

Fifth-Year Interim Report

Presented to the

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by

Amherst College

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I. Report Preparation

This report was prepared in the Dean of the Faculty's Office under the guidance of Dean Lisa Raskin, Associate Dean Robert Hilborn, and Assistant Dean Ann Burger. Many people submitted written updates of developments on campus over the past five years, and information was taken from reports of the Committee on Educational Policy, the Committee of Six, the College Council, and the Committee on Priorities and Resources. Major portions of the text were written by Ann Burger, Robert Hilborn, Jill Meredith, Director of the Mead Art Museum, and Douglas Wilson, College Editor. Special note should be given to the contributions of Kathryn Bryne, Director of Human Resources; Joe Paul Case, Director of Financial Aid; Phil Fitz, Director of Information Technology; Michael Kiefer, Chief Advancement Officer; Ben Lieber, Dean of Students; Stacey Schmeidel, Director of Public Affairs; and Peter Shea, Treasurer. The Dean consulted the Committee of Six, the executive committee of the Faculty, and encouraged campus colleagues to comment on the Mission Statement. Karla Keyes and Mary Miller in the Dean's Office provided valuable technical assistance, and Harrison Gregg in the Office of Institutional Research updated statistics from the last round of accreditation. Many people willingly responded to questions and clarified sections of this report. Professor David Sofield and Stacey Schmeidel kindly read and made suggestions on the drafts. The attached data forms were prepared by the Treasurer's Office, the Registrar's Office, and the Office of Admission.

II. Institutional Overview

Amherst College is a coeducational liberal arts institution with a 1,000-acre campus in the semi-rural town of Amherst in western Massachusetts. It is consistently ranked as one of the best three or four undergraduate colleges in the United States. Founded in 1821 as a non-sectarian institution for the education of young men for the ministry, Amherst today is an independent, residential college for both men and women. Its 1,640 students come from most of the 50 states and many foreign countries.

The Amherst curriculum, taught by 165 tenured and tenure-track faculty and by a number of

lecturers and visitors, includes study in the humanities, the social sciences, and the natural sciences, combining a broad education with specialization in one or more particular fields. Emphasis falls upon each student's responsibility for the selection of an appropriate course program. The College offers a bachelor of arts degree and cooperates with four neighboring colleges in a consortium called Five Colleges, Inc., which includes Amherst, Smith, Mount Holyoke and Hampshire Colleges and the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. The five institutions together have made the area a center of intellectual and artistic activity. Course exchange and other forms of Five College cooperation enhance Amherst's ability to offer its students an unusually wide variety of courses and programs.

In its faculty recruitment the College seeks individuals who are both excellent teachers and scholars. In recruiting students, Amherst is highly selective, looking above all for men and women of intellectual promise who have demonstrated qualities of mind and character that will enable them to take full advantage of the curriculum. The College seeks qualified applicants from different races, classes, ethnic groups, and nationalities—students whose many perspectives contribute significantly to a process of mutual education within and outside the curriculum. The College admits students without regard to their financial status, and its need-blind admission policy and commitment to meet full financial need make it possible for every admitted student to attend Amherst.

With annual operating expenses of about \$99 million, Amherst is supported by tuition, by income from an endowment of approximately \$860 million, and by additional gifts from alumni that total more than \$30 million a year. More than 60% of the College's 17,000 graduates contribute these gifts every year—a record percentage in alumni giving to an American college.

Amherst maintains its tradition of providing an excellent education to its students, of fully supporting members of its Faculty in their teaching and research, of fiscal conservatism that makes possible these endeavors both now and in the future, and of providing an environment for all community members that allows them to function as responsible citizens of the broader society.

III. Response to Areas Identified by NEASC for Special Emphasis

A. Develop, adopt and promulgate a formal mission statement.

The Amherst community as a whole has, through many years, understood and fully supported the College's unwritten but widely respected mission. Through these years, many community members have resisted the idea of adopting a specific mission statement for Amherst, preferring, instead, to let the community norms speak for the College. In light of the request from NEASC during the 1998 reaccreditation process, however, the Dean of the Faculty drafted a mission statement for consideration by the community. The draft was discussed by the Committee of Six in the Spring of 2002 and distributed to the Faculty at that time. In the Fall of 2002, discussion on campus, both in the Committee of Six and amongst the Faculty as a whole, resulted in amendments to the original version. This version was distributed, again, to all community members.

This working draft will be forwarded to the Board of Trustees for possible consideration at a Spring 2003 meeting of the Board:

Amherst College seeks to provide the very best liberal arts education to undergraduate students and outstanding support to a faculty engaged in teaching and research. The College brings a diverse group of distinguished faculty members and exceptional students together in a residential setting conducive to personal and intellectual development; it encourages faculty to contribute to their disciplines and to society through scholarship, performance, or professional work. Amherst promotes breadth of study for all students through its advising system and depth through its departmental majors. An Amherst education fosters critical thought and creative achievement in the sciences, arts, and humanities by emphasizing close interaction between faculty and students and by offering vigorous support for independent research.

- B. Assure that students achieve a balance in their general education and assess students' learning in their general education studies.

Since the time of the last accreditation, the Faculty has continued to discuss and debate the shape of the Amherst curriculum and the paths students take through it. This discussion has taken place within the normal governance of the College, in the ongoing work of departments and college-wide committees, but also, over the past two years, by the Faculty as a whole in its revision of the Honors Program, and, now underway, in discussions with the Special Committee on the Amherst Education.

First, revision of the Honors Program. The Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) reviewed honors at Amherst during the 2000-01 academic year, and subsequently brought forward a series of proposals for a new program. The Faculty as a whole adopted a change in the system from a grade-based eligibility for honors to one based on class rank, both for English (college-wide) honors and Latin (departmental) Honors (policy appended). Starting with the 2003-04 academic year, Latin Honors will be awarded to students completing a thesis within their major department or program; for a degree *magna cum laude* or *summa cum laude*, a student will have to be in the top 25% of the class. English Honors (the degree with Distinction) will be awarded to students in the top 25% of the class solely on the basis of performance in course work. In the past two graduating classes under the old Honors system, 55% of Amherst students graduated with degrees of *summa cum laude* or *magna cum laude*. The Faculty believes that limiting these honors to 25% of the graduating class better suits the College's educational mission and serves as an appropriate recognition of the excellent academic performance of its students.

During the debate on Honors, several proposals were made to institute distribution requirements for eligibility for a degree with Distinction; arguments were put forward at Faculty Meetings both for and against attaching such requirements to honors. Some faculty saw the proposals as a backdoor way of installing distribution requirements across the College; after all, they argued, most students coming to Amherst expect that they will qualify for honors. During the thoughtful and often passionate discussion on the floor of several Faculty Meetings, colleagues who argued for distribution said that students should be offered incentives for breadth—that is, given inducements to diversify course selections. They noted that breadth is encouraged by language in the Amherst College *Catalog* and by advisers across the campus, and that such diversity in course selections coincides with traditional values of Amherst and liberal arts colleges in general. Why shouldn't the College require distribution, they argue, especially since the language in the *Catalog* is not perceived by many as particularly useful or as an effective guide to advising? The

requirements, then, would serve as a modest counterweight to a perceived narrowing of course selection and a too smooth passage through the curriculum. One interesting aspect of this discussion was that positive support was given to the idea of distribution requirements on the part of many more Amherst faculty members than in the recent past.

Opponents spoke forcefully that the open curriculum works quite well, especially since it encourages close relationships forged between students and their faculty advisers. They said the current curriculum, a hallmark of Amherst for the past 30 years, would be undermined by attaching distribution to honors. Some spoke of such requirements as a superficial way of merely pretending to be rigorous, and said that requirements might constitute a glorified high school course of study. They said they prefer to teach students who are interested in their courses and who are not forced to take them; not having requirements, in the view of many, makes Amherst the good institution that it is. They also expressed the view that the open curriculum is in fact responsible for the present distinction of the College. In the end, all proposals for attaching distribution requirements to the Honors Program failed, some by relatively close votes. One colleague said the decision was appropriate because he thought the College should not make major curricular change by close decision.

We offer this level of detail to indicate that members of the Faculty at Amherst, both those on the CEP in proposing various alternatives to honors and faculty members at large, in thoroughly discussing the proposals have indeed taken the shape of the curriculum seriously since the time of the last accreditation. In its discussion of honors and the limitation on the numbers of students who will receive Amherst honors, the Faculty is moving toward more rigor in the curriculum. All members of the Faculty seem to recognize that the topic of distribution will surface again, given its support on campus; they expect that it will be on the agenda of the Special Committee on the Amherst Education, to which we now turn.

As a result of faculty interest in discussing the curriculum, the Committee of Six in the Spring of 2002 charged an *ad hoc* committee, The Special Committee on the Amherst Education, with the following mandate:

The Committee of Six charges the Special Committee on the Amherst Education to examine the question, What should an Amherst education be in the 21st century? The Committee should examine the current state of education at Amherst and assess the challenges we will face in the near future. We ask the Committee to draw upon the relevant experiences and ideas of like institutions

and to propose concrete plans to move forward.

Three specific issues should provide focus within this broad mandate:

1. Are our students being graduated with the capabilities central to liberal education? Such skills might include the ability to engage in critical and creative thinking, to write and speak clearly, and to engage in quantitative reasoning.
2. Would students be best served by more one-on-one instruction? New academic specializations? More collaborative teaching?
3. If we were to increase the size of the Faculty, how might the extra positions be best used to achieve the long-run goals of the College?

The Committee is made up of five members of the Faculty, the President, the Dean of the Faculty, and the Associate Dean of the Faculty. The Committee's recommendations are expected to be submitted to the Committee of Six, the Dean, and the President by June 2003.

The idea of establishing such a committee came from discussions connected with the possibility of increasing the size of the Faculty, the possible focus of the next comprehensive fund-raising campaign, and an interest on the part of the Dean and the President to lay a foundation for future initiatives at the College. The Committee began its work last spring, visited ten colleges and universities over the summer, and scheduled a series of meetings with faculty in October and November to solicit ideas. At these meetings, the Committee distributed data summarizing students' academic choices and performance for the Class of 2002, comparative data (from COFHE) summarizing student satisfaction with advising and academic course work for the Class of 2002, and comparative data from peer institutions on their academic programs and requirements. The Committee also distributed to colleagues a series of questions generated by its work to date and intended to spur discussion. Examples of these questions are:

- How well do we do, in comparison to our peers, in serving students of varying levels of academic preparation?
- Are there specific skills that we should make sure that all our graduates have

mastered and, if so, how do we measure our/their “success”?

- What are the relative merits of different degrees of structure and/or coercion in the curriculum in different academic settings? How are these related to our overall sense of educational identity?
- Are there specific fields that we do not cover currently that should be part of our curriculum? What principles should we consider in establishing priorities for new curricular initiatives?
- Do we need more systematic forms of institutional research to evaluate our performance?

The Special Committee is consulting widely with faculty committees and administrative groups on campus, as well as the Faculty at large. On the basis of these comprehensive conversations, the Committee hopes to identify themes and issues that will serve as the basis for further study in the spring semester. Two areas of particular interest in the initial discussions of the Committee involve investigation of comprehensive writing and quantitative skills programs for all students at Amherst. The possibilities for addressing these two areas will be discussed during this academic year. The Committee’s work is an exciting venture for Amherst, one that may carry the College well into the first half of the 21st century as we maintain our focus on excellent undergraduate education.

- C. Periodically and systematically assess the effectiveness of instruction and faculty contributions to the institution.

As noted by NEASC in 1998, the Faculty at Amherst was, at that time, involved in determining how best to evaluate the quality of teaching in promotion to tenure. The final report of the committee considering complex matters of reappointment, tenure, and untenured faculty development was issued in September 1998 (appended). The Faculty at Amherst then took up the recommendations, including proposed revisions to procedures in the *Faculty Handbook*, discussing the recommendations seriatim through the 1998-99 academic year and into the next. The end result of these changes is a rigorous transparency of departmental personnel procedures for tenure and promotion, with an unusual level of accountability on the part of departments in

analyzing data from student evaluations of teaching and observation by senior colleagues. The formal emphasis on evaluation of teaching, both by students and by colleagues in departments, is new for Amherst.

Amherst has long solicited retrospective letters from all students who have taken courses with a professor standing for reappointment or tenure. These often lengthy, comprehensive letters offer a view of the long-term effectiveness of teaching. However, the response rate, while somewhat variable, has been rather low. On the basis of a recommendation from the *ad hoc* Tenure Committee, in-class student evaluations in essay form are now required to be written by students in the last week of classes in all courses taught by untenured members of the faculty. These evaluations are given to the Faculty member, after grades have been submitted and with names removed; the evaluations are part of the record reviewed and discussed at an annual meeting of the untenured Faculty member and the chair of the department. The departmental evaluation of teaching effectiveness discussed at this meeting is supposed to draw upon several sources of information in addition to these in-class evaluations and confidential retrospective letters. "Evaluation should derive from, but need not be limited to, conversations about courses with some members of the department; attendance by some members of the department at a number of class meetings at mutually agreed upon times; and assessment, by the candidate with at least one senior member of the department, of the accomplishments of at least one of the candidate's courses at the end of a semester." Thus, teaching evaluation at Amherst now consists of retrospective letters from former students, in-class evaluations by current students, a range of possible observations by tenured colleagues, discussions with at least one senior colleague, and an annual meeting of review with the chair of the department. While this rigorous review is restricted to untenured colleagues, the ethos of deep departmental discussion of teaching has involved senior colleagues and heightened their awareness of successful methods and strategies in the classroom.

In the academic year 2001-02, Amherst established a committee to consider topics of Faculty Career Enhancement in order to be able to accept an invitation to apply for a grant from the Mellon Foundation. As one of its recommendations, the committee recommended establishing a "teaching center" where discussion of pedagogy might take place separate from evaluation and extend across all ranks. The committee envisioned that the activities might enable conversations about all aspects of teaching, from assignments to grading to leading discussion. The College then applied for a grant from the Mellon Foundation to support workshops on pedagogy, and, upon conferral of the grant, appointed an interested full professor to organize the pedagogy initiative. The sessions held so far this year, attended by tenured and non-tenured faculty alike,

have offered the promised opportunity to step back from daily responsibilities to reflect on teaching, and to share effective classroom strategies with a diverse group of colleagues. The ethos of good teaching pervades Amherst, both traditionally and currently; our faculty colleagues push themselves to be excellent teachers without formal senior faculty review. The open curriculum means that students enroll in specific courses because of reputation and excellence, not because of requirement. Thus, enrollments themselves are a form of evaluation by students.

An additional initiative that might have an effect on the teaching culture of the College is supported by a grant from the Mellon Foundation to explore ways to retain the connections between the College and its *emeritus* professors. These experienced teachers have much to offer their colleagues, and we hope that a program of engagement and involvement might help them serve as mentors and resources to faculty and students alike.

We are also pleased to report that a highly successful capital campaign has afforded new opportunities to faculty for research and sabbatical support. FRAP (the Faculty Research Award Program) has an annual budget of \$250,000, endowed; it funds proposals up to \$20,000 for faculty research. A new program of Senior Sabbatical Fellowships, about ten each year and also endowed, provides 20% of a faculty member's salary, bringing the semester sabbatical compensation from 80% to 100% . Eighteen new named professorships have been established, reflecting the success of the Campaign. Because of the decision-making necessary for each these programs, the Dean and the President review many more records of tenured members of the faculty each year than they have in the past. The Dean of the Faculty now requests that her faculty colleagues send her an updated CV on an annual basis, and most faculty members comply. Thus, she has information at her disposal about faculty contributions to the College and to their scholarly fields. The new initiatives on behalf of the Faculty are designed to ensure that its members are fully supported in their teaching and research endeavors.

D. Assure adequate staff support for the maintenance of information resources.

When the review team visited in 1998, the College recognized that it had problems supporting the use of information technology, and had begun to take steps to remedy the situation. Two separate units, Administrative Computing and Academic Computing, had just been combined under a single newly hired director. The total number of staff was 23, lower than many of our peer institutions. The distribution of staff among various functions was also not effective or efficient, due in part to the staff-intensive mainframe system used for administrative data

processing. Because of the use of relatively old technology, the skills of the staff had not been kept as up-to-date as necessary to support the work of the Faculty, students, and staff at Amherst; that is, the administrative computing/academic computing structure at that time created inefficient use of the existing staff.

Since 1998, the College has taken a number of steps to improve the support of information technology across the institution. We have significantly increased the overall number of positions; by June 2003, the total number of staff positions within Information Technology will be 31. We have reorganized staff functions within Information Technology to make more efficient use of staff. The administrative mainframe is being replaced with a more modern system that will require fewer staff to maintain. And, through a combination of retirements, transfers, and retraining, the skills of staff within the department have been significantly upgraded. We believe these steps have resulted in an efficient and effective organization of an appropriate size to provide reasonable support for information technology at the College. More information about the activities of the Information Technology Department is included in the next section of this report.

IV. Other Changes and Developments at Amherst since 1998

A. Faculty and Instruction

Initiatives undertaken by the Faculty and Administration during the past five years have been informed by assessments done by both *ad hoc* and standing committees of the Faculty; reports issued by these committees have resulted in substantial changes to policies and administrative structures, affecting the Faculty as a whole and areas of the instructional program.

1. The Faculty Committee on Admission and Financial Aid

In January of 1998, the then Dean of Admission resigned. The President commissioned a visiting committee to review the Office of Admission before embarking on the search for a new

Dean; the visiting committee examined all aspects of admission. Its members urged the College to consider a number of structural reforms in the organization of the office, to establish better communication between the office and the wider college community and to pay greater attention to gathering data about admission trends. Under internal and excellent interim leadership during 1998 and 1999 while the search was organized and then reopened after redefining the position of Dean of Admission and Financial Aid, the Office of Admission embarked on reforms that addressed the issues of organization noted by the visiting committee. The President created a new single executive position of Dean of Admission and Financial Aid, reporting to the President and supported by a Director of Admission and a Director of Financial Aid. The administrative reorganization acknowledged the key role of the Dean of Admission and Financial Aid within the College's administrative structure and made it possible to bring an experienced and talented Dean to Amherst.

Further, at the beginning of the 1998-99 academic year, the Committee of Six issued a charge to the Faculty Committee on Admission and Financial Aid (FCAFA) to promote conversation within the college community with the following questions in mind:

- a. Would the Faculty reaffirm the statement on admission endorsed in 1983?

“Amherst College looks, above all, for men and women of intellectual promise who have demonstrated qualities of mind and character that will enable them to take full advantage of the College's curriculum. The College seeks qualified applicants from different races, classes, and ethnic groups, students whose several perspectives might contribute to a process of mutual education within and outside the curriculum. Admission decisions aim to select from among the many qualified applicants those possessing the intellectual talent, mental discipline, and imagination that will allow them to most fully benefit from the curriculum and to contribute to the life of the College and society. Grades, standardized test scores, essays, recommendations, independent work, the quality of the individual's secondary school program, and achievements outside the classroom are among the factors used to evaluate this promise, but no one of these measures is considered determinative.”

- b. Are we, as a community, fulfilling in practice the admission statement now in the *Catalog*?

Toward this end, the Committee of Six urged FCAFA to address with the community several issues outlined in its 1998 annual report to the Faculty. In particular, they asked for a detailed examination of questions relating to early decision, financial aid, and the current role of athletics in the admission process.

FCAFA submitted a report in the fall of 1999 (appended) with four basic recommendations about the issues that emerged from its study. These recommendations address the structure of admission work at Amherst in ways that expand faculty involvement and faculty liaison with admission staff, strengthen the role of institutional research in Amherst's understanding of its applicant pools and matriculation outcomes, and involve faculty more widely in the recruiting process. In conclusion, the committee felt confident that the structural recommendations—rather than any rewording of the admission policy—represented the best possible approach to the issues raised in the report. In the course of conversations with different groups within the Amherst College community, the committee was apprised of a number of issues relating to athletics, the solutions to which did not fall exclusively within the purview of FCAFA, although they did affect the work of the Admission Office. The Committee of Six and the Administration then worked with the Board of Trustees to establish the next level of assessment and review of athletics at Amherst, as described next.

2. The Report of the Special Committee on the Place of Athletics at Amherst

In the fall of 2000, following consultation with the Committee of Six and the Trustees, President Gerety established the Special Committee on the Place of Athletics at Amherst, and charged the Committee with the task of weighing the extent to which Amherst's athletic programs are consistent with the overall purposes of the College. (Report appended.) Three Trustees, three Professors, the Athletic Director, the Dean of Students, and two students were appointed; they spent the next year and a half studying various aspects of athletics at Amherst. The final report was issued in April of 2002. The report is now under discussion by two major faculty committees, the Committee of Six and the Faculty Committee on Admission and Financial Aid. Many of the recommendations in the report have been or are being implemented, including the agreements within the athletic conference, NESCAC, to lower the number of admission places reserved for recruited athletes. Further recommendations will be considered by the Faculty as a whole in the spring.

In addition to these major working committees, other matters of Faculty and Instruction have

continued to develop since 1998. The Faculty as a whole is undergoing a demographic shift; faculty hiring has increased dramatically in the past five years. The number of retirements has picked up, and some members of the Amherst faculty have been lured away to positions at other institutions. Several untenured faculty have left the College, either by choice, encouragement, or non-reappointment. The result of these departures has been an increase in the number of available FTE slots, highly sought after by departments across the College. This year we have 34 untenured faculty and 11 searches underway. Thus, the possibility exists that next fall 45 out of 162 FTEs, or 28% of our faculty, will be at the junior level—a far higher percentage than in the past decade.

Because of this shift, the Dean's Office has established an ongoing program of new faculty orientation, and the Mellon Career Enhancement Committee made a special effort to reach out to junior colleagues in its work. The effort now underway to enhance opportunities to talk about pedagogy on campus is a response to requests, from untenured faculty in particular, for the College to provide more support for teaching.

Five departmental reviews were conducted since the last visit by NEASC. Self-studies and external review committees for the departments of Asian Languages and Civilizations, Biology, French, Music, and Russian helped departments hone their curricula and plans for future development, including staffing.

In addition, a restructuring in the Dean's Office has provided both needed assistance to the Dean and created an avenue for administrative experience for faculty, as deemed desirable in the report of the NEASC visiting team in 1998; we created a rotating, half-time position of Associate Dean in 2000. The first, and highly successful, Associate Dean, a senior professor in the Physics Department, is now in his third year of a three-year term.

B. Admission

The Office of Admission has adopted new procedures to enhance its connectedness to both internal and external constituencies and to bolster its research efforts. In 2001, following the recommendation from the Faculty Committee on Admission and Financial Aid (FCAFA), a College-wide committee (the College Committee on Admission and Financial Aid, known as CCAFA) was established to further communication among the Faculty, Administration and Staff. Membership includes the Faculty and Admission staff that serve on FCAFA, and the Dean of the

Faculty; it has no student members. CCAFA meets four times a year; it reviews the qualifications of the incoming class and takes a formal vote admitting the class to the College (early admission, regular admission, and transfer admission). It also reviews policies that the FCAFA and the Admission staff used to create the incoming class. The Committee has the benefit of a newly reintroduced Admitted Student Questionnaire; this questionnaire provides data for analysis as to why students chose to attend, or not to attend, Amherst College and, thus, enhances our research capability in admission.

In 1998, the College started new early identification/outreach programs for highly talented high school juniors and students of color. In addition, we developed both a Black Alumni Volunteer Network and an International Alumni Volunteer Outreach Network. Both are intended to enhance the College's efforts toward maintaining a diverse student population. The diversity of the incoming classes in the fall of 2001 and 2002 show some good results; 36% of each entering class is composed of students of color.

In an effort to increase yield among the very top candidates, in 1998 the College established the first faculty "phonathon" to the top 10% of accepted students. This seems to have produced a small but significant increase in the yield of these very top students. In 1998-99 we completed a new family of admission publications (with the help of the Public Affairs Office) and redeveloped the admission website. We are currently conducting market research for another family of publications which we hope to produce in the spring of 2004.

All of the initiatives described above were undertaken to matriculate students who will thrive at Amherst and go on to productive careers in both the private and public sectors of society.

C. Financial Aid

The College's financial aid program continues to be totally need-based. It provides institutional scholarship assistance to about 46% of the students. An additional 2% receive only need-based self-help (student loans and employment). For 2002-03, the average financial aid package of students with need is \$26,080. Students with gift aid average \$24,039 in scholarships and grants. Students with need-based self-help aid average \$2,081 in loans and \$1,252 in employment.

In 1999, the College revised its treatment of the scholarships that aid students receive from private sources outside of the College, making the policy more generous. These external

resources are now included in students' aid awards by reducing any self-help aid before scholarship aid is reduced.

As part of its commitment to diversity, the College in 2000 revised the way it "packages" financial aid for students from lower- and middle-income backgrounds. Students whose total parents' contribution is less than \$3,200 (approximately \$35,000 in income) have no loan included in their aid awards. Those whose total parents' contribution is less than \$11,000 (approximately \$75,000 in income) have reduced loan amounts. The standard loan amount for students in all classes is \$3,400, plus applicable origination fees.

At the same time, the College reduced the amounts that it expects students from lower-income backgrounds to save from summer employment to \$750 for first-year students and \$950 for students in the upper three classes. The standard figures are \$1,600 for first-year students and \$1,800 for others.

The average indebtedness of the College's students at graduation has been declining. For the Class of 2002, 44% of the class borrowed an average of \$11,544 while in college. The College has been listed by *U.S. News & World Report* as being among the national liberal arts colleges with least student debt at graduation. The same publication has also listed the College as the best value among national liberal arts colleges the past two years.

Beginning with the 2003-04 academic year, the College is participating with other institutions in a "Common Approach" to the College Board's Institutional Methodology for analyzing families' resources to pay for college. This participation is under the aegis of Section 568 of the Higher Education Act, which provides antitrust exemption for certain financial aid activities of institutions that are "need-blind" in their admission of U.S. students. It is hoped that the Common Approach will provide a better means of assessing family contributions for college and a coordinated set of practices for data collection and professional judgment in various family financial circumstances.

D. College Finances

The College continues to budget and plan with the Financial Framework, cited in the January 1998 report to NEASC, as its guide. The Framework called for a number of initiatives to restore the College to "financial equilibrium". The results of those initiatives are the subject of a report,

“The Financial Framework, An Update, February 2001” (appended). Included in this report are a set of institutional benchmarks compiled by the administration, using fiscal 1991-92 as a base. Key measurements include endowment per student, the endowment spending rate, debt as a percentage of endowment, admission statistics, and faculty salaries compared to peer institutions. These benchmarks provide objective measures of the College’s ongoing progress toward the principles of financial and institutional equilibrium. The report was issued to the campus community in late winter of 2001 and discussed at an open meeting sponsored by the Committee on Priorities and Resources. Excerpts from the report summary follow:

The College is in financial equilibrium and all of the financial benchmarks indicate a positive trend. The goals established in the Report of the Priorities Planning Committee have been achieved. The principles of institutional and financial equilibrium continue to be valid ones for guiding the institution. The financial and institutional indicators are measures to determine if the requirements of those principles are being maintained.

However, the College needs to continue to be cautious in managing its resources. There are a number of institutional commitments and features that require larger annual investments than at comparable colleges and universities.

The value of the endowment funds is stronger now than at the time the Report of the Priorities Planning Committee was issued. Much-needed investments have been made to upgrade buildings across the campus. The progress made on the value of the endowment funds must be preserved and enhanced in order for Amherst to remain one of the leading colleges in the country.

The growth in the College endowment since the January 1998 report to NEASC has been significant. The endowment, which was \$474 million on June 30, 1997, grew to an all-time high of \$912 million at the end of fiscal year 2000. In that fiscal year the endowment achieved a time-weighted total return of 49.5%, one of the highest in the country. Market conditions over the subsequent two fiscal years have been very difficult. In spite of this, the market value of the endowment was down less than 6%, to \$860 million, at the end of fiscal 2002. The Investment Committee of the Board of Trustees did an exemplary job of minimizing the College’s losses during this period with time-weighted total returns of -3.69% and -1.24% in these two fiscal years.

In short, the College's operating budget continues to be balanced, the spending rate on the endowment is comfortably at the low end of the policy range of 3.5% to 5.0%, and College facilities are being adequately maintained and improved as needed. Careful financial planning and fiscal responsibility are embraced by the Trustees and Administration of Amherst College in an effort to support the long-term mission of the College and its traditional values both now and for the future.

In March 2001, Sharon G. Siegel left the College after a decade as Treasurer to pursue other interests. Peter J. Shea, who had served as Associate Treasurer and Acting Treasurer of the College, was named the permanent Treasurer in March 2002 after an extensive nationwide search. Mr. Shea had been with the College since 1987 and provides the continuity of fiscal management that has served the College so well over the last decade.

E. The Amherst College Campaign

As stated in our January 1998 report to the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, The Amherst College Campaign was launched on November 8, 1996. The College's goal was to raise \$200 million for approved priorities by June 30, 2001. On March 10, 2000 – 15 months ahead of schedule – Campaign Co-Chairs Charles A. Lewis '64 and H. Axel Schupf '57 announced that the \$200 million goal had been reached. By June 30, 2001, when the effort concluded, campaign gifts and pledges totaled \$270 million, 35% more than the original goal.

A \$25 million anonymous challenge gift set the stage for campaign success by stimulating special support from both the Trustees and prospective donors of \$2 million or more. Trustee giving totaled \$36 million. Amherst received 16 gifts of \$2 million or more that totaled \$73 million. During the campaign, the College received 15 gifts of between \$1.5 million and \$2 million totaling \$24 million, and 30 gifts of between \$1 million and \$1.5 million totaling \$34 million. Amherst received nearly 300 gifts of between \$100,000 and \$1 million, which totaled \$66 million.

The Annual Fund, which has one of the highest alumni participation rates in the world (over 60%), grew from less than \$4 million to \$7.5 million. The Annual Fund provided \$40 million in unrestricted operating support in the campaign years.

Pre-campaign annual gift income to the College was in the range of \$12 to \$15 million. During

the campaign, yearly gift revenues ranged from \$26 million to \$59 million, with an average of \$38 million. The post-campaign benchmark is \$30 million, a fact that most clearly demonstrates the elevating effect of the campaign. Fund-raising has been enormously successful over the past five years, adding balance and stability to the College in reaching its goals for education of undergraduate students and support of the Faculty. The Final Report of the Amherst College Campaign is appended.

F. Facilities

The College continues to provide funding for the maintenance and renewal of campus facilities. All of the capital needs cited in the January 1998 report to NEASC and identified as Category 1 and Category 2 priorities have been completed; with the exception of renovations to the Chemistry Department, the Category 3 priorities have been addressed as well. A full renovation of the Merrill Science Center, which will likely begin later in the current decade, will address the needs of Chemistry as well as Physics.

The Residential Master Plan

In the late 1990s, after a decade of attention to the academic facilities on campus, Amherst turned to residential facilities, most of which had gone unrenovated since at least the 1940s. Many of our major competitors--several of the Ivies, as well as Williams and Swarthmore--had undertaken major residential projects during the early- and mid-90s, and our residential facilities had come to seem woefully inadequate in comparison. We embarked on a major study in 1999 by forming the Dormitory Master Planning Committee, co-chaired by the Treasurer and the Dean of Students, and made up of the Director of Facilities Planning, the Director of Residential Life, two faculty members, and four students. Supported by a generous grant from the Mellon Foundation, the College hired the Boston architectural firm of Sasaki Associates as consultants to the committee, and they proved to be crucial in focusing and developing our thinking on residential life issues. The result of two years of deliberation on the part of the committee was our Residential Master Plan, which is intended to shape the future of residential life on campus for the next several generations. The plan consists of three phases, each one dealing with a different type of dormitory on campus. The primary and immediate focus was the freshman dormitories, which are old, overcrowded, and completely out of character with the quality of the rest of our facilities. In the mid-90s, at the behest of students and before the Residential Master Plan was even

contemplated, we made the decision to house our freshmen together in all-freshman dorms; previously, approximately two-thirds had lived in freshman housing and the other third lived in mixed-class housing. The first major decision of the planning committee was to recommend the creation of a true Freshman Quad, one that would house all the freshmen in geographic proximity. We developed a plan, accepted by the Board of Trustees, that involves the renovation of two dormitories, the demolition and reconstruction of two others, and the conversion of two classroom buildings on the Quad into dormitories. As part of the phasing of this complicated project, two “swing dorms” have been planned and will begin construction shortly, and temporary housing to accommodate the peak displacement has been installed near our athletic fields.

The first project--the conversion of Williston Hall, formerly used for faculty offices and classrooms, into a freshman dormitory--began in September 2002, and the entire series of projects is scheduled for completion in September 2007. The Residential Master Plan also incorporated design standards for all future projects, including the amount of residential and lounge space in each building and ancillary facilities (performance spaces, music practice rooms, large-scale social spaces) to be installed in the various areas across campus. All current dormitories were evaluated according to the current state of their systems and of the building interiors and exteriors, and a comprehensive program and schedule of renovation and renewal for our 32 dormitories was developed. We expect the master plan to take at least 20 years to complete; at its final implementation we will have consciously and deliberately designed a set of buildings that provide an excellent residential experience for many generations of Amherst students.

Mead Art Museum Renovation

The Mead Art Museum, designed by the firm of McKim, Mead and White, was built in 1949 as an integrated facility for the storage and display of the College art collection, as well as for the teaching of art and art history. Approved by the Board of Trustees as part of The Amherst College Campaign, a comprehensive facility renovation was undertaken in 1999-2001. The project brought the Museum (accredited by the American Association of Museums) into compliance with professional standards of environment, fire suppression, security, storage, and accessibility.

The improved art environment in galleries and storage areas was accomplished through new energy-efficient mechanical systems, a renovation of the building exterior and all interiors, and installation of sprinkler systems. The new HVAC system provides for professionally mandated museum standards of 70 degrees at 50% humidity year-round in galleries, art storage, preparation, and teaching spaces. Professional metal storage systems, segregated by art medium, replaced the 50- year-old wooden art storage and housing systems that were inadequate and deteriorated. The drawings, prints, and photography collections (works on paper) are maintained in a special archival storage area (65 degrees at 40% humidity). The significant upgrade to the works on paper storage area was supported by a major grant from the Institute of Library and Museum Services, a federal agency.

The engineering changes prompted interior renovations that included new walls, floors, lighting systems, and tele-data ports in all galleries. The public space allocated to exhibition galleries increased by 20%. Expansion in the south wing, formerly occupied by the slide library, provided space for administrative offices and handicapped-accessible restrooms in compliance with ADA and building code requirements.

The increased need for a flexible gallery-classroom space to allow for teaching from the art collections led to the creation of the Teaching Gallery. This multi-purpose room permits short-term presentation of art works not regularly on view for College classes and small groups. The Teaching Gallery's function reflects the growing demand to provide access to art works in storage as faculty across the College increasingly incorporate art and material culture into the curriculum.

In March of 2001, the Mead Art Museum re-opened with not only a renovated facility but also with a new electronic collections management system. The collections database contains information about all 14,000 objects, including digital images of 750 works. The Oracle-based system, developed as part of the Five Colleges, Inc. museums consortium initiative, features an Internet module for faculty, students, and public users to access the core fields and images.

The Museum renovation project stimulated increased major gifts of art works that either enhance existing strengths or diversify the collections in areas targeted for growth in complement with the curriculum. In 2000, a major collection of more than 400 works of modern Russian art valued at over \$6 million was donated to join the Russian literary archive given to the College in 1991. Four significant collections of West African art, featuring Yoruba divination objects, sculptures,

and textiles, were acquired between 1998 and 2002, yielding a world-class exhibition and teaching collection of more than 300 objects. Major gifts of Japanese woodblock prints, 20th-century photography, and contemporary art have expanded the Museum's holdings in these areas. Thus, the renovation fully serves the educational mission of the College.

Fayerweather Hall

Fayerweather Hall (dedicated in 1894), an outstanding example of Italian Renaissance Revival style, was designed by McKim, Mead and White as the Physical Science Laboratory for the Departments of Chemistry and Physics. After these departments moved to new facilities, in the 1970s the building housed the Department of Fine Arts and the Department of Theater and Dance. The latter moved to new quarters in Webster Hall in 1998, permitting the much-needed expansion of art studios.

In 2001, Fayerweather Hall underwent a facility renovation that restored its historical features and retained its substantial interior spaces and natural light for improved classroom and studio spaces. Although the building was in fine structural condition, its mechanical and environmental systems, safety features, and accessibility did not meet current building code or professional health standards. The renovation design utilized all four levels to provide classrooms, galleries, slide library, administrative and faculty offices, and a range of specialty art studios with state-of-the-practice equipment and OSHA-mandated environmental systems. The enhanced studio art facilities include new photography darkrooms, a metalworking studio with welding booths, a sculpture studio for fabrication and modeling, and an outdoor sculpture space, as well as expanded drawing, painting, and printmaking studios. The four new classrooms include a large multimedia lecture hall with fixed seating for 80; two smaller multimedia classrooms with 35 seats and a flexible teaching configuration; and a seminar room for 15 students. The Eli Marsh Gallery, for installations by thesis students and visiting artists, was doubled in size, and two new student galleries were created. The plan to build out the attic created new spaces for offices, an additional 2-D studio, and an art history study room for fixed images. The renewed Fayerweather Hall re-opened to Fine Arts classes in January of 2002, supporting the curriculum and the broader education of students across the campus.

Cooper House

Cooper House, a former residence owned by Amherst College, was renovated in 2002 as the new home for the Department of Philosophy and the Department of Black Studies, both relocated from Williston Hall, which is being renovated as part of the Residential Master Plan. Built in 1881, this Second Empire brick building is located on the periphery of the main campus across from Valentine Dining Hall and near several dormitories.

While maintaining or replicating the original architectural features of the building, the renovation introduced all new electrical and mechanical systems, a new roof, new windows, and a 3300-square-foot, two-story addition. The exterior elevation and decorative features of the new addition mimic the original building, while interior elements such as stairs and window trims include re-used vintage components. The environmental, accessibility, and safety features conform to building code requirements. The ample interior configuration provides office space for 12 faculty members and two administrative offices. Each department also has a reading room for small seminars, meetings, or study purposes.

G. The Five College Library Depository

The creation of off-site storage facilities has eased book storage space shortages for many institutions; some have even decided to create joint repositories with other institutions. The Five College Library Depository, however, has boldly taken the idea a step further. In collaborating on storage, members of the Five Colleges, Inc. have agreed to deaccession duplicate copies and adopt joint ownership of the remaining collection. In effect, they have agreed to organize their collections as a single library to serve the consortium.

Having opened its new, six-floor, 120,000-square-foot Robert Frost Library in 1965, Amherst College assumed it would not have to build more library space for many years. When it was dedicated, the Frost Library had about 330,000 volumes. However, the library was acquiring approximately 15,000 volumes per year, and the shelves on the top five floors were soon filled. The College was forced to move its general storage area from the Library's lowest level to another building and to install electrically controlled compact shelving there. Nonetheless, by 1989, shelves throughout the building were filled to the point where frequent shifting was required to make room for new volumes.

In November 1989, the President of Amherst appointed a Library Expansion Committee made up of trustees, faculty, administrators, librarians, and students. “The expansion of the Library is expected to be the single largest and most expensive construction project in the history of the College: at current estimate, its cost will exceed one-third of the annual operating budget,” the President stated. He emphasized that the Library, at the heart of much of the educational activity of the College, should be the best of its kind in every area, but that finances were a serious concern and could not be ignored.

Meanwhile, in the summer of 1992, the College Treasurer noticed that the Federal Reserve was planning to auction a 44,000-square-foot Strategic Air Command Base it had acquired from the U.S. Air Force. The base, commonly referred to as “the bunker”, is located approximately four miles south of Amherst College. A portion of the bunker was built into the side of the Holyoke Range, and the balance was covered with 25 feet of rock and 7 feet of earth. In 1992, Amherst College acquired the 26-acre site and the bunker for \$510,000, or \$11.59 per square foot. Although the College purchased the bunker for general storage purposes, it quickly became apparent that it could be used as an off-site storage center for library materials.

The Library moved some older journals and books from the general collection to the off-campus Amherst College Library Depository. The transfers included periodicals in the sciences published more than ten years earlier and periodicals in the social sciences and humanities published more than 15 years earlier. Most books classified in the Dewey Decimal 500s and 600s were also shifted to the Depository.

In the fall of 2002, after complex negotiations that took two years to complete, the use of the bunker was expanded to include a Five-College Depository. Among the agreements reached:

Five Colleges, Inc. will lease indefinitely approximately 10,000 square feet from Amherst College, the owner of the Depository facility. The Five College Library Depository will be used primarily for the storage of little-used periodicals and books owned by the Five College Libraries. Election of materials for deposit in the Depository will be made by each of the five libraries based on their local needs. The four college libraries will store just one copy of volumes sent to the Depository by them; duplicates will be sent to JSTOR (a program established to convert back issues of paper journals into electronic formats, allowing savings in space while simultaneously improving access to the journal content) for its “dark archives” and to other interested libraries. Materials are made available by

electronic transmissions, and for on site use, given 24 hour notice. Amherst College is responsible for the physical maintenance of the Depository facility.

H. Information Technology

With the increased staffing described earlier in this report, Information Technology (IT) has been able to provide better services to faculty, staff, and students. All faculty and staff computers are now replaced at least every four years from a fully funded replacement budget. A new 21 station computer classroom has been created, and a second is planned. Computer projection is now in place in 15 classrooms. Most software has been licensed to allow its installation on any computer on campus. We also established a help desk to provide live telephone support from computer professionals at any time during normal working hours.

The network has been upgraded substantially. Connections to each faculty and staff office now are on switches with a bandwidth of 100 megabits per second to each computer. The campus backbone has gigabit per second bandwidth. All student residences are now connected to the campus by fiber optic cabling. The College's connection to the Internet has been increased from three-quarters of a megabit per second to 21 megabits per second. The College has received an NSF grant for Internet2 connectivity, which will be in place within the coming two years. Small timeshare servers have been replaced with a number of up-to-date servers providing fast services and large amounts of network storage.

IT formed a group named Curricular Computing Services to help faculty use technology in their teaching, and introduced a course management system; within a year more than 50% of courses were included in the system and 50% of the faculty were participating in it. A group of specially trained students provide evening help to any student with course work using specialized programs. We established a summer internship program for five students both to help create specialized faculty programs and materials and to provide opportunities for students to learn new technologies.

The College made a decision in 1999 to examine the commercial possibilities for an integrated administrative software system to replace our "home-grown" one that had been in use for 30 years. After a lengthy review of commercial applications available, we selected Datatel for implementation at Amherst. The conversion to the new system is now nearly complete, coming in on time and on budget. The new system supports direct access to data using desktop tools

such as spreadsheets, word processing programs, and personal database packages. The changes in Information Technology, not surprisingly, have come “fast and furiously.” We expect this trend to continue, as the College continues to support the technological needs of its students, staff, and faculty.

I. Human Resources

The College undertook a comprehensive review of the classification program for Staff positions in the fall of 1997. Watson Wyatt, a management consultant firm, worked with the Office of Human Resources and a committee of eight staff members and two administrators. This review of Staff job descriptions resulted in the reassignment of 55 positions to higher grades. A small number of jobs dropped to a lower grade, but incumbents were grandfathered to remain at their existing level. The Classification Committee continues to meet monthly to review new positions and those with significant changes.

The College has implemented a new grievance procedure for all non-faculty employees. The new procedures provide clearly articulated steps to address conflicts or misunderstandings that require resolution. After many years without updates, a revised Staff Handbook was published in January 2001. An Administrative Handbook is also in process, and will be published in fiscal year 2003.

The College last reviewed its health insurance benefits during 1997-98. Since then, Point of Service (POS) and Health Maintenance Organization (HMO) plans have been offered to active faculty and staff and a Medicare Supplement to retirees. Currently, all plans are with Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Massachusetts. The market is evaluated annually for available alternatives. A comprehensive review of active and retiree health insurance benefits is now underway. This is an area fraught with difficulty, given the sensitivity of health benefits; the study will likely raise concerns on campus as the College tries to control spiraling costs.

Amherst improved its dental benefits as of July 1, 2000 by increasing the maximum benefit payable and adding coverage for a percentage of major restorative services. This addressed concerns about the level of dental benefits that had been expressed by faculty and staff over several years.

In 2000-01, a committee made up of staff and administrators reviewed the leave policies

applicable to those groups. The new policies adopted after this review provide paid time off for an employee's own illness or the illness of a family member, for birth or adoption, for physician appointments and to supplement short term disability. The new policies also provide consistency among staff and administrators.

In the fall of 2002, the Committee on Priorities and Resources forwarded to the Committee of Six and the Faculty a new parenting leave policy, applicable to fathers and adoptive parents as well as birth mothers. The draft was discussed at length and approved by the Faculty at a meeting on December 3; the policy will be forwarded to the Trustees for consideration in the spring.

All benefit enhancements were undertaken to maintain the College's competitiveness in hiring and in supporting the current employees of the College.

J. Student Services

For the last several years, the College has placed particular emphasis on developing support services for students having difficulty in quantitatively-based courses. The Quantitative Skills Center was founded in 1997, after two years of discussion within our Committee on Academic Support, an *ad hoc* committee consisting of faculty members and staff from the Dean of Students Office. Staffed originally by a Quantitative Fellow--a recent Amherst graduate with a strong background in math and science and experience tutoring fellow students as an undergraduate--the Center has gradually expanded its staff and its offerings, working in conjunction with the appropriate academic departments. The Center now has a full-time director as well as a fellow, both of whom offer tutoring to any students who need it in a variety of quantitative disciplines. In addition, the Center works with the math and science departments to coordinate an extensive program of student tutors and teaching assistants who provide both individual and group help to students having difficulty in those courses. At the end of the 2003-04 academic year, which will be the third year of the new, expanded structure of the QSC, we plan to do a full-scale study to evaluate its effectiveness.

In an effort to engender good relationships between members of the Faculty and their students, the College developed a program called "TYPO" (Take Your Professor Out). Students in small groups are encouraged to invite their professors to lunch or dinner at one of four relatively inexpensive restaurants in the town of Amherst, off campus. The College pays for the meals, up

to a certain limit. Originally begun in 2000 as a program for first-year students, its popularity encouraged us to expand it this year to include students from all four class years. TYPO seems to be popular with students and their faculty, providing a good opportunity for casual interaction outside the classroom.

K. Public Affairs

Many of the changes in College communications since the time of the last accreditation report have been driven by the increased use of the Internet, by people wanting information about the College, and by people at the College seeking alternative ways to communicate and seek information about events on campus. The Public Affairs Office assumed responsibility for and undertook a comprehensive redesign and restructuring of the Amherst College website, expanding the content in key sections. (Many College documents--for example, *The Faculty Handbook*--are now available online.) Public Affairs also launched a weekly e-mail news digest that is now mailed to more than 2000 subscribers. The office has also expanded its sports information coverage to include comprehensive web and e-mail reports, and it has worked with a student group to develop an online student directory and face book.

Outside the electronic sphere, Public Affairs undertook a comprehensive redesign of the *Amherst Magazine*, worked with the Admission Office to develop a new view book and other admission and financial aid publications, and produced a number of publications to support The Amherst College Campaign. These enhancements increase the College's ability to communicate quickly and accurately with its many constituencies.

V. Efforts to Enhance Institutional Effectiveness

Amherst College uses a variety of mechanisms to evaluate the effectiveness of its programs and to plan for new initiatives. Most of these activities are embedded within the College's committee structure. Academic departments carry out some, and some involve special committees. With these mechanisms the College obtains feedback about how its programs are operating and how they affect the lives and careers of our students. The College's goal (paraphrasing T. A. Angelo, "Assessing (and Defining) Assessment", *The AAHE Bulletin* 48 (2), November 1995 pp. 7-9) is

to make its expectations explicit and public, to set criteria and high standards for learning and teaching, to gather data and interpret evidence about how well the College is meeting those expectations, and to use the resulting information to improve learning and teaching.

The College recognizes that in spite of these various assessment activities, we do very little College-wide for “input-output” assessment. For example, we do not attempt to measure students’ writing capabilities when they enter the College and how those writing capabilities change as a result of an Amherst education. Nor do we attempt to measure College-wide whether students have attained a mastery of some set of skills or whether they have accumulated a certain amount of knowledge. We strongly believe that individual academic departments best carry out such assessments as part of their senior comprehensive requirements and senior honors program and by getting feedback from their alumni.

We have compiled a partial list of planning and assessment activities to give some notion of the variety of practices at the College.

A. Faculty/College Committees

1. Committee on Educational Policy

The CEP provides reviews and rankings of departmental requests for tenure-track hires. In all cases, departments must justify their requests in terms of the needs of the academic program. The CEP recommendations are sent to the Dean and the President, who make the final decisions on FTE allocations.

In 2001-02 the CEP carried out an extensive review of the College’s Honors Program and brought to the Faculty a series of motions that resulted in substantial changes to the Honors Program. These changes are described earlier in this report.

2. Committee on Priorities and Resources

The CPR reviews benefits programs, allocation of resources among various college activities, and capital expenditure recommendations, and it produces an annual report on faculty salary and compensation in comparison with peer institutions. Most recently the CPR has developed a proposal for an expanded parental leave program that would include paternity leave and leaves for parents with newly adopted children.

3. Faculty Committee on Admission and Financial Aid

The FCAFA membership includes faculty members, students, and Office of Admission staff. FCAFA works closely with the Dean of Admission to discuss admission policy and procedures. The non-student members of FCAFA plus the Dean of the Faculty constitute the College Committee on Admission and Financial Aid (CCAFA); The CCAFA is charged with looking closely at the statistics of admitted students to assure that in fact the policies on admission are being followed and to alert the Faculty and Administration to important trends in the pool of applicants and admitted students. (See pages 15 and 16 for further detail.)

4. College Council

During the 2001-02 academic year the College Council conducted a review of the College's Community Outreach Program and issued a report to the faculty (through the Committee of Six) assessing the effectiveness of that program, including recommendations for modifications of the program's governance. The report included statistics comparing the structure of the Amherst program to analogous programs at other liberal arts colleges.

5. Special Committee on the Amherst Education (SCAE)

In the spring of 2002 the College appointed a Special Committee to lead the Faculty in a broad discussion of the Amherst Education. (The mandate and membership of the Committee are described on pages 7 and 8.)

The last such broad review was undertaken in 1992-93 with the College's Priorities Planning Committee (PPC). The PPC work laid the foundation for the College's successful comprehensive campaign. Although the PPC report did contain some discussion of curricular issues, the focus was on getting the College's financial house in order and developing the infrastructure to support future curricular initiatives. The SCAE was set up to focus on teaching and learning issues.

As described earlier in the report, the SCAE is in the process of studying:

- The distribution of courses taken by Amherst students
- How students distribute themselves among various majors

- A survey of recent alumni assessing various aspects of their Amherst educations
- Curricular issues at ten colleges and universities visited during the summer of 2002
- Plans for enhanced institutional research

In studying the course distribution taken by Amherst students, SCAE is looking at how students distribute their course work among the traditional academic disciplines (humanities, laboratory sciences, creative and performing arts, and the social sciences). It is also examining student enrollment in foreign language courses. The collected data is being disaggregated by ranges of SAT scores. The Committee is also studying the correlation between student GPA performance and academic ratings given the students by the Office of Admission staff as part of the decisions on admission. As noted, the Committee will produce a report on its findings and recommendations during the spring of 2003.

B. Academic Departments

In 1993 the College faculty adopted a program of periodic departmental reviews. The College reviews the programs of two or three departments each year. The review includes a self-study written by the department's faculty and a visit and written report from an external review committee. The Dean of Faculty, Associate Dean of Faculty, Assistant Dean of Faculty, and the President meet with the department to discuss the reports. These reports are often quite important in determining FTE allocations and in helping a department review and revise its curriculum. In addition many departments solicit information from their graduates when planning curricular changes. For example, the Physics Department revised its complete program in 2001-02. Information solicited from physics graduates over the past ten years or so was helpful in determining what areas of the program needed strengthening.

C. Assessment of Study-Abroad Programs

Amherst recently joined a consortium of 125 colleges and universities whose purpose is to evaluate and assess study abroad programs. The offices of the Forum on Education Abroad will be housed in nearby Northampton. Amherst's Study Abroad Advisor, Bill Hoffa, is a member of its founding Board. The forum will assess the academic rigor of foreign programs and other factors that influence a student's experience abroad.

D. Library Assessment Activities

The Amherst College Library was inspired to undertake facilities assessment activities beginning in 2000, when the new Association of College and Research Libraries Standards for College Libraries were promulgated and approved. The Library, through the work of the Librarian of the College, had been closely following the evolution of the standards from a set of prescriptive guidelines to a tool that provides "both a quantitative and qualitative approach to assessing the effectiveness of a library" using outcomes assessment as the key measure set in a context that compares these measures to other peer institutions. Having recently undergone renovations in the Frost Library and a consolidation of departmental science libraries in the newly expanded central Keefe Science Library, the staff in the Library saw an opportunity to examine the mission of the Library in the context of the College's self-study and to contribute to the College-wide assessment. More broadly, this was also an opportunity to use the new ACRL standards and share what the Amherst College Library learned with its professional community.

The facilities assessment process provided the opportunity to undertake a creative self-study that resulted in very specific improvements to the Amherst libraries and made the spaces better for staff who work in them and more welcoming to all library patrons. The assessment was also an opportunity to evaluate the resources we allocated for facilities. We felt that our experience with the assessment process put us in a position to respond flexibly to any future facilities changes.

For the full report on this assessment project, please consult the following Internet site:
<http://www.amherst.edu/library/assessment/facilities/>

E. Administrative Assessment Activities

1. During the 2001-02 academic year, the Associate Dean of Faculty, with the assistance of the chairs of the science and math departments, carried out a study of science/mathematics graduates who go on to get Ph.D.s in their fields.
2. The Health Professions Committee asks students to submit to it their scores on the MCAT (Medical College Admissions Test).
3. Amherst participates in the COFHE survey of alumni, which solicits a wide range of opinions from alumni about their college experiences.
4. Amherst participates in a the Five College Cycles Survey, an attitudinal survey of a random sample of students on each of the campuses taken in the spring of each year. Data is compiled by UMass and distributed to administrators at all campuses.
5. The Career Center surveys each graduating class about employment plans, graduate school enrollment, etc.

F. Summary of Assessment Activities

While not centralized in any one office or department at the College, examination and assessment of college activities are very much part of an on-going Amherst tradition. Such efforts are organic, spread widely across the campus, and have demonstrably affected and effected change at the College. As can be seen by the many *ad hoc* committee reports and ongoing standing committee work, Amherst is perpetually involved in self-assessment. Through these many disparate processes, Amherst has maintained its effectiveness as it adapts and refines its efforts at providing a high level of undergraduate education to its students.

VI. Summary Appraisal and Plans for the Next Five Years

Reflecting on the accomplishments and challenges of the past five years, we believe the College as a whole has tackled difficult issues with thoughtful and inclusive discussion. Faculty leadership has emerged in the areas of Admission (see Admission Report), Tenure and Promotion procedures (see Tenure Report), the Honors Program, and, most recently, Athletics. Currently, the Special Committee on the Amherst Education is hard into its discussions and considerations of the future shape of the curriculum and the Faculty. Thoughtful reports discussed by the Faculty as a whole have led to institutional policy changes in many of these areas. At the same time, the successful completion of The Amherst College Campaign increased the number of endowed professorships and research funding opportunities for faculty. External grants from the Mellon Foundation led to our ongoing efforts to enhance pedagogy and to reach out to *emeriti* to keep their valuable resources more closely connected to the institution. In addition, Mellon grants support faculty members with a program of academic interns and provide opportunities for competitive semester research-leave grants and summer stipends to encourage new collaborative projects. At the time of the last NEASC committee visit, the campus was still in the throes of the turmoil created by the decision of the Trustees to sell some of its housing to senior faculty. Full implementation of the plan, actually quite advantageous to those faculty affected, has stood the test of time, and Administration/Faculty relations have improved. (Such peace is always fragile.) All in all, the Faculty has been engaged, supported, and extremely productive since the time of the last accreditation report.

During these years, the College has reaped the benefits of an experienced Administration as well as an experienced Faculty. The Senior Staff formed a team under the leadership of President Gerety that worked very well together, much to the benefit of the College. Although the longtime and extremely effective Treasurer, Sharon Siegel, left her position two years ago, the policies and firm financial framework she helped establish have enabled her successor to take on the position without disruption. The endowment increase in the late 1990s was extraordinary. Even more importantly, the endowment has held up remarkably well in the market downturn of the past year—in large part due to forward-thinking advisors and tight fiscal control. Conservative spending policies and an attitude of cautiousness have served the College very well, enabling the Trustees to move forward with plans rather than retrenching, as many institutions are doing. Fiscal caution has been, and will continue to be, an Amherst hallmark.

The College is in a strong position with regard to admissions. The need-blind financial aid policy has been maintained, the diversity of the student body is relatively high, the graduation

rate is excellent, and satisfaction expressed by students about their Amherst experiences is most positive. Alumni giving is robust. All in all, the past five years have been a healthy, productive time for Amherst.

That being said, the signs of change are upon us. The implementation of the Residential Master Plan will keep the campus in a state of construction and its resultant disruption as old buildings are renovated and new buildings constructed. Many of these projects are in the central campus; this will necessitate careful coordination with the ongoing work of the campus so as not to be overly intrusive into the life of the College. The rate of faculty hiring has picked up as senior colleagues choose to retire, or are lured away from Amherst by other institutions (Harvard and Yale, most recently). We have a greater number of untenured faculty on campus than we have had in years; thus, the shape of the Faculty is shifting, offering both opportunities and challenge. President Gerety and Dean Raskin are both stepping down from their administrative positions in June 2003. The Presidential search process is underway, and plans are being made to appoint an interim dean from the Faculty for the first year or so of the new President's term. The Presidential Search Committee has had extensive conversations on campus to inform its work, and is broadly based so as to involve all segments of the community. This will be a spring of "good-byes" and of new beginnings.

We anticipate that within the next five years, our Trustees will discuss a new comprehensive campaign, with its focus being perhaps defined in large part by the work of the Special Committee on the Amherst Education and by the various building projects now on the drawing board. Important academic and facilities planning now underway will certainly guide the activities of the College and its new leadership for the next five years. We are confident that we will have many initiatives to report in the next full cycle of NEASC accreditation.