

January 11, 1990



Mr. James T. Rogers
Executive Director
Commission on Colleges
Southern Association for Colleges & Schools
1866 Southern Lane
Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097

Dear Dr. Rogers:

Office of the Chancellor
103 Spilman

919-757-6212

Enclosed is the interim report you called for in your September 15, 1989 letter to me. As you can see, our 1990-92 SACS Self-Study will be traditional and related to our East Carolina University Strategic Planning Process. The report describes both that process and the manner in which it addresses questions of institutional effectiveness. We are pleased with the progress we have made with this Planning Process, and we believe that it will enhance not only our SACS self-study but also the long-term effectiveness of East Carolina University.

We are also pleased that Dr. David Carter will be visiting with us on March 5-6th at the beginning stages of our Self-Study. Indeed, such a visit at this early stage will assist us in getting off to a good start.

As you know, I have appointed James LeRoy Smith, Chair of our Department of Philosophy, as SACS Self-Study Director. He will report to Dr. Marlene Springer, our Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. Dr. Springer has approved a position description for the Director, and Dr. Smith is at work on the initial planning stages, including the structure of the steering committee.

Dr. Smith will work closely with Ms. Sue Hodges, Director of our Planning and Institutional Research Office. This is especially appropriate, given the central focus we now are giving to strategic planning at East Carolina University.

We look forward to Dr. Carter's visit and his interactions with me, the staff, Dr. Smith, and the steering committee. We trust that the enclosed report will provide the orientation necessary in his planning for our meetings.

We look forward to our continuing association with the Commission.

Sincerely,

Richard R. Eakin
Chancellor

cc: Chancellor's Staff
Council of Deans

Strategic Planning and Institutional Effectiveness at East Carolina University

As accreditation criteria have moved in the last decade from the focus on resources and processes to the more primary emphases on goals and purposes, their means of achievement, the evaluation of that achievement, and the consequent use of that evaluative analysis to enhance planning, East Carolina University has also been busy deliberating ways to evaluate the effectiveness of the University's many undertakings. We have, of course, been guided in these deliberations by the directions taken by the Commission on Colleges in the last few years.

In 1987-88, soon after the arrival of our present Chancellor, the University decided that a strategic planning process should be implemented. It was initiated in September of 1988. The University Strategic Plan will be completed in the summer of 1990. Operational plans for departments and program areas below that strategic planning level will be developed in 1990-91 based on the University Strategic Plan.

Clearly, then, our SACS 1990-1992 Self-Study will be traditional and will be integrated with the East Carolina University Strategic Planning Process. Indeed, to describe (a) what we are doing to reaffirm our institutional goals and their relation to institutional purpose, (b) the means whereby we purport to reach those goals, (c) procedures we use to evaluate our achievement of those goals, and (d) ways in which that evaluation will be used to enhance planning is to describe our East Carolina University Strategic Planning Process.

As this Planning Process unfolds, we believe that our work is exactly centered on what institutional effectiveness is all about. Therefore, the balance of this report will describe the Planning Process activities of 1988-89, those currently underway in 1989-90, and those projected in 1990-91 and 1991-92.

1988-89: In September of 1988 the University began this Planning Process with an off-campus retreat, where the Chancellor, the Vice Chancellors, the Deans, some fifteen administrators, the Faculty Senate officers, and the chair of the Educational Policies and Planning Committee gave consideration to a proposed model for planning at East Carolina University. Over a two-day period discussion and debate produced a consensus about how the University would approach planning.

Within the next month, the planning model was presented to the University community in the form of University-wide forums. Three-thousand brochures outlining the process were distributed. Thereafter, four initial work groups were formed with membership drawn from faculty, staff, students, alumni, Board members, and community leaders. Nominations were solicited from the Vice Chancellors, Deans, and Faculty Senate. By December, these groups were organized and ready to commence.

One of these groups engaged in an analysis of the threats and opportunities that exist in our external environment. A second group went about the very difficult task of identifying our strengths and weaknesses. A third group was responsible for assessing the values held by the people who comprise the University community. These three groups completed their preliminary work in March and April of 1989 and presented draft reports by forum to the University community for review and comment. Revised reports resulted from that review process, where faculty, staff, faculty senators, administrators, students, alumni, and Board members participated. A special Faculty Senate meeting was held to discuss the reports. Final reports were distributed to all of the groups just mentioned in April and May.

Concurrently throughout 1988-89, a subcommittee of the Educational Policies and Planning Committee undertook a reconsideration of the University Mission Statement. They, too, held open forums for review of their work. A Mission Statement revision was presented to the Faculty Senate and was, along with the three work group reports mentioned above, forwarded to the fourth working body organized in 1988-89, a group called the Strategic Planning Advisory Group.

During the first week in May, a second planning retreat was held to discuss progress to date and to set some priorities for the 1989-90 academic year. The Strategic Planning Advisory Group attended that retreat. Their charge was to use the results from the preliminary analyses mentioned above and develop a set of recommended strategies to move the University forward. The work of this group became the Planning Process focus as we moved into 1989-90.

1989-90: The Strategic Planning Advisory Group met from May until November. They distributed a draft report to the University community in October, 1989, and held two University-wide forums to receive comments and criticisms. They revised the report as a result of the many helpful suggestions made during the review process and submitted their final report to the Chancellor on November 21, 1989.

As this present report is being written, the Chancellor, informed by many, many hours of careful study and thoughtful discussions over the past year, and particularly by the work of the Strategic Planning Advisory Group, has produced a document that articulates a vision of what the future should hold for East Carolina University. He has worked closely with the Board, the Faculty Senate, Vice Chancellors, Deans, students, and others. He has presented a Mission Statement and a set of University-wide goals to guide unit planning, committee deliberations, the overall management of the University, and day-to-day decision-making within our institution.

One of the initial steps toward implementation of the University goals just mentioned is the development of implementation plans containing a series of University-wide functional strategies. These plans address such areas as financial strategies, facilities-related priorities, effective management of our enrollments, faculty and staff development issues, the structure of the organization, our information technology environment, and our goals for public outreach. Seven planning teams have been meeting during the last two months and their draft reports will be circulated for review presently (see attachment A for a list of these planning teams). These plans in final form will provide further guidance, along with the Chancellor's statement of University Directions, for the Strategic Planning Units (see Attachment B for a list of these Strategic Planning Units) as they begin developing unit goals and objectives to guide their activities and commitment of resources over the next two years.

Thus, in the Spring semester of 1990, the Unit Planning Process will become the central focus of the Strategic Planning Process (see Attachment C for guidelines and the timetable for these activities). Planning Units have been looking at their own strengths and weaknesses, environmental opportunities and constraints, as well as their values as a unit. The completed University Directions from the Chancellor and the implementation plans from the implementation planning teams, which will be available soon, will guide these Strategic Planning Units as they begin work on their priorities for putting the goals into action. This Unit Planning Process will reach completion in the spring and summer of 1990 and will result in a final comprehensive University Strategic Plan.

1990-91: By the end of the summer, 1990, all Unit strategic plans will have been completed and approved by the Chancellor. Each Planning Unit's vision statement, elements of distinction, and priorities for action regarding the Chancellor's list of strategic goals for the University will have been asserted in these Strategic Planning Unit documents. As departments/program areas move in 1990-91 to develop operational plans under their respective Planning Unit Strategic plans, they will be instructed to indicate means for achieving those goals, procedures for evaluating that achievement, and for using the results of that evaluative analysis to improve planning in the future. We envision this process as one which will insure proper focus on institutional effectiveness. The SACS Self-Study will also be fully underway that year, tracking this process across the University.

1991-92: By 1991-92, many of the means to attain the goals asserted in the department/program area operational plans will have been implemented. Procedures to evaluate how well those goals are being attained will have been invoked. Budgets will have been affected by the entire process, and all levels of the University will have been related to the University Strategic Plan.

As is evident, then, this Strategic Planning Process was designed with the guidelines from the Commission on Colleges in mind. As our planning continues, University activities will receive continued strategic reconsideration, and the framework for judging institutional effectiveness will be continually strengthened.

ATTACHMENTS: (A) Implementation Planning Teams
(B) Strategic Planning Units
(C) Strategic Planning Unit Guidelines & Timetable