

## EVALUATION TEAM REPORT

[The Evaluation Team Report follows]

### CHAPTER 2: INSTITUTIONAL MISSION, GOVERNANCE, ADMINISTRATION [standards 1, 4 and 5]

The institution's mission clearly defines its purpose within the context of higher education and indicates who the institution serves and what it intends to accomplish. The institution's stated goals, consistent with the aspirations and expectations of higher education; clearly specify how the institution will fulfill its mission. The mission and goals are developed and recognized by the institutions with the participation of its governing body and are used to develop and shape its programs and practices and to evaluate its effectiveness.

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

**In the team's judgment, the institution appears to meet this standard.**

The University Strategic Plan: Students First: Innovative ESU was launched in June 2014. While the self-study's claim that "the vision, values, mission and goals of East Stroudsburg University are incorporated into every part of the University Strategic Plan" may be overbroad, there was a great deal of participation at many levels from students, faculty, staff, trustees, and community members. The Strategic Plan principles and goals appear to have been carefully aligned with ESU's mission and goals so as to be mutually reinforcing of one another.

The unveiling of the Strategic Plan was accompanied by the establishment of several committees to implement the goals of the plan.

This is described at pages 11 and 12 of the Self Study report

"In September of 2016, ESU published Implementation Teams' Reports and Goal Sheets outlining work completed to date on the university's strategic plan. Included in this document are reports outlining the accomplishments achieved by each implementation group as well as "goal sheets" which outline synergies with other goals, deliverables, yearly success measures and benchmarks. The data contained in this document will provide the basis for assessing the success of the strategic plan."

#### **Recommendation:**

1. Analyze and integrate assessment outcomes associated with strategic goals outcomes to inform curricular and extracurricular initiatives for the next 3 year strategic planning cycles.

#### ***STANDARD 4: Leadership & Governance***

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

**In the team's judgment, the institution appears to meet this standard.**

The governing body of ESU is the eleven-member Council of Trustees who are eligible to serve six year terms upon being appointed by the Governor ; one of the Trustees is an ESU student and does not serve six years.

The self-study focuses a good deal on elements of mission such as critical thinking and diversity. There do not appear to be any significant difficulties with leadership initiatives and shared governance through the various leadership bodies. The President's Council, the University Senate, the Student Senate, the Academic Council of Chairs and the Council of Trustees appear to work well together.

#### **Non-binding suggestions for Improvement:**

1. Develop a plan to recruit, retain and mentor diverse faculty and staff.

#### ***STANDARD 5: Administration***

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

**In the team's judgment, the institution appears to meet this standard.**

ESU has concentrated on improving communication both horizontally and vertically. This has been well-received, particularly insofar as the determination of personnel needs is concerned.

ESU is also laying greater emphasis on employee training and development

Recent organizational changes to effect greater accountability are being closely monitored to determine if they have generated greater accountability.

#### **Non-binding suggestions for Improvement:**

1. Review employee evaluations procedures to enhance employee performance, training and professional development.

## CHAPTER 3: PLANNING, INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES, AND BUDGETING [standards 2 and 3]

### ***STANDARD 2: Planning, Resource Allocation, and Institutional Renewal***

**In the team's judgment, the institution appears to meet this standard.**

(ESU) conducts ongoing planning and resource allocation based on its mission and goal and develops objectives to achieve them. Implementation and subsequent evaluation of the success of the strategic plan and resource allocation support the development and change necessary to improve and to maintain institutional quality.

The institution has demonstrated remarkable flexibility and agility responding to the dynamic environment in which it operates. Determining resource allocation is challenging given the limited resources but here seems to be a shared understanding across the institution that sacrifices need to be made. Determining the right amount of resources is based on industry best practices, peer analysis and the best instincts of the President's Council.

The planning process is not a coordinated effort that involves representatives of all affected parts of the institution.

ESU has a current strategic plan, academic plan, financial plan, strategic enrollment strategy, and facilities master plan. The facilities plan is being updated to reflect current data, financial realities, and new leadership. ESU does not have a technology plan.

The organizational structure is clear and the institution has well defined decision-making processes and lines of authority that facilitate planning and renewal.

Units produce annual reports that provide a record of institutional and unit improvement efforts and their results.

#### **Significant accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices:**

1. The institution's flexibility and agility managing multi-million dollar budget cuts without demonstrable adverse impacts on students is noteworthy.
2. The President's Council's decision to increase faculty lines during this period of fiscal distress is a testament to the commitment to the academic mission of the college and a sign of respect of the faculty.

#### **Non-binding suggestions for Improvement:**

1. Further define the role of governance in the budget process.
2. Include students in an advisory capacity in the development and approval of the technology fee budget.

3. Review and refine cross division strategies to identify and deploy resources to support retention, instructional technology, diversification of staff and students, and maintenance of facilities consistent with the Strategic Plan.

**Recommendations:**

1. Formalize a comprehensive technology plan.
2. Develop assessment plans for all administrative units and use the results of such assessment activities for institutional renewal.
3. Continue to review budgeting and planning processes, formalizing mechanisms for allocating resources to institutional priorities identified in the Strategic Plan and grounded in a transparent budget process.

***STANDARD 3: Institutional Resources***

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

**In the team's judgment, the institution appears to meet this standard.**

In the team's judgment, the institution appears to meet this standard, however, there are concerns about the institution's ability to maintain the human, financial, technical, facilities, and other resources necessary to achieve into the future.

The decision-making process for allocating assets is connected to the institutional planning process.

The financial plan is communicated to the campus in a number of ways. Examples include Monday Morning Messages from the President, presentations at the all campus meeting that occurred monthly and a set of financial dashboards updated monthly and distributed to the President's Council.

ESU lacks systematic strategies to measure and assess the level, and efficient use of, institutional resources required to support the institution's mission and goals. Administrative assessment plans are not consistently used across the institution. Without assessment data, resource allocation decisions are based on anecdotes. With that said, the team did not find issues with the resource allocations made by the President's Council.

It appears that ESU has adequate faculty to support the academic mission and meet the needs of students. The level of support staff needs to be closely monitored to assess the level of services extended to students. Administrative units expressed concerns over service levels, as did faculty. Students indicated that they have not perceived a diminished level of service.

The auxiliaries (e.g. dining services, residence life, University Center and Rec Center) are financially viable and their budgeting processes are congruent with institutional financial planning. The institution is extremely conscientious about keeping cost low and quality high. This is commendable. However, it is not uncommon to leverage auxiliaries to supplement institutional budgets. For example the level of scholarships funded by the foundation is relatively small for an institution of this size and age. Increased revenue from the auxiliaries could increase the number and amount of scholarships.

As noted in its self-study, the budget process has become less transparent which is not unusual during periods of financial distress.

The overall financial health of the institution is reflected in the annual Financial Risk Assessment produced by PASSHE in 2016 and 2017. The analysis includes assessment of market demand, operating efficiency, financial performance and management risk. ESU scores in the middle of pack relative to the other 13 PASSHE schools. ESU is considered to be a "Moderate Risk" requiring continued monitoring and possible attention. ESU's ability to monitor its financials is quite mature and there is evidence that decisions are being made to improve financial conditions. According to data submitted by ESU to IPEDS, ESU decreased expenditures \$4.5m from 2014/15 to 2015/16 almost exclusively from non-academic functions. At the same time, revenues decreased \$.4m. Reserves have grown to nearly \$60m which will help to address a significant (\$50m) backlog in deferred maintenance and a projected operating shortfall (\$6m) for next year. The debt services ratio is a reasonable 5.37% but the university intends to lower that to 5%.

The team has some trepidation about future undergraduate enrollments and ESU's ability to meet its revenue targets. Undergraduate headcount is down nearly 200 students since 2012. The one bright spot in that graduate headcount is up nearly 100 students over that same period.

The outlook for state funding is uncertain but there is little cause for optimism.

The general conditions of facilities including grounds, classrooms, and labs are adequate. The grounds are exceptional and it is obvious that careful planning and attentive maintenance is important to the campus. The new (2008) Warren E. '55 and Sandra Hoeffner Science & Technology Center building is a great addition to the campus. The library is a bit dated but plans are in the works for renovation.

The cleanliness of the campus is consistently good from building to building.

The provisions for current technology needs are generous given the fiscal challenges of the institution. However, the lack of a comprehensive technology plan makes it difficult to determine future strategic directions in this mission critical area. Staffing should be addressed in that plan.

ESU has an annual internal control program to deal with financial, administrative and auxiliary operations. Annual independent audits confirm financial responsibility and provide unqualified opinions.

**Significant accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices:**

1. The President's Council shares a common understanding of campus finances and is working collaboratively to manage expenses.

2. ESU's ability to monitor financial conditions and disseminate key performance indicators is laudable.
3. ESU is very cognizant of student cost of attendance and strives to minimize tuition and fee increases.

**Non-binding suggestions for Improvement:**

1. Closely monitor support staff levels to ensure that student support services are adequate.
2. Consider increasing institutional support to expand and enhance fundraising activities.
3. Expand efforts to grow alternate revenue generation sources as well as cost saving initiatives to greater alignment of academic departments and a focus on sustainability.
4. Evaluate and update the Facilities Master Plan.
5. The level of funding committed to deferred maintenance should be increased to substantially reduce the backlog.

**Recommendations:**

1. Allocation and use of space should be reviewed and policies established to ensure greater utilization.

## CHAPTER 4: INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT AND INTEGRITY [standards 6 and 7]

### *STANDARD 6: Integrity*

**In the conduct of its programs and activities involving the public and the constituencies it serves, the institution demonstrates adherence to ethical standards and its own stated policies, providing support for academic and intellectual freedom.**

**In the team's judgment, the institution appears to meet this standard.**

ESU has numerous policies and procedures in place sufficient to ensure that all individuals associated with the institution are treated fairly and equitably. There are also means for appropriate review and redress when these policies are violated.

**Integrity of academic programs:** There are adequate procedures in place to address plagiarism by students. Teaching faculty have appropriate credentials and experience, new faculty are provided appropriate orientation and mentoring, the curriculum is periodically reviewed by knowledgeable faculty outside the university for currency and appropriateness and course syllabi accurately represent the work required in the class as well as the method by which students will be assessed and graded. Finally, the course offerings are mostly sufficient to allow students to complete their program of study within appropriate timeframe. Students expressed some concerns regarding advising and scheduling which they felt, at times, contributed to some students needing to take an additional semester or two to finish their degree. Another area of concern involves the programs which support under-prepared students. There do not appear to be sufficient assessment data regarding their effectiveness and retention rates seem to reflect the need for attention to this area.

**Grievances policies and procedures:** ESU has appropriate policies and procedures in place to handle the range of potential grievance from all stakeholders. In particular, both students and faculty have detailed handbooks which specify how grievances and appeals will be handled. This information is available both in print and electronically. Data from Human Resources show that there were 44 formal faculty grievances submitted during the period 2012-2017, the most frequent subject involving tenure decisions and the CBA. The new administration's commitment to transparency and dialogue has resulted in much better communication and more informal resolution of issues.

**Hiring and evaluation:** The Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE) and the CBAs specify much of the policy and procedures for the hiring and evaluation of faculty and staff. The internal process followed by the ESU Human Resources department mirrors these policies and procedures. Additionally, the approval levels required for hiring ensure appropriate oversight. Evaluation of faculty and represented staff is determined by the CBA. For those employees who are not covered by a CBA, the university uses the PASSHE management evaluation forms and a process which allows for collaborative review of performance. There was some concern expressed during meetings concerning adherence to the non-CBA process regarding staff evaluations. The form is generic and should be reviewed to incorporate best practices for employee assessment and performance improvement. Additionally, ESU has evolved a very diverse student body; unfortunately, the faculty is not as diverse with approximately 18% classified as diverse compared to

approximately 35% of the student body. There is awareness of this and its implications and it is being addressed within the fiscal and structural constraints facing the institutions.

**Academic freedom (intellectual property):** Academic freedom is affirmed in the university statement of values and detailed in the APSCUF CBA (Article 2). Research involving human subjects is guided by IRB. The IRB is appropriately staffed and the necessary information regarding procedures and submissions is available on the ESU web page. A link to the appropriate training is also provided. During the past two years (2015-2017) there have been 181 internal and 14 external IRB reviews. Research involving animals is guided by the Institutional Animal Care Act and Use Committee. Intellectual property rights of the faculty are likewise detailed in the CBA (Article 39).

**Tenure and promotions:** The APSCUF CBA outlines the standards and procedures for tenure and promotion. ESU has both Tenure Committee and a Promotions Committee with adequate and appropriate faculty representation on each. These committees follow the CBA as well as the locally developed and agreed to tenure and promotions manuals. There is an appropriate appeal procedure in place for faculty regarding tenure and promotion. Approximately 30% of faculty indicated dissatisfaction with the tenure and promotion process in a recent survey. The Provost is aware of the areas of dissatisfaction and is working with the appropriate groups regarding the various areas of concern. During the 2011-2016 period there were 56 positive tenure decisions out of a total of 64 requests (87.5%). Of the 56 positive decisions, 23 were for male faculty and 33 were for female faculty with 39% representing diverse faculty.

**Catalog:** The university undergraduate catalogs are available both in print and electronically. The web page has historic copies available back to 2002 giving more than adequate access. Catalogs appear in annual editions; biennial editions would yield a cost savings. Also, the web editions are not hyperlinked making it difficult to search and move through the catalog.

**Publicly available institutional information:** ESU has a very well developed and information rich web page regarding its assessment activities which also includes its MSCHE self-study. However, some sleuthing is required as it is embedded under the Faculty and Staff tab rather than the more publically accessible About tab. Once found, it is a rich source of information. Additionally, while there appear to be adequate policies in place regarding the provision of information about the University to the public, there does not appear to be any person or office charged with the responsibility of responding to complaints concerning the accuracy or quality of the information provided.

**Significant accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices:**

1. For the commitment to, and progress regarding, campus communications and transparency.
2. For effectively involving students in the self-study process and ensuring that their voice was heard.

**Non-binding suggestions for Improvement:**

1. Review the non-CBA staff evaluation form and procedures regarding staff evaluation to ensure best practices.
2. Relocate access to the University's assessment data to improve access by the public.



3. Consider designating a person or office as a contact point for the public regarding complaints about information contained on the University's web page.
4. Incorporate review of current job description at time of annual performance review (ESU recommendation).

**Recommendation:**

1. Develop a formal campus-wide mechanism for tracking student issues and complaints as well as outcomes and resolutions (ESU recommendation).

***STANDARD 7: Institutional Assessment***

**The institution has developed and implemented an assessment process that evaluates its overall effectiveness in achieving its mission and goals and its compliance with accreditation standards.**

**In the team's judgment, the institution appears to meet this standard.**

There are documented, sustained assessment processes regarding the University's range of programs and services and there is written information concerning assessment plans, process and result.

ESU has well documented goals at the institutional, unit and program level for its academic offerings and many of its non-academic programs; the major exceptions appear to be the programs which support under-prepared students and academic advising. While these appear to be strongly supported and enthusiastically embraced, there do not appear to be data to support their effectiveness.

Goals are articulated on a well-organized web page and show that there has been significant thought given to them. Curricular as well as program goals are included. As an example, the newly implemented General Education program is being comprehensively assessed for its effectiveness after its launch during the 2016-2017 academic year. Additionally, academic program reviews are conducted every five years and the schedule of reviews is published on the web.

The University Assessment Committee coordinates assessment and its membership spans the entire campus including academic units, student support units, student life, IR and administration. While assessments are developed and conducted at the department or unit level, the UAC provides support and training for individual faculty and departments/units. There is evidence that primary and secondary assessments are being used. Both the University Assessment Committee and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Planning and Assessment (OIEPA) support this organic approach and provide consultation as needed.

The University Assessment Committee is evidence of faculty and administration collaboration in assessing student learning and responding to results. Additionally, chairs use assessment data to make requests to their Dean for programmatic funding which, in turn, is presented by the Dean to senior leadership responsible for strategic planning and resource allocation. For example, assessment data indicated that the aging biology labs were an impediment to student learning. As a result,

resources where allocated for new biology labs which have been installed and assessment results indicate an improvement in student learning outcomes.

There are detailed timetables for implementing the range of assessments conducted by the University. The OIEPA coordinates and publishes the schedules online. Further, the OIEPA recently conducted an “assessment of the assessment process” which has resulted in a retooling of the University’s approach to assessment with an implementation targeted for the fall of 2017. As part of the retooling, new data warehouse software (TracDat v5) is being implemented to increase the efficiency of data collection and distribution. While this effort will move the institution forward, given its size and breath of programs it needs to consider a more sophisticated data analytics approach to assessment data collection, analysis and distribution.

The extensive assessment of data available on the ESU web (DataPoints) is evidence that assessment results are shared widely. These available data are also used by the Committee on Teaching and Learning for professional development programs. Assessment results were incorporated into the Academic and University Strategic Plans which has already resulted in a restructuring of the General Education program. Additional assessment goals include automation of data collection and distribution which will allow for a transition for the UAC from a focus on the logistics of assessment, as these become embedded in the ESU culture, to a focus on improving learning.

**Significant accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices:**

1. ESU is to be commended for embracing the Monitoring report concerning assessment to initiate major improvements and advancements in its assessment of student learning outcomes.

**Non-binding suggestions for Improvement:**

1. Consider developing and implementing a data analytics approach to assessment.
2. Develop an institution-wide initiative to address, further analyze and implement all assessment related recommendations in the response to ESU 2017 self-study (ESU recommendation).
3. Develop an assessment process for academic advising

**Recommendation:**

1. Develop an assessment process for the programs supporting under-prepared students.

## CHAPTER 5: STUDENTS [standards 8 and 9]

### *STANDARD 8: Student Admissions and Retention*

**The institution seeks to admit students whose interests, goals and abilities are congruent with its mission and seeks to retain them through the pursuit of the students' educational goals.**

**In the team's judgment, the institution appears to meet this standard.**

Institutional data indicate congruence among ESU's mission, admissions efforts, students' interests and abilities, academic support services and retention rates. ESU has seen significant challenges to enrollment over the past six years. While a recent leveling has occurred, this has resulted in a degradation of the academic profile for incoming students. These enrollment challenges mirror a regional demographic downturn of ESU's primary student population base and increased regional competition for students. Further, as a regional institution, ESU's primary service population tends to be traditional-aged and geographically focused.

It is anticipated that these enrollment challenges will continue into the future as contiguous states have adopted policies and programs that will negatively affect out-of-state enrollments. Additionally, the decrease in incoming academic profile could result in a downturn in retention and graduation rates if additional remedial steps are not taken.

Most recently, ESU realigned administrative reporting channels to devote more institutional energy and resources to enrollment management. That shift has resulted in an uptick in enrollments over the past year. As noted in other areas of the report, decreased state subsidies challenging the resource allocation model have affected all areas of the university including enrollment management and financial aid.

Of particular note is ESU's efforts to promote diversity by focusing resources on students from underrepresented areas. This effort has assisted in supporting overall enrollment goals. ESU's efforts at moving toward a test optional entrance model also enhances opportunities to increase and support campus diversity effort and offer an opportunity to support entrance for students who, in the past, might not have considered ESU.

ESU has also devoted time and resources to reviewing its tuition model and has regionalized its approach to tuition pricing to be more attractive to prospective out-of-state students. It also retained a consulting group to help sharpen its marketing efforts and support its institutional brands.

According to IPEDS, the first time, full time retention rate is 72% and the six year graduation rate is 55%. These data indicate that ESU is working to manage enrollments in a turbulent enrollment environment.

Students view the enrollment process as fair and transparent. Staff are helpful and support services are student friendly. Furthermore, students indicate they were surprised that the quality of their overall ESU experience was even higher than they had expected prior to matriculation.

**Significant accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices:**

1. ESU has made significant commitment to support campus diversity. Its efforts to recruit and retain students from underrepresented groups are a model to be emulated by others in the State System of Higher Education.

**Non-binding suggestions for Improvement:**

1. Consider developing an institutional retention plan that uses a predictive analytical approach and engages the greater campus community cross-institutionally.
2. Develop a program to systematically and longitudinally assess institutional efforts at remedial education.
3. As the financial standing of the institution improves, review opportunities to enhance institutional financial aid opportunities and decrease student debt load.

***STANDARD 9: Student Support Services***

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

**In the team's judgment, the institution appears to meet this standard.**

ESU offers a broad array of student services designed to support students' physical, emotional and intellectual needs. The services begin with pre-matriculation programs and continue through graduation. ESU offers a summer bridge program for approximately 100 students that includes an intensive orientation and provides a foundation for student support and success.

For students with academic challenges in writing and mathematics, the university offers credit-bearing support courses to assist in enhancing areas of potential weakness. While credit bearing, the credits do not count toward graduation. Out-of-class support services, including counseling and health, are robust.

Through Student Affairs programs, students are provided appropriate supports and opportunities to excel. For example both leadership and mentorship programs are in place to support students along the developmental spectrum. There are many activities designed to cultivate talents in athletics, leadership, and the arts.

ESU appropriately maintains records in accordance with established requirements including FERPA and is compliant with Title IX and other state, federal and PASSHE mandates.

ESU also provides a supportive environment for veterans and their affiliates. This includes a Veterans Center located in dedicated space that provides one-stop service, as well as a location for socializing and connecting.

Athletics plays a key role in the vitality of campus life. Programs meet NCAA Division II standards. Currently a restructuring process is occurring under the leadership of a new Director of Athletics this

will include an updated athletics strategic plan. Additional services are provided to student athletes who are considered at academic risk.

**Significant accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices:**

1. Collaboration within student affairs is strong. Staff show a commitment to student growth and development. Student Affairs has developed a model of assessment, based on national standards, that provides a developmental framework for programming.

**Non-binding suggestions for Improvement:**

1. Conduct an investigative review of current advising practices to assure consistency in practice using the Academic Advising Task Force report as a baseline.
2. Consider a review of current Title IX processes to assure all institutional protections are solidly entrenched.
3. In the development of an athletic strategic plan, ensure that athletic facilities are considered for upgrades.
4. Look for ways to engage faculty and academic affairs in conversations with the Student Threat Assessment and Response Team (START).

## CHAPTER 6: FACULTY [standard 10]

### *STANDARD 10: Faculty*

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

**In the team's judgment, the institution appears to meet this standard.**

Based on a review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to the standard:

The ESU faculty and other professionals are appropriately prepared and qualified for the positions they hold, with roles and responsibilities clearly defined, and sufficiently numerous to fulfill those roles appropriately. While the composition of the faculty has changed, with fewer full time but an appropriate number of part-time, all of the faculty are appropriately qualified. The APSCUF Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) outlines criteria for hiring part-time and fulltime faculty. The CBA also details the rights and responsibilities of faculty.

There is clear oversight and planning in the curriculum process. The faculty are assigned that responsibility and have developed a clear plan for the process, following the requirements of the union CBA. The curriculum process is thorough, guaranteeing thoughtful course development and approval. Courses are suggested by individual faculty, approved by the relevant department, the relevant college, the University-Wide Curriculum Committee, reviewed by Academic Council and, ultimately, approved by the Provost. An individual faculty member keeps up with all the details of course changes; on a longer-term basis, however, this process needs to be institutionalized – that is, the curriculum committee, or whoever is ultimately in charge of the implementation of the approved curriculum, needs a dedicated staff member to memorialize these course descriptions, etc.

Faculty and other professionals, are provided appropriate institutional support for the advancement and development of faculty, including teaching, research, scholarship, and service. This is supported through the CBA (article 12), the Faculty Development and Research Committee for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, and the Center for Teaching with Technology. Faculty Development and Research awards are grants up to \$6,500 and mini grants up to \$1,200 to support faculty research and development activities. In 2016 \$70,000 was awarded through 25 grants. While this represents a decline in total dollars from 2012 (\$120,000), the most recent period shows a \$10,000 increase. Given the fiscal constraints on ESU, this is an appropriate commitment. Additionally, department chairs have some discretionary funds (\$100-\$400) to support faculty development and Deans also provide support for workshops and on-site training. However, a recent survey of faculty found they are not satisfied with the level of support for research and scholarship.

Faculty recognition for scholarship, teaching, learning, research, and services is provided through acknowledgement at the Provost's Colloquium and the Distinguished Professor Award. The latter is recommended by a committee of APSCUF members and administrators approved by ESU's president.

ESU procedures for faculty and other professionals, regarding appointment, promotion, tenure, grievance, discipline and dismissal, are based on principles of fairness with due regard for the rights of

all persons. Information is available on the Web, through Human Resources, and is covered by the CBA. Faculty surveys indicate almost unanimous awareness of the tenure and promotion process. The CBA also details the criteria for the appointment, supervision and review of teaching effectiveness of part-time faculty. Recent tenure and promotion processes show a much larger percentage that previously of those going up for promotion were NOT promoted (essentially half). Whatever process is being used, there should be a clearer delineation of requirements for both tenure and promotion. Faculty should never get to the point of presenting themselves for such 'steps' without clear expectation of the outcome.

The CBA presents carefully articulated, equitable, and implemented procedures and criteria for reviewing all individuals who have responsibility for the educational program of the institution. Based on agreements, many faculty are given Alternative Work Assignments (AWA) to serve as directors, implementers and instigators of important educational programs. Not much is left to the discretion of the current administrators.

There is adherence to principles of academic freedom, within the context of institutional mission and according to the CBA. There is one problem, however, students in courses with several sections could, possibly, have to take courses (with many selections) that vary widely from those taken by peers since there is no requirement, or even a suggestion, that multi-sectioned courses should look very much alike. Appropriate assessment should verify the equivalence of such courses.

**Significant accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices:**

1. Maintaining financial support for faculty research and development during a difficult fiscal time.
2. Maintaining positive faculty morale during a difficult fiscal time.
3. The development of a Faculty Mentoring Program by the Goal 2 Strategic Planning Implementation Committee and CETL welcomes new faculty and provides them with important resources as they enter the ESU community.
4. Both the Early Start and Honors programs are accomplishing a lot with minimal resources. These very dedicated faculty should be encouraged and supported as much as possible by the administration.
5. The establishment of the Academic Council of Chairs appears to be an essential ingredient in the excellent communication and collaboration among faculty.

**Non-binding suggestions for Improvement:**

1. Improve and centralize data gathering for all decisions.

**Recommendation:**

1. Review and revise, as necessary, policies regarding retention, tenure and promotion to develop consistency and support across the categories of teaching, scholarship and service. Faculty should not have 'surprises' in retention, tenure and promotion decisions.

## CHAPTER 7: EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS [standards 11 and 13]

### *STANDARD 11: Educational Offerings*

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

**In the team's judgment, the institution appears to meet this standard.**

Based on a review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to the standard:

ESU has educational offerings—formal undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs—congruent with its mission. It offers 55 bachelor's degrees, including Environmental Studies, Athletic Training, Biotechnology, Philosophy and Religious Studies, Public Health, and traditional ones such as History, Sociology, English and Mathematics. Master's degrees number 22, including, Clinical Exercise Physiology, Communication Sciences and Disorders, Management and Leadership in Public Administration, Professional and Digital Media Writing, and predictably Biology, Computer Science, History, and many degrees in Education areas, including Special Education, Professional and Secondary Education, and Education (Early Childhood, Elementary Education & Middle School) and 1 Doctoral program (Ed.D in Educational Leadership and Administration).

Program goals are stated in terms of student learning outcomes. Program names and descriptions are available online; however, where the programs are listed and briefly overviewed, only some of them have explicit statements of what a student can expect to learn while in a specific program. It was difficult to find this information when going to the main ESU website. Some sites led to an appendix of syllabi, with student learning outcomes enumerated there, but some lacked a description of the aims of the particular department or program. Programs having to meet standards for outside accreditation are more likely to provide complete descriptions than others. Faculty have developed 4-year plans for majors. This is a very important accomplishment. However, Student Government representatives indicated in a group meeting that advising quality was variable, resulting in some students reporting that they needed an additional semester to graduate because of a missed requirement.

ESU has mandated that course syllabi incorporate expected learning outcomes and the self-study indicates that they believe 100% of the courses have those. A random set of courses and disciplines shows that, for the most part, this requirement has been met. There is a periodic review of curriculum and faculty seem committed to making assessment part of their everyday work. We found surprisingly little resistance to any of the assessment initiatives. From the presented evidence, it appears that ongoing assessment is used to evaluate current courses/programs and that changes are made, periodically, to improve outcomes. Programs are reviewed every 5 years. The PASSHE board policy and ESU process include templates for this review and the reports are thorough and useful.

There are online and local learning resources, facilities, etc., adequate to support East Stroudsburg's educational programs – however, they are currently organized in several small units – some are



faculty-led, some are led by technologists, librarians, etc. The CETL, CTT, IRC, and the Library are all tasked with supporting faculty in strengthening their teaching skills. There is a lot of overlap by these units. The current move to put them under one umbrella, reporting to the Provost, is an excellent idea so long as all voices are heard.

There is collaboration among professional library faculty and line faculty in relation to information literacy. Assessment of student information literacy is determined through “conversations with classroom faculty,” according to the self-study. It would appear that Information Literacy is a work in progress because the newly SLO IV certified courses will “need to include a component to assess students” information literacy.

The University’s comparison of online and local programs suggest that they are comparable based on SLO’s rather than course based, has been implemented. This situation will require thoughtful monitoring to determine whether the incoming students’ courses are, indeed, equivalent to the ESU courses and whether the students are missing some needed competencies.

East Stroudsburg indicates that it does not offer accelerated programs in terms of MSCHE’s definition of such, according to self-study.

ESU offers a number of degree programs for adult learners, including “study skills and work/life balance resources.” There are degree completion programs for adults. Classes are available online, hybrid and face-to-face—at nights and weekends and at four locations. An administrator is assigned to oversee both Graduate and Extended studies.

A carefully structured honors program exists serving approximately 250 students. Based on the current staffing, it appears that the program deserves more resources and support from the administration especially as the presence of such a program is a very good recruitment tool.

Faculty with credentials appropriate to the graduate curricula are not identified as such. The Provost is quoted in the self-study saying “We expect to hire those faculty with advanced or terminal degrees in their field so as to teach other graduate courses rather than undergraduate...” (p80). The deans and department chairs decide what credentials someone needs to teach graduate courses (p81). Assessment reports are produced yearly by graduate programs.

Students in both graduate and undergraduate programs compliment the teaching ability of their instructors and see that as a very positive aspect of the College.

**Significant accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices:**

1. The Student Research and Creative Activity Symposium is an excellent example of a program that supports both faculty, in their research activities, and students in their higher-level learning.
2. According to the Self-Study, all undergraduate programs have developed four-year course plans for students to use to help them in their course planning.

**Non-binding suggestions for Improvement:**

1. Advisors should continually refer to the four-year plans when working with students so they are focused on a timely graduation.

2. A listed strength (in self-study) is “Students in need of additional educational support are identified in a timely fashion and a comprehensive suite of resources is offered...” The team was given no evidence to support this in the self-study or in the group meetings. The faculty should consider this statement and verify that they, in fact, are doing this. It is a great idea and should definitely be implemented if it is not currently in effect. Students should not have to wait until their GPA drops below 2.0 to get help.
3. According to the self-study, “Policies are in place to assure that educational experiences completed off-campus achieve the same level of academic rigor and are subject to the same curricular oversight as those completed on campus.” We suggest that ongoing assessment be conducted.
4. We support the self-study recommendation as a suggestion to “Expand assessment efforts particularly at the programmatic and unit level, and then use the data to improve the quality of the total educational experience while ensuring alignment with the university’s mission and strategic planning objectives
5. Continue to develop clear SLO’s for Information Literacy and assess their effectiveness within both the General Education curriculum as well as the curricula for majors.

### ***STANDARD 13: RELATED EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES***

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

**In the team’s judgment, the institution appears to meet this standard.**

#### **Basic Skills**

East Stroudsburg identifies students who are not fully prepared for college level Math and English and provides remedial courses and support services for them. For Math, students who don’t meet at least one of the following criteria must take remedial math: A score of 500 or above on the math portion of the SAT, an ACT math subtest score of 20 or above, a PSAA score of Proficient or Advanced, successful completion of a 100-level (or above) transfer math course taken within the past 5 years with a grade of C- or better, an AP or CLEP test that transfers to an ESU math course, or successful completion of MATH 090 with a grade of “S” for Satisfactory. For students who have not taken any of the above tests, they must take an ESU competency exam and score 19 or above. This exam can only be taken three times. Remedial courses are Pass/Fail and do not carry academic degree credit. For English, SAT English scores and/or a student’s high school transcript are evaluated to determine if a student needs to take remedial English. If a student does not have an SAT score they must take an exam in Accuplacer. Since the University is no longer requiring the SAT as an entrance requirement the Accuplacer will be used more in the coming semesters. Tutoring for both remedial Math and English students is available through student peer tutors. Information regarding the University’s Basic or Developmental Skills program/s was not found under “Standard 13” in the institution’s self-study. On-site interviews with various staff members yielded conflicting or no information concerning information regarding the pass/failure and retention rates of remedial students.

#### **Certificate Programs**

East Stroudsburg offers both credit and non-credit bearing certificate programs. Six credit-bearing certificates are offered and align with the University’s mission. The courses are covered by general

tuition if taken as part of an undergraduate degree. The certificates, alone, each cost about \$5,000 in tuition and fees, which is less than the cost of an undergraduate degree at ESU. Support services are available to enrolled students and at the same level as for students enrolled in any program at the University.

### **Experiential Learning**

No data was available regarding credit for any type of experiential learning awarded by the University.

### **Non-credit Offerings**

ESU does not offer non-credit courses.

### **Branch Campuses, Additional Locations, and Other Instructional Sites**

East Stroudsburg has two additional locations and one instructional site. None were identified to be visited as part of the on-campus visit. One additional location, at 701 Market Street, in Philadelphia, is in the process of being phased out as the last cohort there finishes its program. The University provides adequate student support services via Internet/Web access as well as through traditional on-campus offices.

### **Distance Education, Distributed Learning, and Correspondence Education**

ESU has distance/distributed education course offerings. All of ESU's distance offerings have student learning outcomes stated in course syllabi and are identical to the same course offered in other modalities such as face-to-face. Distance courses, like all courses at ESU, are approved through the same curriculum flow process and evaluated during the regular 5-year program review process. Distance offerings are monitored to meet institution-wide standards for quality instruction. ESU requires students in distance courses to use a secure User ID and password for identity verification and to access online courses/coursework. A virtual identity software application is also available for faculty who wish to have their students be proctored virtually during online assessments. An online primer and technical readiness survey is also available to students wishing to take an online course or program. The University offers 3 programs completely online as well as 2 programs in a hybrid method at 50% or more online. ESU is a member of NC-SARA, the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements. Membership will help make compliance with other states much easier regarding students enrolled in online programs who reside in other states. All departments are encouraged to develop distance education courses and programs. In the near future, the administration may require faculty to complete specific training in order to teach online (courses) and has been working with the faculty union to develop guidelines to be completed this year. There is evidence of strategic vision in regards to the University's online program. Distance offerings are offered based on historical data regarding distance enrollment when determining the session and number of sections to be offered in a distance modality. The University has a Center for Teaching with Technology (CTT) that offers webinars regarding its learning management system, Desire2Learn (D2L), and offers face-to-face sessions as well including topics as requested by individual faculty or staff or groups. The CTT is appropriately staffed with a Director, an LMS administrator, a multimedia specialist, and an Instructional Designer. The center is in the process of adding close-captioning to existing faculty recorded lectures. It is not apparent how other aspects of existing online content are being made to meet accessibility standards or if Universal Design is being used in the center's approach to course design. Tutorials covering various aspects of the LMS, D2L, are available to students and faculty on-demand and technical support is offered during normal operating hours and 24/7 for Desire2Learn.

## **Contractual Relationships and Affiliated Providers**

ESU has contractual relationships with affiliated providers. They have a contract with the Chincoteague Bay Field Station, study abroad programs, and ITV courses offered through the state system. The Chincoteague Bay Field station is reviewed by the University's usual credit transfer process.

### **Non-binding suggestions for Improvement:**

1. Standardize the placement plan that identifies Developmental English students.
2. Analyze the pass/failure rate for Developmental Math and English students to help assess the success of the program(s).
3. Develop an intentional plan for the University's distance education program.
4. Incorporate Universal Design standards for ADA accessibility for all content in online learning courses.
5. Disaggregate assessment data by EDU's campus, additional locations, and other instructional sites in order to facilitate comparison of disparate locations.

### **Recommendation:**

1. Use data to determine if basic skills programs are sufficient for student persistence and academic achievement in degree programs and courses.

***STANDARD 12: General Education***

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

**In the team's judgment, the institution appears to meet this standard.**

In Martha Nussbaum's words, a higher education is a cultivation of the whole human being for the functions of citizenship and life generally – some subordinate that cultivation of the whole individual to technical and vocational education, and even when it is liberal, it may not cultivate the whole individual.

Three capacities are essential to the cultivation of humanity. First, critical examination of oneself and one's tradition, meaning no tradition is accepted simply because it is traditional. Second, it means understanding how common aims and needs are differently realized in different circumstances. The third is narrative imagination. This means thinking what it might be like to be in the shoes of another person different from oneself.

Each institution reflects its choices through the educational philosophy of its general education program. The factors incorporated in the program present the public face of the university. East Stroudsburg's new general education program implemented in Fall of 2016 is designed to document, and assess, ESU's Gen Ed Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) which closely align with the school's strategic plan: Students First: Innovate ESU. The primary focus is retention and graduation. The Gen Ed program's student learning outcomes are:

- I. Demonstrate an understanding of their role as citizens of a diverse, global society.
- II. Utilize critical thinking skills.
- III. Communicate orally, in writing, and through other formats.
- IV. Demonstrate information literacy and technological skills.
- V. Employ scientific reasoning and quantitative skills when analyzing the world in which they live.
- VI. Create and/or critique various forms of artistic expression.
- VII. Demonstrate understanding of and apply various models for the healthy development of the whole person.

Incoming freshman are introduced to college life via two channels. One is meeting basic competency in math and English through either testing or course work, as well as participation in a First-Year Experience, using both classroom and service experience. Course work builds on this initial step to meet the competencies described above. One signature feature of ESU's Gen Ed program lies in its

requirements of “healthy development of the whole person”, an unusual feature that reflects the school’s origins as physical education teacher preparation program.

**Significant accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices:**

1. The faculty should be recognized for creating a well-articulated, intentional program reflecting the values of the faculty and campus while attempting to meet the intellectual development of their students.

Assessment is a well-planned part of the new Gen Ed; it uses the defined course SLO and the, Gen Ed, and FYE, are collected and reported according to queries asked. As a result, faculty do not segregate courses according to function, but rather according to learning outcomes and program needs. This simplifies and streamlines tasks for all faculty involved in all parts of the curricula.

2016-17 is the first year of this new program, as a result, there are no evaluations of the classes or the program. This is a very intentional and well-thought out idea, but ESU will need 3-5 years to establish how well this program works.

***STANDARD 14: Assessment of Student Learning***

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

**In the team’s judgment, the institution appears to meet this standard.**

Assessment of student learning demonstrates that, at graduation, or other appropriate points, the institution’s students have knowledge, skills, and competencies consistent with institutional and appropriate education goals.

In the decade since their last MSCHE report, ESU has built a culture of assessment. A substantial portion of this effort has been led by the University Assessment Committee (UAC), a cross-campus body, whose mission was to define assessment on campus. The departmental annual reports using both direct and indirect measures of student performance were the original source for this build up. Those measures were subsequently aligned with student learning outcomes, program level-learning outcomes and institutional-level learning outcomes, (general education). This phase was followed by curricular mapping of programs to courses and departments. Both the UAC and the OIEPA - a site for data warehousing – used their own rubrics to define which departments and programs needed further support to develop assessment instruments.

These initial efforts were compiled in annual reports, and in turn, simplified through a standard reporting form; this conclusion was the birth of a shorthand for discussing course, program and institutional assessment of student learning. This process was both intentional and incremental, resulting in the creation of a language, culture and infrastructure for assessment at ESU.

This organic expansion created a central office to warehouse, retrieve and analyze data. Two years ago, the Office of Assessments and Accreditation became the Office of Institutional Effectiveness,

Planning and Assessment (OIEPA) with four data analysts. Their task is to input, store and retrieve data for all units on campus. However, they do not prioritize the uses of data and leave that task to departments and management.

UAC was the body responsible for bringing together the assessment of the First-Year Experience, freshman placement and the Gen Ed program. As a result, student learning outcomes across all of these courses and programs has shaped a common language for institutional learning goals. The next stage in this process is to apply these ideas to the transfer student population and develop a student awareness and culture for learning outcomes.

**Significant accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices:**

1. The UAC and its members are to be commended for a cross-campus, interdisciplinary and interdivisional, student learning assessment program. It is most remarkable for its inclusion and spirit of goodwill.

**Non-binding suggestions for Improvement:**

1. Develop a student learning plan applicable to the transfer population that can be implemented within the next two to three years.
2. Ensure that the data from all these efforts are carefully reported back to the UAC and the campus.
3. Improve and centralize data gathering from alumni.