranked and poorly ranked programs compared to relevant and aspirational peers. AU deans and central leadership are encouraged to use both external review information and AA data to inform decisions about differential investments across its graduate and research programs.

American University's curriculum development process is very comprehensive. Curricular changes are initiated at the departmental level. From there, the proposed changes go to the dean's office, and afterwards to all schools/colleges for their comments, objections, and/or approval. Simultaneously, the proposal is circulated via the University's daily newspaper to the community at large for their comments. The proposing department has to satisfy any objections of the schools/colleges before forwarding its proposal to the Faculty Senate for its approval. At the Faculty Senate, the proposing department must include a record of public comments and other school/college approvals. The Provost's office may then approve the curricular changes, as does the Board of Trustees when there is a proposed major curricular change.

The visiting team reviewed American University's off-site "additional program" that awards two masters degrees in McLean, VA exclusively for Freddie Mac employees under the auspices of its Kogod Business School. A team member met with faculty members and administrators responsible for the site and looked into the admission and retention standards (Standard 8), curriculum and educational offerings (S11), facilities and instructional technology (S3), assessment of student learning (S14), student support services (S9), integrity (S6), and faculty compensation (S10). The faculty is a mix of those who meet AU's Scholar-Teacher ideal (tenure-line faculty) and those who are heavy on practice (term and adjunct faculty). Overall, the team found evidence of AU's compliance with the applicable standards pertaining to this site. While the continued operation of this site is uncertain, the team finds that it is in compliance with applicable standards.

7. Other Educational Initiatives

Standard 13: Related Educational Offerings

American University offers a diverse cluster of related educational activities to complement the on-campus classroom component of student learning. The outline of non-traditional educational offerings in American University's self-study link their mission statement to the realities of today's rapidly changing society. It is clearly evident that the educational trends of the 21st century led AU to systematically analyze a variety of its programs and services with a focus on meeting the demands of digital-age students.

These innovative educational offerings are designed for a diverse population of students from the first-generation freshman to the working professional who struggles to manage home, work and education. AU students are given ground-breaking opportunities to take part in learning experiences under the direction of highly respected scholars including as participants in interdisciplinary research centers that have received increasing support from the University. These centers support cross-disciplinary collaborations for both graduate students and untenured junior faculty. For example, faculty from both the Center for Behavioral Neuroscience and the Center for Food and Society work together to address a wide range of pressing national problems. AU is recognized for its efforts in promoting Interdisciplinary educational initiatives that not only increase student learning, but also their level of engagement on and off campus. In accordance with Middle States, the fundamental elements of AU's

mission and goals for collaborative participation is clearly evidenced in the administrative support given to the planning and resource sharing of their Research Center initiatives.

It is evident that AU has an institutional commitment to learning outside the University through experiential learning activities. Students have the opportunities to gain real-world experience serving as interns in a wide variety of professional environments. The classroom faculty are involved in the placement, monitoring, and evaluation of the students' internship experiences. For example, as noted in the Self-Study, "...virtually every school and department on campus offers student opportunities to engage with prospective employers and professionals through group applied research and production projects." In a meeting with the visiting team, most of the students raised their hands when asked if they had taken part in an internship experience.

American University is to be commended for its profound commitment to the enrichment of student learning outcomes through a uniform application of innovative experiential projects. The interdisciplinary approach to scholarship and teaching embedded in their research centers provide students with life changing experiences. Internships and service learning opportunities are threaded throughout many courses and programs. [A12]

Some of the disciplines and departments in AU have joined forces with Deltak, an online vendor, to develop enhanced course offerings for improved student online learning experiences. As stated in the self-study, AU resisted a serious exploration of MOOC's (massive online open courses) but rather "...stay(ed) true to its mission by focusing on what it does exceptionally well, teaching degree- and certificate-seeking students in small classrooms." Middle States encourages this kind of institutional assessment which leads to greater effectiveness in student learning. It is evidenced in this administrative decision to resist the MOOC concept for online education that AU is systematically employing their mission statement as a critical standard for institutional decisions.

While there is a growing demand for online education, AU is capping class enrollments to ensure quality and adherence to its mission and standards. Assessment measures are in place to ensure that online courses have the same quality as on-campus offerings. There is a stringent review of all new online courses in place, including an evaluation and approval by the department faculty, academic deans, school and college faculty councils, the University library, and the Faculty Senate. Ongoing reviews are still in place once the online course has been approved.

The Self-Study Report provides a summary assessment of American University's science programs and offerings. With no medical or engineering schools and very modest facilities, the science programs at AU have been a valued part of the undergraduate liberal arts experience but only a modest research engine. In an increasingly technological world, science and technology are clearly more and more relevant and adjacent to the professional disciplines that have long been at the core of AU, and the faculty, leadership, and trustees are actively and appropriately grappling with questions about the "science strategy" that American should pursue. Clearly, AU should not try to pursue a comprehensive "curiosity-driven" approach to science or to compete with its aspirational peers who have much stronger traditions and accomplishments in the sciences—to do so would be to put the financial position

of the University in jeopardy. Neither should American forsake the sciences, both because they are an ever-more-important part of a liberal arts education and because it would put at risk the relevance of some of its professional programs. Indeed, the strategy that American is pursuing seems right: seek those interdisciplinary areas of high impact in which science and policy are important in an integrated way, make targeted investments in both the social science and science disciplines that are relevant to the important problems in those areas, and partner with other universities to fill gaps, bringing AU's great expertise to the partnership. This is not an inexpensive strategy, as it will require faculty hiring, instrumentation set-ups, and some investment in niche laboratory space; but if done wisely and highly strategically, it can grow sponsored expenditures and allow American to be seen as relevant in key science/policy areas. The work done thus far in identifying niches in behavioral neuroscience, environment, and public health, and the development of the Technology and Innovation Center are clearly steps in the right direction. **The key will be to ensure that American pursues a science strategy that is true to its Statement of Common Purpose and its well-rationalized strategic plan. The visiting team encourages the University to integrate with this strategy an investment in laboratory facilities that will be relevant for its basic undergraduate instructional programs. [S7]**

Section VI. Conclusions

The Middle States visiting team is impressed by the current state of American University and the progress it has made as an agile, planning-intensive, well-governed, well-run institution. The University seems to know itself well and understand its special nature, as detailed in its Statement of Common Purpose and expressed most recently in its strategic plan, which plays a central role in the life of the institution as it is updated regularly and used for benchmarking and assessment. The pace of change over the past seven years has been intense, which will continue to serve American well given the continued highly dynamic nature of higher education. Investments in faculty, staff, academic and research programs, and the physical plant have been considerable, and the institution is encouraged to maintain its culture of evaluation and assessment around these areas to ensure that the "return" on the investments—in terms of quality, productivity, and reputation—is strong.

As described in Section V, American University appears to meet Middle States Association's Standards 1-14 in the visiting team's judgment. The recommendations, accomplishments, and suggestions interleaved throughout that narrative section are presented below for ease of reference and because, in the team's opinion, attention to these points will ensure continuous improvement.

The team again thanks American University, its leadership, and the entire community for its embrace of the Middle States accreditation process as an opportunity for further learning and assessment, and we are confident that the institution will be open to the ideas contained in this report. As a reminder, the next steps in the evaluation process are as follows:

- American University replies to the team report in a written response addressed to the Commission;
- The team chair submits a confidential brief to the Commission summarizing the team report and conveying the team's proposal for accreditation action;

- The Commission staff and the Commission’s Committee on Evaluation Reports carefully review the institutional self-study document, the evaluation team report, the institution’s formal response, and the chair’s brief to formulate a proposed action to the Commission; and
- The full Commission, after considering information gained in the preceding steps, takes formal accreditation action and notifies the institution.

Recommendations

- R1. In light of the changing demographics of the undergraduate student body, the University as a whole—inclusive of Campus Life, Academic Affairs, Enrollment Services, schools and colleges, and business units— should carefully consider how best to support the more diverse student body and ensure that its engagement in AU’s special opportunities, sense of belonging, degree of satisfaction, and retention and graduation rates is carefully monitored and regularly assessed.
- R2. The increased investment in the Scholar-Teacher ideal brings with it greater expectations for scholarly impact and, as a result, the University should establish clear goals and detailed assessment protocols at the individual and the unit levels to ensure that the University’s expectations are being realized.
- R3. The aggressive move to a new mix of tenure-line and term faculty also bears attention and careful tracking both for long-serving faculty and those who will enter American University under this new paradigm. AU should monitor the evolving faculty perceptions and degree of satisfaction in this new environment and make adjustments in the model as necessary over time.

Accomplishments of Note

- A1. The entire American University community is to be commended for its efforts and its success; American University is stronger, more vibrant, more relevant, and better positioned as a result of what has transpired over the past six years.
- A2. American University’s strategic plan has penetrated all levels of the University to a remarkable degree.
- A3. The Office of Institutional Research and Assessment performs an extraordinary service to American, delivering information to many constituencies across the campus with sophistication, nuance and a high degree of efficiency.
- A4. The experience of American University over the last decade is testimony to the fact that an investment by the leadership in planning and process improvement yields real fruit in academic quality and the delivery of the academic mission of the University.
- A5. Following the presidential transition in 2005-2006, AU revised its governance structure to be more “effective, transparent and participatory.”

- A6. The broad representation of University constituencies in governance contributes to a campus culture of commitment to AU's advancement in quality and reputation.
- A7. The openness and transparency of governance at AU has been carried forward consistently under the leadership of President Kerwin since he took office.
- A8. The collaborative development—including faculty, the administration, and trustees—and adoption of the new Faculty Manual by the Faculty Senate (2010 & 2011), that codifies among many topics the tenure and promotion protocols for both tenure-line and term faculty, is commendable.
- A9. The average teaching load, reduced from five to four courses for all tenure track faculty and for tenured faculty active in research, is a milestone to allow more time for higher impact scholarship.
- A10. AU is to be commended for the great and purposeful progress they have made in the recruitment and enrollment of increasing numbers of underrepresented students of color, and Pell-eligible students.
- A11. The General Education Program, faculty-developed and monitored, is commended for its scope and depth and for serving as the basis for university-wide learning assessment.
- A12. American University is to be commended for its profound commitment to the enrichment of student learning outcomes through a uniform application of innovative experiential projects. The interdisciplinary approach to scholarship and teaching embedded in their research centers provide students with life changing experiences. Internships and service learning opportunities are threaded throughout many courses and programs.

Suggestions

- S1. Additional needs in the facilities domain are recognized by the University and remain to be funded. This points to the need for careful prioritization and focus on fundraising.
- S2. As a precondition of endowment growth, the development function should become an institutional priority and become more fully integrated into the fabric of the University.
- S3. The University should continuously evaluate its resource allocation processes to ensure that there are appropriate incentives for the academic units to engage in the kinds of entrepreneurial activity that will advance programmatic goals and help increase revenue diversity.
- S4. As the University continues to evolve, care must be given to ensure that the nature and quality of support services are appropriate to the new environment.
- S5. To ensure continued board renewal, it should consider instituting term limits.

S6. The University should continue to track staff turnover and monitor the effectiveness of the revised annual staff performance review process.

S7. The key will be to ensure that American pursues a science strategy that is true to its Statement of Common Purpose and its well-rationalized strategic plan. The visiting team encourages the University to integrate with this strategy an investment in laboratory facilities that will be relevant for its basic undergraduate instructional programs.