The Circle Special Edition

Marist begins Middle States Review Oct. 25

by CAREY ALLABAND

A visiting team of faculty and administrators from 11 colleges and universities in the Northeast will arrive on campus on Sunday, October 25, 1992, to evaluate Marist as part of the Middle States Association’s ten-year reaccreditation process. The primary purpose of the visit is to study the College’s analysis of its own work, as represented in the recently completed institutional self-study. The Middle States team will be on campus through Wednesday, October 28, during which time they will be meeting with faculty, administrators, and students to discuss the self-study and its assessment of the College’s programs and activities.

Based on a report prepared by the team following their visit, the College’s response to the report, the self-study itself, and the team’s recommendations, the Commission on Higher Education will decide on whether Marist should be reaccredited for another ten years.

“There is no doubt that Marist will be accredited again,” according to Dr. Mark Sullivan, executive vice-president of Marist College. “Marist has fully demonstrated in its self-study that it is adhering to the Characteristics of Excellence adopted by Middle States as part of the assessment process.

The team will have reviewed the self-study prior to their visit and determined which areas to focus on during their stay. The team’s primary goal is to examine the academic program, organization, administration, and the teaching process, according to “Design For Excellence, A Handbook For Institutions of Higher Education.”

The team is made up of 11 faculty and administrators from institutions within the Middle States Association region which includes New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Delaware. Dr. David Rubino, President of Gannon University in Erie, Pennsylvania, chairs the team.

The team members are selected in a variety of ways. One way Mid­dle States chooses team members is to match the unique programs of an institution with the backgrounds of visiting team members, according to Sullivan.

The College has been working on its self-study for about two years prior to its publication in September 1992. The self-study was completed under the direction of a Steering Committee headed by Sullivan and Dr. Ed O’Keefe, a professor of psychology at Marist.

There were 18 subcommittees besides the Steering Committee. Each subcommittee represented one of the 17 Characteristics of Excellence utilized by Middle States. An additional committee dealing with Institutional Advancement was also created.

The 18 committees were as follows:

- Mission, Goals and Objectives
- Planned and Resource Allocation
- Program and Curricula
- Outcomes and Institutional Effectiveness
- Admissions
- Student Services
- Faculty
- Organization and Administration
- Planning and Resource Allocation
- Technology and Other Resources
- Information Technology and Other Resources
- Library/Learning Resources
- Philosophy, Integrity, Equity, and Diversity
- External Programs
- Student Services
- Admissions
- Governance and Board of Trustees

Admissions, housed in Greystone, was one of the areas examined in the recent self-study.

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The following is a partial list of the recommendations:

1. Mission, Goals and Objectives
   - The College should explore new and creative approaches to helping families, particularly those in the middle-income range, finance their educational expenses.

2. Planning and Resource Allocation
   - The College should develop a comprehensive financial plan to address the fiscal impact of its expansion in Division II athletics to determine the effect of these increased costs on other institutional needs.

3. Technology and Other Resources
   - The Library's bibliographic instruction program should be broadened to reach all students at the beginning of their major courses.

4. Information Technology and Other Resources
   - Faculty
   - Administration
   - Student Services

5. Library/Learning Resources
   - Faculty
   - Administration
   - Student Services

6. Philosophy, Integrity, Equity, and Diversity
   - The College should work to see that administrative computing needs are met by computer support resources in a timely and cost-effective manner.

7. External Programs
   - The College should address the academic and administrative computing needs, as well as the computer support requirements of the entire college, not just the academic units.

8. Student Services
   - The College should address the academic and administrative computing needs, as well as the computer support requirements of the entire college, not just the academic units.

9. Admissions
   - The College should develop a comprehensive financial plan to address the fiscal impact of its expansion in Division II athletics to determine the effect of these increased costs on other institutional needs.

10. Governance and Board of Trustees
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12. Technology and Other Resources
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Introduction

Since the last Middle States Self-Study in 1981, Marist has experienced extraordinary growth in enrollment, facilities, academic breadth, and stature. Although the college was established in 1929 in response to the massive influx of young men who wished to serve as co-chairs of the Study.

Outcomes subcommittees; and at an open meeting on the Self-Study draft document in May 1992.

Subsequent to the latter meeting, the draft was reviewed, critiqued, and revised by the Steering Committee in July 1992. The Marist Self-Study Report, therefore, is the Steering Committee's synthesis of a two-year community-wide pro-analytical process.

Major Findings

As would be expected, many findings on the strengths and weaknesses of the College emerged from this comprehensive Self-Study. The Self-Study concluded that while the Strategic Plan has served as a good foundation for this analysis and has widespread support throughout the College, its specific objectives need to be reviewed annually and adjustments made in response to changing external and internal conditions. Members of the community need to be continually encouraged to keep the mission and goals of the College in focus as revisions to the Strategic Plan and departmental operating plans are proposed.

The academic direction and functioning of the College reflect the Core/Liberal Studies Program. The Steeble Committee on Self-Study with particular concerns being expressed relative to the following areas: Core/Liberal Studies Program - Institutional support for individual initiatives - Resource allocation for Graduate Education - Programming for cultural diversity - External academic programs - Support services, particularly need to increase the number of full-time faculty (particularly women and minorities) and support personnel to serve this more cultural- ly and academically diverse student body. The library and residence hall, the availability and upgrading of equipment and facilities, the need for additional faculty, and the increased diversion of financial resources for student aid to counter state cutbacks ($2 million in the past two years), a major challenge to the College will be to maintain and open the possibility of knowledge, and on the other hand, a response to the deeper yearnings of the human spirit. It is an institution that contradicts the odds and demonstrates the unbeatable combination of visionary leadership and dedicated faculty.

Financial Scene

Financially, the College appears to be in good shape for the present — but potential problems have already been mentioned. Consideration has been expressed regarding the allocation of resources in accordance with academic priorities, particularly on academic matters, and with the decision-making processes. The Board of Trustees self-evaluation. It is also clear that the Strategic Plan and departmental operating plans are proposed.

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The Self-Study suggested more improvements for the college library.