

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

**FORDHAM UNIVERSITY**

Bronx, New York 10458

by

An Evaluation Team representing the

Middle States Commission on Higher Education

Prepared after study of the institution's Self-Study Report  
and a visit to the Rose Hill and Lincoln Center campuses

April 2-4, 2006

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## I. Evaluation Team Members

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<b>Frederick C. Sieber, III</b>	Executive Director, Budgeting & Auxiliary Services, Villanova University
<b>Gloriana St. Clair</b>	Dean, University Libraries, Carnegie Mellon University

## II. Individuals Interviewed

Rev. Joseph McShane, S.J., President  
Dr. Dominic Balestra, Dean, Arts and Sciences Faculty  
Ms. Michele Burris, Associate Vice President for Student Affairs  
Dr. Nancy Busch, Dean, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences  
Dr. Brian Byrne, Vice President, Administration  
Mr. Albert Checcio, Vice President, Development and University Relations  
Rev. Anthony Ciorra, Dean, School of Religion and Religious Education  
Rev. Vincent Duminuco, Secretary of the Board and Rector, Fordham Jesuit Community  
Dr. Michael Gillan, Dean, Fordham College of Liberal Studies  
Dr. Donald Gillespie, Associate Vice President, Institutional Research  
Mr. Jeffrey Gray, Vice President, Student Affairs  
Rev. Robert Grimes, S.J., Dean, Fordham College at Lincoln Center  
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Mr. Frank Simio, Vice President, Finance  
Dr. Frank Sirianni, Vice President, Information Technology  
Dr. Peter Stace, Vice President, Enrollment Services  
Mr. John Tognino, Chair, Board of Trustees  
Dr. Peter Vaughan, Dean, Graduate School of Social Service  
Dr. Grace Vernon, President, Faculty Senate

### **III. Context and Nature of the Visit**

Fordham University is an independent university in the Jesuit tradition. The University comprises three campuses: Rose Hill in the north Bronx, Lincoln Center in Manhattan, and Tarrytown in Westchester County. Fordham operates the Graduate Center at Tarrytown as well as Marymount College and Fordham College of Liberal Studies at the Marymount campus. It also operates a biological field station in Armonk, NY. Fordham University grants baccalaureate, graduate and professional degrees. The eleven schools of Fordham enroll 15,613 students (as of Fall 2005). There are 8,477 undergraduates and 115,907 alumni.

The evaluation Team visited Fordham's Rose Hill campus in the Bronx and its Lincoln Center campus in Manhattan on April 2-4, 2006. Prior to the visit, the Team examined the Self-Study report and came to some preliminary conclusions, some of which were confirmed during the visit. In other instances, there was sufficient evidence on campus that Fordham has indeed met the Standards of Excellence. Questions regarding Fordham's compliance in advance of the visit were due either to the complexity of the institution or to one or two recently accomplished plans.

While at the two campuses, the Team visited with numerous administrators, faculty, staff, and students, engaging several hundred people during the two-and-a-half-day visit. At the exit session alone, approximately 150 faculty, staff, and administrators came to hear the findings of the Team and to discuss its suggestions and recommendations. In short, the Team had access to all available information at the institution. We had the full cooperation and participation of nearly every sector of the institution, and we had the interest of the entire community. In short, we experienced a vibrant, open, and welcoming community.

### **IV. Affirmation of Continued Compliance with Eligibility Requirements**

Based on a review of the Self-Study, interviews, the certification statement provided by the institution, and other institutional documents, the Team affirms that the institution continues to meet eligibility requirements.

### **V. Compliance with Federal Requirements; Issues Relative to State Regulatory or Other Accrediting Agency Requirements**

Based on review of the Self-Study, certification by the institution, other institutional documents, and interviews, the Team affirms that the institution's Title IV cohort default rate is within federal limits. The Team relied on the institution's documentation to make this determination. In addition, the Team is unaware of any issues relative to state regulatory requirements or its accreditations with other accrediting agencies.

## VI. Evaluation Overview

Some comments on the evaluation process and visit:

Prior to the site visit, it was determined that the Team would not need to visit the Westchester campus since it does not contain its own programs. The decision to close Marymount, a Catholic women's college that was consolidated with Fordham in 2002, was also examined. It was determined that the process for this decision and the way it has been studied, discussed and communicated did not warrant any further inquiry or review. The College is presently in a phase-out process and will cease to exist in 2007.

Also, prior to the visit and due to expertise within the Team itself, it was determined that Standard Six: Integrity would be handled by several of the Team members in the course of their investigation of other standards, especially Standard One: Mission, Standard Five: Administration, and Standard Eleven: Educational Offerings. Each Team member responsible for these three standards reported that they covered this standard in their review and found the institution to have met the standard.

Some notable findings from the visit include:

Fordham is a model of fiscal planning and integrity. Analyses of the institution's planning for resource allocation, its methods of cost- and revenue-sharing that incentivize deans to meet and exceed budget expectations, its husbanding of the endowment, its management of capital assets, etc. indicate that those systems have built a secure institution capable of advancing on several strategic fronts.

Fordham's growth in student applications and admissions since the last Middle States visit is evidence of its increased attraction to undergraduates. Applications have quadrupled in the last seven years, and the academic quality of the student body has measurably improved.

Fordham's improved facilities, especially its new Walsh Library and its expanding facilities and plans for the Lincoln Center Campus, along with its programmatic expansion, especially at the Manhattan campus in the performing arts, are noteworthy accomplishments leading Fordham into real prominence in New York City and around the nation.

A new president has reinvigorated the campuses. Father Joseph McShane, S.J., is present and available, intimately involved in the numerous planning processes, and is much-appreciated for the positive and proactive role he is taking. Building on the Self-Study, Father McShane was heavily involved in the creation of an ambitious and academically-focused strategic plan. He is now translating that plan into a capital campaign which is being well-received by trustees and alumni.

The Team found Fordham's faculty to consist of productive scholars and engaged educators. Students regularly commented on the faculty's availability and dedication to learning both inside and outside the classroom. The quality of the faculty and their commitment to Fordham bode well for the future of this institution.

Finally, Fordham's Board of Trustees, under the leadership of Chairman John Tognino and officers, is an engaged and hard-working board, eager to assist the institution in any way possible. The board is very aware of the internal workings of the institution, the perceptions of faculty, staff and students, and the rising expectations within the institution, and they are committed to helping the president meet those expectations.

In sum, we found a healthy, energetic institution that has the plans and is accumulating the resources for moving forward.

## **VII. Compliance with Accreditation Standards**

### **Standard 1: Mission, Goals, and Objectives**

*The institution's mission clearly defines its purpose within the context of higher education and explains whom the institution serves and what it intends to accomplish. The institution's stated goals and objectives, consistent with the aspirations and expectations of higher education, clearly specify how the institution will fulfill its mission. The mission, goals, and objectives are developed and recognized by the institution with its members and its governing body and are utilized to develop and shape its programs and practices and to evaluate its effectiveness.*

The institution **meets** this standard.

#### **A. Summary of evidence and findings:**

Fordham situates its efforts to clarify its modern mission by referencing a 1956 article (published in a Fordham journal) by American religious historian John Tracy Ellis, who warned Catholic universities not to forsake a distinctive Catholic intellectual tradition in the process of adopting a professional model of higher education. The Self-Study frankly concedes that Fordham did not take Ellis' warning wholly to heart, nor were administrative processes ever developed to institutionalize previous mission statements.

A number of indicators show that Fordham is now making a strong effort to redress the imbalance that Ellis identified by means of a clearly stated mission and a detailed effort to embed all dimensions of that mission in planning, evaluation, and assessment in every area and at every level of decision making:

- The mission and goals of Fordham are clearly set forth in the mission statement adopted by the Board of Trustees in April, 2005. It clarifies the distinctive dimensions of Fordham’s identity—as a university, as a Catholic and Jesuit university, and as an institution with a special relationship to the City of New York.
- Furthermore, in a strategic planning statement endorsed by the Board of Trustees in 2004, the University clearly indicated its vision of its future: within the next decade it will “return to a position of recognized national prominence in the world of American higher education.” The University’s long-range goal is to reclaim its position as “the premier Catholic university in the United States.”
- Before taking office in 2003, the new president asked that all units and divisions of the University engage in annual reporting. These reports require each unit to explain how its objectives for the coming year will contribute to the University’s long-range goals and the achievement of its mission.
- In 2003, the new president announced his commitment to integrated strategic planning and to mission- and vision-focused operational planning.
- In 2004, as part of the strategic planning process, deans and department chairs were surveyed in order to assess the level of their awareness of the University’s mission, goals, and objectives; how well the mission was communicated in their units; and the extent to which it was used in long-range planning and daily decision making. Another questionnaire was sent to staff in the divisions of Student Affairs, Athletics, Campus Ministry, and Community Service.
- In 2004, the president elevated the position of University Chaplain to Vice President for University Mission and Ministry and asked this person to lead a review and revision of the 1979 mission statement, which resulted in the mission statement’s adoption in 2005.
- The University created a Mission and Identity Committee on the Board of Trustees.
- Several initiatives, many of them sponsored by the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs, have renewed the University’s sense of identity and mission as a Jesuit and Catholic university, including:
  - A revised undergraduate core curriculum with a recognizably Jesuit character.
  - An identity-and-mission component introduced into new faculty orientation.
  - Year-long Lilly Seminars for new faculty, focused on the nature of Jesuit, Catholic higher education.
  - A Newman Fellows Seminar for senior faculty on the idea of the university as an institution.
  - The establishment of several academic centers which give prominence to the University’s mission of engaging the culture from a faith perspective and invite faculty into their programs.
- An Office for Academic Effectiveness was created to coordinate academic assessment processes.

- The University has supported the development of several community-service and service-learning programs and intends to expand them. Staff members are piloting ways of involving students in these programs and encouraging substantive reflection on their experiences.
- Campus Ministry oversees an impressively large number of national and international service programs.
- Several administrative staff mentioned how successfully the president articulates the mission of the University in his talks to different segments of the community.

The Team notes that the process of requiring departments, programs, and operating units to integrate the University's mission into their planning and into the evaluation of the effectiveness of their activities has really just begun. Follow-through will be extremely important, especially on the parts of senior administrators. The process will only work if those who oversee it take it seriously. Nevertheless, the developments listed above indicate that Fordham has met the requirements of this standard when judged according to the fundamental elements that constitute it.

#### B. Suggestions:

1. Fordham has many strengths as it faces its future: a clear understanding of its history, the changes it has undergone in recent decades, and the challenges it faces in living its mission; the "lived presence" of its mission in many areas of the University's life over the years; a determination to be clear about the several dimensions of its mission, including those that embody its Catholic and Jesuit character; and a resolve to put in place a mission-based process of planning, assessment, evaluation, and allocation of resources.

There is, however, some variation in how the mission is understood. The Team, therefore, believes that the recommendations of the Self-Study under Standard 1 are timely and cogent, and the Team strongly endorses them: 1) "Stipulate that units, schools, and departments consider ways in which their programming engages the core areas of the 2005 Mission Statement..."; 2) "Expand mission education for faculty (tenured and non-tenured) and staff during hiring and orientation and through continuing study groups and University events"; and 3) "Require that review panels consider the mission during periodic program reviews for undergraduate majors and graduate and professional programs."

2. The Team also endorses a recommendation of the Self-Study under Standard 6: "The Office of the Vice President for University Mission and Ministry should monitor the University's progress in integrating its Mission Statement and goals into Fordham's community life and should make recommendations to the University administration regarding their implementation."

3. In requiring divisions and departments to take account of the University's mission in their planning and evaluation, the University should insist that all the dimensions of its mission—as a university, as a Catholic and Jesuit university, and as a university located in New York—be explicitly addressed.

4. Although educating faculty and staff about the University's mission and its relevance to their work would seem to require a plan and considerable resources (to fund seminars, retreats, personnel, etc.), there is no mention of either in the Strategic Plan. Fordham may want to give some thought to developing a detailed plan for how it will achieve this goal. A starting point might be an assessment of the extent and effectiveness of present efforts compared to the number of faculty and staff whom it would be desirable to influence with new mission-focused educational resources.

C. Recommendations:

1. The University should work to further integrate its mission into planning across schools and departments, as well as enhance mission education programs for faculty and staff, and should incorporate this goal into the University's Strategic Plan *Toward 2016*.

**Standard 2: Planning, Resource Allocation, and Institutional Renewal**

and

**Standard 3: Institutional Resources**

*An institution conducts ongoing planning and resource allocation based on its mission and the results of its assessment activities for institutional renewal. Implementation and subsequent evaluation of the success of the strategic plan and resource allocation support the development and change necessary to improve and to maintain institutional quality.*

*The human, financial, technical, physical facilities, and other resources necessary to achieve an institution's mission and goals are available and accessible. In the context of the institution's mission, the effective and efficient uses of the institution's resources are analyzed as part of ongoing outcomes assessment.*

The institution **meets** these standards.

A. Summary of evidence and findings:

Planning has taken place in the area of finances and budgeting for some time now—perhaps 15 years or more—that can be described as exceptional and noteworthy. In that time, the institution has managed its physical assets (plant, etc.) with great care and foresight. This was not always the case. In the past, the University addressed its campus and other needs in fits and starts. A long period of economic stability and growth in reputation and enrollments has helped achieve financial security. Several years ago, the University adopted a plan of school-based budgeting and revenue sharing that allows deans who meet their budget expectations to retain excess revenue for accrual into sums that can be put toward strategic initiatives. These plans are approved by the administration and allow the academic unit to advance one-time investments. Several academic units with particular relevance to the mission that are not able to achieve budget surpluses are nevertheless “carried” by the overall financial plan, and this too has wide acceptance and agreement. Five-year plans and projections were available to the Team and were reviewed with appropriate administrators.

Investment in plant has been continuous and ambitious. Plans for capital expansion are also in place as resources become available. There is solid evidence that these resources will be forthcoming, since the institution has decided to leverage property it has determined it does not need for academic purposes.

The following documents were available to the Team and were reviewed: Annual Reports of the vice presidents’ units, 2004-2005; Financial Plans for fiscal years 2005-2009; Five-year Projections for fiscal years 2005-2009; audited Financial Statements, 2003, 2004, and 2005; and the integrated Strategic Plan *Toward 2016*. A careful review and discussions with administrators including the president, financial vice presidents, and other chief officers of the institution confirmed that Fordham is an institution that values assessment in this area, uses benchmarks for planning and for measuring the rate of growth, and has developed a culture of proactive analysis and planning within its chief administrative units. The financial modeling that Fordham is doing is exemplary.

Evidence exists that the institution has added and improved facilities and services in a consistent manner and has done so under a systematic facilities maintenance plan. Considerable investment in plant is a hallmark of institutional planning for all campuses. Facilities that are still needed include space for student indoor recreation, a new science facility, and additional space for student programs and activities at the Lincoln Center campus. The strategic plan for the institution addresses these needs with specificity.

A University Space Planning Advisory Committee regularly meets to review departmental and program needs and solicits input for its deliberations. Deans are able to address one-time, non-personnel resource needs through their accumulated reserves. A large contingency fund (approximately \$3M) exists for handling unexpected needs and emergencies.

## B. Suggestions:

1. The Team endorses the recommendations in the Self-Study, namely that the institution work more diligently at informing all stakeholders of the plans that have been made for such things as enhancing faculty support and reduction of teaching loads to allow more research opportunities for the faculty, that better communication exist between the central budget planning team and the academic units prior to budget completion, and that a central University-wide database be maintained for consistent information needed by various planning units and academic offices for planning purposes.
2. The Team notes the need for increased diversification of revenue sources in order for Fordham to meet its ambitious strategic plans. It encourages increased investment in the Office of Development and University Relations, which is now under new leadership.

## **Standard 4: Leadership and Governance**

*The institution's system of governance clearly defines the roles of institutional constituencies in policy development and decision-making. The governance structure includes an active governing body with sufficient autonomy to assure institutional integrity and to fulfill its responsibilities of policy and resource development, consistent with the mission of the institution.*

The institution **meets** this standard.

### A. Summary of evidence and findings:

Fordham has a mature and reasonably well-defined system of governance described in written documents and policies that affords opportunities to faculty and students to participate in various levels of policy development and decision-making. Interviews with various faculty and staff support this conclusion. The Self-Study and interviews, however, reveal considerable concern related to the organizational structure of the administration and the impact of that structure on day-to-day decision-making. These concerns are addressed in Standard 5: Administration.

*Governing Board*—The By-Laws of the Board of Trustees dictate that the Board of Fordham University will consist of no more than 40 or less than five members each serving three-year terms. In addition, the By-Laws provide for participation by two classes of former trustees, Trustee Emeriti and the recently created Trustee Fellows. The Board has an Executive Committee as well as standing committees which include Academic Affairs, Athletics, Audit and Finance, Enrollment, Facilities, Investment, Mission and Identity, Student Affairs, Trusteeship, and University Relations. Faculty members serve as a resource on all Board committees except the Executive Committee and Trusteeship Committee, while students currently serve as a resource on the Student Affairs and Academic Affairs Committee. The University maintains a policy that requires annual disclosure of any possible conflicts of interest by Board members and selected administrators.

*The President*—University President Joseph McShane, S.J. has held his position for approximately three years, during which he has received a substantial level of support and approval from all of the University’s constituents.

There is considerable interaction between the President and members of the Board of Trustees, and every three years the President is formally evaluated by the Board. Internally, the President meets each week in a group setting with the University’s vice presidents (Administrators’ Conference) to discuss University-wide issues. Likewise, the President participates in Faculty Senate meetings and meets with the President of the Faculty Senate. Students have the opportunity to interact with the President at student forums where he answers questions, as well as at athletic and social functions.

The Self-Study document describes Father McShane as a leader who is energetic, active, and engaged and who strives to lead in a collegial style. The fact that 85% of those who offered an opinion about his leadership in the Middle States Task Force Faculty Survey chose excellent or satisfactory suggests that the President currently enjoys support for his leadership.

*The Faculty Senate and Faculty Representation in Governance—Article 4 of the University Statutes: Policies and Procedures for Faculty* clearly describes the role of the faculty in University governance. Faculty responsibilities for governance are to be carried out primarily through the Faculty Senate, the faculty organizations of the Schools and Departments, and through other University committees. The Faculty Senate is the representative body of the University Faculty. It serves in an advisory capacity to the President and has the right and duty to initiate recommendations and to speak for the Faculty in all areas of University activity. The documents also describe faculty voting privileges and the right to choose faculty representatives to various campus committees and appropriate search/selection committees.

The Middle States Task Force Faculty Survey on Leadership and Governance helps provide insight to the Faculty’s satisfaction with the Faculty Senate’s role in governance. In each of the four questions related to this topic, over 40% of faculty responded that they did not know enough about the work of the Senate to offer an opinion. Of those who did respond, a fairly high proportion was satisfied with the Faculty Senate’s relationship and communication with the Board of Trustees, President, and administration. This led the Middle States Task Force to conclude “that the faculty, in general, finds the University’s existing leadership/governance arrangements to be satisfactory.” The Task Force also noted that the faculty seems satisfied with the role they play in the governance of their own departments or schools, and with the leadership and support provided by their respective Deans and the Vice President for Academic Affairs. Finally, the Task Force expressed concern over the number of faculty who indicated that they did not know enough about governance matters to express an opinion on the various questions. This observation led to a Self-Study recommendation that urged improved assessment procedures and communications by the Faculty Senate and other faculty committees.

*Student Representation in Governance*—Opportunities for student participation in governance exist at all levels of institution. The Academic and Student Affairs Committees of the Board of Trustees recruit student representatives to serve in a resource capacity. From time to time students are asked to serve on ad hoc Board committees.

Section 4.3.5 of the Self-Study appendix lists numerous College, Departmental, and administrative committees that seek student participation and membership. All schools include student representatives on committees such as Core Curriculum, Faculty Evaluation, Faculty Policies and Resources, Student Policy, Strategic Planning, and the Dean's Advisory Committees. Administrative committees with student participation include Security, Community Service, Campus Ministry, Food Service, and Residential Life.

In addition, active student governments exist on all campuses which serve to manage student activity programs, as well as the allocation and management of student activity budgets.

B. Suggestions:

The Team supports the two recommendations made by the Self-Study task force:

1. Governing bodies of the University (e.g., school councils, Faculty Senate) should introduce formal procedures for periodic assessment of governance procedures and for evaluating the effectiveness of their leadership.
2. The Faculty Senate is urged to find ways to improve its communication with the general faculty.

**Standard 5: Administration**

*The institution's administrative structure and services facilitate learning and research/scholarship, foster quality improvement, and support the institution's organization and governance.*

The institution **meets** this standard.

A. Summary of evidence and findings:

*The Qualifications and Duties of the Chief Executive*—Fr. Joseph M. McShane, S.J. was hired by the Board of Trustees in 2003. He is a native of New York City, earned his doctorate in the history of Christianity at the University of Chicago, and previously served at Fordham as dean of Fordham College, as a faculty member, and as a member of the Board of Trustees. He has forged an ambitious strategic plan that was approved by the Board in 2005. Fr. McShane has the drive and the confidence of the faculty to see it through.

*The Qualifications of Other Members of the Upper Administration*—The members of the senior administration have the credentials and qualifications to assume their responsibilities at a research university. Several have considerable experience with Fordham.

It should be noted that the position of the Vice President for Academic Affairs (the Chief Academic Officer) is temporarily being filled by Dr. Judith Mills, who will be leaving the post in June of 2007. There is, therefore, some urgency in formulating the job description and hiring an individual who embraces the University's mission and strategic plan.

Information and decision-making systems that assist administrators:

- *Institutional Research (IR) and Other Data Collection Agencies*—Currently, IR is an arm of undergraduate enrollment. Other “shadow” systems occur on campus to capture data that IR misses (e.g., graduate admissions). As the institution grows and demands for a common source of data for the entire University increase, the IR office may have to expand and report directly to the Chief Academic Officer or president.
- *Councils and Committees*—Fordham has a Faculty Senate that serves as an advocate for faculty matters and has representatives on the important Vice President's Council and University Planning Committee. The President and Vice President for Academic Affairs attend the Faculty Senate meetings. Therefore, the Senate appears to be an important element in the decision-making system.
- Each College has its own council that meets 2-4 times a semester. In the internal review, the Arts and Sciences Council was considered too large to be effective and it was recommended that membership be reduced. However, the deans consider the councils consultative (which requires wide representation) and deliberative (the decisions made in committee) in nature. This slows the final decision. If the originators were updated frequently on the progress of their proposals, they would more likely remain patient. Two exceptionally important and potentially explosive committees concern the budget and space. Both were given high marks by the internal review committee.
- *Reports*—According to the internal review, departmental chairs are enthusiastic about producing an annual report recently mandated by the President, and the upper administration is pleased with the departmental results. According to the internal review, however, the lack of response to this and other reports is disconcerting to the originators. This may mean that the report is being read and evaluated by more than one dean and that no one has been given the responsibility to respond. Another problem voiced by the departmental chairs in the internal review is multiple and redundant requests for information by different deans and vice presidents. This may mean that deans and vice presidents should discuss plans to request information at their frequent staff meetings before the request goes out.

*Lines of Organization: Function and Effectiveness*—Administrative structures from the president to the dean’s level are clearly diagrammed in the Fact Book (1) and Appendix 5.1 of the Fordham University Report 2006. It would be more informative if the responsibilities of each position were also listed along with the diagrams. The administrative structure below the dean of arts and sciences faculty becomes murky. In the internal review, Arts and Science chairs complain of reporting to multiple deans and of departmental issues falling between the cracks at the vice presidential level. If administrative responsibilities were better defined in the Fact Book, then problems might be sent to the correct office more frequently. The problem might be solved with a streamlined organization that has few direct reporting lines to the top. Perhaps as the plan becomes realized, some offices will have to be expanded, their missions changed, and their reporting lines redefined.

Analysis of the administrative structure revealed that many officers had a few direct reporting lines (e.g., the Chief Financial Officer, the Vice President for Administration), which is an efficient way to manage. On the other hand, the Chief Academic Officer might have too many (18 direct reporting lines). Furthermore, a few administrators that are important in the process of implementing the goal are not among the 18 (e.g. the Associate Vice President for Institutional Research, the Director of Research and Sponsored Programs, and the Vice President for Information Technology).

In summary, the president and other officers should ask if Fordham’s current administrative structure is appropriate to achieve its goals and then revisit the question as the strategic plan is realized.

#### B. Suggestions:

The Team makes the following suggestions for further study by Fordham’s creative leadership:

1. The Academic Vice President should seek to clarify reporting lines between Arts and Science chairs and administrators. Perhaps if duties and responsibilities of all administrators are defined and promulgated (Fact Book, Faculty Handbook, and/or an on-line searchable database), faculty will know who to contact with a problem. Fordham should consider a streamlining of the administrative structure with fewer deans and vice presidents making a decision before presenting a proposal to the Chief Academic Officer.
2. The faculty needs more frequent updates on progress that proposals are making through the system, especially in the Arts and Sciences Council, which would reduce anxiety and impatience among originators.
3. The internal reviewers recorded complaints from Arts and Science chairs about redundant requests for information and a lack of response to reports and departmental requests. Redundancy may be reduced if ad hoc administrative requests are first vetted at vice presidential or deans’ meetings. The lack of response may be the result of multiple administrative recipients of the report. This can be rectified by assigning a responder.

4. Improved compensation for department chairs was a concern raised during the internal review. The real problem, as stated clearly on page 51 of the Fordham University Self-Study, is workload. For large departments, especially those that are on two campuses, it may be a wise investment to hire an upper-level departmental administrator to deal with daily operations and bring a long institutional memory to departments that appoint chairs at 3-year intervals. Being a chair, however, is not a nine-month job and the salary should reflect the 2-3 months of summer service.

5. Formal evaluations of administrators by faculty and/or chairs is an idea proposed by the Self-Study and the MSCHE. Chairs and other significant University constituents could be asked to comment on the performance of individual administrators and their offices at mid-term and at the end of the academic year. The surveys need not be anonymous but they should be held in confidence by the next level of authority and compiled before dissemination to the administrators being evaluated.

6. The appointment of an executive vice president should be studied and an alternative considered. It may be unrealistic to assume that a chief operating officer can effectively manage the business, academic, development, and student affairs aspects of a university that has reached the size and complexity of Fordham. Perhaps a study of the organization of aspirational schools will reveal a structure that will better achieve the goals set in the strategic plan.

Therefore, it is further suggested that:

7. In order for the strategic plan to move forward, a high priority should be given to fill the positions of Chief Academic Officer and Director of the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs.

8. To further the goals of the strategic plan, the administrative structure should be streamlined with fewer people reporting directly to the president and the Chief Academic Officer, and there should be a reordering of reporting lines.

9. At the same time, certain positions may be more effective with an expansion of mission and the addition of different reporting lines (e.g. institutional research, research and sponsored programs, and computing and information technology).

### **Standard 7: Institutional Assessment**

*The institution has developed and implemented an assessment plan and process that evaluates its overall effectiveness in: achieving its mission and goals; implementing planning, resource allocation, and institutional renewal processes; using institutional resources efficiently; providing leadership and governance; providing administrative structures and services; demonstrating institutional integrity; and assuring that institutional processes and resources support appropriate learning and other outcomes for its students and graduates.*

The institution **meets** this standard.

#### A. Summary of evidence and findings:

There is ample evidence of a variety of assessment activities and processes, and a widespread expectation of assessment at Fordham. It is clear that the leadership of Fordham read Middle States' *Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education* and took it seriously: there is evidence of assessment in the areas included in the statement of the Standard and those listed under Optional Analysis and Evidence in *Characteristics*. Although there was no evidence of an extant Institutional Assessment Plan per se in the Self-Study, such a document exists in draft form dated March 2006. The latter is an excellent, thorough, and thoughtful piece crafted by the Office of Institutional Research and the Office of Academic Effectiveness, and it merits the serious attention of Fordham's senior leadership (see suggestions below).

The draft Assessment Plan lays out a clear and logical sequence of actions that could be undertaken to strengthen and coordinate the institutional research, planning, and assessment functions. This would not require the absolute centralization of all planning and assessment activities, many of which are done well and appropriately by other units. Rather, the Office of Institutional Research (or the expanded Office of Planning, Institutional Assessment and Institutional Research) can add considerable value to the analysis and presentation of assessment data collected elsewhere, it can further the data collection and reporting skills of other offices, and it can consolidate the assessments that are currently scattered throughout the institution. One of the telling moments of the site visit was the Associate Vice President for Institutional Research's declaration of how pleasantly surprised he was to discover through the Self-Study process that a great amount of assessment was being undertaken on campus about which he had known little or nothing. There is a need at Fordham for a central repository and sharing mechanism for such data, and the Office of Institutional Research seems like the ideal location.

The main focus of the Self-Study with respect to assessment was diagnostic: it was to identify where assessment is done successfully at Fordham and where there are (sometimes significant) gaps to be filled and expansion of assessment to be undertaken. The Self-Study includes some analysis of findings and mention of actions taken as a result of lessons learned through assessment. Much of the latter, however, is implied rather than demonstrated. The overall impression is one of spreading awareness of the need for, and steady progress toward, assessment at Fordham. Again, information gathered during the site visit was especially helpful in conveying the full range of current and planned assessments.

Evidence of assessment activity falls into two areas: those, including a raft of surveys, that were undertaken specifically for the purposes of the Middle States Self-Study, and those that have been integrated into ongoing planning and evaluation. This duality is common in, and helpful to, the re-accreditation process. Fordham should continue to expand and integrate its assessment into the regular academic and administrative life of the institution. If the proposed Assessment Plan is implemented, the next Periodic Review Report should be able to demonstrate both added breadth and depth of assessment, and a stronger link between assessment results and "course corrections" or other actions suggested by them.

Concerning the surveys conducted not for the Self-Study but as part of ongoing planning and institutional research, most of the commonly accepted “right” areas (graduating seniors, alumni, incoming first-years, current students, faculty, etc.) are covered at least periodically at Fordham. In general the analysis and presentation of assessment data is stronger cross-sectionally than it is longitudinally and comparatively, although when the data and time to analyze them are available, longitudinal trends and comparisons with other universities are displayed to good effect. The comparative angle may benefit from extra attention (see Suggestions below).

B. Suggestions:

1. The systematic expansion of assessment across administrative and especially academic departments should be continued as recommended in the Self-Study. In addition to increasing the breadth of assessment, Fordham should increase the depth of assessment through more sophisticated analysis and explicit links to action plans.
2. The resources required for expanded assessment should be allocated as recommended in the Self-Study. The draft Assessment Plan includes many details and a sequence of actions for enhancing staffing, among other things, in order to meet the assessment, planning, and IR needs of Fordham that will be required for the fulfillment of the Strategic Plan. This is intentionally consistent with the final paragraph of *Toward 2016*. The institutional research function at Fordham has improved since the last Self-Study and is showing clear contributions to and success in the area of institutional assessment. Given how much more needs to be done if the ambitious agenda of *Toward 2016* is to be accomplished, it is clear that the resources currently devoted to this function will not be sufficient.
3. The Office of Institutional Research, or preferably the expanded Office of Planning, Institutional Assessment, and Institutional Research recommended in Part III of the draft Assessment Plan, should report directly to the Vice President for Academic Affairs. This arrangement would give more visibility to the office and to the importance of its work, and it would give the highest levels of Fordham’s administration more direct access to this increasingly important resource. The office could continue to provide the very significant analytical support that it currently does to the Vice President for Enrollment.
4. Fordham should consider affiliate if not full membership in the Higher Education Data Sharing (HEDS) Consortium. While Fordham has considered and rejected HEDS membership in the past, HEDS now offers an affiliate membership to university members with greatly reduced dues and data submission requirements. Furthermore, while the HEDS membership does not currently include several of Fordham’s 10 peer and aspiration institutions, it does contain 22 doctoral/research universities, and at least 7 Jesuit and many other Catholic colleges and universities among its approximately 140 members. HEDS is a potentially rich source of comparative data and expertise for Fordham and warrants reconsideration as new resources are devoted to the IR function.

## **Standard 8: Student Admissions**

*The institution seeks to admit students whose interests, goals, and abilities are congruent with its mission.*

The institution **meets** this standard.

### A. Summary of evidence and findings:

The admissions policies as developed and implemented by Fordham University are congruent with the mission of the institution as evidenced by the link for Admissions found on the University website, the Viewbook publication, and flyers and other materials provided to the students by the Admissions Office. Additionally, Fordham's admissions policies are clear, and criteria for application are available both on the website and in the Viewbook.

Accurate and comprehensive information regarding academic programs, including any required placement or diagnostic testing, is accurate and readily available in the materials previously referred to, and academic information is also available in the *Fordham Undergraduate Bulletin*.

In regards to the availability of information on student learning outcomes for prospective students, data are available but are not consistently used during the admission process, according to interviews held with undergraduate admissions and deans from the graduate programs. It is available to some extent if requested by the student, although the Team did not find published data on student outcomes so that incoming freshmen or applicants could see where graduates were going after completing their degrees.

Fordham maintains accurate and comprehensive information and offers advice regarding financial aid, scholarships, grants, loans, and refunds. Each student is personally interviewed and student aid packages are attended to individually, which complies with the mission. It is important to note that during that process the financial aid officer may remember a student's particular circumstances so that when additional grant or scholarship funds become available, the student's financial aid package can be revised and updated to his/ her benefit. This was evidenced consistently through Team interviews with students, both formally and informally, at both campuses. They all said that they were provided tours, materials, and information about Fordham that their experiences as freshman, juniors, and seniors have proven to be positive.

### B. Suggestions:

1. Published and implemented policies and procedures regarding transfer credit and credit for extra-institutional college level learning is less accessible than financial aid information. There is a committee formed by the assistant deans to work on this. Limited data are available in the Fordham Bulletin. The Team suggests that Fordham have someone assigned to this task in the Registrar's Office.

2. The Team suggests a more systematized approach toward collecting and using assessment data on student success, including but not limited to retention that evaluates the match between the attributes of admitted students and the institution's mission and programs. Some information is currently available from surveys, but they are used if needed or requested and are not made available in any published format. This would serve not only Admissions, but would offer insight into whether the students who have been accepted to Fordham have proven to be the students the University targets.

### **Standard 9: Student Support Services**

*The institution provides student support services reasonably necessary to enable each student to achieve the institution's goals for students.*

The institution **meets** this standard.

#### **A. Summary of evidence and findings:**

According to the Self-Study, Student Support Services, which include Student Affairs, Campus Ministry, Community Service, Athletics and Sodexo Hospitality Services, appear committed to the mission of Fordham University and to providing services and programming to meet the non-academic needs of their students (page 91). As the data show in the Online Survey of Staff on Mission, Staffing and Resources (Appendix 9.2), a strong commitment to Fordham University's mission permeates Student Services, i.e., 83% of the staff within the areas of Student Services surveyed state that the mission is vital to the success of their work with students, 73% of the staff surveyed state that the mission informs recruiting practices and hiring for institutional fit, and, 73% of the staff surveyed state that their departments conduct mission-related mentoring staff.

It appears that this commitment to the mission by the staff in Student Services informs the work that they do with the students as evidenced in an informal conversation with a group of students. When a Team member asked these students what was important about their education at Fordham, the response was the mission. "What makes the experience so great is that it is Jesuit." When asked to explain what Jesuit meant, they said that it meant "being a good person, being men and women for others, doing service, and being hard-working citizens."

According to the Student Survey of Student Services (Appendix 9.3), students state that they are aware of the various student services available to them, and that they "believe their services to be visible and accessible" (page 91). Likewise, the students state that the services are appropriately tailored to their needs, with the exception of Sodexo Hospitality Services where 57% of the students surveyed felt that these services were not tailored to fit their needs.

The Athletics Department and the Office of Academic Advising for Athletes at Rose Hill appear to have created a positive academic environment for students with athletic scholarships, since they graduate at the same rate as the overall student body. In fact, they graduate at a much higher rate than the national average graduation rate of Division I programs as calculated by the NCAA.

B. Suggestions:

The Team suggests that Fordham University accept the recommendations in Standard Nine. Those of particular importance are those pertaining to resources, assessment and diversity:

1. As indicated by the Staff Survey (Appendix 9.2), there appears to be concern regarding adequate staffing and resources in the areas of Student Services. It is suggested that benchmarking for program and staffing resources be done to help direct the University in this area.
2. Fordham University's Mission Statement as a Jesuit university states that it is "attentive to the development of the whole person" (page 8). However, there appears to be inadequate recreational space to help students develop physically at both the Rose Hill and Lincoln Center campuses. It is suggested that a study be conducted to determine ways to address this area of concern.
3. It will be important that the Student Services' strategic initiatives as outlined by the University in *Toward 2016* be appropriately funded to respond to the expectations and needs of the future incoming student. It will be difficult to become the premier Catholic institution without upgrading co-curricular facilities, programs and staffing.
4. It appears that Student Services are strongly committed to creating a culture of assessment. Presently, they conduct program assessments and national surveys, i.e., CIRP, CSS, YFCY, CAS, and EBI. However, there appears to be a lack of coordination of assessment activities from which Student Services could benefit. If there were greater centralization and coordination, it could result in more consistent use of assessment instruments, improved sharing of assessment results, and data-driven decisions.
5. Given that there was a very small sampling of graduate students surveyed, it is suggested that Student Services create more effective outreach for assessing the student services needs of graduate students.
6. While Fordham University has approximately 23% students of color, "there is a dearth of assessment information for services and programs in place to advise and guide Fordham students who belong to minority populations" (page 94). This Self Study statement was confirmed by talking with students of color and Student Services staff. Therefore, it is suggested that an assessment be conducted of the programs and services for this population to determine if they are being adequately served.

## **Standard 10: Faculty**

*The institution's instructional, research, and service programs are devised, developed, monitored, and supported by qualified professionals.*

The institution **meets** this standard.

### A. Summary of evidence and findings:

Fordham University meets the fundamental elements of this standard as evidenced by accreditation reports from Professional Schools; conversations with Faculty Senate and other faculty members, groups, and leadership; and as indicated in the mission statement and detailed in the Faculty Handbook.

Regarding carefully articulated, equitable, and implemented procedures and criteria for review of all individuals who have responsibility for the educational program of the institution, Fordham University meets this guideline with its own recommendations as noted in the Self-Study, namely: 1) institute teaching loads comparable to those at aspirant institutions and concurrently reduce the number of sections now being taught by adjunct instructional staff, 2) renew the University's commitment to bringing faculty compensation within the 80<sup>th</sup> percentile of category I AAUP rankings, 3) establish a policy regarding faculty housing assistance and other non-salary benefits in order to attract and retain highly competent faculty, and 4) improve rewards for teaching and service.

As noted elsewhere in this report, new presidential leadership at Fordham offers an opportunity for creative change. Recommendations from the faculty are generally consistent with the Strategic Plan with the exception of the need to place scholarship in a more privileged position of reward. The campus is positive and on the move; an opportunity for excellence at Fordham is manifest. The Team feels that with clarity of academic and scholarly purpose the University community will emerge closer to the picture painted by the Strategic Plan.

### B. Suggestions:

1. The Team endorses the recommendation as noted in the Self-Study of improving communication. The University needs an academic storyteller to assist the President, who must be the caretaker and active promoter of the mission of the University. The Provost could coordinate/advocate scholarship (including an annual report on the status of publications and national ranking of programs) and clarify reporting lines to faculty by empowering a new dean structure, empowering department chairs, championing a faculty of excellence, leading expectations for scholarly advancement consistent with the strategic plan, and hiring deans with scholarly records committed to the mission of Jesuit education.

2. The Team endorses recommendations from the Self-Study related to this standard and suggests the following:
  - a. Teaching load considerations need to follow a determination of acceptable and desirable scholarly activity on the part of faculty. Compensation as well as release-time for research need to follow from a more thoughtful plan.
  - b. The Fordham Self-Study recommends rewards for teaching and scholarship. In order to enact the ambition of the Strategic Plan, the University should consider improving rewards for scholarship. The goals of the Self-Study will be realized with the national recognition of the faculty. Teaching and service are central to the mission and must continue, but movement in national rankings will follow the reputations of the faculty and their publications.
3. The Team endorses recommendations from the Self-Study related to Standard 5, specifically that Academic Affairs should evaluate and clarify reporting lines between Arts and Sciences chairs and directors and academic deans; and that the Vice President for Academic Affairs should include formal reviews by faculty and/or chairs/directors in the evaluation of academic deans. The Self-Study, in both Standards 5 and 10, points to a need for and an opportunity to make structural administrative changes. Faculty conversations clearly suggest the need for a second-in-command, keeping learning and academic life central to the mission, both symbolically and pragmatically. Standard 5 recommends an Executive Vice President (similar to Provost in the University Statutes), and this recommendation is central to Standard 10. The Team urges consideration of a second-in-command, namely a Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs.

### **Standard 11: Educational Offerings**

*The institution's educational offerings display academic content, rigor, and coherence that are appropriate to its higher education mission. The institution identifies student learning goals and objectives, including knowledge and skills, for its educational offerings.*

The institution **meets** this standard.

#### **A. Summary of evidence and findings:**

The Team found that the educational offerings at Fordham are congruent with its mission. Fordham's mission emphasizes the education of the whole person and the formation of leaders and citizens who will be men and women for others. Its curriculum is tailored to this mission objective and student responses to focus groups indicate that the mission pervades the core curriculum.

Formal programs are designed to foster coherent student learning experiences and to provide synthesis. Fordham examined its undergraduate Service Learning Program to demonstrate its commitment to promoting “the dignity of the human person, the advancement of the common good, and the option for the poor.” While the Self-Study task force thought the program was valuable, they determined that it was not well-understood around campus. One hundred twenty-five (125) clubs and organizations offer further enrichment for the students involved in them. Furthermore, an active Community Service Program involves students in New York City and functions as an important part of the curriculum with courses in many different fields. All of this is supplemented with a rich program of intellectual and cultural offerings, lectures, conferences, and workshops drawing on the resources of New York City.

There is periodic evaluation of the effectiveness of curricula. A sampling of twelve departments shows systematic discussions are used to evaluate educational offerings. Student feedback has been little-used in this process. The survey used to gather data for the review asked whether the department compared itself with peer and aspirant institutions with regard to the major, whether the department administered a knowledge or subject test, and a number of related questions. It would seem that some follow up on the issue of the content of each major in comparison with that major in selected institutions would be desirable. The mechanisms by which these departments are comparing their offerings with those in their disciplines nationally and internationally are not spelled out.

Furthermore, the Team found evidence that program goals are stated in terms of student learning outcomes. Some discussion is provided vis-à-vis student and departmental expectations for rigor, with the conclusion that students may have higher expectations than faculty. A quick review of departmental websites did not indicate that program goals are stated in terms of student learning outcomes. The more traditional vocabulary of offerings dominated on the websites. In the new Strategic Plan *Toward 2016*, however, some references to program level measures (winning of prestigious scholarships and fellowships, medical school acceptance rates, and improved placement of graduates) are included. Sample course syllabi were reviewed in the document room and indicated that one included expected learning outcomes and several others used phrasing that indicated an emphasis on learning.

Learning resources, facilities, and library services are adequate, and in some instances, excellent. Fordham University prides itself on its initiatives with regard to computer literacy. “Smart classrooms” have been installed and are being used to good effect. The faculty appears to be making good use of computer technology in the classroom, and students appear to improve their computer literacy through their own efforts while at the University.

The new Walsh Library provides an exceptional space for students and faculty. As one of the largest libraries among the Jesuit comparator groups, statistics indicate robust use of its resources. Library resources are available electronically across campus. Comparative statistics would have been helpful to the Team. Students gave high marks to the library but, as students do everywhere, wished for more resources. The real-time chat with the 18 other Jesuit colleges is an excellent service for remote users.

Additionally, collaboration between professional library staff and faculty in teaching and fostering information literacy skills relevant to the curriculum is strong. Middle States has been emphasizing the information literacy skills of students as an indicator of the success of library programs for the last three or four years. The Self-Study notes a basic bibliographic instruction course at one campus: the Rose Hill campus. Interviews with library administrators indicate that about 4,000 students are currently being reached. In addition, a new tutorial for information literacy has been developed and will become available shortly. Librarians should think of some measure of current reference service so that the impact of the new tutorial can be understood.

B. Suggestions:

Recommendations around the review of the core curriculum are most worthwhile. As recommended, faculty review of major requirements is needed on a regular basis as the content of many majors is changing. Other recommendations with regard to literacy expertise and assessment of the overall culture and the individual campus cultures are also noteworthy.

C. Recommendations:

1. College and university libraries are now in head-to-head competition with Google as a source for fulfilling student information needs. It would be valuable to consider how Fordham views that competition, and what faculty and librarians are doing to ensure that students find and use quality information. The Team suggests that the steps already taken be consolidated into a plan to ensure that students are information-literate in their disciplines.

**Standard 12: General Education**

*The institution's curricula are designed so that students acquire and demonstrate college-level proficiency in general education and essential skills, including oral and written communication, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis and reasoning, technological competency, and information literacy.*

The institution **meets** this standard.

A. Summary of evidence and findings:

As in other sections of the Fordham University Self-Study, the level of detail, self-awareness and self-criticism on display in the review of Standard 12 is remarkable. Especially nuanced are the passages setting forth the rationale for the current core curriculum, those assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the core, and those discussing the difficulties in assessing the core courses. On-campus interviews and conversations reinforced the major themes of the Self-Study and underscored certain points. For example, senior faculty who teach regularly in the core, in response to a direct question, acknowledged that relatively few of the core courses, perhaps less than one-third, are taught by tenure-track and tenured faculty. At the same time, senior faculty members do tend to teach the “capstone” Senior Seminar in Values.

Fordham is to be commended for having developed a comprehensive, fairly well-integrated core curriculum. Several features stand out:

1. Centrality of core education as a reflection of mission. Fordham requires more course hours and course credits than its aspirant institutions. Fordham undergraduates must take 17 to 23 courses to satisfy the core, depending on a student’s entering language proficiency and ability to satisfy distribution requirements in core courses. Given that the Fordham student normally takes only 36 courses, a staggering fifty to sixty-three percent of coursework occurs in core courses (Self-Study, pp. 115, 120).
2. The core curriculum, with its attempt to provide an extensive common educational experience for all Fordham undergraduates, does indeed function as a means of embedding the themes, values, and vision of the University Mission Statement within the nineteen departments or interdisciplinary programs that offer courses that satisfy core requirements. This function is weakened, however, to the extent that faculty members teaching the core are not consistently socialized into the values and objectives of the core curriculum. The evidence derived from various assessment instruments offers a mixed message on this issue of consistent faculty engagement with core values and pedagogical goals.

A number of challenges emerge for Fordham University here, namely:

1. The core curriculum as a whole has not been evaluated in ten years, and there is a sense on the part of some faculty, especially those in the sciences, that the core is too big and needs re-examination in light of the recently approved Strategic Plan, which underscores Fordham's ambition to become nationally known as a preeminent Catholic university that fully exploits its location in and historic service to New York City. The President, who has just appointed a committee to undertake such a review, shares the judgment that the core must be re-thought. Moreover, the Strategic Plan envisions a smaller core that focuses "more sharply on the primacy of the Ignatian tradition in concrete ways. . ." Such a core might be composed of required courses that directly engage Fordham's religious identity, moral values, and commitment to social justice in a globalized world, along with courses in various disciplines that, as core courses, would concentrate less on bodies of knowledge and more on the habits of mind characteristic of each discipline. Both kinds of courses would strive to inculcate, the Strategic Plan suggests, "right reason expressed effectively, responsibly and gracefully."
2. Assessment is a University-wide challenge, and the core curriculum is no exception. The Self-Study is particularly forthcoming on this point, and devotes space to detailing the challenges to useful evaluation of core courses and the core itself. It is valuable to consider how to develop a set of metrics that can adequately evaluate progress toward the goals of deepening student appreciation for the complexity of human problems, developing moral values alongside critical analysis, and inculcating a sense of responsibility for the world. Fordham, especially under its new president, has devoted considerable attention and collective energy to self-evaluation.

Nevertheless, faculty and administrators convey a strong sense that specifying and implementing effective practices for measuring outcomes—for assessing the achievement of intended results in the student—remains a vexing problem. Relying on written student evaluations is not sufficient to the task. The Senior Seminar offers another option, in that seminar instructors are able to perceive real intellectual growth in students over the four-year core experience. But evaluation of this kind has not been systematized and some professors warned against placing too much evaluative burden on one course.

To ensure the highest possible quality of instruction, there is a need for more rigorous assessment of learning objectives and outcomes. The Self-Study is candid about what one might term a "lack of full compliance" on the part of some disciplines and departments when it comes to evaluating their courses on the basis of how well they achieve the objectives of the core curriculum. The procedures in place have nonetheless produced a few victories, notably the ratcheting-up of the language requirements to a proficiency basis.

In sum, the Core Curriculum Committee is duly concerned with enhancing effective core teaching across disciplines and colleges over time. At the same time, during the site visit, faculty, students, and alumni expressed satisfaction with and general enthusiasm for the core. A balanced assessment might conclude that Fordham should continue its diligence regarding general education, but take care that the concern and energy devoted to assessment not become a paralyzing preoccupation.

3. The Self-Study devotes ample consideration to the problem of ensuring commonality while respecting the differing disciplinary requirements of the different colleges. Less developed are the sections matching requirements to educational goals and to the overall mission of the University. Other parts of the Self-Study are instructive in this regard. Fordham's international and overseas programs (see Standard 13) are far less robust than its aspirant institutions, with fewer students studying abroad, and doing so in programs that may or may not approximate Fordham's standards and educational goals. At any rate, the quality of these (non-Fordham) foreign study programs is unclear from the Self-Study, and the faculty interviewed by the team agreed that Fordham lags behind in internationalization as reflected in study abroad programs.

B. Suggestions:

1. The committee to re-evaluate the core should incorporate the faculty in discussion of the design, execution and assessment of the core curriculum, as the Self-Study on Standard 12 recommends. Particular attention should be given to measures that provide incentives for tenured and tenure-track faculty to teach regularly in the core curriculum. Special consideration in these deliberations should also be given to the University's faculty research profile, which needs to become stronger, and the related question of faculty teaching load, which needs to become lighter. Discussion of the revised core should unfold simultaneously with the ongoing review of and adjustment to the Strategic Plan. Finally, the president or Chief Academic Officer should set a firm closing date for these deliberations, lest they drag on interminably.

Making progress toward these disparate goals—higher percentage of courses taught by regular faculty, a lighter teaching load for faculty, broad-based commitment to the core as a means of embedding the mission and Strategic Plan within the curriculum—will require that faculty members cultivate in themselves a sympathy to arguments for a smaller core. Nonetheless, these arguments must be compelling on pedagogical and mission grounds. Such compelling arguments are available.

2. Fordham should create and develop an excellent foreign study program for Fordham undergraduates. The president, vice-presidents, deans, trustees, faculty, and students should begin a discussion toward the goal of investing resources in this project. Salient parts of the core curriculum—e.g. the Global Studies seminar, foreign language courses, theology, philosophy, and new core courses (e.g. “Perceptions of America”)— would be offered at these international educational sites. Realizing a truly Catholic, Jesuit and globally-focused core would be greatly advanced by Fordham becoming seriously committed to an international educational presence. Such a presence would also stimulate the necessary development of the undergraduate and graduate programs in business, which must become truly internationalized if Fordham is to be taken seriously as a 21<sup>st</sup>-century leader in this field.

### **Standard 13: Related Educational Activities**

*Institutional programs or activities that are characterized by particular content, focus, location, mode of delivery, or sponsorship meet appropriate standards.*

The institution **meets** this standard.

#### **A. Summary of evidence and findings:**

Evaluating this standard based on the information provided was difficult, which may reflect the breadth of the category tackled in this standard. The Self-Study shows an impressive array of “related educational activities”; the sheer number is stunning. But the category includes, at one end of the spectrum, traditional academic courses offered at the Graduate Center at Tarrytown as well as Marymount College and Fordham College of Liberal Studies at the Marymount campus. At the other end of the spectrum, it includes Fordham College Liberal Studies courses offered to non-traditional students, one-credit community service learning modules, and non-academic community service internships for Fordham undergraduates at the Rose Hill and Lincoln Center campuses. In the middle are state and national programs targeted at disadvantaged students. The overview paragraph of the Self-Study on Standard 13 refers not to faculty but to “teaching personnel” hired for these programs. It was unclear what constitutes “teaching personnel” and how they differ from regular faculty. Furthermore, while the programs at Tarrytown adhere to “all current institutional school policies and procedures regarding program quality and program assessment,” no such claim is made for the numerous additional programs placed under this broad canopy of “related educational activities.” Nor is mention made of “full time, tenure track and adjunct faculty.” The additional programs are presented in a cursory manner, in the form of a brief account of how they were founded, how they are funded, and what their functions and aims are. How the programs are evaluated; whether and to what extent they reflect or embody the policies, educational methods and procedures of the main campuses; who, precisely, teaches in these programs—much of this remained a mystery prior to the site visit. For example, the Self-Study mentions, in addition to Tarrytown and the Regional Educational Technology Center, “13 other sites that offer undergraduate and graduate credit.” It is not clear who staffs these centers, how many students take advantage of them, and who has oversight for quality control.

The site visit and the personal interviews conducted at Lincoln Center and Rose Hill were exceedingly useful in providing answers to at least some of the Team's questions. The section of the Self-Study on "Fordham as Neighbor" was also a useful supplement. Indeed, some of the most important "related educational activities," including those highlighted below, are covered not in the Self-Study Standard 13, but in the "Fordham as Neighbor" section of the Self-Study.

During the campus visit, three things became clear: 1) Fordham's Community Service Program (CSP) and Service Learning Program (SLP), along with government-funded assistance programs, such as the Regional Educational Technology Center (RETC) and the Higher Education Opportunity Program (HEOP), stand at the heart of the University's fulfillment of this standard; 2) these programs are impressive in scope and scale; and 3) these programs, especially the student internship and volunteer initiatives, are known to Fordham students and some faculty, but are a well-kept secret beyond this circle. One strong finding, therefore, is that Fordham is hiding part of its light under a bushel-basket: the story of student and faculty contributions to the communities surrounding the two main campuses must be told, both for the sake of Fordham's external reputation, and as a way of increasing the effectiveness of these programs.

Several of the programs described in this section, developed in cooperation with the State of New York (e.g., the Regional Educational Technology Center, the Higher Education Opportunity Program, The Collegiate Science Technology Entry Program) or the U.S. Congress (e.g., the Trio programs, including Upward Bound), have excellent goals that are compatible with the mission of Fordham.

In many respects, the CSP and other initiatives (e.g., the Bronx African American History Project) define the University's "outreach" and embody three central dimensions of Fordham's identity: its location and civic leadership in the City of New York, its commitment to serve the poor and disadvantaged, and its education of the whole person—in particular. It should be noted that the CSP in its current configuration cannot meet the demands of students who seek internships and it is not situated to recruit faculty systematically and consistently for service learning modules and courses.

#### B. Suggestions:

1. It seems necessary and desirable to bring coherence to the diverse "related educational activities." The Self-Study lists only one recommendation: "Each program should review its procedures for assessing student learning outcomes and incorporate findings in subsequent planning" (p. 132). This recommendation, however, does not address the "islands in a sea" character of these programs—that is, it does not articulate a common rationale binding these disparate parts into a coherent educational, mission-driven whole. Nor does it address the "under the radar" (a.k.a. "light under a bushel basket") character of these often impressive initiatives. Thus, a "rationale for Fordham outreach" consonant with the University Mission Statement should be developed, and programs evaluated in part according to their contribution to this intended coherence.

2. Consideration should be given to expanding the opportunities for internships provided by CSP.

#### **Standard 14: Assessment of Student Learning**

*Assessment of student learning demonstrates that the institution's students have knowledge, skills, and competencies consistent with institutional goals, and that students at graduation have achieved appropriate higher education goals.*

The institution is **beginning to meet** this standard.

##### **A. Summary of evidence and findings:**

Sufficient evidence exists of articulated expectations of student learning. As a first indicator of student learning, the Self-Study looked at 776 undergraduate syllabi from across the University. The team found that exams, quizzes, short assignments, and papers were being used as direct measures of student learning as noted in *Student Learning Assessment: Options and Resources*. After analyzing the statistics on the various kinds of measures, one might ask a critical question about whether feedback is provided to students in time for them to improve.

The Self-Study team went on to look at SEEQ as an indirect measure of student learning. In general, students agreed with statements about course objectives, reading and homework, exams, and instructor feedback at the 'agree' level (7). This agreement was broadly distributed among values courses and major courses. On a question about learning the subject materials, students' average response was 7.2.

This work at the course level seems to follow the standard, although observations of field work, internships, and service learning would provide a useful adjunct for direct measures. Indirect measures of class time spent in active learning and hours spent on external activities related to the course (a key part of the Fordham curriculum) would also be helpful.

Furthermore, the capstone senior seminar in values and moral choices is a program-level direct measure of learning.

A plan that describes student learning assessment activities was provided during the site visit. The Self-Study team reports that, since in 2003-04, departmental annual reports must include explicitly requested information on outcomes assessment. A common departmental response to this requirement has been implementation of an exit interview. Implementation is now underway, but not yet consistent in all departments.

The University's Draft Assessment Plan provides a thorough guide for the institution. The plan speaks to the use of learning assessment to inspire teaching, but this has not been fully implemented.

Regarding documented use of student learning assessment information as part of institutional assessment, the inclusion of outcomes assessments in departmental reports indicates that student learning assessment will play a part in institutional assessment. Since this requirement is a new one, its results cannot yet be measured.

B. Suggestions:

1. The planned reexamination of the core curriculum is a worthy recommendation with keen interest from constituents ranging from students to trustees. Collection of data about post-graduate experiences, as proposed in the Recommendations, would enrich understanding of learning outcomes.

2. The Self-Study notes that some offices collect data on graduates, but that these are not shared with the larger University community. Such data might be a good source for improving student learning. A more detailed description of how the SEEQ data is used by faculty, departments, and the University would also aid understanding in this standard.

C. Recommendations:

1. The Team recommends that Fordham implement its plan to create a University-wide program for assessing student learning at the course level, the program level, and the institutional level. This plan should be incorporated by summary into the Strategic Plan *Towards 2016*, in the Learning section. Fordham's existing familiarity with *Student Learning Assessment: Options and Resources* will be useful in the implementation of the plan. After it has been fully vetted and adopted by the University community, the draft plan distributed will satisfy this need.

## VIII. Summary of Recommendations for Continuing Compliance and Requirements

The Team's key recommendations as detailed in the report include:

1. The University should work to further integrate its mission into planning across schools and departments, as well as enhance mission education programs for faculty and staff, and should incorporate this goal into the University's Strategic Plan *Toward 2016*.
2. College and university libraries are now in head-to-head competition with Google as a source for fulfilling student information needs. It would be valuable to consider how Fordham views that competition, and what faculty and librarians are doing to ensure that students find and use quality information. The Team suggests that the steps already taken be consolidated into a plan to ensure that students are information-literate in their disciplines.
3. The Team recommends that Fordham implement its plan to create a University-wide program for assessing student learning at the course level, the program level, and the institutional level. This plan should be incorporated by summary into the Strategic Plan *Towards 2016*, in the Learning section. Fordham's existing familiarity with *Student Learning Assessment: Options and Resources* will be useful in the implementation of the plan. After it has been fully vetted and adopted by the University community, the draft plan distributed will satisfy this need.