



Introduction and **Accreditation History**

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND ACCREDITATION HISTORY

This self-study report is submitted by MidAmerica Nazarene University as part of the formal application process for continued accreditation by The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) of the North Central Association. The foremost intent of the report is to create a tool for evaluation, feedback, planning and improvement. This report is designed to provide a thorough depiction of the strengths and weaknesses of the institution and to provide recommendations for the University's strategic planning and budgeting processes. The report also documents the findings of the comprehensive self-study which MidAmerica carried out to substantiate its request for continued accreditation and provides the visiting HLC team with information needed to evaluate the University during their visit. Finally, the report will be a useful source of information to stakeholders including students, parents, the Church, faculty, staff, administrators, alumni, community members, Board of Trustee members, MNU Foundation members and the public.

*Tabs used throughout the report:*



The Higher Learning Commission has five criteria on which it bases its evaluations of institutions. This self-study presents evidence that MidAmerica Nazarene University meets each criterion within the context of its mission and goals and puts forward an extensive analysis of University's strengths and opportunities for improvement.

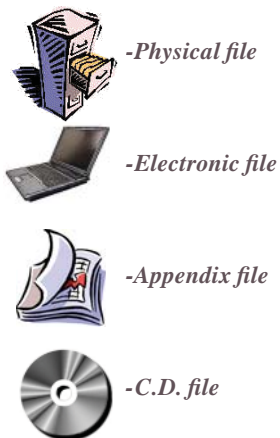
### Organization of the Report

The report's content is organized around the five HLC criteria and four cross-cutting themes. While each criterion is the subject of an entire chapter, cross-cutting themes are addressed throughout the report and can be identified by referring to the colored tabs in the margins. Icons and footnotes are used throughout the report to make the reader aware of the location of supporting materials. Many of these references are hyperlinked to the virtual resource room or to websites and will link automatically to those sites when the report is read using Adobe Acrobat reader. Hyperlinks are present when the reference is underlined in red. In addition to the criteria, themes tabs, and icons there are also appendices which furnish background information about the institution, requests for institutional change, and federal compliance information. An overview of the report is given below.

### Chapter 1 – Introduction and Accreditation History

This chapter provides a brief introduction to MidAmerica Nazarene University, its operations, and its stakeholders. This chapter also describes significant changes since the last HLC comprehensive visit in 1999 and how the institution has responded to the challenges identified by, and the advice and suggestions of, the visiting team.

*Icons used throughout the report:*



## **Chapter 2 – Process of the Self-study**

This chapter describes how MidAmerica organized and conducted the self-study process. Sections include the mission and goals of the self-study, the organization of the self-study teams, the data collection and writing processes, methods used to communicate information to the campus and community, and the level of consultation used throughout the process.

## **Chapters 3 through 7 – The Criterion Chapters**

Each chapter addresses one of the five HLC criteria for accreditation and includes examples of evidence and analysis supporting the position that MNU meets the criterion. Each chapter is organized around the core components and presents facts and evidence in the form of narrative, analysis, visual aids, and reference materials. Each chapter's analysis also includes strengths and opportunities for improvements based on the findings of the self-study.

## **Chapter 8 – Summary and Requests**

This chapter concludes the examination of the criteria for accreditation by asking for continued accreditation and by making several requests for institutional change which are substantiated in Chapters 9 and 10.

## **Chapter 9 – Request for Change in relationship with the Commission**

This Chapter provides the necessary documentation and analysis pursuant to Chapter 7.2 of the HLC *Handbook of Accreditation* to support the University's request that it be authorized to offer carefully selected additional master degree programs in narrowly defined discipline areas from its Olathe, Kansas campus without submitting a formal request to The Higher Learning Commission for approval of each new program. As part of this overall request, in the field of Religion, the University will describe its plans to offer the Master of Pastoral Leadership degree from its Olathe, Kansas campus. Supporting information regarding the Master of Pastoral Leadership is in Appendix One.

## **Chapter 10 – Request for Change in relationship with the Commission and approval of new educational site.**

This chapter provides the necessary documentation and analysis pursuant to Chapter 7.2 of the HLC *Handbook of Accreditation* to support the University's request for amendment of restrictions related to off campus degree sites so that the Commission's Streamlined Approval Process becomes available for additional specified programs at off campus sites within 60 miles of Olathe and within the Kansas City metropolitan area. The University seeks HLC approval of its Liberty, Missouri location as an educational site for these specified programs.

Throughout this report, confirmation is provided to support the position that MidAmerica meets the Commission's requirements for accreditation. This information was collected and analyzed over a two and a half year period, and substantiation is available in the physical resource room, the virtual

resource room, or the appendices to this report. MNU used various documents, reports, surveys, and meetings to gather information and documentation for this self-study.

### ***Surveys***

Best Christian Workplaces Institute Survey  
Faculty Course Evaluations  
Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Survey  
Student Learning Assessment Outcomes Survey  
2008 Graduate Student Survey  
2008 Traditional Undergraduate Student Survey

### ***University Reports and Documents***

Academic Unit Annual Reports  
Academic Unit Program Review Reports  
Annual Assessment Records Books  
Annual Databooks  
Budget Documents  
Committee Meeting Minutes  
Course Schedules  
Employee Policy Manuals  
MNU Catalog  
Strategic Planning Documents  
Student Handbooks  
Strategic Planning Documents

### ***Narratives and Discussions***

As part of the data gathering process, the five criterion committees collected information and evidence from every office on campus. In some cases, they made requests for additional information.

## **Profile of MidAmerica Nazarene University**

Founded in 1966, MidAmerica Nazarene University is a private, coed, four-year, comprehensive liberal arts university sponsored by the North Central Region of the International Church of the Nazarene. It provides a caring environment where students gain broad-based knowledge and skills that will serve them professionally and personally throughout their lives. Learning to live one's faith is an integral part of the MNU experience. Revitalizing one's spirit, awakening one's concern for others, and helping build deep and lasting relationships are some of the most important objectives at MNU.

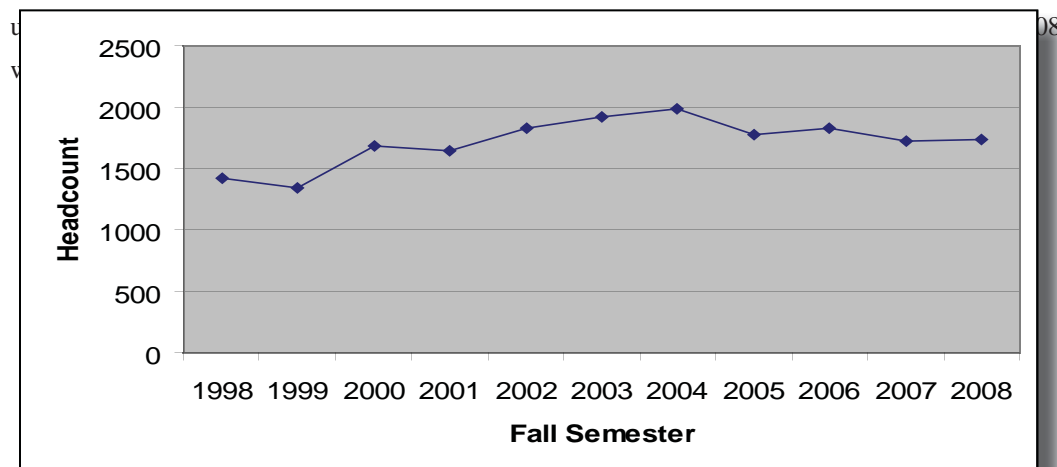
R. Curtis Smith, first president, opened MidAmerica's doors to 263 students on September 2, 1968

**DISTINCTIVE**

with only five buildings. “The total physical facilities consisted of an administrative-classroom center, a library-classroom building, two residence halls, and a campus center.”<sup>1</sup> The first twenty years of the institution’s existence were marked by rapid expansion with the construction of 17 buildings and the purchase of 4 more. MidAmerica Nazarene College had been born as “College B” because the General Assembly of the Church of the Nazarene, which formed two new institutions of higher education (College A and B), had not assigned specific names. “It had no status. Lacking a permanent location, devoid of both personnel and facilities, it was actually a resolution on paper and not a realistic achievement. By 1985, however, the College had earned federal, state, and regional accreditation... Graduates were accepted by universities nationwide for graduate study.”<sup>2</sup>

The second president, Dr. Donald Owens, was elected in July 1985 with the resignation of the founding president. He served from 1985 to 1989. The third president, Dr. Richard Spindle, was elected in September 1989 and served until his retirement in 2004. Under the leadership of these two men, by 1999, the university had also constructed Mabee library, two new apartment-style residence halls, offered its first master’s level program, celebrated its 25th anniversary, and incorporated the word “University” into its name.

Average enrollment over the past ten years was 1,746 students and 1,810 over the past five years. The



MidAmerica offers nine degree programs: an Associate of Arts, a Bachelor of Arts, a Bachelor of Science in Nursing, a Bachelor of Music Education, a Master of Education, a Master of Arts in Special Education, a Master of Counseling, a Master of Organizational Administration, and a Master of Business Administration. Undergraduate students can choose from more than 40 fields, independent study, and internships. The University also offers a degree-completion program in Management and Human Relations and a baccalaureate degree affiliation with European Nazarene College in Germany.

1 Metz, “MANC: The Pioneer Years” Nazarene Publishing House, 1991, p. 178,

2 Metz, “MANC: The Pioneer Years” Nazarene Publishing House, 1991, pp. 358-359.

3 2008 MNU Databook, p.11.

MidAmerica students enjoy small classes and a staff of dedicated professors. A ratio of one faculty member for every 20 students allows for individualized attention. There are 84 ranked faculty members and 97 adjuncts. The University employs 196 full and part-time staff members which includes administrative personnel, professional office assistants, maintenance and trades persons.

MidAmerica is located on a 105-acre campus in Olathe, Kansas, a suburban community of approximately 113,000 people just 19 miles south of Kansas City. The campus includes 60 classrooms, 2 gymnasiums, 6 athletic fields, a performing arts hall, 3 auditoriums, 12 laboratories and 9 residence halls. Mabee Library and Learning Resource Center contains over 481,000 volumes and also provides access to a variety of research databases which provide articles and other resources.

A variety of student organizations and activities make up the co-curriculum and contribute to each student's education. These include: special interest clubs, ministries, traveling music groups, band, concert choir, student government, intramural sports, varsity sports teams, and outreach groups. Weekly chapel services, an emphasis on spiritual formation, and revivals foster spiritual vitality on campus. Residence halls at MNU are meant to provide more than a place for sleep and studies—they also provide an environment for personal growth. MNU believes that learning takes place both inside and outside the classroom. Each residence hall has a lobby or shared lobby where students can meet to study, watch television, or just hang out with friends. Each room is equipped for phone, cable television, and Internet service. Students enjoy a fun and active life through dozens of campus wide events. Special events include Spirit Week, Homecoming, Spook U, Mother/Daughter Weekend, Rockin' Caucas Battle of the Bands, Thrift Store Prom, Gotcha Week, Colony West Fest, TWIRP weekend, Mock Rock, and Late Night Skates. MNU is a member of the NAIA and the NCCAA. Athletic competition includes nationally-ranked football and basketball, as well as track, volleyball, softball, baseball, cross-country, and soccer. There is always something to do on campus.

Students range in age from 16 to 73, with the highest percentage of traditional undergraduate students between the ages of 18 and 19; and the largest number of graduate and adult students falling between the ages of 25 and 34. While the student body at MidAmerica Nazarene University reflects the Church it serves with 52% of the undergraduate population and 34% of the total headcount being Nazarene, enrollment has increasingly included a greater percentage of students from outside the Church of the Nazarene. The student body also reflects the community the University serves with a slight increase in the number of students classified as ethnic or minority.<sup>4</sup>

*Table 1-1: Minority study population as a percentage of total headcount<sup>5</sup>*

Year	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
% of minorities*	11%	11%	12.5%	13.5%	12.8%	13.4%	15.3%

\* Minority student percentage is the sum of African American, American Indian, Oriental American, and Hispanic Culture minus the international and unknown student headcount divided by the total student body.

<sup>4</sup> Databook 2008, p.30

<sup>5</sup> Databook 2008, p.30



Table 1-2: Demographic Data for MNU, Johnson County and Kansas

People QuickFacts		MNU (c)			(e)	
		Students 2006	Students 2008	Faculty/ Staff 2005	Johnson County 2006 est	Kansas 2006 est
	Population	1823	1743	464	516,731	2,764,075
1	White persons, percent	unknown	unknown	unknown	90.30%	89.10%
2	Black persons, percent	6.7%	9.5%	1.3%	4.00%	6.00%
3	American Indian and Alaska Native persons, percent	0.4%	0.6%	0.0%	0.50%	1.00%
4	Asian persons, percent (a) (d)	1.2%	1.1%	0.0%	3.80%	2.20%
5	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, percent (a) (d)	unknown	unknown	unknown	0.10%	0.10%
6	Persons reporting two or more races, percent	unknown	unknown	unknown	1.40%	1.70%
7	Persons of Hispanic or Latino origin, percent (b)	3.0%	3.4%	1.0%	5.70%	8.60%
8	White persons not Hispanic, percent	77.5%	81.0%	96.0%	85.00%	81.10%
9	Unknown or Unreported	10.0%	3.5%	1.7%	0%	0%
10	International	1.0%	0.9%	0.0%	0%	0%

(a) Johnson County and Kansas: Includes persons reporting only one race.  
(b) Johnson County and Kansas: Hispanics may be of any race, so also are included in applicable race categories.  
(c) MNU figures: 2006 student headcount; 2005 Faculty Staff Head count  
(d) MNU: Category 4 and 5 are combined  
(e) Figures for Johnson County and Kansas State are from the U.S. Census Bureau

Please see Core Component 1B, pp. 33-35, and Core Component 2A, pp. 58-60, for a full discussion regarding diversity.

## Governance, Administration and Organizational Structure

The permanent control of MidAmerica Nazarene University is vested in a board of trustees elected by the districts of the North Central Region of the International Church of the Nazarene. Currently, there are no board members who are public members elected outside the auspices of the Church. The Board consists of thirty-five members and meets twice a year and upon call by the University president or by the chairperson of the Board. Between the official sessions, an Executive Committee of eight members, elected by the Trustees, acts as an advisory and procedural group.

The organizational structure at MidAmerica Nazarene University is comprised of five areas: academic affairs, enrollment development, finance, student development and university advancement. A vice president leads each of these functions and reports directly to the president. In addition, the university chaplain and assistant to the president for church and community relations are members of the President's Cabinet. The assistant to the president for diversity and cultural competency also reports directly to the president. In academic affairs there are three associate deans: one for undergraduate programs, one for graduate and adult programs, and one for accreditation, program review, and assessment.

## **Accreditation History**

MidAmerica Nazarene University, presently a PEAQ participant, has maintained continuous accreditation by The Higher Learning Commission since 1974. Comprehensive review in 1979 resulted in continued accreditation with a mandated focused review scheduled for 1984. In 1984, the team found favorable evidence that the institution had addressed the concerns from the last visit and asked the institution to submit a detailed report by February of 1987. A Master of Education degree was approved by the Commission in 1989. Comprehensive review in 1989 resulted in continued accreditation with a mandated focused review in 1992. The 1992 focused visit team found that the institution had met or exceeded goals for the M.Ed. program, made progress toward reversing unfavorable undergraduate enrollment, and demonstrated substantial improvements related to the financial concerns delineated in the 1989 team report. The recommendation of the comprehensive evaluation team in 1999 was to continue accreditation of the institution for ten years with progress reports required in two areas. MNU provided the Commission with information regarding recruitment outcomes and preliminary goals on November 1 of 1999, 2000 and 2001; and submitted progress reports on assessment on October 4, 1999; July 1, 2000 and July 1, 2001. HLC staff accepted these reports. An institution requested focused review in 2001 resulted in permission being granted to offer the B.A. completion programs within 60 miles of the Olathe campus. In August 2001, the Commission granted initial accreditation of the Master of Educational Technology degree. An April 2003 institution requested focused visit resulted in permission being granted to offer the B.A. degree completion programs and the M.Ed. Program at off campus sites. In August 2004, the Commission extended MNU's accreditation to include Master's programs in the field of education and non-degree courses offered through the Midwest Associated College's Consortium. The University's last on-site visit was a May 2008 institution requested focused visit which resulted in permission being granted to offer the M.Ed. program 100% online.

## **Program Accreditation and Associations**

Accreditation of the teacher education program has been achieved from the Kansas State Board of Education, and the nursing major has received approvals from the Kansas State Board of Nursing and the National League for Nursing (NLN). MidAmerica Nazarene University is an accredited institutional member of the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM). The University is a member of the Coalition of Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU), the Kansas Independent College Association (KICA), the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA), the National Christian College Athletic Association (NCCAA), the Heart of America Athletic Conference (HAAC), The Midwestern Association of Graduate Schools (MAGS), the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE), and the Olathe Area Chamber of Commerce.

## Significant Institutional Changes Since 1999

Since the last comprehensive self-study, MidAmerica Nazarene University has continued to move forward by adding a variety of new academic programs, special accreditations and campus facilities. Institutional changes over the past ten years have also included new faculty and staff, technology upgrades, curriculum updates, and new leadership. MNU has continued to follow its mission, providing transformational education which is characterized by excellent teaching, learning, and service to students. The following is a timeline of noteworthy developments:

Fall 1999	Master of Arts in Counseling degree is introduced.
Fall 1999	The Cook Center, a 70,000 square-foot, state-of-the-art facility for physical life and wellness, is opened. Included in the Cook Center is a large basketball/volleyball arena, two practice gymnasiums, a fully equipped weight room, facilities for the nursing and athletic training programs, athletic offices, a lecture hall and several classrooms.
Fall 2001	Master of Arts in Educational Technology degree is added.
Fall 2003	JRC-AT grants initial accreditation to the Athletic Training Education program.
Fall 2004	Because of growth in the adult and graduate programs, MNU expanded by leasing space in the Eby Building, located in the University Park Office complex, just south of Santa Fe on Mur-len. Classes meet on the first floor, north side, and are equipped with the latest technology. The multi-media technology includes video, DVD, audio and Internet access. Teamboards with touch advance and electronic notation capabilities serve as “smart” screens for the overhead projection system allowing presenters to make electronic notes, save the notes to file and print the image displayed. This technology, coupled with traditional easels and whiteboards, make presentations interesting and varied.
Fall 2004	The Mur-Len Office Building houses the MNU Play Therapy Center and training classrooms. The state-of-the-art center is located on the first floor and includes play rooms for therapy which are monitored by camera for security and training purposes. Play Therapy Certificate students meet in classes on the second floor.
Fall 2004	Developed a new comprehensive program to assess student learning outcomes based upon the Nichols’ model and to conduct program reviews.
Fall 2005	The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education granted initial accreditation for the professional education programs.
Spring 2005	Dr. Edwin H. Robinson was elected fourth president of MidAmerica Nazarene University.
2005 to 2008	New vice presidential leadership began during this time period in enrollment development, university advancement, and academic affairs.

Spring 2006	The International Assembly for Collegiate Business Education grants initial accreditation for the traditional undergraduate Business programs.
Summer 2006	MNU’s newest dorm was completed and named for MNU President Emeritus Richard Spindle, and his wife, Billy. The Spindles led the university for nearly 16 years before retiring in June 2005. Spindle Hall provides three floors of additional housing for upper class women. The rooms in the new building consist of fully carpeted suites with three bedrooms, joined by a common living area and bathroom. Added features include two showers in the bathroom and a sink in the common living area. The number of occupants per suite varies from three to six women, depending on enrollment and the availability of space.
Fall 2007	A new state-of-the-art Bell Cultural Events Center was opened. This 40,000 square foot facility is an acoustically-engineered masterpiece. The 541-seat Mabee Performing Arts Hall boasts the very best in sound environment, supported by a Yamaha M7CL digital sound mixing console, multi-track recording capabilities through Pro Tools, ETC computerized light board, and visual playback and projector for viewing DVDs, Power Point presentations and other multi-media on a drop-down screen on the stage. The building also has practice rooms and individual instruction areas in support of the high level of academic standards and has the most up-to-date technology for teaching, recording, and playback for students and teachers to use in classrooms, private lessons, rehearsals, and performances. The Black Box theatre, scene shop, Green Room, make-up room, and dressing rooms have expanded the abilities of the MNU Theatre Department for both training and performance.
Spring 2008	A new University entrance was developed on the east side of the campus on Murlen Drive. The new entrance is connected to traffic signals providing easier, safer and more visible access to the University. New signage and landscaping will provide a greater aesthetic appeal for all stakeholders.

## Responses to Issues Raised in the Last Self-study

In its February 1999 report, the visiting team cited seven challenges and seven items under the heading “advice and suggestions” for MidAmerica Nazarene University to address. Attention to these concerns and recommendations has resulted in the development and/or modification of the institution’s policies, practices, and organizational structures in order to make improvements. MidAmerica recognizes the importance of the challenges identified by the visiting team and has worked conscientiously to address them. This section reviews the opportunities for improvement noted during the institution’s last comprehensive visit and explains how MNU has successfully handled each concern.

## Institutional Challenges

### *Concern One:*

*Given the distinctive mission of the University and its dependence on tuition revenue, careful attention must be devoted to developing and implementing recruitment strategies that will allow the institution to achieve its admission goals in today's highly competitive environment.*

### *Response One:*

To encourage greater enrollment, the University has changed student scholarship policies several times since 1999. Enrollment Development completely renovated its offices and reception areas to make the area more attractive to prospective students. The organizational structure of the University was altered to give the Vice President of Enrollment Development direct line authority over those units which are most likely to impact future enrollment. The Registrar's office and the Director of Retention were moved from the oversight of the Vice President for Academic Affairs to the Vice President of Enrollment Development. The University's marketing function, which included responsibility for web site development, was transferred from University Advancement to Enrollment Development. In addition, the Athletic Department was moved to University Advancement because it did not seem to work with the new Enrollment Development philosophy.

On page 23 of the 1999 HLC team report, the evaluators cite comments from community members who said "that the University was the 'best kept secret' in town" and then went on to recommend that "there could be more attention given to developing closer ties with the community." MidAmerica Nazarene University has responded to this concern in a variety of ways since 1999. A new online course delivery system for the Master of Education program and the addition of a distance education center in Liberty, Missouri will help lift the veil of secrecy surrounding the University's offerings and make them more accessible to Olathe and the surrounding metropolitan area. Also, within the last two years, several initiatives were launched to strengthen MidAmerica Nazarene University's "brand". A branding committee was developed to provide as much empirical data as possible to inform efforts to strengthen the image of the University.

Although MNU has been successful in attracting new students to the school, the institution must seek additional students to meet unmet capacity. Before launching an effort to attract new students, the branding committee with the help of an external marketing consultant undertook a "Community Perceptual Research Study"<sup>6</sup> to evaluate the awareness of the University in Olathe and the Kansas City metropolitan area. Using an online system, a survey was sent out to a regional list that was randomly drawn from adults (18 years of age and older). The survey was sent to 1000 residents and 300 persons responded. While 241 of the 300 respondents (80.3%) had heard of MidAmerica prior

---

6 2007-2008 Branding Committee Research Report

to taking the survey, 80.91% reported that they had not received any information from the institution. The data also confirms that while 80.3% had heard of MidAmerica, only 43% were very familiar or somewhat familiar with the institution. Respondents were asked to rate MNU on its overall reputation in the community. The 241 respondents who were aware of MNU prior to taking the survey answered this question.

*Table 1-6: Community Survey Item<sup>7</sup>*

What is MNU’s overall reputation in the community?	Percentage responding
Very positive	20.75%
Somewhat positive	28.63%
Neutral	26.97%
Somewhat negative	.41%
Negative	.41%
Don’t know	22.83%

While nearly half of the respondents who knew of MNU reported a positive reputation, the other large response categories demonstrate that people have either not made up their mind or do not know enough to evaluate the institution.

In general, it can be concluded from the study that previous efforts have strengthened MNU’s image with regard to the following characteristics: It cares about students, has a safe campus, offers small classes, gives students the opportunity to explore their faith, has an active presence in the community and prepares students for their careers. However the public is unsure, and therefore the University must work to generate awareness and/or program improvements, in these areas: 1) MNU provides an education that is valued by prospective employers, 2) offers high-quality, nationally recognized education, 3) gets graduates the jobs they want, 4) provides students with easy access to faculty, 5) hosts a successful athletic program and 6) has a vibrant campus life.

Finally, the office of Enrollment Development has recently put together a comprehensive enrollment plan to develop and implement recruitment strategies that will allow the institution to achieve its admission goals in today’s highly competitive environment.

***Concern Two:***

***Equal and concurrent attention should be dedicated to understanding why students leave the institution and to developing effective retention programs that encourage them to stay.***

***Response Two:***

---

7 2007-2008 Branding Committee Research Report

Soon after the HLC's last site visit, MidAmerica established the part-time position of Director of Retention. This position serves primarily the undergraduate population and was done in direct response to the team's stated concern. The first director developed a close professional and personal relationship with many students and made sure that he was highly visible on campus by attending most student extracurricular activities throughout the year, eating regularly in campus center and being very involved at College Church. He served as an effective ombudsperson for students experiencing difficulty in understanding or navigating University procedures. The director served as the primary academic advisor for undecided students and helped bridge the gap in getting students connected with a major and an academic division. The director gave updates to the Dean's cabinet regarding retention statistics on an annual basis. In Fall 2007, this position was upgraded to a full-time administrative position and reports to Enrollment Development to further facilitate the comprehensive approach to recruitment and retention envisioned by the new Vice President. New office space for the Director of Retention, near the Dining commons and bookstore, gives maximum access to student foot traffic and encourages informal communication. In addition, the Director of Retention follows up on students in a variety of ways. He is in communication with each faculty member regarding their advisees who have not registered for the upcoming semester and contacts each of those students individually. He encourages faculty to make contact with each student to encourage them to register. Contacts by the Director of Retention with students include e-mails, facebook messages, calls to their cell phones, and face-to-face discussions encouraging them to register and discovering why they have not registered. The Director of Retention also attends chapel services, as well as weekly student leader meetings with the Black Student Union, Resident Hall Government, and Freshman Class Council. He also attends weekly Residential Life Staff meetings with dorm Resident Educators and the Associate Dean for Residential Life. This provides for enhanced communication regarding residential students who may need encouragement and follow up. Finally, the University is committed to continuing the first year experience and has made New Student Orientation and Freshman Seminar two retention priorities. Please see Core Component 3C, p. 118 for additional information regarding retention.

***Concern Three:***

***The institution should assess carefully the impact of its current institutional aid policies on the recruitment and retention of students and make adjustments, if necessary.***

LEARNING - FOCUSED

***Response Three:***

A number of adjustments were made to institutional aid policies in response to HLC's concern after the last site visit. Some adjustments impact both incoming Freshman students and returning students. These are seen in the establishment of Freshman awards that are renewable and which obviously impact the retention of these students. These awards include the following:

1. The Ministerial Scholarship was established in 2003-2004 and assists Ministry students in

- preparing for a lifetime of ministry while reducing the debt load they might otherwise incur.
2. The Residential Life Award began in 2006-2007 and is designed to assist residential students who might otherwise have to commute to campus.
  3. The Nazarene Missionary Child Award began in 2006-2007 and provides a 50% tuition award to assist children of Nazarene Missionaries.
  4. The Need Based Pastor's Kids Award was established in 2006-2007 and assists Pastor's children.
  5. The University Grant began in the 2006-2007 academic year and is a need based grant.
  6. The New Student Award for commuter students was established in 2008-2009.

The University also established grants and programs specifically designed to assist in the retention of students. These grants include the following:

1. The Challenge Loan/Grant was established in 2000-2001 and is designed to encourage students to graduate. If they graduate, then the award continues as a grant. If, however, they do not persist to graduation at the University, then the award becomes a loan that must be repaid to the University. This award is determined and offered by the Retention Scholarship Committee.
2. The Pioneer Grant was established beginning in the 2001-2002 academic year. It is an award determined by the Retention Scholarship Committee on a case by case basis after evaluation of the financial aid package and need of each student is considered.
3. The Harvester's program is a need based and job related award established in 2003-2004 and allows students to earn \$1,000.00 per school year while working on campus, while working on campus for a full time professor or head coach.
4. The Retention Grant was established in 2005-2006 and is an award determined by the Retention Scholarship Committee on a case by case basis after an evaluation of the financial aid package and need of each student. This grant is used to help students return to the University who would not otherwise be able to return without this financial help.

***Concern Four:***

***The institution should accelerate implementation of its Program to Assess Student Academic Achievement with particular attention being devoted to systematic collection, dissemination, analysis, and use of information gathered through the process..***

***Response Four:***

Significant changes have been made since 1999 to ensure that student learning assessment is built into the culture and operating structure of MidAmerica Nazarene University. The institution's first effort to respond to the Commission's concern following the 1999 site visit was to hold a week long assessment workshop for faculty. The Division of Education obtained a grant to underwrite the expense of this workshop. Mini-grants were provided to faculty participants from each academic unit on campus. The workshop was led by Dr. Rick Gibson who was director of assessment at Friends

University in Topeka, Kansas. Second, MNU modified its organizational structure to add a part-time Director of Outcomes Assessment and Program Review (In 2008, this position was modified and is now the Associate Academic Dean of Accreditation, Program Review and Assessment). This administrator chairs a monthly meeting of the Student Learning Assessment Facilitation Team (SLAFT) and works with assessment representatives in the systematic collection, dissemination, analysis, and use of information gathered through the assessment process. Third, MNU adopted a model of assessment based upon the work of Drs. James and Karen Nichols at the University of Mississippi. This resulted in the creation of academic unit assessment plans and annual unit assessment reports which are organized in an Assessment Records Book. Fourth, organizational policy was updated to provide three hours of overload pay (or load reduction) for each academic unit's assessment representative in recognition of the amount of time and effort needed to fully integrate assessment into the culture of the University. Fifth, the General Education committee now regularly addresses student learning by reviewing results obtained from the College Base exam, the Senior Survey and embedded assessments throughout the general core. Sixth, nominal rewards have been created each year and awarded to those academic units doing the best job with regard to student learning assessment. Seventh, institutional procedures and practices have been implemented so that:

- All programs have learning goals identified;
- All programs are using direct measures of student learning;
- Assessment of student learning is consistently understood and consistently implemented by MNU;
- Programs do not rely too heavily on indirect assessment;
- All programs identify actions they have taken, based on assessment data, to improve student learning;
- All programs have specific events to increase awareness of assessment and use of assessment findings (e.g. "Assessment Days");
- Active supervision of programmatic assessment within MNU takes place by a university-wide assessment committee and non-academic assessment committee;
- A Non-Academic Assessment Team (NAT) has been created to accelerate the implementation of assessment in the co-curriculum and the educational support units at MNU;
- Non-academic units have initiated assessment activities;
- Faculty, staff and administrators have increased knowledge about assessment, resulting in significant increases in institutional capacity for and commitment to high quality assessment activity;
- The University's assessment plan is posted on a recently developed wiki page <http://assesslearningatmnu.wiki.zoho.com>;
- Annual assessment reports for all units are now expected to include details about assessment activities and findings;
- Unit assessment reports are reviewed by an assessment review committee on an annual basis. Feedback from the review is sent back to each office with comments about means of improving assessment activities in the future;

- The program review process (conducted on a 5 year cycle) is used to evaluate the effectiveness of unit level assessment efforts;
- The core of assessment of student learning activities occurs at the unit/office level. Almost 100% of all degree-granting programs and most non-academic units at MNU have assessment plan (Either in the form of the Assessment Records Book or an iteration of their own);
- Significant percentages have reported findings, using results and/or loop-closing activities in the form of interventions or program improvements.

Eight, a delegation from MNU attended “*Making a Difference in Student Learning: Assessment as a Core Strategy*,” in July 2006 to work with a mentor appointed by the Commission in an effort to improve its assessment processes. The University has also provided resources each year for key employees to attend the HLC annual meeting in Chicago and various other regional assessment conferences to obtain the latest information with regard to student learning assessment.

These findings do not signify total success, but they do signify a developing level of maturity which:

- Recognizes the need to pay attention to what students are learning as well as what the faculty member intends to teach;
- Understands the need to collect and review information systematically;
- Achieves benefits from assessment that demonstrate the value in terms of student learning and institutional improvement.

***Concern Five:***

***The University has incurred a high percentage of debt with a current value of over \$8 million and an additional \$4 million when the Cook Center is completed this summer. This high percentage of debt should not be increased in the future until this present debt is significantly reduced. Also, the team concurs with the administration and trustees that the proposed new Fine Arts Center should be completely funded by gifts and no bonds should be used for its construction.***

***Response Five:***

Finances continue to present a challenge and opportunity for improvement for the University. The President’s Cabinet has kept abreast of the financial situation at MNU for many years and in the last three years, since Dr. Robinson’s election, has been very intentional about planning for and thinking about long-term, strategic improvements in the University. The President has set goals to increase revenue generation through student enrollment, fundraising, new programs and comprehensive quality improvement toward excellence.

Plans are also underway to balance the University’s budget and live within it. The 2008-09 MNU

budget was approved by the Executive Committee of the MNU Board of Trustees on March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2008 and sent to the full Board with a recommendation that it be approved by them as well. Key assumptions were made in this budget regarding various expense reduction items and revenue generation initiatives.

Finally, MNU has restructured its debt to a manageable load, pay it down, and build reserves so it does not have to borrow more in the future.

For a complete discussion of the financial challenge that the University faces and its plan to meet this challenge please see Core Component 2B, pp. 65-67.

***Concern Six:***

***The University needs to strengthen the programs and the annual giving in the alumni area to approach the level of the national average.***

***Response Six:***

In response to concerns expressed by The Higher Learning Commission in its 1999 accreditation study report regarding alumni giving, the Office of University Advancement developed and implemented the following initiatives to increase the giving rate and overall support of its alumni:

1. The *Senior Challenge* program was introduced to encourage graduating seniors to begin giving back to the University. At graduation time seniors were given the opportunity to make a contribution in honor of a professor or other significant individual who had helped them successfully complete their university experience. Names of the honored individuals were placed in the graduation program. Members of the senior class were utilized to help organize and promote the program working along side of the Director of Annual Giving.
2. At the 2001 and 2005 General Assemblies of the Church of the Nazarene the Director of Alumni and the Alumni Council sponsored a major meal event for alums and friends of the University during which opportunities for participation in a capital campaign and scholarships were presented.
3. Alumni gatherings at targeted away sporting events (primarily football and basketball) drew together groups of alumni that would not always participate in on campus activities. Once again, the opportunity to support the University in a variety of means (including Annual Fund, Scholarship investment, and Capital Campaigns) was presented along with a report of the health of the University.
4. During the capital campaign for the construction of the Bell Cultural Events Center alums were challenged to participate in a *Buy-A-Brick* program that helped with the funding of the facility and provided a means by which the alum and their family could be recognized in a tangible way as having participated in the construction of the new facility. The bricks are located outside the

main entrance. In addition, specialized groups (Heritage Choir alums) were encouraged to give in honor of a long-time choral director.

5. Special emphasis was placed on involving athletic alums in providing funding for a variety of athletic projects and programs. A new full-time director of the Pioneer Athletic Association was hired to spearhead athletic fundraising.
6. A new *Giving* page was included on the MNU website that describes the various types of gifts that can be given and the mechanisms for providing gifts. The current page includes video testimonies of students who have been impacted directly by the giving of alums and friends.
7. The University president and the Assistant to the President for Church and Community Relations regularly visit with churches and pastors across the North Central Region to encourage support of alums.

During the past fiscal year, the Office of Alumni Relations has developed plans to form MNU Clubs in strategic locations throughout the country where significant pockets of alumni are located. The first MNU Clubs will be formed in the fall of 2008. The purpose of these clubs is to provide a means of reconnecting with alumni in different geographic areas and to provide a means for alumni to support the university's student recruitment efforts. Each group will be challenged to recruit students from their geographic area, participate in the send-off and support of students who decide to attend MNU, and to welcome new graduates and alumni who move to the geographic area. This strategy holds significant promise and is designed to heighten the level of engagement of alumni and is anticipated to have a direct impact on their level of financial support.

The Alumni Relations office is also preparing to make changes that will enhance and expand communication with alumni through e-mail. For a number of years, the alumni e-newsletter was sent only to those alumni who specifically signed up for an alumni e-mail account through the online Alumni Directory. The distribution list for the alumni e-newsletter will be broadened to include all alumni who have provided the University with their e-mail address. This change will increase the number of alumni receiving regular monthly e-newsletters from the Alumni Relations office.

The Alumni Relations office recognizes the importance of engaging students during their initial years at the University. As a result, a Young Alumni Club will be formed and implemented during Fall 2008 for the first time. This new initiative promises to further deepen and strengthen students' relationship with the Alumni Association and the University.

During the 2006-07 school year, a total of 883 of MNU's 15,795 alumni contributed a total of \$345,749 to the University for annual, capital and endowment purposes. This represents a 5.6% alumni participation rate which falls below the 11.7% national norm. Further improvement is needed in MNU's direct mail and phonathon initiatives in order to make a significant impact on the participation rate. The University recognizes this need and has hired a new Development Director for Annual Programs who will focus her efforts on these important areas. In addition, the Office of University Advancement has changed its philosophy from being events oriented to being more

relationship driven. Two major gifts officers have been hired within the last two years who are engaged in direct one-on-one personal solicitation. These actions are all designed to increase the amount and the breadth of alumni support.

***Concern Seven:***

***The University should develop a plan to increase the diversity on the board of trustees, on the foundation, and in the senior administration.***

***Response Seven:***

Diversity has become an area of emphasis and development at MidAmerica since the last comprehensive visit in 1999. Dr. Ed Robinson has been a strong catalyst for change and this explains why much of the University's progress dates after his appointment. For further information regarding progress in this area please see Core Component 1B, pp. 33-35; Core Component 2A, pp. 58-60; Core Component 3C, p. 116 and Core Component 4C, pp. 157-158.

There are thirty-five members of the Board of Trustees. At the time of the last site visit, in 1999, there were no ethnic minorities on the Board of Trustees and three women. In 2008, these numbers had increased to include one ethnic minority and four women. It should be noted that the University has little control over the composition of its Trustees in that they are elected by the Church districts of the University's assigned educational region.

The MNU Foundation is comprised of 70 members. In 1999, there were no ethnic minorities and no women on the Foundation. In 2008, three females were members.

Senior administrators are members of the President's cabinet. In 1999, there were no ethnic minorities and no women on the President's cabinet. In 2008, this number had increased to include one female on the cabinet. While not a member of the cabinet, the President has appointed an assistant to the president for diversity and cultural competency who is an ethnic minority and is a direct report.

## **Conclusion**

Since 1999, the University has demonstrated commitment to the value of regional accreditation by addressing concerns raised by the HLC. The University has also made progress by participating in program reviews, external specialized accreditations and by listening to its stakeholders. This drive for continuous improvement enables MidAmerica Nazarene University to more effectively accomplish its mission.