

CRITERION ONE: MISSION AND INTEGRITY

The organization operates with integrity to ensure the fulfillment of its mission through structures and processes that involve the board, administration, faculty, staff, and students.

Introduction

As one of only six open-admissions public universities in Ohio—and the only public master’s comprehensive institution in the state—Youngstown State University has served a special mission and role since becoming a state institution in 1967. This distinctive mission; the documents that define it; the diverse, interconnected communities who support and implement it; and the processes that enable YSU to fulfill it with pride and integrity, now and into the future, form the basis for this chapter and for the chapters that follow.

Core Component 1a:

The organization’s mission documents are clear and articulate publicly the organization’s commitments.

The Primary Mission Documents

1a1. The board has adopted statements of mission, vision, values, goals, and organizational priorities that together clearly and broadly define the organization’s mission.

The University developed the current Mission Statement (see **Figure 1-1**) and other primary mission documents between January 2001 and June 2002.

Figure 1-1: Youngstown State University Mission Statement

Youngstown State University provides open access to high-quality education through a broad range of affordable certificate, associate, baccalaureate, and graduate programs.

The University is dedicated to

- outstanding teaching, scholarship, and service and to forging connections among these three interactive components of its mission;
- fostering student-faculty relationships that enrich teaching and learning, develop scholarship, and encourage public service;
- promoting diversity and an understanding of global perspectives;
- advancing the intellectual, cultural, and economic life of the state and region.

Core Component 1a:

The organization’s mission documents are clear and articulate publicly the organization’s commitments.

Reflecting broad participation by both internal and external constituencies, these incremental, interrelated mission documents—drafted by committee, discussed widely, then revised to reflect consensus and endorsed by the University’s Board of Trustees—include the following items:

- the Youngstown State University Mission Statement, approved by the University’s Board of Trustees in June 2001 (http://www.yсу.edu/strategic-plan/mission_5-02.pdf);
- four Core Values, endorsed in principle by the Board of Trustees on November 14, 2001, and later edited (http://www.yсу.edu/strategicplan/spc_core_values.shtml);
- five Defining Principles for the Strategic Planning Process, endorsed by the Board of Trustees on November 14, 2001 (http://www.yсу.edu/strategic-plan/spc_defining_principles.shtml);
- ten Critical Issues, or priorities, endorsed by the Board of Trustees on December 16, 2001 (http://www.yсу.edu/strategicplan/priorities_5-02.pdf);
- the Youngstown State University Vision Statement, endorsed by the Board of Trustees on March 14, 2002 (http://www.yсу.edu/strategicplan/vision_5-02.pdf); and
- *Designing Our Future in the 21st Century: The Centennial Strategic Plan of Youngstown State University*, endorsed by the Board of Trustees on June 28, 2002 (Appendix B, or http://www.yсу.edu/strategicplan/Strategic_Plan_Packet2.pdf).

Incorporating each of the earlier documents (Mission, Core Values, Defining Principles, Critical Issues, and Vision), the *Centennial Strategic Plan* provides a framework to guide the University’s planning and activities during the six-year period between approval of the plan in 2002 and celebration of Youngstown State University’s centennial in 2008.

Both the self-assessment survey of the University’s Board of Trustees in November 2006 and the Campus Climate Survey administered to full-time faculty and staff in spring 2007 indicate continuing wide support of the mission, broadly defined, and a sense that, taken together, the University’s mission documents clearly and broadly define the mission, vision, values, goals, and organizational priorities of Youngstown State University (see Appendix H; and Section S—Surveys at <http://www.yсу.edu/accreditation/resources-accreditation.shtml>).

Internal and External Constituencies

1a2. The mission, vision, values, and goals documents define the varied internal and external constituencies the organization intends to serve.

The mission, vision, values, and goals documents define multiple internal and external constituencies.

The dual focus in the Mission Statement on “open access” and “high-quality education” suggests the distinct mix of underprepared and highly prepared students that YSU proudly serves. YSU’s primary internal constituency is a diverse group of first-generation undergraduate and master’s students, most of whom commute (12,323 of 13,497 students in fall 2007, or 91%), and many of whom are employed on or off campus.

Nearly 60% of YSU’s entering students take developmental math and/or English; and among Ohio’s public four-year institutions, YSU serves the second highest percentage of first-generation college students. (Approximately 56% of the YSU undergraduates who receive financial aid are first-generation college students—see the Ohio Board of Regents (OBOR) annual higher-education *Performance Reports* at <http://regents.ohio.gov/perfrpt/index.php>, or summaries at <http://www.yсу.edu/institutional-research/perfreportR.shtml>.) If the new “Ohio Core” legislation—Senate Bill 311, passed in December 2006—takes effect for the high school graduating class of 2014 as currently planned, YSU may be one of only three four-year institutions in Ohio permitted to continue admitting students who have not completed the full high school core curriculum.

However, although Youngstown State University provides open access to a wide variety of students, the University also admits many highly prepared students. Among first-year students entering YSU in fall 2007, there were 93 high school valedictorians; 4 students scored 34 or higher on the ACT; and 41 students scored 30 or higher.

The mission documents thus define internal constituencies broadly enough to encompass a wide continuum of students in a wide spectrum of courses and programs. As noted in the introduction to the self-study document, the regional economy is weak, and educational attainment in Northeast Ohio is low. Since there is currently no community college in Mahoning County, YSU has long offered the range of programs specified in the Mission Statement: certificate and associate programs to serve the local and regional population, as well as baccalaureate and master’s programs and a doctorate in Educational Leadership to serve a broader population. In addition—and suggested in the Mission Statement’s emphasis on public service and on “advancing the intellectual, cultural, and economic life of the state and region”—YSU’s ties with external constituencies are fundamental and especially strong, as explained under Criterion 5.

The Vision Statement (see **Figure 1-2**) defines the University’s internal and external constituencies more explicitly, reflecting the long-term aspiration to become more “national,” or at least a national model, while simultaneously “increas[ing] the educational attainment, economic prosperity, and environmental vitality of the region”; maintaining the focus on students, excellence, and diversity; highlighting the importance of partnerships with other educational institutions and corporate, public, and non-profit entities; and emphasizing the importance and strength of the relationship between the University and its external constituencies.

■ *“Youngstown State University is the most important citizen in the community. It offers an opportunity to young people who would not otherwise, for various reasons, have the opportunity of obtaining any type of higher education....”*

— James H. Sisek,
President and CEO,
Butler Wick Trust Company

Figure 1-2: Youngstown State University Vision Statement

- Youngstown State University will become a national model for student-centered comprehensive urban universities, transforming its students into successful professionals, scholars, citizens, and leaders.
- Building upon its tradition of developing the body, mind, and spirit, YSU will provide a full range of services and amenities to meet the needs of residential, commuter, and offsite students.
- In partnership with schools and the corporate, public, and non-profit communities, YSU will promote diversity and excellence in teaching, research, and service to increase the educational attainment, economic prosperity, and environmental vitality of the region.
- The University will be a center for intellectual and cultural activity and a catalyst for public engagement.

The Core Values (**Figure 1-3**) define the University’s “extended and interconnected” internal and external constituencies inclusively and comprehensively, accenting the centrality of students; the focus on excellence and innovation inside the classroom and out; relationships among the various constituencies; and the importance of public engagement.

Figure 1-3: Youngstown State University Core Values

We—the faculty, staff, administrators, and students of Youngstown State University—hold the following values essential to achieving the University’s mission:

Centrality of Students

We are a student-centered institution committed to the education, development, well-being, and success of students of all ages and from all walks in life. In concert with our mission to help students grow intellectually, we strive to foster their personal, social, emotional, and career growth, as well as their capacities for lifelong learning, civic responsibility, and leadership.

Excellence and Innovation

We value excellence and innovation inside the classroom and out. Thus, we strive to offer outstanding academic programs; to foster intellectual inquiry, exploration, and discovery; to transcend traditional boundaries; to apply and perfect knowledge; to encourage creativity; to provide effective tools, technologies, and facilities for learning; and to excel in research and scholarly activity, including the “scholarship of teaching and learning”—an area of research that explores how individuals teach and learn.

*Core Values, continued****Integrity/Human Dignity***

As a campus community, we expect all conduct to be rooted in integrity, mutual respect, and civility. We value ethical behavior in scholarly and other endeavors; believe in the dignity and worth of all people; strive to foster an appreciation of, and respect for, differences among the human race; and celebrate the diversity that enriches the University and the world.

Collegiality and Public Engagement

As scholar-citizens of many extended and interconnected communities, we pledge to work collegially and cooperatively to enrich the cultural environment; establish productive partnerships; provide responsible leadership; address community and workforce needs; and bring about the greater good of the collective whole—be it the University, the Mahoning Valley, the state, the region, or beyond.

The other primary mission document—the *Centennial Strategic Plan*—outlines goals and actions to serve internal and external constituencies, as detailed under Criterion 2. The University fulfills its mission to a diverse group of students—its primary internal constituency—as described under Criteria 3 and 4. YSU fulfills its mission to external constituencies as detailed extensively under Criterion 5.

During the five years since developing the *Centennial Strategic Plan*, the University has continued to delineate and refine its internal constituencies. The *Enrollment Management Plan* (2002–04), which grew out of the *Centennial Strategic Plan*, defined the desired “mix” of undergraduate and graduate students as 85–90% undergraduate students and 10–15% graduate students. The *Academic Strategic Plan, 2007–2013* (endorsed by the Youngstown State University Board of Trustees in June 2007) acknowledges the difficulty of achieving that mix, given substantial increases in undergraduate enrollment, and sets a new graduate target of 650 graduate FTE by the year 2013.

Espousing High Academic Standards

1a3. The mission documents include a strong commitment to high academic standards that sustain and advance excellence in higher learning.

YSU prides itself on the quality of its academic programs, many of which are accredited by discipline-specific accrediting agencies, and strives to serve a diverse mix of students of all backgrounds and abilities. (Program-specific accreditation information is available in the *Undergraduate and Graduate Bulletins*, and a list of accreditations is posted on the web at <http://www.ysu.edu/institutional-research/accredit.shtml>.) Thus, all of the University’s mission documents refer to the quality and excellence of academic programs.

On the one hand, as noted earlier, the University as a whole is “open-admissions,” to provide “open access to high-quality education.” On the other hand, many undergraduate programs in YSU’s professional colleges (the College of Business, the College of Education, the College of Fine and Performing Arts, the College of Health and Human Services, and the former College of Engineering and Technology, now part of the College of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) have selective admissions standards, as do YSU’s graduate programs. Enrollment in some programs (e.g., Nursing) is capped.

Admission criteria for selective-admissions programs are listed in the *Undergraduate* and *Graduate Bulletins*. The academic performance and achievements of many YSU students (see Criterion 3) counter a commonly held perception—evident in results of an image survey the University conducted in 2005—that the quality of students may suffer in an open-admissions institution. The University has a number of programs, including the competitive University Scholars and B.S./M.D. programs, that attract incoming—and continuing—high-performing students.

The Mission Statement makes explicit the University’s commitment to “high-quality education” through a range of undergraduate and graduate programs; to “outstanding teaching, scholarship, and service and to forging connections” among the three; and to “fostering student-faculty relationships that enrich teaching and learning.” The Vision Statement espouses “excellence in teaching, research, and service to increase . . . educational attainment.” And the second core value, Excellence and Innovation, focuses on “academic standards that sustain and advance excellence in higher learning.”

Critical Issue 2 of the *Centennial Strategic Plan* states that “YSU will promote excellence in teaching, learning, service, and research—and prepare students to undertake civic and leadership responsibilities—through programs and educational experiences that meet student and workforce needs.” Building on this critical issue, Section II of the new *Academic Strategic Plan* focuses on “academic excellence,” with an underlying goal of making academic excellence a cornerstone of the next University-wide strategic plan. Specifically, the *Academic Strategic Plan* calls for increased coordination of resources to serve underprepared and at-risk students; strategic allocation of resources to support interdisciplinary and discipline-specific academic programs; growth in the graduate-student population; enhanced institutional diversity; growth in internationalization and study-abroad experiences; increased presence of full-time faculty in the classroom; more effective faculty mentoring and professional development; and continued support and celebration of achievements in scholarship and research (http://www.yzu.edu/provost/communications/Academic_Strategic_Plan_Final_6-20-07.pdf).

■ *“In the University Scholars Program at Youngstown State University, you are given all of the tools that you need to succeed: a quiet living environment that is very conducive to learning, where you live with other students who are as dedicated to learning as you are, knowledgeable faculty who motivate you every step of the way and classes specially designed to both challenge and stimulate you.”*

— Karen Varga
2007 BA in Spanish and ICP
in International Relations,
currently spending a year in
Spain as a cultural ambassador
through a program with the
Spanish Embassy in the U.S.

1a4. The mission documents state goals for the learning to be achieved by . . . students.

As indicated under 1a3, all of the mission documents focus on the excellence of the learning experiences that Youngstown State University offers students.

The Academic Senate approved specific, University-wide learning goals in 1998, while designing the new General Education program (<http://www.yosu.edu/ger/genedg.html>). That program was implemented in fall 2000, just before the process of developing new mission documents began. Thus, the Mission Statement itself does not delineate specific learning goals, though it does note that the University is dedicated to providing experiences that enrich student learning and that promote “diversity and an understanding of global perspectives,” aspects that play a significant role in Goals 10 and 12 of the General Education program. The Academic Senate reaffirmed and refined these University-wide learning goals, rewording them as explicit learning outcomes, in March 2007 (<http://www.yosu.edu/acad-senate/minmar07.pdf>), in preparation for posting the University’s student success plan on a state web site at <http://regents.ohio.gov/StudentSuccess/>.

During the Higher Learning Commission self-study process, the Criterion 1 Committee suggested that online references to the mission documents include a link to the General Education goals, and the University provided those links early in 2007. Program-specific learning goals are included in each academic department’s assessment plan and, at the suggestion of the Criterion 1 Committee and the University-wide Assessment Council, noted (either in full or by reference to the department web site) in the 2007–08 *Undergraduate Bulletin* (<http://www.yosu.edu/catalog/catalog.shtml>) and on the School of Graduate Studies and Research web site (<http://www.yosu.edu/GradSchool/>).

Periodic Evaluation of Mission Documents

1a5. The organization regularly evaluates and, when appropriate, revises mission documents.

The last in-depth revision of the University-wide mission documents occurred in 2001–02, since the *Centennial Strategic Plan* was in part a “plan to plan” (i.e., it called for development of additional plans, which have since come into being, on enrollment management, use of technology, and overall campus growth and capital development) designed to culminate in the celebration of the University’s centennial in 2008. The goals in the *Centennial Strategic Plan* have been updated and new goals have been outlined every year in the Institutional Annual Plan produced by the President’s Office with input from the University divisions. In addition, periodic progress reports on achieving institutional goals are posted on the strategic planning web site (see http://www.yosu.edu/strategicplan/spc_updates.shtml).

As noted earlier, the *Academic Strategic Plan* approved in June 2007 is both a product of the current mission documents and a foundation for the next University-wide strategic plan. It sets forth goals for the Academic Division but also calls for collaboration with the Division of Student Affairs and other divisions. Academic units reviewed their mission documents during departmental program review and planning that led to development of the *Academic Strategic Plan*, and non-academic units throughout the University reviewed their mission documents through the recently developed process for assessment of non-academic units instituted in 2006–07. Other plans—such as the *Enrollment Management Plan* (developed 2002–04), the *Information Technology Master Plan* (developed 2004), and the *Centennial Campus Master Plan* (developed 2003–06)—that grew out of the *Centennial Strategic Plan*, are ongoing and reviewed regularly, as noted under Criterion 2.

Originally, the University had intended to complete a new institutional strategic plan during the Higher Learning Commission self-study. However, a number of significant activities at the local, regional, and state levels suggested the wisdom of waiting until rapidly developing changes in the state system of higher education, and especially YSU’s role within that system, are more clearly defined.

Even before changes at the state level were publicly announced, YSU—in consultation with area career and technical centers, school districts, the regional Chamber of Commerce, county commissioners, state legislators, the Ohio Board of Regents, area employers, and other entities—had begun, in March 2006, to study the feasibility of establishing a community college or similar structure to increase educational access in the Mahoning Valley (see <http://www.ysu.edu/cc/>). Goals for creating a community college or similar entity (alone or in partnership with other institutions, within YSU or external to the University) include the following:

- Increase access to and enrollment in higher education in the region.
- Help achieve Governor Strickland’s goal of increasing the number of students enrolled in Ohio colleges and universities by 230,000 students over the next 10 years (for the Mahoning Valley, an increase of approximately 9,000 students).
- Make attending college more affordable by offering college-level courses at community college pricing.
- Improve marketing of YSU’s current associate-degree programs, and develop dynamic programs that respond to workforce needs of the region.
- Be a catalyst for economic recovery and growth in the region.

If the ongoing study shows that a community college or similar initiative is needed and feasible—and research so far suggests that it is feasible if *finan-*

cial ramifications can be addressed satisfactorily both for the new entity or partnership *and* for Youngstown State University—and if such an endeavor comes to fruition, YSU’s role and mission could change substantially.

Transformations at the regional and state levels also suggest that YSU’s role and mission will need to be modified over the next five to 10 years. These regional and state changes began late in 2006 and have advanced rapidly over the past year. During 2007,

- the new, legislature-mandated Northeast Ohio Universities Collaboration and Innovation Study Commission began exploring “bold ideas” for partnerships and changes among Northeast Ohio colleges and universities;
- newly elected Governor Ted Strickland and the state legislature made changes in the function and reporting structure of the Ohio Board of Regents, making the Chancellor a Cabinet-level position that reports to the Governor; and
- Governor Strickland and the legislature charged Eric Fingerhut, the newly appointed Chancellor of the Ohio Board of Regents, to work with Ohio’s institutions of higher education to develop a 10-year “master plan” for higher education in Ohio, which the Chancellor is to present to the legislature in March 2008 (or perhaps July 2008, recent reports suggest; see components of the plan and mechanisms for feedback at <http://universitysystem.ohio.gov/master-plan/>).

■ “YSU has taken a leading role in helping the state meet the overall educational needs of the region.”

— Eric D. Fingerhut, Chancellor

Changes at the regional and state level are expected to be sweeping, leading both to inter-institutional collaborations and to more specialized missions and foci, including specialized centers of excellence, at the state’s four-year and two-year institutions.

At the Governor’s directive, the Chancellor created a state “system” of education in summer 2007 (see <http://universitysystem.ohio.gov/>); and the Chancellor indicates that a community college is indeed likely to be formed in the Mahoning Valley within the next few years. A community college in the region may result in *fundamental* changes in YSU’s mission, whether the community college is associated with YSU long-term (YSU’s initial preference); associated with YSU for a fixed number of years and then “divested” to become freestanding (YSU’s current preference); cooperative among multiple Northeast Ohio institutions (a possibility proposed by the Chancellor); or freestanding from the beginning. Most of these scenarios suggest that YSU will need to make a transition to a smaller and more-selective, upper-division, and graduate-focused institution over the next 10 years.

The findings of the Higher Learning Commission self-study and the site-team evaluation, coinciding with the possible formation of a community college in the Mahoning Valley, the initial recommendations of the Northeast Ohio Commission, and preliminary release of the state master plan, present both exciting opportunities and interesting challenges. They are expected to

lead to refinements or substantial revisions in YSU's mission documents; to development of a new institutional strategic plan; and to extensive planning for transition to YSU's role in the new and evolving "system" of higher education in Ohio.

Youngstown State University will continue to engage in ongoing discussion and reach consensus with Chancellor Fingerhut and the Ohio Board of Regents about how the delivery of associate-level programs and the potential establishment of a community college best fit with the long-term mission of Youngstown State University and the shared goal of increasing higher education attainment in the Mahoning Valley; with the master plan for higher education in Ohio to be developed by the Chancellor, with input from constituencies throughout the state; and with recommendations of the Northeast Ohio Universities Collaboration and Innovation Study Commission.

Communicating the University's Mission

1a6. The organization makes the mission documents available to the public, particularly to prospective and enrolled students.

The mission documents, along with a description of the process by which they were developed and periodic progress reports on addressing items in the strategic plan, are readily available on the University web site at <http://www.ysu.edu/strategicplan/>. In addition, a link to the Mission Statement appears in the "Information About" menu on the YSU home page at <http://www.ysu.edu/>. The Mission, Vision, Core Values, and Priority Statements are displayed in the front pages of both the *Undergraduate Bulletin* (<http://www.ysu.edu/catalog/catalog.shtml>) and the *Graduate Bulletin* (<http://www.ysu.edu/GradSchool/bulletin.shtml>), which are posted online and distributed in hard-copy or on CD-Rom to all incoming undergraduate and graduate students, respectively; in glossy brochures distributed campus-wide and in the community; and on posters in many campus buildings.

The Criterion 1 Committee and self-study coordinators used the Higher Learning Commission self-study to remind campus constituencies of the mission documents; to survey individuals about their understanding of and support for the mission (see the Board of Trustees and Campus Climate Survey links under the survey section of the accreditation resource page at <http://www.ysu.edu/accreditation/resources-accreditation.shtml>); and to initiate a "mission-banner" project making short summaries of the Mission, Vision, and Core Values highly visible on colorful outdoor banners mounted throughout the campus core, with the goal of making the mission documents more prominent in the minds of faculty, staff, students, and the general public.

Juxtaposed with Centennial banners denoting the University's "proud past and promising future" and with student-initiated banners titled "Embracing Our Differences," the mission banners are a reminder of the values, goals, and strategies that enable the University to serve each of its diverse constituencies.

Summary and Evaluation of Core Component 1a

Youngstown State University meets Core Component 1a: The mission documents are clear and articulate publicly the University's commitments.

The Mission, Vision, Core Values, and Organizational Priorities of Youngstown State University—taken together—accurately, clearly, and broadly define the University's mission. They delineate the constituencies the University intends to serve, expressing commitments to open access, academic excellence, and the public good. The documents are widely available, in print and online, and serve constituencies well.

Continuing internal analysis and significant changes at the regional and state levels may ultimately result in fundamental changes in YSU's mission and open-admissions role. However, Youngstown State University is proactively assessing its capacities for change and engaging in ongoing, collaborative discussion about the University's current and future roles.

Core Component 1b:

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

The Mission and Diversity

1b1. In its mission documents, the organization addresses diversity within the community values and common purposes it considers fundamental to its mission.

1b2. The mission documents present the organization's function in a multicultural society.

1b5. The mission documents provide a basis for the organization's basic strategies to address diversity.

Statements of commitment to diversity appear in each of YSU's primary mission documents—the Mission and Vision Statements, Core Values, Critical Issues, and the *Centennial Strategic Plan*—as well as in the various plans that build on the *Centennial Strategic Plan*. As noted in response to the NCA's 1998 concerns (see the introduction to this self-study document), the University's commitment to diversity is strong, and YSU has made substantial progress in implementing diversity goals and increasing diversity among students, faculty, and staff—although, as in any large, complex institution, more can be done, and more is planned.

Diversity, broadly defined, is a foundation of the University's mission. An overview of some of the central statements of YSU's commitment to diversity and awareness of the institution's role in a multicultural society follows here:

Core Component 1b:

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

■ *“The University has made a concerted effort to be proactive in their role as a community leader. For instance, YSU has been intimately involved in a number of regional planning initiatives, including the Youngstown 2010 plan, with the City, a project that has received national acclaim for formally recognizing that Youngstown needs to plan to be a small city. Additionally, YSU is both a leader and a partner in a neighborhood redevelopment project known as Wick Neighbors. This project will bring new housing and retail investment back to the city and attract new residents to the community.”*

— Tim Ryan, Member of Congress

- The YSU Mission Statement asserts that the University is dedicated to “promoting diversity and an understanding of global perspectives” and to “advancing the intellectual, cultural, and economic life of the state and region” (http://www.ysu.edu/strategicplan/mission_5-02.pdf).
- The YSU Vision Statement affirms that “YSU will promote diversity” (http://www.ysu.edu/strategicplan/vision_5-02.pdf).
- YSU’s Core Values state that the University community believes in the “centrality of students . . . of all ages and from all walks in life” and in “the dignity and worth of all people”; “[w]e strive to foster an appreciation of, and respect for, differences among the human race; and celebrate the diversity that enriches the University and the world.”
- Several Critical Issues in the *Centennial Strategic Plan* relate to diversity and the University’s role in a multicultural society (http://www.ysu.edu/strategicplan/Strategic_Plan_Packet2.pdf):
 - Critical Issue 6—Diversity: “YSU will provide a climate of respect for all people. Its students, faculty, staff, and course content will increasingly reflect the diversity of the community, the nation, and the world.”
 - Critical Issue 9—Human Resources Development: “YSU will further develop a competent, motivated, diverse, and competitively paid workforce committed to carrying out the mission of the University.”

In defining and carrying out its mission, YSU recognizes its special position in Northeast Ohio and the Mahoning Valley:

- located in the heart of the city of Youngstown, a city whose population is 44% African American and 5% Hispanic;
- located in the Youngstown-Warren Metropolitan Area, an area challenged by *decreasing population* (decreasing 3.3%, from 613,623 residents in 1990 to 593,168 in 2005) and a *stressed economy* (Census Bureau estimates for 2006 listed Youngstown as the “poorest” mid-size city in the United States, with 30.5% of the population falling below the poverty level—the highest percentage among Ohio cities with at least 65,000 residents—and a median household income of \$21,850);
- located in a region where the percentage of adults with an associate or bachelor’s degree lags behind the rest of the state and the nation (4.8% of adults in Mahoning County have an associate degree, and 17.5 % have a bachelor’s degree, compared to 6.3% and 24.4%, respectively, nationwide); and
- surrounded by communities representing a variety of economic strata, degrees of integration, and lifestyles, ranging from classic suburban through rural.

The immediate service region epitomizes the diversity of the nation as a whole, with its multiplicity, strengths, and challenges, and the University takes seriously its responsibility to serve a diverse community and a diverse body of learners; to increase educational attainment; and to improve the quality of life for all in the region.

With their strong commitment to diversity, the mission documents provide a basis for the University's strategies to address diversity, as reflected throughout this self-study document. For example,

- Through strategies to implement Critical Issues 6 and 9 of the *Centennial Strategic Plan*, including the Strategic Hires policy implemented in June 2006, the University has increased the percentages of minorities among its various constituencies and created a more diverse workforce, as noted in the response to 1998 concerns. As indicated there, **the percentage of minority students increased 74% between fall 1998 and fall 2007; the percentage of minority faculty increased 66.7%; and the percentage of minority staff increased 22.7% between 1999 and 2006.**
- Through Critical Issue 1 of the *Centennial Strategic Plan* and the resulting *Enrollment Management Plan*, the University has targeted resources (e.g., the Martin Luther King scholarships, need-based scholarships, and "Success Challenge" funding from the state) to serve minorities, economically disadvantaged students, and students who need developmental courses and academic-support services such as the University's award-winning Center for Student Progress (see Criterion 3).

Finally, the *Academic Strategic Plan*, the newest planning document, stresses the diversity of student learners, addressing multiple meanings of "diversity," from racial/ethnic, to internationalization, to varying levels of preparedness and styles of learning. Although the *Academic Strategic Plan* was approved only this past June, the Academic Division has already created workgroups and begun to devise strategies to implement the plan, and the University has supported the plan by committing resources to increase study abroad and to fund nine international study tours during the current academic year. Section II, Goal 3, of the *Academic Strategic Plan* calls for efforts to increase minority-student retention, which lags 9.5% behind overall retention rates, despite gains for fall 2007.

A firming Dignity and Worth

Ib3. The mission documents affirm the organization's commitment to honor the dignity and worth of individuals.

The most explicit affirmation of Youngstown State University's commitment to honor the dignity and worth of individuals is the core value labeled "Integrity/Human Dignity," portions of which have already been quoted in the sections on diversity:

As a campus community, we expect all conduct to be rooted in integrity, mutual respect, and civility. We . . . believe in the dignity and worth of all people; strive to foster an appreciation of, and respect for, differences among the human race; and celebrate the diversity that enriches the University and the world (http://www.yasu.edu/strategicplan/spc_core_values.shtml).

In its principles—and actions—the University is committed to honoring the dignity and worth of individuals. Progress toward increasing both diversity and an understanding of diversity is well-documented throughout this self-study report. In addition, the University has a long and well-received tradition of recognizing faculty, staff, and students for their outstanding performance in many areas (a number of awards are discussed in other sections of this self-study and listed in the Criterion 1 Committee report available in the Resource Room).

However, as noted in the introduction to the self-study document, recent years have been marked by labor-management tension (including strikes by the faculty and classified staff), and not all individuals feel that the University has fully achieved the principles outlined in the Integrity/Human Dignity core value. Despite the University’s commitment to honor the dignity and worth of individuals, labor-management relations have been—and at least through summer 2007 remained—a significant challenge. A substantial number of individuals in all employee groups—i.e., faculty, staff, and administration—have expressed a sense that their work is not sufficiently appreciated.

On the one hand, employees are committed to YSU and working together to fulfill its mission. In response to the Campus Climate Survey conducted in March 2007,

- 70% of full-time employees who responded to the survey indicated that they are “satisfied with [their] job here at YSU”;
- 80.4% believed that “[f]aculty and support staff have positive work relationships with each other”; and
- 77.2% indicated that their immediate supervisor understands their concerns.

On the other hand,

- only 44.8% agreed that the “University honors the dignity and worth of individuals”;
- only 51.6% indicated that “[t]here is respect at YSU for expression of diverse values and beliefs”; and
- only 53.6% felt that their work at YSU is “appreciated.”

(See the data summaries for the survey in Appendix H, or Surveys at <http://www.yasu.edu/accreditation/resources-accreditation.shtml>.)

The Higher Learning Commission's *Handbook of Accreditation* states that "Organizational learning . . . requires carefully listening to multiple constituencies" (p. 3.3–3). The Youngstown State University Board of Trustees, upper administration, Academic Senate, bargaining units, and other constituencies have committed themselves to improving relationships; listened to responses on the Campus Climate Survey; and begun taking additional steps—beyond existing employee-recognition awards—to reverse the perception that the University does not sufficiently appreciate and value members of the campus community. The responsibility for addressing the challenge, as President Sweet noted in an April 2007 report to the campus, lies with everyone.

At the April 7, 2007, meeting of the Academic Senate, senators passed a motion to hold bimonthly "civility hours," which have been hosted by the Senate and funded by the Office of the Vice President of Student Affairs. During fall 2007, the mood at these events has become festive; attendance by faculty, staff, students, and administrators has increased; and two of the University's bargaining units have joined the Senate in cohosting the gatherings. It is hoped that events such as these, along with an enhanced, service-oriented role for the Office of Human Resources, open communication, productive Labor Management Council discussions, and successful negotiations with the faculty and classified unions, will make a positive change in the campus environment during 2007–08 and move the University closer to achieving "wholeness."

Codes of Behavior Consistent with Mission

Ib4. The organization's required codes of belief or expected behavior are congruent with its mission.

A number of official documents outline the rights and responsibilities of various campus constituencies, as well as expected behaviors and procedures to address alleged infractions. These documents include, among others,

- *The Code: A Handbook of Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct* (<http://www.yсу.edu/thecode.pdf>);
- *Your Right to Know*, a compendium of information updated annually for students, faculty, and staff in accordance with federal law (<http://www.yсу.edu/righttk.pdf>);
- *The University Guidebook*, a binder of Board-approved policies known as the "red book";
- online *Guidebook* policy updates (<http://www.yсу.edu/vpadmin/GDBK%20memo2.htm>);
- the *Professional Conduct Policy*, which is incorporated in the *Guidebook* as University Policy 9006.01 (<http://www.yсу.edu/vpadmin/guidelinespdf/RVSD9006.01.pdf>);

- the *Graduate Studies Policy Book* (<http://www.yosu.edu/GradSchool/pdf/policy.pdf>);
- the four bargaining-unit contracts (http://cc.yosu.edu/hr/Contract_Agreements.htm);
- the Academic Senate *Bylaws* (<http://www.yosu.edu/acad-senate/bylaws.htm>); and
- departmental governance documents (defined under Article 9.3a of the *YSU/YSU-OEA Agreement* and on file in individual academic departments).

Each of these documents is consistent with the University’s mission; all are applicable to internal constituencies, enabling YSU to fulfill its educational mission; and some of the documents (e.g., the *University Guidebook*) outline expected behaviors for mission-related interactions and activities involving external constituencies as well.

The student *Code* helps guide students toward behaviors that are consistent with YSU’s mission, as in the following words from the “Preamble”:

As a member of a higher education community, students have an obligation to conduct themselves in a manner that is compatible with the University’s purposes as an institution of higher education. Each student is expected to be fully acquainted with all published policies, procedures, and regulations of the University and is held responsible for compliance with them. Furthermore, all members of the University community are expected to assume responsibility for creating an environment conducive to the educational mission and purpose of the University.

The Code outlines procedures to address academic dishonesty and other conduct that “adversely affects the University community or interferes with the pursuit of its mission or educational objectives and programs. . . .”

The *Professional Conduct Policy* (Board Policy 9006.01, Revised)—in words echoing the Integrity/Human Dignity Core Value—notes that “Faculty, department chairpersons, and professional/administrative employees are expected to demonstrate professional conduct that exhibits the values of honesty, integrity, competence, respect, and responsibility.” It outlines expectations for the following mission-related activities:

- “proposing, awarding, administering, conducting, and/or presenting or reporting results of scientific research, administrative or scholarly inquiry, or creative endeavors”;
- “[r]ecommending or awarding grants, leaves, travel requests, promotions, professional awards or recognitions, or other funds or resources”;

- “use of grants, facilities, equipment, supplies, or other University resources”;
- “use or release of information, ideas, or data”;
- use of “property of others or products or research produced by others”;
- and
- representation of credentials.

Other documents outlining expected behaviors include the following policies (among others) from the *University Guidebook*:

- Board Policy 2002.01—Equal Opportunity Discrimination Complaint Procedures;
- Board Policy 2003.01—Sexual Harassment;
- Board Policy 4009.01—Use of University Computing Resources.

The Sexual Harassment Policy is undergoing revision in fall 2007 to more clearly outline expected behaviors in instructional and administrative settings. Policies related to research are discussed under Criterion 4.

Finally, by defining institutional priorities, the *Centennial Strategic Plan* also helps to delineate expected behaviors consistent with the University’s mission. As noted earlier, this plan incorporates the Mission Statement, Vision Statement, and Core Values; it emanates from the mission and is guided by it.

Information about these documents is disseminated at employee and student orientations and via standard University communication vehicles such as the University web site, minutes of meetings of the Board of Trustees and the Academic Senate, and meetings of councils such as the Executive and Administrative Staff Council.

Summary and Evaluation of Core Component 1b

Youngstown State University fulfills Core Component 1b: Mission and planning documents at all levels of the University recognize the value of diversity among internal constituencies and in the world at large.

Increasing diversity and fostering an understanding of diversity are key institutional and curricular goals. Through strategies to address diversity, the University has increased the percentages of minorities among students, faculty, and staff since the 1998 comprehensive visit, while continuing to serve and support all constituencies.

Youngstown State University’s codes of behavior are well-defined and consistent with the mission. However, the University has experienced, and is addressing, significant challenges in one area of Core Component 1b. Despite

core values that call for “all conduct to be rooted in integrity, mutual respect, and civility,” a number of individuals in all employee groups feel that the University needs to do more to honor the dignity and worth of individuals in the University community. All constituencies must continue to take steps to improve labor-management relations and campus morale.

Core Component 1c:

Understanding of and support for the mission pervade the organization.

Core Component 1c:

Understanding of and support for the mission pervade the organization.

Support for the Mission

1c1. The board, administration, faculty, staff, and students understand and support the organization’s mission.

As discussed under Core Component 1a, the mission documents are widely publicized and clearly stated. Results of multiple surveys indicate that campus constituencies believe in, understand, and support the mission. They may not be able to recite the Mission Statement verbatim, they may not know every intricacy of Board policies or the *Centennial Strategic Plan*, but they understand that YSU is an open-admissions University dedicated to helping individuals build better lives and strong professional futures through a broad range of academic and other programs; through outstanding teaching, scholarship, and service (with special emphasis on teaching and learning); and through connections with a diverse community.

The 10 trustees who completed the Board of Trustees Self-Assessment Survey in November 2006 expressed understanding of and support for Youngstown State University’s mission. Likert-scale question #12 of the survey asked trustees to respond to the statement, “I feel that the board *understands* YSU’s mission.” Six trustees indicated that they agreed, and four “strongly” agreed. Question #13 asked trustees to respond to the statement, “I feel that the board *supports* YSU’s mission.” Five indicated that they agreed, and five “strongly” agreed.

YSU employees’ responses to mission-related questions on the March 2007 Campus Climate Survey convey similar agreement. The March survey included two questions pertaining explicitly to employees’ understanding of—and support for—the mission. Question #2 asked faculty, staff, and administrators to respond to the following statement: “I feel that I *understand* YSU’s mission.” Question #3 asked them to respond to the statement, “I *support* YSU’s mission.” Most respondents to both questions answered “Agree.”

Narrative responses to both surveys articulate strong support for the mission and especially for its focus on teaching and learning. In 2004, in response to the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) survey question “Do your interests lie primarily in teaching or research,” 29.5% of YSU faculty respondents had indicated that their interests lay “very heavily in teaching; another

52.6% had noted interest in both teaching and research, “leaning toward teaching.” Not surprisingly, given the University’s long association with a “teaching mission,” many respondents to the Campus Climate Survey and to the Board of Trustees survey identified student-centeredness, the emphasis on teaching and learning, and the quality and breadth of academic programs as significant strengths of the University.

A number of respondents also specified the University’s accessibility, affordability, and connections with the community (other aspects of its mission) as strengths and noted symbiotic relationships between community engagement and student learning. Even as research and scholarly activity—and emphasis on such activities—continue to grow at Youngstown State University (see Criterion 4), all campus constituencies support the focus on teaching and learning, the importance of “fostering student-faculty relationships that *enrich* teaching and learning,” and the “interactive” relationship between teaching and other components of the mission.

No assessment or survey tool to date specifically addresses whether students at Youngstown State University understand and/or support the organization’s mission. However, as the self-study coordinators discussed findings of the self-study with members of Student Government, one student commented that knowing the mission word-for-word, while not “necessary,” is “empowering”: “It . . . allows the student to see that [students] are the center” of every decision made (reported in *The Jambar*, the YSU student newspaper, October 30, 2007).

Certainly, students’ actions and a number of indirect measures, such as discussions with members of the Student Government Association and students’ responses to diversity training and exit surveys, indicate that students not only *appreciate* the many educational experiences that YSU provides them but also *believe* in the University’s core mission to educate and serve the community through a wide range of programs, and as openly and affordably as possible. Students visibly championed the University’s diversity mission by developing the “Faces of Diversity/Embracing Our Differences” banner campaign, and students modeled connections with the community by clearing and restoring a long-neglected garden adjacent to campus (for this latter effort, YSU students received one of 16 community-sponsored CityScape Beautification awards in November 2007). What better way to support the mission than connecting mission to action?

■ “*The University Scholars Program offers the perfect blend of classroom learning, community service, and exposure to cultural activities.*”

— Mollie McGovern, 2002 BA Telecommunication Studies and Geography; 2004 Master of Business Administration, Youngstown State University

Connecting Mission and Action

Ic2. The organization's strategic decisions are mission-driven.

Ic3. The organization's planning and budgeting priorities flow from and support the mission.

Youngstown State University's planning processes and their relation to the University mission are discussed extensively in Chapter 2, Criterion 2.

Budget requests, hiring decisions, program development, and actions of the University and its units are based on the Youngstown State University Mission Statement and other primary mission documents. Various statements endorsed by the Board of Trustees, such as the Defining Principles for the Strategic Planning Process (**Figure 1-4**), assert that the *Centennial Strategic Plan* and overall mission of the University will guide expenditures and overall decision-making patterns:

Figure 1-4: Defining Principles for the Strategic Planning Process

YSU's strategic plan represents a shared vision of what YSU seeks to become and specific strategies to achieve it.

An open and continuous endeavor, the strategic planning process is designed to guide a dynamic University capable of responding in a timely fashion to new opportunities and changing internal and external circumstances. The plan reflects campus- and community-wide collaboration and discussion.

The Strategic Plan will

- represent YSU's commitment to provide all students open access to a high quality education.
- state how YSU interacts with and responds to community needs and opportunities.
- guide development of annual action plans and budgets, connecting human and other resources to identified priorities and supporting initiatives.
- guide the University in identifying programs and activities that will be initiated, continued, and discontinued.
- establish a vision for achieving identified priorities by YSU's centennial year in 2008.

Endorsed by the Board of Trustees November 14, 2001

The 10 priorities in the *Centennial Strategic Plan* are based on the mission and guide strategic initiatives as well as annual budgeting and planning. In response to the November 2006 Board of Trustees Self-Assessment Survey, all 10 trustees responded “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” to Likert-scale statement #14 (“The board regularly considers YSU’s mission, vision, values, and/or goals and organizational priorities when it discusses key issues; allocates resources; and/or approves new initiatives”) and statement #16 (“Board policies and practices show that the board’s focus is on the organization’s mission”).

Board of Trustees minutes, annual institutional budgets, the annual institutional plan, periodic reports of progress in meeting goals of the annual plan and the *Centennial Strategic Plan* (see http://www.ysu.edu/strategicplan/spc_updates.shtml), presidential reports and addresses (<http://www.ysu.edu/president/>), and annual reports from units as diverse as Maag Library and Intercollegiate Athletics show that the University’s strategic decisions are mission-driven and that planning and budgeting priorities flow from and support the mission.

Many items in the *Centennial Strategic Plan* have been partially or fully achieved by targeting resources to achieve key goals (e.g., increased enrollment and retention). Successes in areas such as enrollment and University Development are strengthening the institution’s fiscal foundation and, in turn, facilitating progress in areas throughout the University. For instance, increased revenue from enrollment in fall 2007 has enabled strategic allocation of resources to support initiatives in the *Academic Strategic Plan*.

Nonetheless, given such factors as substantial declines in state subsidy over the past decade, budget cuts, stagnant or reduced operating budgets, constituencies’ incomplete understanding of legislative restrictions on the use of capital funding, limited availability of strategic and discretionary funding, communication issues, and disagreement with some of the decisions made, some individuals and constituencies have questioned budgeting decisions and processes. One decision in particular—the closing in 2006 of CATALYST, the Center for Teaching and Learning at Youngstown State University, a faculty-development initiative named specifically under Critical Issue 2 of the *Centennial Strategic Plan*—has raised concern, especially among faculty.

Many responses to the Campus Climate Survey expressed skepticism about the University’s patterns of financial allocation and whether budgeting processes sufficiently support learning for students, faculty, and staff (a matter discussed under Criterion 4). A number of respondents expressed the desire for a more responsive, interactive, and “transparent” budgeting process. In response to ongoing dissatisfaction about budget matters, the President, implementing a suggestion of the Labor Management Council, formed a Budget Information Committee in early 2007. The purpose of the committee—which includes Budget Director Neal McNally and representatives of the administration, the Academic Senate, Student Government, and three bargaining units—is to educate campus constituencies about the budget.

For more detail about the relationships between planning and budgeting, see Chapter 2, Criterion 2.

Aligning Unit Mission and Goals with the University Mission

1c4. The goals of the administrative and academic subunits of the organization are congruent with the organization's mission.

1c5. The organization's internal constituencies articulate the mission in a consistent manner.

Missions and goals of the University's internal units parallel and align closely with the University's mission and goals.

Academic units last updated their mission statements in 2006–07, during the academic program-review and strategic planning process. The Provost asked academic units to define their mission and vision within the context of the mission and vision of the University as a whole. Thus, the University mission lies at the heart of the planning process, the individual unit plans, and the *Academic Strategic Plan*:

The *Academic Strategic Plan* will . . . help us make the necessary decisions about the investment of resources and about our mix of programs, precisely because it is embedded within our University mission. . . . Consideration of [a unit's vision for the future] needs to be embedded within the various disciplines practiced at the University and in the ways those disciplines continue to evolve, as well as within the University's overarching mission and vision. Each planning/review document should relate the unit's aspirations and goals to our mission and vision. (*Academic Strategic Plan, 2007–2013*, pp. 3–4)

Academic units are also asked to “reassess” their missions each year for their annual report, and all units are asked to align annual goals and annual reports with priorities in the *Centennial Strategic Plan*. Nonacademic units will be asked to discuss the relationship between their individual missions and the mission of the University as a whole in their 2007–08 assessment reports, due January 15, 2008.

As noted under example of evidence 1c1, the University's internal constituencies express widespread support for the mission of Youngstown State University. The University and its units articulate that mission consistently at local, state, and regional levels through their actions, through interaction with other constituencies, and in a myriad of publications (e.g., *Undergraduate Bulletin*, *Graduate Bulletin*, *Centennial Strategic Plan*, *YSU Magazine*), as well as on the University's web site and in other electronic documents. Faculty, staff, and students promote the mission through positive experiences with the larger regional community in which YSU is located. Such enthusiasm has made YSU a focal point for open access and educational excellence

in the greater Youngstown area and, in the words of the University’s Vision Statement, “a catalyst for public engagement.”

Summary and Evaluation of Core Component 1c

Youngstown State University meets Core Component 1c: Understanding of—and support for—the mission pervade the organization.

The University’s commitment to be student-centered and teaching-focused is clear and well supported by faculty, staff, and administration. Strategic decisions are mission-driven; planning and budgeting priorities flow from and support the mission; goals of the administrative and academic subunits are congruent with the mission; and internal constituencies articulate the mission consistently, in words and actions.

Under Core Component 1c, an ongoing challenge has been helping constituencies understand the budget and the connections between budgeting and planning—matters discussed in more detail in Chapter 2, Criterion 2.

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.

Board of Trustees Policies and Structure

Id1. Board policies and practices document the board’s focus on the organization’s mission.

Id2. The board enables the organization’s chief administrative personnel to exercise effective leadership.

When Youngstown State University joined the Ohio system of state-assisted colleges and universities in 1965, the enabling legislation (*Ohio Revised Code*, Section 3356) established a Board of Trustees to “do all things necessary for the creation, proper maintenance, and successful continuous operation of the University.” The trustees are governed by Ohio state law and by the Youngstown State University Board of Trustees Bylaws (http://www.yosu.edu/accreditation/Resources/BOT_Bylaws_2006.pdf).

Appointed by the governor of Ohio, the members of the Youngstown State University Board of Trustees are predominantly local professionals and residents with particular interest in education and quality of life in the Mahoning Valley. Nine of the 11 trustees serve nine-year terms, which require a long-term commitment to serving the University. The two YSU student trustees, each of whom serves a two-year term, are also highly committed to the University and its mission, as is the Board secretary, a twelfth individual appointed by the Board.

Component 1d:

The organization’s governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the organization to fulfill its mission.

The trustees know and support the University's mission and goals. As noted under Core Component 1c, the 10 trustees who completed Part I of the 2006 Board of Trustees Self-Assessment Survey responded "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" to Likert-scale statement #16, "Board policies and practices show that the board's focus is on the organization's mission."

Multiple sections of the *Board of Trustees Bylaws* specify, under descriptions of Board duties, the responsibility to heed and take action on "institutional mission" and "strategic and master plans." As explained under Core Component 1a, the Youngstown State University Board of Trustees approved the current Mission Statement and related mission documents, including the *Centennial Strategic Plan*, between January 2001 and June 2002. Subsequently, the Board approved a series of plans that build on the *Centennial Strategic Plan* and position the University to achieve its mission, as noted under Core Component 1a, example of evidence 1a5. These plans include the *Enrollment Management Plan* (2002–04), the *Information Technology Master Plan* (2004), the *Centennial Campus Master Plan* (2006), and most recently the *Academic Strategic Plan, 2007–2013*.

Other documents, including agendas and minutes of quarterly Board of Trustees meetings and the committee meetings that precede them; annual Board-approved institutional budgets; and Board-approved policies in the *University Guidebook* and online policy updates (<http://www.ysu.edu/vpadmin/GDBK%20memo2.htm>), document the Board's focus on the University's mission. Minutes of Board and Board committee meetings are housed in the Office of the President on the second floor of Tod Hall. Full meeting minutes since 2006, plus "For the Record" summaries of the Board's actions between March 2003 and March 2006, are available via a link at <http://www.ysu.edu/trustees/index.shtml>.

The trustees' understanding of and support for the mission, broadly defined, are outlined under Core Component 1c. Their understanding of the relationship between the Board of Trustees and the University's chief administrative personnel is evident both in the Board's actions and in the following words from a letter, signed by Trustee Hai-Shiuh Wang (Board chair at the time), that prefaces the June 2006 revision of the Board *Bylaws*:

Each Trustee's actions and decisions will ultimately touch the lives of thousands of students, faculty, staff and regional communities. Each Trustee must pledge to apply his or her unique background, knowledge, energy and vision to working as part of a cohesive team to develop policies as well as to support the President and his/her administration, in order to reach the full institutional potential in an environment of limited resources.

The Board's rules of governance have been clearly stated in these *Bylaws*; however, in order for the Board to remain an efficient and

effective governing body, it should observe a number of “operating principles” as well. These operating principles include working in a collegial atmosphere. . . .

The letter goes on to note the importance of carrying out the Board’s “policy making” duties without “micromanaging.”

The trustees conduct annual assessments of the President and fulfill their legal and fiscal responsibilities to ensure the “maintenance” and “successful continuous operation of the University.” At the same time, they have supported the President and Cabinet-level officers during the difficult times of labor-management disputes and declines in state support. They evaluate and when possible support the University’s proposed mission-related initiatives, enabling administrative personnel to initiate long-term projects more quickly than might otherwise be possible. Board committee chairpersons and vice chairs meet with Cabinet-level administrators to review draft agendas before each regularly scheduled cycle of Board committee meetings, providing an opportunity for mutual interchange of ideas, recommendations for policy changes, and resolution of issues.

This ongoing process allows the administrative team to exercise its leadership. Quarterly Board committee meetings, quarterly Board of Trustees meetings, and specially called meetings of the Board provide constructive feedback and support for administrative recommendations and decisions, within guidelines of law and the *Board of Trustees Bylaws*. The Board and administrative personnel also hold annual retreats focusing on specific issues, allowing both parties opportunities for input.

All 10 of the trustees who completed the 2006 Board of Trustees Self-Assessment Survey responded positively to Likert-scale question #51, “I feel that the board enables the President and other chief administrative personnel to exercise effective leadership.” In turn, Criterion 1 Committee interviews with Cabinet members indicated that administrative personnel feel supported by the Board.

University Governance and Administrative Structures

Id3. The distribution of responsibilities as defined in governance structures, processes, and activities is understood and is implemented through delegated authority.

Id4. People within the governance and administrative structures are committed to the mission and appropriately qualified to carry out their defined responsibilities.

Id7. The organization evaluates its structures and processes regularly and strengthens them as needed.

The Ohio Board of Regents serves as the coordinating body for public institutions of higher education in Ohio. As noted under Core Component 1a, the new Chancellor of the Board of Regents created the University System of Ohio this past summer; however, governance of the state's institutions of higher education remains at the local level.

Thus, Youngstown State University is still governed by a local (but governor-appointed) Board of Trustees, which delegates authority for daily operation of the University to the President, as indicated under example of evidence 1d1. An organizational chart showing the upper-level administration, University divisions, and administrative officers appears in **Figure 1-5**. Organizational charts for the five divisions of the University are housed in the Office of Human Resources.

Individuals in the administrative and governance structures of the University have appropriate credentials for their positions, as documented in vitae detailing their educational and job-related experiences, filed in the Office of Human Resources. Although a few individuals have been promoted from within the University, most administrators are selected through careful search processes (including credential checks) and must meet criteria noted in the job postings. In most circumstances, search committees include faculty, staff, and, when appropriate, students and/or members of the external community. Conventional search processes have been modified only in select cases, through policies and procedures approved by the Board of Trustees (e.g., the Strategic Hires policy and the use of outside consulting firms to pre-screen candidates for certain positions).

Brief descriptions of the University's governance and administrative structures follow.

The YSU Board of Trustees

At the time of the previous accreditation, the work of the Board of Trustees was distributed among 11 standing committees, most of which had three members. In 2001, the Board undertook a thorough review of its *Bylaws* and governance structure, concluding that the number of committees and meetings had become unwieldy and that the committees were too small to accomplish the work that needed to be done. The Board thus amended the *Bylaws* to facilitate a more effective committee structure. The revised *Bylaws*

- reduced the number of standing committees to four—Academic and Student Affairs, External Relations, Finance and Facilities, and Internal Affairs—which meet quarterly before the quarterly meeting of the Board;
- created two special committees: the Executive Committee and the Trusteeship Committee; and
- provided that all trustees and student trustees be voting members of all Board standing and special committees, unless otherwise stated by the *Bylaws*.

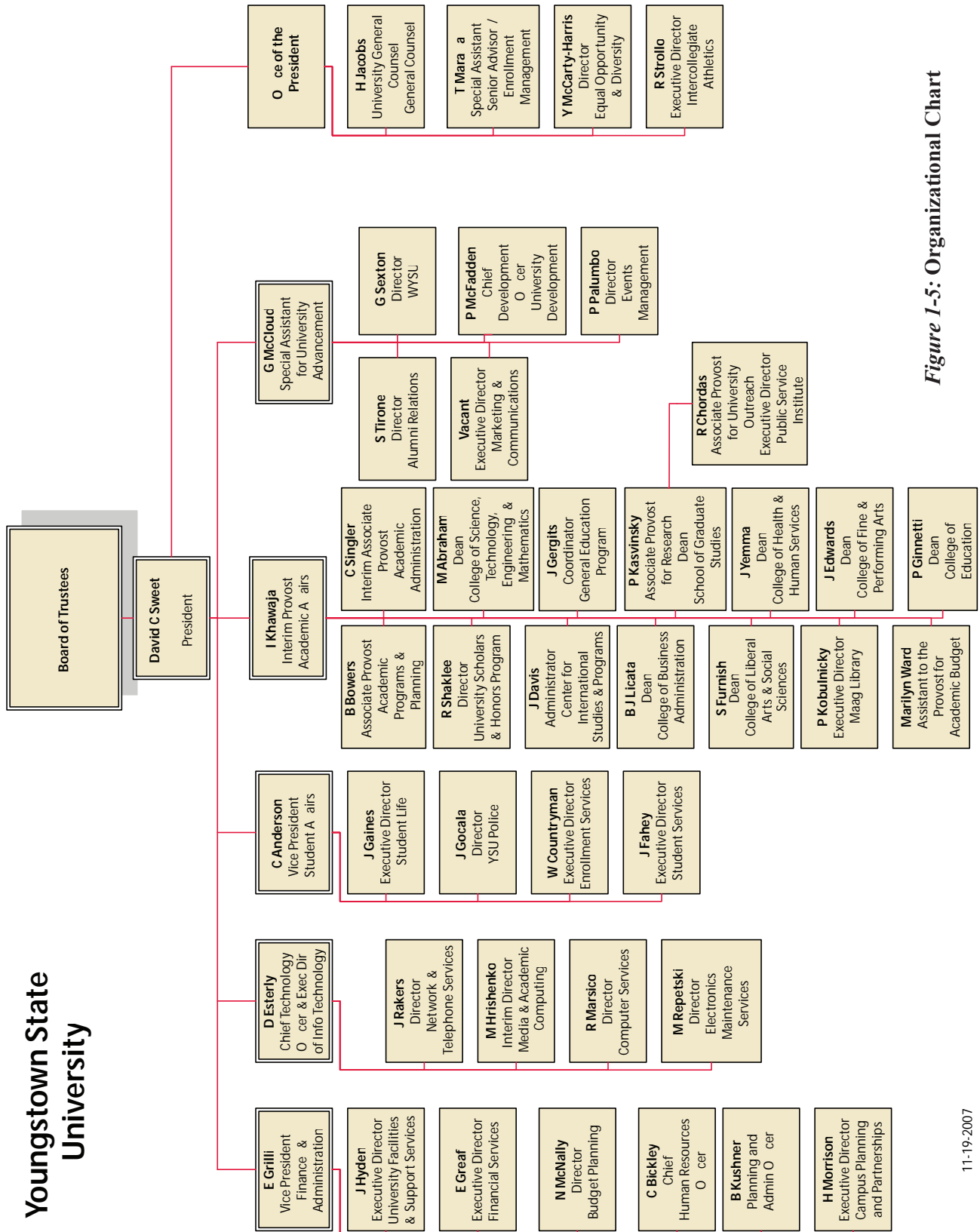


Figure 1-5: Organizational Chart

As a result, all Board committees except the Executive Committee (and the two subcommittees noted below) now function as “committees of the whole,” consisting of 11 members.

In 2004, in accordance with new Ohio legislation, the Board amended the *Bylaws* again to create two standing *subcommittees* of the Finance and Facilities Committee: an Audit Subcommittee and an Investment Subcommittee. The structure and responsibilities of all committees and subcommittees are outlined in Article III, Section 9, of the current *Bylaws*, published June 23, 2006 (http://www.yosu.edu/accreditation/Resources/BOT_Bylaws_2006.pdf).

The Office of the President

The *Ohio Revised Code*, Section 3356.03, authorizes the Board of Trustees to “. . . employ, fix the compensation of, and remove the President. . . .”

University Guidebook policy 9001.01, Revised, outlines the responsibilities of the executive officers, including the President. As the “chief executive officer of the University,” the President is “responsible to the Board of Trustees for the overall operation of the institution.” The President

- “executes the power and authority of the Board . . . in leadership, planning, and development of the institution”;
- delegates “primary responsibility” for divisional management to the heads of the divisions; and
- “expects the faculty, through the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs, to share the responsibility” for academic matters, such as recommending academic policies, curriculum, and procedures.

In addition to the President, the Office of the President includes the Office of the General Counsel, a Special Assistant to the President who is also the senior advisor for implementing the *Enrollment Management Plan*, the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity, and Intercollegiate Athletics.

Structurally, the University has **five divisions**, the heads of which report directly to the President:

- **Academic Affairs**, headed by the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs;
- **Student Affairs**, headed by the Vice President for Student Affairs;
- **Finance and Administration**, headed by the Vice President for Finance and Administration;
- **Information Technology Services**, headed by the Chief Technology Officer and Executive Director of Information Technology; and

- **University Advancement**, headed by the Special Assistant to the President for University Advancement.

The executive officers of the five divisions, the General Counsel, the Director of Equal Opportunity and Diversity, the Executive Director of Intercollegiate Athletics, and the Special Assistant to the President serve on the nine-member **President’s Cabinet**, which serves as a forum to discuss institution-wide issues. The Cabinet meets weekly to focus on an agenda developed by the President in consultation with the Cabinet.

The Division of Academic Affairs

The Provost, responsible for promoting excellence in the faculty and academic programs of the University, is the “chief academic officer” and head of the Division of Academic Affairs. The **Division of Academic Affairs** includes

- **Six colleges:** the **Williamson College of Business**, the **Beeghly College of Education**, the **College of Fine and Performing Arts**, the **Bitonte College of Health and Human Services**, the **College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences**, and the **College of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics**, each of which is administered by a dean; and
- The **School of Graduate Studies and Research**, which is headed by the Associate Provost for Research and Dean, Graduate Studies and Research.

The deans, as administrative officers of the University, are responsible for leadership and management of their college or school. They also serve as part of the University’s leadership team, responsible for the overall direction of the institution; as primary advisors to the Provost; and as liaisons between the Office of the Provost and the chairs of the academic departments, which house academic programs.

Also reporting to the Provost are the Associate Provost for Academic Programs and Planning, the Associate Provost for Academic Administration, the Assistant to the Provost for Academic Budget, the Executive Director of **Maag Library**, the Director of the **Center for International Studies and Programs**, the Director of the **University Scholars and Honors Programs**, and the Coordinator of **General Education**. The Associate Provost for University Outreach oversees Metro College non-credit courses and reports to the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies and Research.

The **Council of Deans**—which meets at least twice a month to focus on an agenda developed by the Provost in consultation with council members—consists of the deans, the associate provosts, the Assistant to the Provost for Academic Budget, and the Executive Director of Maag Library.

The Division of Student Affairs

The Vice President for Student Affairs, the “chief student personnel officer of the University,” leads the Division of Student Affairs and works with the head of the Division of Academic Affairs to “provide a comprehensive and integrated university experience to a diverse student body.” The **Division of Student Affairs** includes

- **Student Life**, headed by the Executive Director of Student Life;
- **Enrollment Services**, headed by the Executive Director of Enrollment Services;
- **Student Services**, headed by the Executive Director of Student Services; and
- **University Police**, headed by the Director and Chief of University Police.

Student Life comprises seven departments that provide services to support academic success and retention. These services include programming and support for social, cultural, recreational, and academic areas. Five of the departments—Campus Recreation and Student Programming; Career Services; Center for Student Progress; Comprehensive Testing Center; and Student Diversity Programs—serve currently enrolled students. Two additional departments—Academic Achievers, and Upward Bound/SCOPE (Summer College/Occupational Preview Experience)—provide pre-college programs. Many of the student services are discussed under Criterion 3.

Enrollment Services includes the Offices of Undergraduate Admissions, Financial Aid and Scholarships, and Registration and Records. These offices foster programs and initiatives to recruit, admit, and register students and to maintain accurate records of their academic history.

Student Services includes Housing and Residence Life, the University Bookstore, Kilcawley Center (the University’s student center), Student Health Services, and the Student Ombudsperson. In addition, Student Services oversees contracted services on campus, including dining, vending, and copying services.

A **Student Affairs Advisory Committee**—composed of the Vice President for Student Affairs, Executive Directors, Directors, and the Associate Director of Student Life—meets periodically and advises the Vice President on matters affecting the Division.

The Division of Finance and Administration

The Division of Finance and Administration is responsible for the stewardship and coordination of the University’s physical, financial, and human resources. The **Division of Finance and Administration** includes

- **University Facilities and Support Services**, headed by the Executive Director of University Facilities and Support Services;
- **Financial Services**, headed by the Executive Director of Financial Services;
- **Budget Planning**, headed by the Director of Budget Planning;
- **Human Resources**, headed by the Chief Human Resources Officer;
- **Planning and Administration**, headed by the Planning and Administration Officer; and
- **Campus Planning and Partnerships**, headed by the Executive Director of Campus Planning and Partnerships, who leads the *Centennial Campus Master Plan* effort detailed under Criterion 2.

The financial offices work together closely but have distinct functions.

Financial Services is responsible for financial *operations* (i.e., controller and treasury functions), including general accounting, grants accounting, materials management/purchasing, university receivables, accounts payable, payroll, cash and debt management, and investments. **Budget Planning**—in consultation with relevant parties—develops, manages, and communicates the University’s budget to all University constituencies.

The Division of Information Technology Services

The Chief Technology Officer and the Division of Information Technology Services are responsible for overseeing and administering the University’s technological infrastructure, including implementation of the *Information Technology Master Plan* (discussed under Criterion 2). The **Division of Information Technology Services** includes

- **Media and Academic Computing Services**, headed by the Interim Director of Media and Academic Computing;
- **Computer Services**, headed by the Director of Computer Services;
- **Network and Telephone Services**, headed by the Director of Network and Telephone Services; and
- **Electronic Maintenance Services**, headed by the Director of Electronic Maintenance Services.

Media and Academic Computing Services provides for the multimedia and computing needs of the YSU community, providing materials and assistance to augment learning. Areas within Media and Academic Computing include Academic Computing, the Instructional Technology Center, Interactive Distance Learning and Classroom Support, Media Design, Mobile Multimedia Delivery Services, Multimedia Equipment Repair, Photography, and Videography. **Computer Services**, on the other hand, delivers, maintains, and

ensures the integrity of electronic data through centralized computer applications and reporting tools, primarily to support administrative and student services areas.

The **Technology Cabinet**—composed of the Chief Technology Officer and the Directors of Network and Telephone Services, Computer Services, Media and Academic Computing Services, and Electronics Maintenance Services—meets biweekly to discuss opportunities for improvement, to assess work plans and project status, and to communicate and provide counsel on matters related to technology.

The Division of University Advancement

The Special Assistant for University Advancement and the Division of University Advancement are responsible for advancing the University through cultivation of constructive relationships among alumni; friends of the University; community members and leaders; political officials at the local, county, state, and federal levels; and potential financial donors to the University, as well as internal constituencies. The Division is responsible for media relations and advertising, including developing and placing preferred messages about the University and managing crisis communication if and when necessary.


The **Division of University Advancement** includes

- **Marketing and Communications**, headed by an executive director (position currently vacant);
- **University Development**, headed by the Chief Development Officer;
- **Events Management**, headed by the Director of Events Management;
- **Alumni Relations**, headed by the Director of Alumni Relations; and
- **WYSU-FM**, headed by the Director of WYSU-FM.

A divisional advisory committee consisting of the Director of Alumni Relations; the Chief Development Officer; the Director of Development; the Manager of News and Information; the Director of Events Management; the Director of WYSU-FM; the Administrative Assistant of the Division; and the Special Assistant to the President for University Advancement (Chair) meets twice a month, and more frequently if necessary, to discuss Division matters.

Governance and Advisory Bodies

The University's governance and advisory bodies include a number of councils and committees, some of which (e.g., the President's Cabinet, the Council of Deans, division advisory committees) have been noted in the preceding description of the University's administrative structure. Brief descriptions of other significant governance and advisory bodies follow:

- 
- ***Executive and Administrative Staff Council:*** The Executive and Administrative Staff Council (formerly the Administrative Advisory Council) includes members of the President’s Cabinet, the associate provosts, deans, executive directors, and selected directors. The Council’s purpose is to discuss topics of importance to the entire campus, such as strategic initiatives, institutional policy revision, and other significant issues. The Council promotes communication across and within divisions. Meetings of the Council are scheduled twice per semester, or more often if needed.
 - ***Academic Senate:*** The Academic Senate has “primary responsibility for the development of new policies, or changes in existing policies, integral and essential to the academic functions and activities of the University.” The Senate also has the right to make studies and to recommend to the administration changes based on these studies. Unlike senates at many other universities, YSU’s Academic Senate includes voting members who are faculty, administrators, and students, representing a broad spectrum of those interested in the academic arena.

Senate members elect a chair of the Senate annually. An Executive Committee oversees activities of the Senate. Most of the Senate’s work is done through two types of committees: chartered committees, and ad hoc committees created by the Executive Committee. The Academic Senate *Charter* and *Bylaws*, which outline the structure and responsibilities of the Senate and its committees, are available on the Senate web site (<http://www.ysu.edu/acad-senate/>).

- ***Graduate Council:*** Graduate Council—composed of one graduate-program director from each college, one representative from each college’s Graduate Studies Committee, two at-large members, one at-large member from the College of Education, and one student member—reviews and makes recommendations about policies and regulations of the School of Graduate Studies and Research. The Council serves as a channel of communication between graduate faculty and the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research.

Graduate Council reviews each graduate program every five years and makes recommendations about continuance or elimination of programs. Council members chair the graduate advisory committees: Curriculum, Graduate Student Recruitment and Retention, Policy, Assistantships Allocation, and Grievance. Specific duties of Graduate Council and its advisory committees are outlined in the *School of Graduate Studies Policy Handbook*, which is posted on the web site of the School of Graduate Studies and Research under “Resources for Administrative Use” (<http://www.ysu.edu/GradSchool/>; the *Handbook* is currently being revised to reflect the new college structure).

- ***Collective-Bargaining Units:*** Four unions—the Youngstown State University Chapter of the Ohio Education Association (YSU-OEA, the faculty union); the Youngstown State University Association of Profession-

al/Administrative Staff (YSU-APAS); the Youngstown State University Association of Classified Employees (YSU-ACE); and the Youngstown State University Fraternal Order of Police (YSU-FOP)—represent approximately one thousand YSU employees. Collective bargaining allows employees to voice concerns and to participate in decisions affecting the work environment. The unions negotiate such matters as reassigned time; working conditions; performance evaluation; sabbaticals and other leaves; benefits, including health care and tuition remission; and salaries. In addition, positions on a number of University committees, including certain search committees, are reserved for union members.

Agreements outlining the rights and responsibilities of employees in the bargaining units are distributed to employees and posted on the Human Resources web site at http://cc.yzu.edu/hr/Contract_Agreements.htm.

- **College and Academic Department Governance:** Article 9 of the *YSU/YSU-OEA Agreement* outlines procedures for college and department governance, as well as the rights and responsibilities of faculty members. Each college has a Dean’s Advisory Council, which “takes part in the development and review of . . . policies” and “serves in an advisory capacity to the respective dean.” In turn, each department has a “governance document that describes its participatory decision-making policies and procedures for . . . shared responsibilities.”

The *Agreement* outlines 14 rights and responsibilities shared by the department chair and the faculty, plus five matters that are the “prerogative of the Administration” (pp. 28–29). Shared responsibilities of the faculty and department chair include matters related to curriculum; summer teaching; travel funds; development of academic goals; expectations for tenure and promotion; evaluating colleagues for promotion; library acquisitions; department budget requests; faculty recruitment, hiring, and evaluation; office assignments; departmental advising; workload; and mentoring, among others. Department meetings must be held at least once per term during the regular academic year.

- **Student Government Association:** YSU students are represented by the Student Government Association, which operates under constitutional powers granted by the University. The legislative branch of Student Government is composed of representatives from the six undergraduate colleges and the School of Graduate Studies and Research, in proportion to the enrollments in each of these units. Student Government exercises the power to conduct student elections, to recommend students to serve as members of joint faculty-student committees, and to supervise programs financed from its operations. This body also selects the two nominees for student positions on the University Board of Trustees. The organization of the legislative and executive branches is detailed in the *Bylaws* (<http://www.yzu.edu/sga/charters.php>), which are reviewed annually and revised if necessary.

For a more complete list of representative University councils and committees and their individual members, see Appendix I of the self-study.

Evaluation of Structures and Processes

The Higher Learning Commission self-study provides an opportunity for comprehensive institutional evaluation, but the University has many other, more frequent evaluation processes. In addition to, and in conjunction with, the assessment processes described under Criteria 3 and 4 (e.g., the assessment of non-academic units; the assessment of student-learning outcomes; academic program review; program-specific accreditation reviews), the University constantly evaluates its structures and processes and makes periodic changes to strengthen the organization.

Over the past decade, a number of structural changes have resulted from changes in personnel—some strategic, some the result of labor-management issues—and from a variety of internal and external evaluation processes, including:

- the report of the 1998 North Central Association site team;
- recommendations of staff from the Office of the Auditor of State, who reviewed operations of Youngstown State University at President Sweet's request and issued a *Performance Assessment* in May 2001;
- the report of the Operations Improvement Task Force, which subsequently evaluated and prioritized recommendations from the State Auditor's review; and
- ongoing planning processes at all levels of the University.

The introductory chapter of the self-study document outlines structural/divisional changes resulting from some of these planning and evaluation processes.

Most organizational changes have been made collegially and in consultation with appropriate advisory bodies. Although some members of the campus community cite particular actions (e.g., creation of the new College of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics—STEM) as decisions made at the executive level *before* consultation with faculty and staff, committees with broad representation have helped plan and implement changes. Reorganization at the college and departmental levels (e.g., the recent reorganization of the Department of Communication and Theater into two separate departments) frequently derives from recommendations of discipline-specific accrediting bodies, program advisory boards, or periodic program reviews.

Before making major procedural and organizational changes, the University generally seeks advice from outside agencies or consultants (e.g., space-utilization studies, State Auditor's report, energy-savings audits, community-

college study, SCT *Banner* consultants, the state's Interuniversity Council, the Ohio Faculty Council); University research entities (e.g., Public Service Institute image survey); and/or internal planning committees (e.g., the report of the STEM Transition Team).

Curriculum and the Integrity of Academic Processes

Id5. Faculty and other academic leaders share responsibility for the coherence of the curriculum and the integrity of academic processes.

Undergraduate curriculum matters and academic policies and procedures are guided primarily by the University's Academic Senate. The Senate approves undergraduate curricula, academic policies, and procedures.

Undergraduate course and curriculum proposals must be developed by faculty members and approved by departmental and college curriculum committees before proceeding to relevant Senate committees. The *Bylaws* of the Academic Senate charge two committees—the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee and the Academic Programs Committee—with reviewing and approving undergraduate course and curriculum proposals. These committees consist primarily of faculty members, plus a few administrative and student members and a representative of the academic advising staff. Proposals for General Education courses must also be approved by the Senate's General Education Committee, which includes faculty and students.

After preliminary approval by the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (and, if needed, the General Education Committee), proposals are circulated to deans and department chairs to be shared with faculty University-wide; reported on the Senate agenda; and recorded in the Senate minutes. Final approval of undergraduate courses occurs at the Senate level.

Proposals for new programs (majors, minors, and certificates) must undergo more extensive review. After approval by the Academic Programs Committee, undergraduate program proposals are circulated to deans and department chairs to be shared with faculty University-wide; reported on the Senate agenda; and recorded in the Senate minutes, just as course proposals are. However, proposals for new undergraduate programs must then be presented to the Board of Trustees for final internal approval and sent to the state for review and approval by the Ohio Board of Regents (see Bylaw 6.2b–c). (Recently proposed changes in the state's program-approval processes may necessitate changes in YSU's internal procedures during spring 2008 or soon thereafter.)

At the graduate level, the graduate program director or chair of the department submits faculty-developed proposals through the dean of the college to the college's Graduate Studies Committee. If the college committee approves a proposal, the committee forwards it to the School of Graduate Studies

and Research, which in turn forwards proposals to the Graduate Curriculum Committee (which consists primarily of faculty) and to departments offering graduate courses.

The Graduate Curriculum Committee reviews the proposed curricular action and any objections before sending a recommendation to Graduate Council—which also consists primarily of faculty—for final disposition (*School of Graduate Studies Policy Handbook*, pp. 27–28). Final approval of graduate courses occurs internally. Proposals for new graduate programs must proceed to the YSU Board of Trustees, relevant state committees, and the Ohio Board of Regents.

In addition to approving courses and programs, faculty members evaluate academic programs through periodic program reviews, self-studies for specialized accreditations, and assessment procedures developed by the academic departments.

Academic policies and procedures must also be approved by relevant committees (e.g., the Academic Senate’s Academic Standards Committee) and the Academic Senate or the Graduate Council. Senate minutes and a list of Senate committees are posted on the Senate web site; graduate committees are outlined in the *School of Graduate Studies Policy Handbook* posted on the web site of the School of Graduate Studies and Research.

Communication and Participatory Governance

Id6. Effective communication facilitates governance processes and activities.

As indicated earlier in the chapter under **Governance and Advisory Bodies**, the University has many governance and administrative structures to facilitate communication and cooperative decision-making. Article 1.2 of the *YSU/YSU-OEA Agreement* speaks specifically to the importance of participatory governance:

The parties reaffirm their mutual belief in and acceptance of participatory governance as a means of pursuing their mutual goals of excellence in education and in academic standards. The parties . . . believe that it is essential to create an academic environment that uses a participatory governance system that provides an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect, recognizes and uses individual expertise and knowledge in innovative ways, and employs cooperative problem solving at all levels of the academic community. (p. 1)

Individuals who addressed Core Component 1d in the report of the Criterion 1 Committee wrote that collaborative decision-making and participatory governance have functioned well at YSU until the past few years. They noted that a number of documents (e.g., the *University Guidebook*, *Academic Senate Bylaws*, union agreements, *Code . . . of Student Rights, Responsibilities*

ties, and Conduct) clearly outline the specific rights and responsibilities of campus constituencies and define an environment conducive to cooperative decision-making.

Citing the strikes by faculty and classified staff in fall 2005 and results of the March 2007 Campus Climate Survey—e.g., 59.8% of respondents disagreed that “The University supports the concept of shared governance”—the report also contended, however, that participatory governance and open communication have broken down during recent years of labor-management tension. The report noted that the University Ombudsperson has worked effectively to help resolve student concerns and that a similar position to assist staff would create a more positive atmosphere for support personnel.

The report mentioned several positive steps that have been taken to address labor-management tension, such as formation of the Labor Management Council (LMC) in spring 2006. The LMC was created as a forum for upper administration, the union presidents, and student representatives to improve communication and relationships among administration and the unions. As noted on the LMC web site, the group is attempting “to improve the current working climate on campus” by

- fostering open, accurate, and consistent communication;
- defining common interests;
- identifying and implementing solutions to systemic challenges; and
- recognizing and responding to opportunities that will lead to a positive approach to negotiations. (<http://www.yzu.edu/lmc/>)

The report also acknowledged constructive efforts by the administration to engage in interactive information-gathering and dissemination; the wide availability of campus communication vehicles, including online and hard-copy publications; and the positive role of campus advisory bodies.

Members of the President’s Cabinet, in turn, have acknowledged campus dissatisfaction about the application of shared or participatory governance. However, they attribute the dissatisfaction to differences in opinion about the meaning and application of participatory governance.

The upper administration contends that “participatory governance is alive and well” at Youngstown State University and cites representative examples, including the following:

- The Academic Senate provides an environment where all groups can consider issues at a single forum. Senate committees reflect the composition of the Senate as a whole and enable open discussion of proposals before final language is brought to the Senate for approval. Communication is an important part of an effective shared-governance model. President

Sweet meets regularly with the Chair of the Academic Senate, meets when requested with the Senate Executive Committee, and addressed the Senate five times during the 2006–07 academic year and at all meetings during fall semester of the current academic year.

- From the *Centennial Strategic Plan* to specific plans on enrollment management and technology, committees composed of faculty, staff, students, and community members, when appropriate, developed the major institutional plans from inception to the final draft. These committees also held numerous forums at which feedback was received. Reports on progress on the plans are distributed to the campus, posted on University web sites, and/or presented at public meetings.

Shared governance, upper administrators suggest, does not mean an obligation to approve all recommendations that come from faculty and staff deliberations. A resolution proposed (and subsequently tabled) in the Academic Senate in April 2007 referred to administrative decisions “regarding promotion, tenure, hiring, departmental governance, and other vital elements of the life of this . . . university” that “have destroyed even the faintest notion of participatory governance and shared responsibility” (<http://www.yzu.edu/acad-senate/archives.htm>). Cabinet members, quoting the words of late-Provost Robert K. Herbert, contend that the decision-making processes did not violate shared governance: “Participatory governance is not about majority rule. . . . The real purpose of shared or participatory governance is to make sure that decisions made by the President or Trustees are well-informed by input from the appropriate segments of the academic community.”

The administration does accept the premise, however, that shared governance, like other university practices and processes, is subject to review and can be improved. The current negotiations offer an opportunity to address such issues within the context of the collective-bargaining agreements. Cabinet members point to the newly formed Budget Information Committee and to increased direct communication by the President, in the form of campus messages and participation in meetings and forums at which questions are typically invited, as efforts to facilitate improved and interactive communication.

Summary and Evaluation of Core Component 1d

Youngstown State University meets Core Component 1d: The University’s governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the University to fulfill its mission.

Board policies and practices support the University’s mission and administrative leadership; governance processes are well defined and implemented through delegated authority; personnel at all levels of the University are committed to the mission and qualified to carry out their responsibilities; the

University evaluates its structures regularly and strengthens them as needed; faculty share responsibility for development and coherence of the curriculum; and structures are in place to facilitate effective communication.

Nevertheless, there are differences of opinion about how collaborative the University's decision-making processes have been in recent years. The University is attempting to address this challenge by acknowledging differences of opinion and providing mechanisms, both formal and informal, to foster meaningful discussion and cooperation. The Higher Learning Commission self-study has provided an ongoing forum for discussing issues and proposing solutions. From the Labor Management Council to the Budget Information Committee, to academic strategic planning and a new approach to negotiations, all constituencies are making a concerted effort to resolve differences and focus on common goals. As of fall 2007, such measures appear to be bearing fruit.

Core Component 1e:

The organization upholds and protects its integrity.

Core Component 1e:

The organization upholds and protects its integrity.

Activities Related to Mission

1e1. The activities of the organization are congruent with its mission.

Youngstown State University engages in hundreds of activities consistent with the mission and detailed elsewhere in this self-study document in chapters 3, 4, and 5. As noted under Core Component 1c, the activities of the University reflect priorities outlined in mission documents such as the *Centennial Strategic Plan*, subsequent plans that grew out of the *Centennial Strategic Plan*, and the recent *Academic Strategic Plan*. At the college and department levels, activities are guided by plans and governance documents that, in turn, are based on the University's mission. For specific activities of the University and its units, see the respective annual reports, minutes of the Board of Trustees and Board committee meetings, annual progress reports for the *Centennial Strategic Plan*, and the rest of this self-study report.

Legal and Responsible Behavior

1e2. The board exercises its responsibility to the public to ensure that the organization operates legally, responsibly, and with fiscal honesty.

1e3. The organization understands and abides by local, state, and federal laws and regulations applicable to it (or by laws and regulations established by federally recognized sovereign entities).

The structure of the Board of Trustees and its committees, described under examples of evidence 1d1, 2, and 3, is designed to ensure that the organization operates legally, responsibly, and with fiscal honesty. Board actions com-

ply with *The Ohio Revised Code* and other applicable laws, as documented in minutes of the quarterly Board of Trustees and Board committee meetings.

The University makes every effort to comply with all applicable local, state, and federal laws. YSU maintains two on-staff lawyers, one of whom sits on President Sweet's Cabinet and is an assistant state attorney general. The University also consults regularly with the State Attorney General's office, hires outside consultants when deemed necessary, and consults city and state government officials through the office of Special Assistant to the President Dr. George McCloud.

As noted under Criterion 2, YSU's financial statements must undergo annual audits by independent auditors, and the University's financial-aid processes are reviewed periodically by both the federal government and the Ohio Board of Regents. YSU's Office of Financial Services compiles recommendations from the University's internal and external auditors and prepares an ongoing Audits Timeline Matrix, which specifies how the University plans to address each audit recommendation. The Audit Subcommittee of the Board of Trustees reviews the matrix at least annually. In addition, the two-subcommittee structure of the Board of Trustees' Finance and Facilities Committee ensures a checks-and-balances system whereby investment and audit functions of the Committee operate independently from each other.

Like many other universities across the nation, Youngstown State University has drafted policies and implemented procedures to maintain the integrity of University data systems and to protect the identity of students and employees, in compliance with FERPA and other laws. Both the Office of Institutional Research and Policy Analysis and the Technology Services Division are cognizant of applicable laws and regulations.

Board Policy 4009.01—Use of University Computing Resources—is being updated to incorporate recommendations by external auditors and will be presented to the Board of Trustees at the spring 2008 meetings. The Technology Services Division is also developing internal standards for security of YSU's information infrastructure, including network and computing systems and privacy-related data processed or stored on YSU systems. The Division routinely conducts vulnerability tests and third-party assessments to validate risk-mitigation efforts and discover new vulnerabilities. Data are backed up daily and weekly, with off-site storage of data tapes. Annual audits are conducted with assistance from both internal and external auditors.

Compliance with state and federal anti-discrimination laws is monitored by the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity, the Office of Human Resources, and the Office of the General Counsel. The Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity seeks to ensure that no one—whether a student, an employee, a visitor to campus, or a job applicant—is subjected to sexual harassment or to discrimination based on race, color, sex, sexual orientation,

gender identity and/or expression, age, religion, national origin, disability, or status as a disabled or Vietnam Era veteran. Similarly, compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act is monitored by the Office of Disability Services and the Office of the General Counsel.

Examples of evidence 1e5–6 and Chapter 6 (**Federal Compliance**) of the self-study report outline measures to ensure responsible behavior and compliance with a number of specific laws and regulations.

Policies Regarding Rights and Responsibilities of Internal Constituencies

1e4. The organization consistently implements clear and fair policies regarding the rights and responsibilities of each of its internal constituencies.

The University's policies regarding a wide range of issues are spelled out in online and paper documents. The *University Guidebook*, a compendium of Board-approved policies; *The Code: A Handbook of Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct*; *Your Right to Know*, a tabloid discussed in the Federal Compliance section; the *School of Graduate Studies Policy Book*; and the four union contracts are the primary documents outlining policies on the rights and responsibilities of internal constituencies. Examples of evidence 1b4, 1d3, 1d6, and 1e8 and the Federal Compliance section of the self-study report discuss implementation of these policies, as well as procedures for resolving grievances.

Policies are implemented as consistently as possible, although disagreements about implementation occasionally arise. Logs in the Office of Human Resources indicate that the overall number of grievances over implementation of policies has decreased since the strikes in fall 2005, though the number of faculty grievances increased in 2006–07, in part because the YSU-OEA filed multiple grievances over a single issue.

Each of the four union contracts delineates procedures for due process, and the report of the Criterion 1 Committee notes that outside arbiters have ruled in favor of the University in almost all grievances that have proceeded to arbitration. The Office of Human Resources and the Office of the General Counsel maintain records of all grievances and arbitrations.

Policies and procedures concerning the rights and responsibilities of internal constituencies are updated as needed, and a thorough revision of the *University Guidebook* is currently underway, in preparation for online posting. Frequent updating, online indexing/searching, and full online access to *Guidebook* policies will facilitate both knowledge of policies and procedures and consistent application.

Integrity of Cocurricular and Auxiliary Activities

Ie5. The organization's structures and processes allow it to ensure the integrity of its cocurricular and auxiliary activities.

University reporting structures and Board-approved policies delineate responsibility for cocurricular and auxiliary activities.

Athletics

YSU's Intercollegiate Athletics Mission Statement, excerpted below, reflects the department's emphasis on integrity:

The Intercollegiate Athletics Department is committed to:

- Welfare of student-athletes
- Academic integrity
- Gender equity
- Diversity of student-athletes and staff
- Sportsmanship and ethical integrity by student-athletes, staff, and boosters
- Fiscal integrity
- Community outreach

The Office of Intercollegiate Athletics employs a full-time associate director who is responsible for compliance with federal, state, and NCAA regulations and for reporting athletics-related information to the Office of Institutional Research and Policy Analysis. The Executive Director of Intercollegiate Athletics, who reports directly to the President of the University, makes quarterly reports to YSU's Board of Trustees Internal Affairs Committee. In addition, the academic advisor for student-athletes serves on the University-wide Academic Advising Council, both to help ensure student-athletes' compliance with University regulations and to inform other academic advisors about external regulations that pertain specifically to athletes. The Office of Intercollegiate Athletics uses YSU's portal announcement system periodically to inform academic advisors, faculty, and administrators about NCAA and other regulations.

In 2005, external review by the Horizon League's Assistant Commissioner for Compliance and Legal Affairs found YSU's compliance with NCAA rules "commendable." During the past 10 years, the University, through its internal processes, discovered and reported to the Association one infraction of NCAA regulations. The NCAA, accepting the report and the University's self-imposed penalties in 2000, imposed no penalties of its own. The University maintained full certification and successfully completed the periodic re-

certification process in 2007 (the self-study, with detailed information about rules compliance, documented academic integrity, gender equity, and the Board of Trustees-approved Minority Opportunity Plan, is available online at <http://www.yсу.edu/sports/compliance/certification/SelfStudyDraftFINALApril2006.pdf>).

Student Organizations

The Office of Student Life sets guidelines for the formation and functioning of student organizations, which are detailed in *The Code: A Handbook of Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct*. All student organizations must be registered and have a slate of officers, a faculty/staff advisor, at least six charter members, and a statement of purpose. Student organizations are required to reregister annually to maintain their approved status. They must follow University regulations concerning travel, safety, use of alcohol, etc.

Auxiliaries

The University subsidizes some auxiliary functions, such as the bookstore, parking, and University housing, which operate under the general direction of a full-time University staff member. The main privately operated auxiliary, Sodexo food services, is subject to a bid proposal every five years and operates under the auspices of Kilcawley Center, the University's student center. Contracts for external auxiliary services are reviewed by the University counsel before being finalized.

Fairness with External Constituencies

1e6. The organization deals fairly with its external constituencies.

The University has clear policies for engaging fairly with outside contractors, consultants, political entities, and the general public. The University is fair and consistent in negotiating contracts with auxiliaries, renting space, and negotiating agreements with outside entities that provide educational experiences. As a public institution, the University is obligated to abide by the state ethics laws and to pay close attention to the problems, questions, and suggestions of its constituencies. Below are some examples of how the University manages relationships with outside agencies and individuals:

- The University informs the public of scheduled Board of Trustees meetings through media advisories sent to all area media outlets.
- The University employs two full-time attorneys to handle legal aspects of its operations and has access to attorneys in the office of the State Attorney General. As noted earlier, YSU's General Counsel is an assistant state attorney general. In addition, YSU's Director of Equal Opportunity and Diversity holds a J.D. degree.

■ *"The Youngstown State University College of Fine and Performing Arts has provided an exemplary role model for Mahoning Valley institutions. The college has provided value to both students and the community through the presentation of public performances and events on the campus and at the Ford Family Recital Hall."*

— Patricia Syak,
Chief Executive Officer
of the Youngstown
Symphony Society

- Search and hiring procedures are conducted through the Office of Human Resources, in conjunction with the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity. Searches operate within strict guidelines set by the YSU Board of Trustees, *Ohio Revised Code* and state civil service rules, and existing contracts with the University's four labor unions.
- YSU's purchasing rules mirror the law on purchasing goods and services. The University's bid procedures follow *Ohio Revised Code* and YSU Board of Trustees policies; procedures are described in detail on the Materials Management website at <http://www.ysu.edu/matmgmt/>. The site includes conflict-of-interest regulations for University employees, a list of minority-owned businesses, bid procedures for clients and vendors, and other pertinent information aimed at ensuring open and fair purchasing.
- The current bid floor for services is \$50,000, raised in 2006 from \$10,000. The University also belongs to an Interuniversity Purchasing Group that shares information among Ohio state-university purchasing groups, thus providing checks and balances to ensure conformity with pertinent rules and regulations.
- The Controlling Board of the State of Ohio will not approve land acquisitions unless the University obtains one independent certified appraisal for purchases less than \$100,000, and two independent certified appraisals for purchases over \$100,000. The Controlling Board is hesitant to approve purchases for more than the appraised value. Typically, YSU seeks to purchase property at or near the appraised value. Land acquisitions for the new College of Business project and the Smoky Hollow development follow this principle.
- All parties have been adequately represented throughout the University's partnerships with Wick Neighbors, Inc.; the City of Youngstown; and the Youngstown City School District (see Criterion 5). The University's partnerships continue to grow stronger and have resulted in significant benefits to all parties.
- Although educational affiliation agreements with outside entities (e.g., hospitals or clinics) are processed by the departments responsible for the educational or clinical experience, they must be approved by the Office of the General Counsel. Generally, the outside entity provides the University with a proposed agreement. The Office of the General Counsel negotiates any provisions needed to protect the interests of the University.
- The Office of Environmental and Occupational Health and Safety (OEOHS) works with the Office of the General Counsel to ensure compliance with local, state, and federal laws related to health and safety, as well as with Board of Trustees Policy 4010.01—University Health and Safety. Visitors to campus are welcomed by a beautiful and safe campus environment. Signage is available both outside and inside buildings.

■ *"As director of the Butler Institute of American Art for over 26 years, I have seen first hand the enormity of the contribution made by the University to cultural institutions and organizations. . . . Youngstown State University has been a model community citizen in so many ways, but especially so in what it contributes to its immediate neighbors."*

— Lou Zona, Director

(Members of the Criterion 1 Committee did note, however, the need for more map kiosks and better directional signs.)

- Integrity in research is discussed under Criterion 4, examples of evidence 4d2 and 4d4. Policies on intellectual property rights are discussed under example of evidence 4d5.

Representation to the Public

1e7. The organization presents itself accurately and honestly to the public.

As indicated in the chapter on Federal Compliance, Youngstown State University represents its academic programs, accreditation status, tuition, and fees accurately online and in hard-copy versions of the *Undergraduate* and *Graduate Bulletins*. The University presents enrollment, graduation, and crime statistics accurately and honestly in *Your Right to Know*, an annual tabloid publication published online and in hard copy.

Many data about the University are readily available to the public on the web site of YSU's Office of Institutional Research and Policy Analysis at <http://www.ysu.edu/institutional-research/>. Links from that site to YSU-prepared summaries of data in the annual state *Performance Reports* are supplemented by links to the actual data on the Ohio Board of Regents web site, both to ensure accuracy and to enable the public to see all data relevant to the demographics and performance of YSU students. In the most recent Board of Regents audit of enrollment and financial-aid data, YSU earned commendations for 99.9% accuracy, "the highest in the state."

Internal and external publications also represent the University accurately. Publications such as weekly news briefs; the *Youngstown State University Magazine* (the University's alumni magazine); and the *YSU Update/eUpdate*, a weekly newsletter, are reviewed for accuracy by the Office of Marketing and Communications before they are distributed to the public, either electronically or on paper.

The official YSU web site at <http://www.ysu.edu/> is well designed and competently constructed for user-friendly access. The University maintains guidelines for content and design of "official" University web pages, and a Web Advisory Committee is drafting standards for ethical use of advertising on the site. The search function at the bottom right of the home page enables users to find information about the University easily.

The Criterion 1 Committee noted the need for additional staff and funds for the office responsible for designing and updating the University web site, since the web is critical in shaping the University's image and communications. Many departments must design and update their own sites, following standards produced by the Web Advisory Committee, since the staff in the Office of Marketing and Communications is small.

Timely Response to Complaints and Grievances

1e8. The organization documents timely response to complaints and grievances, particularly those of students.

Four University officials—(1) the Provost, or designee (currently an Associate Provost); (2) the Vice President of Student Affairs, or designee (currently the Associate Director of Student Life); (3) the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research; and (4) the Director of Equal Opportunity and Diversity, or designee—have primary responsibility for handling formal complaints by or against students.

The documents highlighted under Core Component 1b4 stipulate timelines for resolution of complaints and grievances, including hearings and appeals. With rare exceptions, resolution occurs within the prescribed timelines, unless the parties mutually agree upon an extension.

Undergraduate Student Grievances

The Code: A Handbook of Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct (<http://www.ysu.edu/thecode.pdf>) addresses the typical timeframe for resolving formal undergraduate academic grievances (i.e., student allegations that a faculty member substantially deviated from the “grading scale or weight distribution indicated on the course syllabus, to the detriment of an individual student or the entire class”). A student must first attempt to resolve the complaint informally through discussion with the faculty member and if necessary the department chair and dean. Students initiate formal academic grievances within the Office of the Provost. If a hearing is deemed appropriate, grievances normally progress to the Student Academic Grievance Subcommittee—an Academic Senate subcommittee—for a hearing within three weeks of formal filing (*The Code*, Article IX, Section B.2). All grievance documents and a grievance log are housed in the Office of the Provost, 222 Tod Hall.

During 2005 and 2006, undergraduate students filed a total of seven academic grievances, two of which proceeded to hearings. All seven were handled within parameters outlined in *The Code*. Average time to resolution in 2005 was three weeks; in 2006, six weeks. The Student Government Association has requested that the administration and faculty union consider changes to existing grievance processes to allow students to grieve on a wider variety of grounds—changes that could occur during YSU/YSU-OEA contract negotiations.

Graduate Student Grievances

Procedures and timeframes for graduate student grievances are outlined in *The Code* (Article IX, Section C) and in the *Graduate Studies Policy Book*, Section IV (<http://www.ysu.edu/GradSchool/pdf/policy.pdf>). Records housed in the School of Graduate Studies and Research, 359 Tod Hall, indicate that formal graduate grievances are very rare and are promptly resolved.

During 2005–06 and 2006–07, one graduate student filed a grievance. The grievance was satisfactorily resolved following Step 1 of the Graduate Student Grievance Procedure, the step in which a subcommittee of the Graduate Grievance Committee meets with all parties concerned. The grievance did not proceed to Step 2, i.e., a hearing before the full Graduate Grievance Committee. Time to resolution was seven weeks.

Student Misconduct Cases

The Code also stipulates the timeframe for resolving formal conduct-related charges (including allegations of cheating and plagiarism) by and against students:

A time shall be set for a hearing, not less than five nor more than fifteen calendar days after the student has been notified of the charges. Maximum time limits for scheduling of hearings may be extended at the discretion of the Student Conduct Administrator. In cases in which an examination period or break intervenes between the time of notice and the hearing date, a reasonable effort will be made to schedule the hearing during the break. In the event that this is not possible, hearings will always be held on the first day on which classes resume. (Article VII, Section D.1)

A total of 559 misconduct cases were brought in 2005–06 and 2006–07, with resolution as follows:

Table 1-1: Student Conduct Cases 2005–06 and 2006–07

Year	Cases	Average Days Incident to Resolution*
2005–06	307	24.39*
2006–07	252	19.75*

***Note:** Average number of days from incident to resolution includes the date an incident occurred (rather than starting on the day the incident was reported in some instances); the time is based on calendar days, not University working days. The total number of cases includes cases resolved within administrative conferences and those that went to full hearings before the Student Conduct Board.

Source: Martin Manning, Student Conduct Administrator, November 2007

Records of conduct-related cases are housed in the Office of Student Life, 2101 Kilcawley Center.

For more information about records of student complaints and grievances, see the Federal Compliance chapter of the self-study (see **Organizational Records of Student Complaints**, in Chapter 6). The final section of that chapter discusses resolution of informal complaints, the Office and principles of the University Ombudsperson, and the resolution of formal complaints and grievances. No students filed formal sexual harassment or discrimination complaints during the two years preceding the Higher Learning Commission site visit.

Other Complaints and Grievances

Logs and summaries of complaints and grievances involving other University constituencies indicate timely resolution of most complaints:

- **Professional Conduct Cases:** Since its inception three years ago, the Professional Conduct Committee has received seven formal complaints, three of which moved forward to formal investigations. For six of the complaints, the process followed the calendar prescribed in the *Professional Conduct Policy*—Board Policy 9006.01, Revised (<http://www.yсу.edu/vpadmin/guidelinespdf/RVSD9006.01.pdf>). For the remaining complaint, the Committee requested an extension because of the complexity of materials being gathered and the fact that the complaint was filed just before semester break. For cases in which formal investigation was not found to be appropriate, resolution occurred within the stipulated 28 days; for the three cases requiring a formal investigation, two were completed within the stipulated 90 days. According to the policy, the committee chair arranges for “safe storage” of committee records for three years following a finding.
- **Sexual Harassment and Discrimination Complaints:** The Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity specifies a timeline for resolution of sexual harassment and discrimination complaints (see <http://www.yсу.edu/eod/complaint.shtml>). Since 2005, employees have filed no formal, written complaints of sexual harassment. They have, however, filed three formal, written complaints of discrimination (all in 2005–06). One of the discrimination complaints was resolved internally (i.e., within the University) within three months. The other two complainants filed claims with the Ohio Civil Rights Commission (OCRC). Information about complaints resolved internally is available in the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity, 223 Tod Hall. Information about claims filed with the OCRC is available in the Office of the General Counsel, 312 Tod Hall.
- **Union Grievances:** The contracts for the four bargaining units—YSU-OEA, the faculty union; ACE, the Association of Classified Employees; APAS, the Association of Professional/Administrative Staff; and FOP, the Fraternal Order of Police—include grievance procedures, timelines, and deadlines (see http://cc.yсу.edu/hr/Contract_Agreements.htm).

The faculty contract includes a pre-grievance step that encourages settling problems before initiating the formal grievance process. ACE and APAS offer to meet informally, too, but informal resolution of grievances is not outlined in their union agreements. The faculty union settles many of its problems at the pre-grievance step; ACE does not, and many ACE grievances go through the entire process without resolution that satisfies the individual who files the grievance. In an effort to resolve more ACE complaints at a pre-grievance stage, the University—at the recommendation of the Labor Management Council—considered appointing a Director of Staff Relations to serve as a liaison between ACE and the administration. The position would

be modeled on the Director of Faculty Relations position held by Teresa Riley, an associate dean in the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, who handles pre-grievance complaints initiated by YSU-OEA members. As of fall 2007, the new Chief Human Resources Officer is considering reorganizing the Office of Human Resources and providing pre-grievance services there, rather than proceeding with the posting for a new position.

Logs and records of all union grievances are housed in the Office of Human Resources in Jones Hall. All faculty grievances filed since August 2005 have been settled within the timelines indicated in the *Agreement*, or both parties have mutually agreed to extend the timelines. APAS has filed no grievances since August 2005, and the two FOP grievances have been resolved in a timely manner. Since the beginning of fall semester 2005, 72% of ACE grievances have been resolved within the specified timelines.

Summary and Evaluation of Core Component 1e

Youngstown State University fulfills Core Component 1e: The University upholds and protects its integrity.

The activities of Youngstown State University are congruent with its mission; the Board ensures that the organization operates legally, responsibly, and with fiscal honesty; the University understands and abides by local, state, and federal laws and regulations; the organization implements clear and fair policies regarding the rights and responsibilities of internal constituencies; structures and processes allow the University to ensure the integrity of its cocurricular and auxiliary activities; the University deals fairly with external constituencies and represents itself accurately and honestly to the public; and the organization documents timely response to complaints and grievances, particularly those of students.

Consistent implementation of policies is sometimes perceived as an issue, but the University is addressing this challenge in the same way it is addressing challenges under Core Component 1d.

Conclusions

Youngstown State University complies with Criterion 1: The University operates with integrity to fulfill its mission through processes that involve the Board, administration, faculty, staff, and students. Significant mission-related strengths, challenges, and opportunities are listed below.

Strengths

1. Youngstown State University's Mission, Vision, Core Values, and Organizational Priorities—taken together—clearly and broadly define the University's mission.

2. The University's Mission, Vision, Core Values, and Organizational Priorities express a commitment not only to broad access but also to academic excellence. Although YSU is an open-admissions institution, it also has many excellent selective-admissions programs.

Recommendation: Continue to focus on student success and academic excellence by implementing all three sections of the *Academic Strategic Plan*.

3. YSU's mission/commitment to be a student-centered and teaching-focused institution is clear and well supported by faculty, staff, and administration.
4. Mission and planning documents at all levels of the University recognize the value of diversity among internal constituencies and in the world at large; increasing diversity and fostering an understanding of diversity are key institutional and curricular goals.

Recommendation: Implement key recommendations of the Diversity Subcommittee and the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity (e.g., provide and encourage ongoing diversity training for faculty, staff, and administrators; work collaboratively to implement diversity and internationalization goals in the *Academic Strategic Plan*).

5. Through the efforts of many, diversity among campus constituencies has increased substantially since the 1998 accreditation visit: minority students, by 74%; minority full-time faculty, by 66.7%; and minority staff, by 22.7%.

Recommendation: Continue efforts to diversify the campus (e.g., the Strategic Hires Policy); find creative ways to improve understanding among individuals and to increase awareness of diversity issues.

Recommendation: Implement Section II, Goal 3, of the *Academic Strategic Plan* to sustain increases in minority enrollment and improve retention of minority students.

Challenges and Opportunities

1. *Rapid and substantial transformations at the regional and state levels* (e.g., recent changes in the role and reporting structures of the Chancellor and the Ohio Board of Regents; creation of the University System of Ohio; potential formation of a community college in the Mahoning Valley and a statewide community-college system; recommendations of the Northeast Ohio Universities Collaboration and Innovation Study Commission; and release of the Chancellor's 10-year master plan for higher education in Ohio, expected in 2008) may result in *fundamental changes in YSU's mission* and open-admissions role.

Recommendation: Continue to participate in regional and state discussions; educate key state legislators and officials about the special mission of YSU and its importance in Northeast Ohio. This education will be essential (perhaps even *more* essential) even if YSU’s mission changes as a result of regional and state initiatives.

Recommendation: Use findings of the Higher Learning Commission self-study and site-team evaluation—in conjunction with the new *Academic Strategic Plan*, the community college study, recommendations of the Northeast Ohio Study Commission, and the state’s forthcoming master plan—to refine or redefine the University’s mission; to develop YSU’s next institutional strategic plan; and to plan for successful transition to a refined or redefined mission.

2. Despite core values that call for “all conduct to be rooted in integrity, mutual respect, and civility,” labor-management relationships and campus morale have experienced long-term strain. Individuals in *all* employee groups—i.e., faculty, staff, and administration—express a sense that their work is not sufficiently appreciated.

Recommendation: Continue efforts to improve campus relations and communication. Provide mechanisms, both formal and informal (e.g., “civility hours”; Labor Management Council; the Budget Information Committee; a more service-oriented Office of Human Resources), to build trust, foster meaningful discussion, and work toward common goals.

Recommendation: Facilitate knowledge and consistent implementation of University policies by posting them online. Enhance training of new and continuing administrators, faculty, and staff.