TOWARD 2000:
A STRATEGIC PLAN
FOR SANGAMON STATE UNIVERSITY

Phase One

March, 1992
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Toward 2000: A Strategic Plan for Sangamon State University

Phase One

Preface on Process

In December, 1989, the Board of Regents required the Regency universities to undertake strategic planning and to share the results of this activity with the Board. Although the Chancellor's Report established a general framework within which campus planning should proceed, each university was given considerable latitude in developing its own approach to the common task.

At Sangamon State, President Durward Long initiated the process in early 1990 by appointing the SSU 2000 Committee. While this group was not charged with the task of strategic planning, it was asked to help create a campus climate conducive to such activity. Toward this end, the committee sponsored four colloquia in 1990-91 on broad issues of continuing relevance to the university: innovation and quality, public affairs, teaching and learning, and undergraduate and graduate education. Presentations by resource persons—including Alison Bernstein (associate dean of faculty, Princeton University), Frank Newman (president, Education Commission of the States), and Curtis McCray (president, California State University, Long Beach)—preceded small-group discussions attended in each case by from one-third to two-thirds of the full-time faculty.

In June, 1990, President Long presented a preliminary scan of Sangamon State's environment to the Board of Regents. Entitled "Sangamon State University at Twenty and A Look Ahead," this document offered both a retrospective and prospective demographic analysis of the eleven-county region from which over 80% of its students have historically come.

In February, 1991, Acting President Wayne Penn requested that the Faculty, Staff, and Student Senates, the SSU Alumni Association, and the SSU Foundation provide representatives to a Strategic Planning Task Force (SPTF), which would build upon these previous developments and fashion a broadly consultative process resulting in a strategic plan for presentation to the campus and the Board in the spring of 1992. Securing the cooperation of the Senates at the outset helped assure that SPTF membership adequately reflected various institutional interests and that appropriate communication with governance occurred as the SPTF carried out its work.

On February 8, 1991, the Faculty Senate asked its Long Range Academic Planning (LRAP) Committee to nominate one faculty member from each of the university’s four schools to serve on the SPTF. On February 22nd, the Senate confirmed LRAP’s nominees: Alfred Ackley, Business and Management; Lynn Pardie, Health and Human Services; Marcellus Leonard, Liberal Arts and Sciences; and John Collins, Public Affairs and Administration. In addition, to assure appropriate liaison between the SPTF and LRAP, a co-chair of LRAP was asked to serve on the SPTF ex officio, a role played by Peg Boudreau through the summer of 1991 and then by John Collins. While acknowledging the need for adequate interface between the two groups, the SPTF liaison to LRAP clarified three key differences between their respective planning purposes: strategic planning is institutional, not confined to the division of Academic Affairs; a strategic plan takes a longer-term perspective (5-8 years) than the Long Range Academic Plan (1-5 years); and a strategic plan emphasizes the institution’s operating milieu more heavily than the Long Range Academic Plan.

On February 12th the Staff Senate selected Betty Harryman and Carol Moore as its SPTF representatives. On February 24th the Student Senate named Bill Schureman as the graduate representative and Charles Myart as the undergraduate representative to the SPTF. Subsequently, Teresa Haley-Washington, SSU’s Student Regent, was also appointed as an ex officio SPTF member.

Given strategic planning’s emphasis on environmental assessment, SPTF membership also needed to reflect important external constituencies. State Representative Karen Hasara, a graduate of SSU’s Psychology and Legal Studies Programs, was chosen as SPTF representative by the Alumni Association Board. In order to balance this public sector perspective, Acting President Penn named Mark Ferguson, president of Firstbank of Illinois, as the SPTF representative of the SSU Foundation.
Rounding out the SPTF membership were administrative appointments by Acting President Penn: Homer Butler, dean and later vice-president of student services; Carl Long, vice president for business and administrative services; Nancy Ford, acting (later associate) vice president for academic affairs; Judy Everson, special assistant to the president; and Brian Alley, dean of library services. When Dr. Naomi B. Lynn became president in July, 1991, she asked Dr. Penn as VPAA to join the SPTF as well, thus completing its membership at eighteen.

At its organizational meeting on March 7th, the SPTF decided to secure the services of a consultant in designing and implementing a process suitable for Sangamon State. Dr. Robert Shirley, president of the University of Southern Colorado, met with the SPTF on April 15th to assist in formulating the process. At an open forum on April 16th, Dr. Shirley and the SPTF explained the process and the timeline for its completion. Members of the campus community were assured that SPTF meetings would be announced in advance and open to the public, that the SPTF would publish periodic newsletters sharing the results of its work, and that the SPTF would regularly invite feedback via written submissions or oral comments at special sessions scheduled for this purpose. On May 15, 1991, Acting President Penn summarized the strategic planning effort underway at SSU for the Board.

For the remainder of the calendar year the SPTF gathered input from various sources. Members heard presentations by Charles Riddle, CEO of the United Way of Sangamon County, on national and regional trends of the 1990s; Jim Stuart, associate VPAA, on preparation of the Long Range Academic Plan; Michael Ayers, executive associate to the president, on demographic trends; David O'Gorman, professor of business administration, on models of strategic planning; John Huther, retired deputy director of fiscal affairs for the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE), and Dick Kolhauser, visiting research professor and former deputy director of the Bureau of the Budget, on Illinois higher education funding patterns; David Strand, provost at Illinois State University, on strategic planning at ISU; Roderick Groves and Charles Morris, chancellor and vice chancellor for academic affairs, Board of Regents; and Robert Walhous and Douglass Day, executive deputy director and associate director for academic affairs, IBHE. The SPTF also reviewed the previous institutional mission and scope statements, investigated the circumstances of other upper-division institutions throughout the country, analyzed the public affairs activities of postsecondary institutions located in other state capitals around the nation, and studied the most recent strategic plans of such relevant institutions as Lincoln Land Community College, Illinois Central College, Illinois State University, Northern Illinois University and Southern Illinois University at Carbondale.

In an effort to broaden campus and community participation in the planning process, the SPTF engaged in four major consultative activities over the summer and fall: identification of institutional strengths and weaknesses, solicitation of suggestions from selected community groups, expansion of environmental scanning efforts, and assessment of campus attitudes and values. Each activity succeeded in widening involvement in the process as well as generating useful material. Twenty-four faculty and staff members were asked, on the basis of their positions within the university, to attend two workshops which produced consensus on SSU's particular strengths and weaknesses. Twenty-six community members served on the artistic/cultural, education, minority, private sector, and public sector advisory groups, each chaired by an SSU administrator not on the SPTF. Twenty faculty and staff members as well as four community representatives contributed to scans of the university's environment along economic/technical, educational/competitive, political/legal, and social/demographic lines. Finally, the Educational Testing Service's Institutional Goals Inventory was completed by 80 full time faculty, 116 staff members, 37 administrators, and a representative sample of 316 undergraduate and 175 graduate students. Administration of the survey and analysis of the results were overseen by a committee of six faculty and staff.

The Task Force Update summarized the results of each of these activities and invited campus feedback. Newsletter #1 described the overall strategic planning process. Newsletter #2 itemized the institutional strengths and weaknesses; #3 and #7 discussed the Institutional Goals Inventory; #4 reviewed the suggestions of the community advisory committees; #5 and #6 reported the conclusions of the scanning groups. Copies of these newsletters are attached as Appendices A-G. In all, dozens of individuals attended at least one of the special forums scheduled after each newsletter's publication or submitted written comments to the SPTF. On December 9-10, 1991, Dr. Shirley returned to SSU and helped the
SPTEF synthesize these various streams of input. President Lynn, who had attended the first workshop on institutional strengths and weaknesses in June and who had participated in several other SPTEF activities during her first six months in office, shared her perspective with the consultant and the committee during both of these sessions.

On January 31, 1992, copies of the first draft of the plan were sent to all full-time faculty and staff as well as to Student Senators and to community members of the Strategic Planning Advisory Committee and the environmental scanning groups. In addition to soliciting their written comments, SPTEF members scheduled discussions with the three Senates, LRAP, and personnel in the four Schools. Four open meetings were also held on campus to gather further feedback, and members of the SPACs and scanning groups were invited to a working luncheon where the draft was reviewed. Therefore this document reflects suggestions made by many members of the internal and external communities.

Phase One of the strategic planning process at SSU will be completed when this document is presented at the March 18-19 meeting of the Board of Regents. Phase Two, consisting of a comprehensive review of the university’s current programs and activities, will begin shortly thereafter and will occur within the general framework established here. President Lynn is consulting with members of the SPTEF and representatives of university governance to develop an appropriate procedure and timeline for implementation of this critical stage in the planning process.

**Premises for Planning and Structure for Report**

As Sangamon State enters its third decade of service to Springfield and Illinois, and as it anticipates a period of change and challenge throughout the 1990s, the university is well situated to take stock of where it has been and of where it would like to be by the year 2000. This strategic plan, the first phase of an ambitious two-year effort, is organized to reflect the following premises.

First, strategic planning must begin with an appreciation of the institution’s origins. Prospects for the future should be grounded in respect for lessons from the past. Furthermore, strategic planning must build upon and strengthen the university’s mission—those fundamental purposes it seeks to advance and special emphases that shape its character. Therefore, under Section I readers will find an overview of the university’s evolution, a consideration of its individual mandates in relation to the institution’s overall mission, along with suggested refinements, and a proposal for two unifying themes to pursue as priorities throughout the remainder of the decade.

Second, strategic planning needs to recognize that, although Sangamon State has many constituencies, as an institution of higher learning it exists first and foremost to serve its students. In order to remain viable in this primary role, it must determine how best to meet their needs with the available resources. Therefore, in Section II readers will find a proposal regarding the student body’s optimal overall size and mix, along with recommendations for achieving this desired clientele.

Third, in an increasingly competitive environment, strategic planning should help position the university to better understand its comparative strengths and limitations in order to exploit the former while considering areas which warrant strengthening. Therefore, in Section III readers will find a list of institutional strengths which Sangamon State either now possesses or could reasonably cultivate in the near future which would enhance its effectiveness in the academic marketplace.

Fourth, as a result of the preceding analysis, strategic planning should produce a manageable set of focused goals toward which the university can commit itself and its resources. Therefore, in Section IV readers will find a list of strategic goals which Sangamon State should endorse and pursue as part of a more coherent and compelling institutional vision of the university’s future.

Finally, strategic planning should suggest the principles and process for assuring the desired range of programs and services by which the university can accomplish its mission and address its clients’ various needs. Therefore, in Section V readers will find a suggested framework and procedure for conducting this analysis in 1992 during the second phase of the strategic planning activity.
I. Origins, Mission, and Themes

Origins

Legislation authorizing creation of Sangamon State University was approved by the Illinois General Assembly on May 20, 1969, and signed by Governor Richard Ogilvie on June 20, 1969. This action culminated a decade-long effort to establish a university in Springfield, then one of the largest state capitals without such an institution. In 1969 civic leaders had formed the Springfield Committee for Higher Education, which campaigned for legislative approval of a local university. Subsequently, the Committee for Higher Education in Central Illinois raised funds to purchase land for Sangamon State's campus southeast of downtown.

Responding not only to the aspirations of area residents but also to the needs of state government and the expansion of Illinois' community college system, the IBHE, in its Master Plan Phase II (December, 1966) and Report on the New Senior Institutions (February, 1968), recommended creation of a new public university in the capital. It was envisioned as regional in scope, serving central Illinois as a commuter campus, and defined as upper-division in character, providing the capstone experience for community college transfers. It would also offer Master's degrees in selected fields, but it would emphasize the dissemination and application, rather than the discovery, of knowledge. It would provide liberal education for public servants and other professionals in order to enhance their future flexibility as well as mobility.

In July, 1969, Robert C. Spencer became the founding president of SSU and oversaw recruitment of 50 charter faculty as well as an appropriate array of support staff. The university began delivering instruction in September, 1970, serving over 800 students in interim facilities on the east side of a 600-acre campus. In 1970-71 SSU was authorized to award Bachelor's and Master's degrees in eight academic disciplines, four interdisciplinary areas, and an individualized program of study as well as graduate degrees in three professional fields.

In the fall of 1991, under the leadership of Dr. Naomi B. Lynn, fourth president of the university, Sangamon State's 175 full-time faculty—supported by 388 full-time staff members—offered coursework leading to degrees in 23 undergraduate and 23 graduate fields to over 4,500 students on the main campus, at the downtown center, and in Peoria as well as Decatur. Three permanent buildings now occupy the west side of the campus: the Norris L. Brookens Library, opened in 1975; the Public Affairs Center, opened in 1980; and the Health and Sciences Building, opened in 1992.

Over the past two decades Sangamon State's basic nature and orientation have remained fairly stable, given the volatility of higher education generally during this period as well as the challenges presented by the university's particular circumstances. SSU continues to serve primarily a commuting clientele from central Illinois, but efforts to fulfill its statewide mandates—in public affairs, for example—and to attract a more culturally diversified student body have led to the development of on-campus housing which will hold a total of 425 by the fall of 1992. Although it represents only a small percentage of the student body, this growing residential population is having a major impact on the institution. As the number of full-time and residential students on campus rises and as the average student age declines, Sangamon State must offer more day-time courses and more varied extracurricular activities, while also addressing the needs of the part-time adult commuters who have been the university's dominant clientele. The university still attracts community college transfers, but as other state schools increasingly compete for transfer students, Sangamon State's original role as Illinois' downstate capstone institution is no longer unique. The university continues to be upper-division and lower-level graduate in focus, but recently there has been discussion both on and off campus about whether Sangamon State should add the lower division to its baccalaureate programs. Furthermore, the university's first proposed doctorate, in public affairs, is pending before the IBHE. Although instruction and applied research have been privileged over basic research at SSU, internal and external concerns about educational quality—particularly at the graduate level—have fueled a growing, but by no means universal, emphasis on faculty scholarship, broadly defined. Finally, whereas SSU originally offered only B.A. and M.A. degrees, student and workforce demands have led to the development of several more specialized degree programs.
Fundamental Purposes

Predictably, just as the university's basic character has remained essentially intact thus far, so have its fundamental purposes, as reflected in the mission and scope statements of the annual Long Range Academic Plans. However, certain discernable shifts in approach and emphasis are also instructive, since they illustrate institutional responses to change, whether internal or external, and provide a historical context for reviewing SSU's current mission statement in conjunction with strategic planning. A refined understanding of—and renewed commitment to—its mission could help Sangamon State both on and off campus, especially in an era of growing competition for scarce resources and greater demands for accountability of public institutions.

In 1970 the university identified four specific objectives, all subsumed under the mandate to be a "truly pioneering segment" of higher education: to make good teaching the standard by which the institution was judged; to emphasize liberal learning in all academic programs, including those with a professional orientation; to provide the capstone to lower-division education; and to be a public affairs university where all members of the campus community engaged the significant issues of the times. During the intervening years, there have been recurring references to all of these objectives, but changes in their interpretation and comparative weight warrant comment as well.

Whereas innovation was SSU's overarching mandate in 1970, excellence in teaching has held this position of primacy among stated objectives since 1986, when the mission and scope statement stabilized for the last time. This change may reflect the university's chronic problems in defining innovation, which as early as 1973 had proven to be "easily the most difficult" goal to honor in practice. It may also indicate the extent to which certain novel aspects of SSU's original design were either discontinued internally (part of the high risk associated with experimentation) or, if maintained here, replicated elsewhere, thereby making institutional claims to be innovative harder to sustain credibly as the university aged. Finally, it may suggest that innovation became a less fashionable concept in higher education, giving way to concerns for quality and accountability against which it was often juxtaposed, not always fairly. While it lost its original preeminence, and while Sangamon State has not aspired to be "an innovative university" since the early 1980s, the term still appears in the institutional objective of providing innovative responses to learners' needs. Paralleling its decline in the mission statement, innovation has also suffered organizationally and budgetarily from diminishing visibility and support.

Excellence in teaching was SSU's number one stated objective in all but three years between 1970 and 1986 (in those exceptional cases it ranked second after public affairs). For the past six years the university has described excellence in teaching as central to accomplishment of its other objectives. In light of this repeated emphasis on the high value Sangamon State attaches to nurturing and recognizing good teaching, it is important to ask whether the university has adequately defined what constitutes excellence in teaching and whether the allocation of institutional resources has been consonant with achieving this goal upon which the success of all else depends.

Although SSU has consistently listed public affairs as a major focus, its relative importance has also fluctuated dramatically. Initially, Sangamon State called itself "a public affairs university" and explicitly expected this perspective to pervade the institution. However, SSU gradually surrendered its early notion that all faculty and programs must manifest this commitment when applying such a standard proved increasingly impractical. Indeed, by 1986 Sangamon State asserted for the first time that it should no longer be regarded as a public affairs university, rather as a university with a public affairs emphasis. This distinction was more than semantic, for it simultaneously signalled the university's aspiration to a more comprehensive educational status and recognized the tendency toward concentrating public affairs activities within certain segments of the institution's structure and curriculum.

In 1980 two interesting trends surfaced in the mission and scope statements. First, the issue of educational quality acquired a new urgency, reflecting not only internal concerns based on a decade of experience but also external criticisms about uneven standards at SSU. Second, the university's capstone role and emphasis on blending the liberal arts with professional studies vanished temporarily as stated institutional objectives. However, the former reappeared later in the decade, as SSU began addressing a period of declining enrollments. The latter also re-emerged, partially in response to tensions arising from
older liberal arts programs on campus faced with increasing competition for students and resources from newer professionally oriented programs, but also stimulated by national debate over the meaning of the undergraduate experience.

The opening paragraph of the 1992 Long Range Academic Plan—unchanged since 1986—reads: "... [SSU] is charged with the specialized mission of educating its students and others in public affairs; developing effective articulation with Illinois community colleges and their students; offering strong liberal arts and sciences and professional studies instruction with integrative interaction between liberal and professional studies; and providing innovative responses appropriate to serving the needs of new groups of students entering and returning to collegiate studies. The institution has placed excellence in teaching at the heart of delivering these missions." Considering these stated objectives in reverse order because of teaching’s centrality to all the rest, the SPTF reached the following conclusions.

First, we reaffirm the identification of Sangamon State as a university where teaching remains the central purpose and where excellence in teaching continues as the overriding goal. However, we believe that while teaching is still the most important activity of this university, it is by no means the sole one, any more than public affairs might once have been to some. Just as teaching and public affairs have often been arbitrarily juxtaposed to their mutual disadvantage here, so have teaching and research. In part this latter distinction arose from the explicit limitations imposed on Sangamon State at the time of its conception, although it also reflects a reaction against the familiar publish or perish syndrome in higher education. Whatever its sources, this historic antipathy toward scholarship has not only restricted faculty mobility but also raised questions about the viability of the university’s extensive graduate enterprise. At this point in our history, as SSU’s first proposed doctorate awaits IDEE action, it seems important to acknowledge that teaching and research need not be mutually exclusive here, but can ideally be mutually reinforcing. Since teaching draws on an expanding fund of knowledge, professors have an obligation not only to remain current in their fields but also to enhance these fields as scholars in various ways. While SSU should not aspire to be a research institution by national norms, it should foster scholarship that enhances the educational process and enriches the classroom experience. Furthermore, given its centrality to the mission, excellence in teaching should be a goal toward which the university pays more than the present lip service. Because it is no longer sufficient merely to claim that this is SSU’s top priority, the SPTF will propose as its first strategic objective creation of a campus center to support the development both of faculty as teachers, advisers, and scholars and of students as lifelong learners.

Second, we believe that SSU’s stated commitment to educational innovation should be understood not as a free-standing mandate to be pursued for its own sake but rather as an approach supportive of other institutional aims. What has made Sangamon State most distinctive has not been its quest for innovation in the abstract but rather its attempt to translate the other elements of its mission into effective practice. We agree with the university’s founders that this mission remains sufficiently complex and demanding that to achieve it will require institutional creativity of the first order. In other words, innovation is more properly understood not as an end in itself but as a means toward other ends that are less inherently elusive. Certainly, as SSU matures it should not achieve institutional stability through rigidity. At both the individual and the institutional level, the changes and challenges ahead will continue to require SSU to question the given and to consider the new as well as the different. But the gap between Sangamon State’s promise and performance as a self-proclaimed innovator in higher education has sufficiently widened that the rhetoric seems easier to change than the reality at this point. The institution’s past practice and present resources do not suggest the likelihood of achieving either the internal momentum or the external validation necessary for successful pursuit of this moving target. In order to consolidate its gains to date, SSU might better commit itself to evaluating the effectiveness of innovations already in place here and sharing the results with the wider educational community.

Third, we sense that the university’s ability to make further progress in integrating liberal and professional studies within its curriculum as well as the on-going viability of its traditional capstone role both hinge in large measure on resolution of the recent debate over continuation or change in Sangamon State’s upper-division status. Operating on the assumption that graduate education is, by definition, more specialized than undergraduate education, and that SSU’s ability to integrate liberal and professional perspectives at the undergraduate level is restricted by its upper-division status, the SPTF
has asked whether a change in this status seemed desirable and, if so, whether it seemed feasible. Given the troubled history of many senior institutions created at about the same time as SSU, it appears that, overall, being upper-division has proven more of a disadvantage than an advantage to such schools. They have faced many similar difficulties, such as their lack of competitiveness in the market for non-placebound students, their inability to control lower-division coursework so as to guarantee a coherent general education for their students, their higher cost because smaller advanced classes cannot be underwritten by larger beginning sections, and their reduced school spirit and alumni identification since most students are part-time commuters rather than full-time residents. Such generic problems have also posed serious challenges to SSU. Furthermore, these problems have been exacerbated since the capstone function for which the university was partly created has been effectively undermined by demographic trends making community college transfers more attractive recruits for four-year institutions.

Despite these difficulties, however, SSU faculty and staff have built good working relationships with many community colleges in the state and have collaborated with their counterparts in addressing some of the aforementioned problems. Additionally, many SSU faculty enjoy teaching adult learners who enrich the classroom with life experience, and some of these faculty fear that the campus climate would be changed for the worse by an influx of younger students. Some faculty also express reluctance to surrender the opportunity to teach advanced courses for the necessity of retraining to offer introductory coursework. Perhaps for these reasons, sentiment on campus seems as divided on the desirability of imminent change as it does off campus.

This raises the related question of whether such change would be possible, even if SSU strongly sought it. We concluded that, preferable though conversion is for the university’s long-term prospects and inevitable though it appears in light of national trends, it is neither politically nor fiscally feasible for SSU to pursue this option aggressively at the present. Many of the factors which originally restricted the university’s status remain in force. In other states where conversions of upper-division universities have occurred, community and legislative pressure—fueled by expanding populations and robust economies—has helped to overcome the natural resistance of competing institutions in the area which feel threatened by the proposed change. In the near future, given Illinois’ fiscal woes, such pressure seems unlikely to build. When conditions change, SSU should be prepared to respond. In the meantime, the institution should continue to collect relevant data and to explore both the advantages and disadvantages of conversion.

The SPTF applauds the university’s recent efforts to integrate liberal and professional studies in its baccalaureate offerings despite the limitations imposed by its upper-division status. These efforts include revision of undergraduate requirements to include a choice among Liberal Studies Colloquia, Public Affairs Colloquia, and Applied Study; implementation of minors; and support of projects aimed at enhancing students’ awareness of cultural diversity. However, there remains one part of the upper-division curriculum at SSU where meaningful progress is not only possible but essential: strengthening students’ critical thinking and communication skills. Local employers in both the public and the private sectors echoed campus concerns that our graduates, like those of other postsecondary institutions, need stronger analytic and expressive skills to be competitive in the workforce. Developing these skills is too fundamental a task for any single course, program, or service unit; it must become an institutional commitment. Later we will suggest that, building upon the assessment project already underway on campus as well as the proposed creation of the Center on Teaching and Learning, SSU designate enhancement of students’ critical thinking and communication skills as one of its potential comparative advantages.

The capstone role, though no longer unique to SSU among downstate public universities, remains important. Since so many of our undergraduates have always come from community colleges, we have both a longer history of addressing their educational needs and a greater stake in doing so more effectively. Here SSU can exert greater leadership, especially with community college colleagues but also with counterparts at other institutions now serving transfers in larger numbers.

We also endorse Sangamon State’s movement over the past half decade toward self-identification as a university with a public affairs emphasis rather than as a public affairs university. Since its founding, SSU has conducted a continuing dialogue over how narrowly or broadly to interpret
public affairs. We define SSU’s public affairs emphasis to involve the application of faculty and staff members’ professional expertise to the solution of societal problems as well as the education of students as citizens capable of understanding and confronting such problems. But even the most generous conceptualization of the term cannot offer a framework capable of supporting adequately all of the roles which this university must play. Because we recognize these multiple functions, we do not urge a return to the diffusion model of the early years, where everyone in general but no one in particular was responsible for the university’s public affairs activity. Much of our current reputation in public affairs has resulted from an increasing concentration of resources dedicated to conducting high-quality applied research, public service training, and public affairs education. Indeed, because public affairs is now widely regarded as an institutional strength, it may be tempting to rest on our laurels in this regard rather than building upon them. But as we will argue, sole responsibility for public affairs activity should not rest with the Institute for Public Affairs. If SSU revitalizes the public affairs mandate by encouraging both wider involvement across the university and closer connections to the community beyond the campus, it can function as one of the institution’s unifying themes during the decade. There has also been a healthy tension in the institution between those who satisfy their public affairs commitment by working within the status quo and those who define their public affairs obligation as critiquing the establishment. This continuing dialogue should never be foreclosed. There must be room within the academy for both perspectives when responsibly applied.

Finally, we offer the following as SSU’s new mission statement: As a comprehensive university, Sangamon State has as its primary mission providing excellence in teaching. SSU strives to produce an educational environment where students can acquire (1) a solid foundation for lifelong learning, (2) a keen appreciation of intellectual and aesthetic achievements, (3) an enhanced capacity for critical thinking and oral as well as written communication, (4) a practical preparation for pursuing fulfilling careers, (5) a sound basis for informed and concerned citizenship, and (6) a productive commitment to improving their world. SSU emphasizes public affairs instruction, research, and service carried out through community partnerships which contribute to social progress, governmental effectiveness, educational excellence, and economic development. SSU is committed to addressing the needs of both traditional and non-traditional learners and reflecting cultural diversity in both the curriculum and the university community. Sangamon State encourages innovative approaches appropriate to fulfilling these institutional aims.

Unifying Themes

In the first SSU 2000 Colloquium on September 28, 1990, Alison Bernstein, former Associate Dean for Innovative and Experimental Studies at Sangamon State, warned the university against becoming too internally referenced because of its unique nature and troubled history. Instead, she urged SSU to re-energize its public affairs commitment and re-assert its ties to the surrounding community by engaging in applied research and public service activities designed to enhance the quality of life in this area.

A year later, in her first convocation address on October 25, 1991, Dr. Lynn sounded the theme of her presidency, one consistent with the earlier message of Dr. Bernstein. That theme can be summarized in the concept of SSU evolving into an interactive university, drawing from and contributing to its immediate environment in an on-going and mutually rewarding partnership.

We believe that renewal of the university’s commitment to public affairs and cultivation of appropriate partnerships with the community can help to focus institutional energy in a constructive and beneficial way for all concerned. In many ways this is an ideal time to encourage the convergence of internal resources and external opportunities. For one thing, strategic planning has given SSU a clearer sense of its own strengths as well as a better picture of how the community might draw on these. For another, the decline in state support for higher education is forcing Sangamon State, like other public universities in Illinois, to seek alternative sources of funding, including contributions by local individuals and institutions.

As a unifying theme, public affairs has the capacity to cut across the central functions of this—or any—university: instruction, research, and service. It also allows SSU to draw upon an existing resource base and an established track record, while at the same time it offers the university
an opportunity to broaden its approach to public affairs, thereby widening its applicability on and off campus. Because of SSU’s location in the capital, there has been a natural tendency for the university to emphasize public affairs in relation to state government. We expect this emphasis to continue. However, as more responsibility falls onto local government and as the problems localities face grow more complex, communities in our service region may increasingly require SSU’s assistance. Since external funding may not be available for many worthwhile community projects, an internally underwritten competitive grants program could provide peer review for such proposals and modest support for the best of them. Wherever possible, public affairs research and service projects should involve appropriate learning opportunities for students, in Public Affairs Colloquia or graduate assistantships, for example. Furthermore, the products of these activities should be more widely shared with the public via open forums, media presentations, publications, or the like. In this way, the university can contribute to civic education beyond the boundaries of its classrooms.

In developing partnerships with the various communities and institutions in its service region, Sangamon State should look beyond connections with state and local government, pivotal though these may be. SSU needs to strengthen its outreach to the educational sector, from area school districts whose teachers it often trains and certifies, to community colleges whose transfer students it frequently serves, to other colleges and universities with which it might explore or expand consortial arrangements. Sangamon State ought to establish more systematic relations with the private sector, particularly the local banking, insurance, health, and information industries which employ many of its clients. SSU should also develop expertise in assisting the burgeoning not-for-profit sector as it fills the gaps between governmental units and the private sector in meeting societal needs. SSU should forge closer ties with the various minority communities of Springfield. Area arts organizations have reminded Sangamon State of the university’s special duty to enrich the community’s cultural life, an obligation the institution has yet to discharge according to expectations. It may not be possible to pursue all of these potential partnerships simultaneously, given existing limits on institutional resources, nor are all of these proposed linkages likely to prove equally productive. Nevertheless, the overall advantages far outweigh the disadvantages in our view if Sangamon State is serious about redefining itself as an interactive university in the 1990s. We will elaborate on the pursuit of such partnerships in Part IV E of this plan.

II. Clientele

The university serve many types of clients, including those who attend its cultural events, continuing education activities, and training sessions. However, Sangamon State’s most important clients are its students. Issues concerning Sangamon State’s student body have vexed the university from the outset, along several different dimensions. First and foremost has been the question of SSU’s proper size in relation to external expectations and internal resources. Second, related to this consideration has been continuing concern about the kinds of students SSU attracts, both the mix they represent and the support they require to pursue their education. Third and finally, there is the on-going discussion of the role that off-campus offerings play in the university’s overall enrollment picture.

First, in terms of the question of institutional size, unrealistic enrollment projections haunted the university in its early years, just as they did at many other upper-division institutions. As a result, SSU’s primary problem in the past was to attract enough students that it could avoid IBHE decrements to its base because of its inordinate cost on the one hand or takeover by a larger university on the other hand. After a dangerous dip in the early to mid-1980s, enrollments have risen modestly but steadily, eliminating the problem of decrements and the prospect of takeover, at least for the present. While this has been encouraging, there remains the unanswered question of how large Sangamon State is ultimately expected to become. Arrival at a target figure, whether internally or externally derived, might relieve the ambiguity but also doom the university to relive that period when it was always on the defensive for failing to meet the stated goal.

For these and other reasons, we believe that institutional interests are better served now by pursuing modest, controlled enrollment growth while concentrating on the mix and quality of students Sangamon State wants. We support the maintenance of an appropriate balance between graduate and undergraduate programs as well as students at the university, and we urge that future new
degree proposals remain sensitive to the institutional tradition of approximate parity between these two realms of study. Furthermore, we believe that at both the undergraduate and graduate levels Sangamon State should retain a healthy mix of liberal arts and sciences and professional programs. Finally, we reaffirm the university’s expressed commitment to the goal of reflecting cultural diversity in the composition of its faculty, staff, and student body as well as in its curriculum. Sangamon State must respond constructively to the demographic changes of our nation and our world. As minority populations increase, educational institutions must anticipate and address the needs of these students. In addition, all students in our pluralistic society need greater awareness of the cultural diversity inherent in the U.S. as well as the global village. SSU’s problem at present is to determine how many and what kinds of students it can properly serve within these parameters when enrollment increases such as it has lately experienced do not produce corresponding revenue increases. This situation raises several concerns.

One such concern has to do with class size. As an upper-division and graduate university, Sangamon State has been designed with relatively small classes in mind. Since there are no large freshman sections to accommodate, classrooms on campus tend to be seminar-sized, and no vast lecture halls have been built. In recruitment of students and faculty, SSU has emphasized its tradition of individualized instruction and personalized advising. Faculty have been encouraged to stress active rather than passive modes of learning and to provide feedback on numerous written assignments in every course. This tradition is proving difficult to sustain in the present environment. If SSU had considerable surplus capacity a decade ago, it no longer does. Enrollments have grown by more than a third over this period, but the size of the full-time faculty has remained fairly constant at around 175. Furthermore, several popular programs remain chronically oversubscribed despite internal reallocation to meet their needs, and some historically smaller programs now find themselves serving more students with fewer faculty.

A second and related issue concerns the overall quality of the students Sangamon State attracts and the demands they make on the system in pursuing their degrees. As a largely commuter institution, SSU has had to accept the fact that for most of its students it is the school of convenience rather than choice. In addition, the university has had to contend with the reality of being an open admissions institution at the undergraduate level as well as with the perception that it was also open admissions at the graduate level and that it has sometimes been open exit at both levels. The university has made remarkable progress in addressing these concerns at the graduate level, but the issue of quality control has proven more problematic at the undergraduate level thus far. While faculty remain committed to providing accessible and affordable educational opportunity to students who may lack other options, and particularly to maintaining a culturally diverse clientele, they also voice growing frustration with the inadequate preparation of many entering students and the high cost as well as professional challenge of providing remediation under whatever guise.

Third and finally, Sangamon State faces the question of whether to maintain, expand, or reduce its off-campus offerings. Currently the baccalaureate degree is offered in Management, Nursing, and Social Justice Professions through Illinois Central College and the University of Illinois Medical Center in Peoria, and coursework toward the M.B.A. is offered through Millikin University in Decatur. In each case the university meets the educational needs of underserved students at a distance, but often encounters difficulty in assuring that the quality of off-campus instruction is comparable to the quality of on-campus instruction and faces questions about whether the resulting enrollment gains for SSU outweigh the associated costs.

Regarding these matters, we offer several conclusions. We believe that whereas in order to survive in the 1980s SSU gave priority to increasing the number of its students, in order to thrive in the 1990s SSU must continue to pay greater attention to increasing its reputation for quality, including the quality of the students it recruits and graduates. The tension between providing access and maintaining standards is widespread in academe, and perhaps nowhere is it more acute than in those open admissions institutions which serve, among other things, as the universities of last resort for those unable to attend elsewhere. We are not proposing that Sangamon State abandon its open admission status, even if it could, but we feel that the university should consider certain steps consistent with this status which could enhance the quality of our student body and of the education they receive here. The measures we suggest below represent an evolution of the university’s continuing efforts to define and refine its standards for not only entrance to but also exit from Sangamon State—i.e., implementation of
general education requirements which must be met upon admission in some cases or by graduation in others. To the degree that a greater institutional focus on quality might result in temporary and slight downturns in enrollment, such a strategic objective should be shared in advance with the BOR and the IBHE so that the tradeoff is understood in advance of implementation.

Specifically, we propose that when the present Director of Admissions retires this spring, his position be filled by an enrollment management specialist who can help the university formulate a sound and comprehensive enrollment plan. In our view, no higher education institution—especially the smallest of the state’s twelve public universities—can afford to be oblivious to market demands. At the same time, academe is not a business, and if institutions become too market driven, they may surrender their claim to be true universities. Therefore, an enrollment plan for Sangamon State would conceive the university as requiring a core of programs, particularly at the undergraduate level, sufficient to retain a strong liberal arts and sciences presence while supporting a range of professional and pre-professional programs adequate to address emerging societal needs. As part of this plan, certain undersubscribed programs would be chosen on the basis of their excellence and/or distinctiveness for more aggressive marketing not only in SSU’s service region but also beyond it. Perennially oversubscribed programs would be consulted about the maximum number of students they can adequately serve with their existing resources and about the possibility of capping their enrollments once this capacity was reached. Such programs might also consider whether, under these circumstances, they should raise their entrance standards where appropriate, providing for conditional admissions of limited numbers of more marginally prepared students if warranted by other identified institutional aims—like redressing the imbalance in the gender ratio in fields which have historically attracted a predominance of one sex over the other, or recruiting more African-American males because they are significantly underrepresented on campus.

Next, we recommend that the Undergraduate Council study the pros and cons of possible adjustments in SSU’s overall undergraduate admissions standards. For example, the Council might explore implementing a policy whereby students would not be admitted with less than an overall 2.0 GPA. Currently the Admissions Office selects the necessary number of hours at 2.0 or better for admissions purposes and discounts the rest of a student’s earned hours, even if the total calculated GPA falls below 2.0. In Fall, 1991, 20 students—admittedly a small percentage of new enrollees—entered SSU on this basis. Perhaps by tracking their subsequent performance, the Council could determine how they fared and if they overtaxed the institution’s academic support system. In addition, the Council could examine whether stricter adherence to the minimum 2.0 GPA would unfairly penalize any particular group of students—such as mature adults who performed poorly in college many years earlier—and make adjustments if this proved to be the case.

Furthermore, in conjunction with maintaining open admissions while emphasizing quality, SSU should build on its current assessment effort and strengthen its monitoring of student achievement from entrance through exit and beyond. Academic advising remains central to this process because of the university’s heterogeneous clientele, and this function needs strengthening if the campus assessment program is to succeed. It is important as well that SSU demonstrate the educational value added to its students by their experience here. In addition to self-reports from graduates regarding their degree of satisfaction with their academic experience, SSU should also solicit feedback from their employers during program review so that our standards can be routinely reviewed in light of external expectations.

Finally, despite the challenges inherent in delivering instruction at host sites, SSU should not suspend its off-campus operations unless the educational needs they serve can be met by other institutions and unless the IBHE offers appropriate concessions for whatever is given up. Although we support maintaining SSU’s present off-campus operations, we do not believe that expanding them is wise at present in light of facilities limitations and resource drawdown, unless new activity can be pursued in a cooperative fashion with other colleges and universities. As the IBHE encourages postsecondary education to address the needs of underserved clients via distance learning, SSU may develop a sound alternative to the present system, with its built-in difficulties. We will have more to say about this prospect under IV F.
III. Comparative Advantages

One positive by-product of strategic planning is that, by providing a clearer picture of the institution's existing or potential strengths, it can help position the university to take greater advantage of what it does best. By capitalizing on the specific positive qualities which distinguish it from other universities, Sangamon State can promote itself more effectively to prospective students and employees as well as to possible sources of external support, such as the legislature, granting agencies, and private donors. In an increasingly competitive environment, the university needs more than ever to lead effectively from its strengths.

Because of the importance of this part of the planning process, the SPTF gathered perceptions of Sangamon State's comparative advantages from many sources, both on campus and in the community. Although there was not unanimity on every point, the degree of consensus that emerged was nevertheless heartening.

To be effective, any list of institutional strengths should be focused rather than comprehensive. The following items were selected because of their special salience for the kind of university Sangamon State has been and can become. Although there is some overlap, these strengths coalesce around the dimensions of quality, accessibility, and affordability.

**Quality**

- Individualized attention from highly qualified faculty in small classes
- Emphasis on faculty scholarship that enhances instruction
- Commitment to helping students refine analytical and expressive skills across the curriculum

**Impressive opportunities to participate in public affairs**

- Internships with the legislature, state agencies, and mass media
- Applied study and cooperative education placements in the public sector
- Graduate assistantships with the Institute for Public Affairs
- Access to public service projects in the community
- Public Affairs Colloquia and other courses covering significant public issues

**Superior library services**

- First-rate permanent collection of books, periodicals
- Computer networking with other system libraries
- Library faculty committed to instruction
- Dedicated support staff

**Accessibility**

**Conveniently located and attractive campus**

- Comfortable and functional classroom and laboratory facilities
- Impressive auditorium and conference facilities
- Plentiful, inexpensive parking for commuting students
- Expanding, pleasant housing for residential students

**Flexible scheduling**

- Evening, weekend, media, and intensive course formats for adult learners
- Daytime offerings for traditional full-time students

**Caring institutional climate**

- Personalized academic advising
- Responsive support services
- Opportunity to participate in varied extracurricular activities
Affordability

An educational bargain
- Competitive tuition rates with other public universities in Illinois
- Reasonable fee structure
- Growing scholarship program
- Varied work study and other student employment opportunities

IV. Strategic Goals

Strategic planning should produce institutional support for a manageable set of goals intended to bring the university closer to its desired future. Such goals should be generally framed, but should also be accompanied by specific suggestions about how each might be addressed. Progress on some of these may not require significant investment of resources, but in other cases new sources of support must be located either internally or externally and dedicated to these purposes for advancement to occur. Because of the state's immediate fiscal crisis, it may seem inappropriate for a public university—especially a new and small one—to articulate goals which involve additional demands on its overall support system. However, we believe that the recent history of state funding for higher education—which has run in a recurring "feast or famine" cycle—justifies our expectation of a turnaround during the period covered by this strategic plan. Therefore, while it would be irresponsible not to acknowledge that the state is currently operating in a "famine" mode, it would be equally unwise to assume that Illinois' economy will not recover within the decade. Sangamon State needs to position itself to take full advantage of this predictable oscillation when it occurs. Through more efficient use and internal reallocation of existing resources, as well as through the more aggressive and effective search for outside funding opportunities, SSU can pursue a focused agenda even during the present period of reduced appropriations.

The following list of goals reflects our collective sense of the half-dozen highest priorities for institutional attention and action during the 1990s. They emerged as the top items from a much longer list of possibilities suggested by many sources and, because they seem to be both equally important and frequently interrelated, no attempt has been made to rank them here.

A. Enhancement of Teaching, Advising, and Scholarship as well as Lifelong Learning

If Sangamon State's strongest identity is as a teaching university, then this emphasis demands greater institutional visibility and support than it now receives. Periodically, the need has been recognized, as in the Project for Institutional Renewal through Improvement of Teaching (PIRT) project years ago or the more recent recommendation that a unit for this purpose be placed in the School of Liberal Arts and Sciences. However, operationalizing SSU's commitment to teaching excellence remains sporadic rather than systematic. As the university ages, good intentions may replace good practice, producing an unacceptable gap between what we assert and what we deliver with respect to our highest priority. Furthermore, as SSU's faculty matures, the need for focused attention to their continuing professional development grows more urgent.

For these reasons, we propose establishing an institutional unit devoted to enhancing faculty members' performance as teachers, advisers, and scholars as well as students' capacities and skills as lifelong learners. This Center for Teaching and Learning, located in the School of Liberal Arts and Sciences, would conduct several existing activities, including faculty orientation, course evaluation, competitive awards programs for curricular development, and teaching recognition. It would also house the Learning Center and the assessment project, and it would help faculty and programs address their students' needs in the area of communication, computational, critical thinking, and library skills. Faculty could come to the Center for assistance in seeking external funds to support their instructional or scholarly development and to address the special educational needs of their students. The Center would sponsor activities to promote faculty awareness of pedagogical and curricular issues as well as to encourage faculty sensitivity to the unique demands of advising and mentoring at Sangamon State.
B. Strengthening the Intellectual and Cultural Climate on Campus

Any university performs many functions, and a public university necessarily serves multiple publics, but unless a university views itself and is viewed by others as a vital intellectual and cultural community, an essential ingredient is missing at its core. Frequently over the past year we have been struck by the fact that although much exciting scholarly and creative work is being done here, many people do not realize this both on and off campus. For employees at a small school, SSU’s personnel seem in some ways to be unusually segmented and compartmentalized, not just by location, discipline or function but also by ideology. The forums where faculty routinely assemble, such as program or committee meetings, were created mainly to handle institutional housekeeping tasks rather than to furnish collegial stimulation, and in the absence of regular occasions designed for this latter purpose, many faculty feel increasingly isolated from their colleagues on campus as teachers and as scholars. This estrangement is compounded by the fact that the university provides few opportunities for its faculty, staff, and students to hear outside speakers on campus and that it has sent inconsistent signals about the value of maintaining connections to external professional networks which can provide a compensating frame of reference. It is also unfortunately true that, for an institution that has generated lots of local publicity over the years, SSU continues to suffer from the fact that the surrounding community knows more about its periodic political conflicts than its employees’ on-going professional contributions.

Renewing both our sense of participation in a rigorous intellectual community, dedicated to the discovery, dissemination, and application of knowledge in our respective fields, and our sense of engagement by a stimulating cultural climate poses a special challenge. Such goals cannot be achieved simply by organizational or budgetary moves, although these may encourage progress. We hope, for example, that creation of the aforementioned Center will contribute by providing an institutional locus for addressing such concerns. In addition, President Lynn has offered her home as the site for a series of informal faculty discussions centered on teaching and scholarship at Sangamon State. Her willingness to lead by example is a welcome sign. As the university discusses the issues of quality and standards which surface in this report, that may also widen the dialogue and lend it specificity. Furthermore, as Sangamon State explores more extensive contacts with area arts organizations, the university may assume a more active role in encouraging creative expression both on and off campus. Finally, we believe that SSU should give high priority to attracting external support through granting agencies as well as private philanthropists for expansion of its existing program of lectures, discussions, debates, forums, exhibits, and performances. Not only would these help to revive the campus community, but also they would communicate a more positive image of the university to the public.

C. Improving the University’s Image

Consistent with the previous recommendation, we believe that one of Sangamon State’s central tasks over the rest of this decade is to refurbish its image, in addition to rebuilding the substance upon which that image rests wherever necessary. As we stated earlier, SSU suffers from an image problem both on and off campus, and therefore these suggestions involve steps for strengthening the university’s image internally as well as externally.

Sangamon State’s internal communication system badly needs improvement so that all members of the campus community have ready access to accurate and timely information about the institution’s manifold endeavors. Furthermore, given the past volatility of campus relations and the enormous challenges confronting the university at present, faculty, staff, and students should remember that the inevitable internecine conflicts need to be handled in a mature and civil manner. Public charges and countercharges may score temporary points, but eventually they damage all concerned, and their cumulative effect is to dig the university into a hole from which it becomes increasingly difficult to extricate itself.

Because Sangamon State is now engaged in that delicate extrication process, the university must also strengthen its public relations and public promotion activities. Earlier in the school’s history a senior administrator carried responsibility for directing university relations and for serving as the institution’s governmental liaison. Previous budget cuts eliminated this position, but there is little doubt that Sangamon State has lost more than it gained from the resulting salary savings. SSU is now the only one
of the twelve public universities in Illinois without its own institutional lobbyist. While being located in the state capital might seem to obviate this need in our case, experience suggests that the additional access it affords is offset by the fact that SSU lives in a fishbowl, its failures and foibles more visibly displayed to the legislature than would otherwise be the case. As resources permit, hiring an experienced and effective individual to serve as the direct link between SSU and state government should be a high priority. In the meantime, the university's press releases and publications should wherever possible reflect and even accelerate the renewed institutional momentum envisioned in this plan.

As Sangamon State anticipates its 25th anniversary, other steps might be contemplated to take maximum advantage of this occasion. For instance, the university should complete an updated study of its impact on the community--not only economically but also intellectually and culturally--as a prelude to a major capital campaign. Also, now that SSU has graduated thousands of alumni, many of whom remain in this area, some of the more conspicuous successes from this growing population should be identified for annual recognition in an SSU Alumni Hall of Fame. Academic institutions are known in large part for their products, and Sangamon State has much to celebrate in this regard.

D. Enrollment Management and Retention Effort

After spending many years on the defensive about its clientele, Sangamon State is now poised at an opportune moment to take the offensive on the issue of its student body--their overall size, configuration, and quality. Crucial to realization of this opportunity will be fashioning a systemic approach to the problems it poses, and critical to the design as well as implementation of this approach will be the services of an enrollment management specialist. In addition to integrating systems for student recruitment, admissions, assessment, retention, graduation, and alumni follow-up, this individual can help the university develop a coherent strategy for more effectively serving its students within existing resources. This will involve working with programs to determine which might benefit from establishment of enrollment caps on the one hand or implementation of intensive marketing on the other. It will also involve working with the Undergraduate Council to consider whether the overall quality of incoming undergraduate students can be elevated in a manner consistent with SSU's open admissions status and our commitment to cultural diversity on campus. Related to this latter goal, the SPTF believes that recruitment efforts must be matched by corollary concern for retention. While this is most often noted with respect to the importance of creating a supportive campus environment for minority and international students, the SPTF encourages the university to explore how it can become more welcoming and nurturant of other students as well, including women and those with disabilities. To the extent that the institution is insensitive to such special needs, the access it represents may become more nominal than actual.

Continuing campus consideration of various human rights policies and curricular integration projects must occur within this context. Furthermore, evening students, who have historically made up a majority of the university's clientele, deserve access to a fuller range of support services than is currently available to them, just as day time students, who are growing in numbers and influence, deserve a richer mix of curricular and extracurricular programs than Sangamon State University has traditionally provided.

E. Pursuit of Partnerships with External Entities

There are many reasons for Sangamon State to use strategic planning as a basis for enhancing existing partnerships and establishing new ones in its service area. The opportunity to address common interests and to share resources is always attractive, but never more so than in tight times. Furthermore, if the university wants to become genuinely interactive with its milieu, such outreach efforts will need to become more varied and effective.

In this plan we have discussed how SSU might play a greater leadership role in relation to community colleges and how SSU could benefit from collaborative projects with other higher education institutions in the area, such as the Central Illinois Education Consortium for Economic Development. We anticipate that the IBHE will be funding cooperative initiatives like these for the next several years, and the university ought to explore how its agenda can be advanced while otherwise unmet educational needs are being addressed through such relationships.
We have also proposed that SSU build upon its public sector partnerships with state government to establish a limited partnership with local governments in its service region where our resources may fit their needs. Beyond working with selected local governments, Sangamon State should also become more actively involved in helping its immediate community to address pressing social issues as part of an expanded university commitment to the practice of public affairs and public service.

Although the university has historically emphasized ties with the public sector, we sense that the time is ripe for cultivating more systematic connections to the private sector as well. As is true nationally, increasing numbers of SSU’s students are pursuing credentials in various business fields and service industries. Their educational experience would be enhanced by more regularized dialogue between faculty and staff at the university and area leaders around such issues as curricular responsiveness and community service. This will need to be handled with care because of the institution’s inconsistent track record in past years, but the payoff to the university could be considerable. We suggest the banking and insurance industry, the health industry, and the information industry as likely candidates for initial overtures.

Over the years Sangamon State has developed a number of beneficial relationships with the local African-American community, as evidenced in the Inter-racial Education Institutes of the mid-1970s, the Marcus Garvey summer program, and cooperative educational efforts with the Springfield Urban League as well as the Community Education Resource Network (CERN). Given the university’s commitment to cultural diversity and the changing demographics of our state, our nation, and our world, it is also imperative that SSU reach out in an inclusive fashion to other minorities, such as Hispanics—now the fastest-growing ethnic group in Illinois—and Asian Americans, a rapidly expanding local population. It is vital that Sangamon State cultivate such relationships as a visible manifestation of the university’s continuing commitment to education in and for a pluralistic society.

For a middle-sized city, Springfield supports an impressive number of arts organizations and activities. As an upper-division university in such a setting, Sangamon State has struggled to define its appropriate role vis-à-vis the arts, in terms of both meeting the curricular and extracurricular needs of its students and serving the aesthetic interests of its community. We believe that exposure to the arts remains an indispensable component in the experience of any truly educated person and therefore an essential ingredient in the mix of educational experiences offered on campus as well as the public programming provided by the university. Because of limited institutional resources, coupled with rising community expectations, Sangamon State needs to explore cooperative relationships with other educational and cultural entities in the area so that it can enhance local opportunities to enjoy the arts as performers and as spectators. Visual exhibits, film screenings, dramatic productions, musical programs, literary readings—all of these can challenge a parochial perspective of public affairs and enrich the overall quality of life in the capital.

If these are successful, such partnerships can heighten Sangamon State’s visibility, deepen its impact, and broaden its base of support.

F. Identification of Targeted Facility and Equipment Needs

The gradual improvement in the university’s physical plant is one of the most striking aspects of its growth and development over the past two decades. But despite the progress Sangamon State has made in this regard, much more remains to be done with respect to facilities and equipment.

If enrollments continue to grow at their present rate, a new classroom building such as the one preliminarily proposed to the IBHE last fall will definitely be needed, particularly to provide space for night classes which now fill the campus to capacity on Mondays through Thursdays. Its classrooms should be planned in consultation with faculty and configured to encourage the application of non-traditional as well as traditional teaching methods. This building will also need to make provision for accommodating occasional courses of over 50 where such size is not inconsistent with the nature of the instruction being offered.

Given the high proportion of Sangamon State’s students who are adult females, it is also vital that the university continue to explore expansion and improvement of its childcare facilities. If these cannot be
provided in conjunction with the YWCA, a proposal currently under consideration, then SSU should proceed independently as soon as possible.

Because it represents the first stop for many prospective students visiting the university, Building F should be remodeled and upgraded as resources permit. Similarly, the student center space needs to be reconfigured and its facilities improved because of heightened expectations as well as increased use by campus residents.

Finally, Sangamon State needs to give careful attention to the growing problems presented to faculty, staff, and students by its outmoded equipment and inadequate technical capability. Because technology tends to develop rapidly, even well-funded universities experience lags between existing and state-of-the-art equipment. At Sangamon State, however, this lag is lengthened by the institution’s chronic cuts in equipment lines in order to protect other parts of the budget. As a result, upgrading campus telephones from dial to touchtone units and replacing outmoded personal computers with better machines must occur in piecemeal fashion. Furthermore, SSU must develop enhanced networking capability on campus as well as improved access to additional systems nationwide. Exacerbating these problems is that Sangamon State has never pursued a sizeable grant for the purchase of computer equipment, nor has it explored the possibility of equipment donations from manufacturers or benefactors. As the faculty fall further behind in their access to top-quality equipment, they lose their competitive edge as teachers and scholars. As staff must work with outmoded or inadequate equipment, they perform their functions less efficiently and effectively. As students experience difficulty gaining access to the type of equipment they are expected to operate on their jobs, they are placed at a disadvantage compared to graduates of other institutions.

In addition to meeting these needs, we place high priority on developing fiberoptic networking capability, interactive television capability, and media-outfitted classrooms, all of which are important to our aspirations as a deliverer of distance learning opportunities.

G. Pursuit of Supplemental External Funding

If we discovered near unanimity on any point during the planning process, it was that Sangamon State must become more aggressive and effective in raising funds to supplement its state appropriations. The experience of the past few years has convinced many on campus that, regrettably, public universities are receiving less state support and that such circumstances favor institutions which help themselves to alternative sources of income. While Sangamon State laments this decline in state support and must continue to actively advocate for public higher education as well as to lobby for its fair share of appropriated funding to carry out its basic mission, in order to achieve its strategic goals the institution will have to go beyond the internal resources that are already available or that can be freed by reallocation. If the university can convince external sources that it deserves their support, progress can be made more rapidly toward all of these worthwhile aims.

Strengthening the relationship of the SSU Foundation to the university and reaffirming the Foundation’s role in support of the institution’s goals should assist in this process. More systematic identification of university alumni and greater emphasis on their programmatic affiliations will permit more effective periodic solicitation of their contributions. Emphasis on the importance of seeking appropriate grants and contracts as well as support for faculty and staff engaged in these activities can produce major dividends, as can pursuit of opportunities for fellowships and scholarships.

In its quest for funding to make the difference between subsistence and plenitude, between adequacy and excellence, Sangamon State must be careful not to allow the agendas of others—whether potential private donors, sources of grants and contracts, or the like—to determine its priorities. At the same time, if the university is to be truly interactive with the community, it must be ready to evaluate emerging opportunities on the basis of their implications and appropriateness. We believe that the university can meet this challenge and shape its future accordingly, if there is a collective will on campus to do so.
V. Program/Service Mix

Typically, in conjunction with strategic planning on campus, schools conduct a comprehensive review of their current mix of programs and services to ascertain how well these match their emerging sense of institutional direction. Because of the transition in leadership underway at Sangamon State as strategic planning proceeded, the SPTF and its consultant agreed that this part of the planning process should be deferred until Spring and Fall of 1992. The resulting delay offers several advantages. It enables the review of programs and services to occur in light of the framework provided by this strategic plan, the first such document in the university's history. It permits President Lynn to oversee the design and implementation of an appropriate review process. And it allows Sangamon State to respond in a timely and systematic way to recent IBHE requests that the university identify those activities which it seeks to maintain or enhance as well as those which may have to be reduced or eliminated in order to respond to anticipated budgetary reductions. The underlying assumption of such a review is that, in an era of increased competition for available funds, no institution can afford to automatically maintain all of its current activities at their present support levels, especially if new initiatives need to be pursued. However, through a combination of institutional priority-setting, prudent internal reallocation, and supplemental external fundraising, the university can secure the resources to make progress toward identified goals in which all have a stake.

As a prelude to undertaking the second phase of strategic planning on campus, the SPTF generated some fundamental principles which derive from the emphases of this report and which therefore should be borne in mind by participants in the review process, as determined by President Lynn and representatives of the university governance. This list is not intended to be exhaustive or definitive, but it offers a useful point of departure. How well does each program or service do the following:

1. contribute to the university's emphasis on enhanced quality
2. improve the intellectual and cultural climate on campus
3. manifest a commitment to public affairs and public service
4. contribute to an appropriate mix of liberal arts and sciences and professional programs on campus
5. foster the integration of liberal learning and professional perspectives within the curriculum
6. support the goal of managed enrollment and selective institutional growth
7. offer the opportunity for building beneficial partnerships with off-campus entities
8. promote the university's tradition of encouraging experiential learning
9. address the curricular as well as extracurricular needs of both traditional and non-traditional students?

As indicated earlier, following Board of Regents approval of this strategic plan, President Lynn will consult with SPTF members and representatives of university governance to establish the procedures and timeline for completion of the second phase of the process. One possible frame of reference, suggested for adaptation to SSU's circumstances by SPTF consultant Robert Shirley, is attached as Appendix E. This approach appears reasonably consistent with guidelines proposed by the IBHE on March 3, 1992.
Conclusion

Now in its third decade of service to Springfield and Illinois, Sangamon State University has developed its first strategic plan based on a candid assessment of its past and a confident anticipation of its future. After careful review of institutional origins and mission, each of the university's fundamental purposes has been reaffirmed with appropriate revision in light of experience, and a new mission statement has been fashioned. To lend further coherence and focus to the pursuit of these general aims during the 1990s, two unifying themes have been suggested: broadening public affairs and public service, and developing community partnerships. Together, these themes manifest a vision of the university as dynamically and effectively interactive with its environment, the overall goal of all strategic planning. Because the university exists first and foremost to serve the educational needs of its students, its clientele—past and present—has been examined to determine how it might be enhanced in the future, quantitatively and qualitatively, consistent with the institution's nature and resources. When compared to other postsecondary institutions in Illinois, Sangamon State has several characteristics which can be marketed as competitive advantages: quality, accessibility, and affordability. Seven strategic goals are offered to guide the university's planning and development efforts to the year 2000. Principles have been presented for conducting the second phase of strategic planning, a comprehensive review of SSU's current program and service mix as a basis for internal reallocation. Insofar as this plan reflects the thoughtful contributions of many faculty, staff, and students on campus as well as numerous members of the community, it provides a consensual basis upon which to shape the university's future to the year 2000.
Footnotes

1. Members of the SSU 2000 Committee were Cullom Davis, David Everson, Judy Everson, Paula Garrott, Barbara Hayler, Ann Larson, J. Michael Lennon, Richard Sames, Larry Shiner, Don Stanhope, and Pinky Wassenberg.


3. Strategic Planning Advisory Committee Members were: (a) Artistic/Cultural—Carole Kennerly, chair; Kay Feurer, Terry Scrogum, Naomi Ross, Margaret Boswell, Dick Morse; (b) Education—Leroy Jordan, chair; A. Karen Siciliano, Dr. Norman Stephens, Valerie Christman, Dr. Mary Lokea, Dr. Phil Davis; (c) Minority—Allan Woodson, chair; Howard Veal, Sr., J. Barron Robinson, Robert Moore, Carl Form, Carolyn Blackwell; (d) Private Sector—Michael Ayers, chair; Michael Boer, Julie Davis, John Staudt, Guerry Suggs, Carolyn Oxtoby, Sergio Pecori; and (e) Public Sector—Michael Lennon, chair; Dave Anderson, Charles Wheeler III, Douglas Whitley, Linda Hawker, Lauren Scholnick.


5. Members of the IGI committee, besides Lynn Pardie of the SPTF, were Horace Chapman, Renee Lange, Melissa Little, Diane Long, and Rupa Kodachawd.
Task Force Update

Solving the Puzzle Together

Last February Sangamon State University began its first strategic planning process at the request of the Illinois Board of Regents. The Strategic Planning Task Force (SPTF), which has representatives from the faculty, staff, student body and community, was appointed in cooperation with the three campus senates, the SSU Foundation and the SSU Alumni Association. Working with Robert Shirley, a nationally known consultant, the SPTF designed a year-long process for appropriately engaging the campus and the community in consideration of the university’s future, culminating in a report to the board during spring semester of 1992.

This process was described to the campus in April at a well-attended forum, where the SPTF announced that its subsequent meetings would be publicized via the SSU Weekly and would be open to interested observers. In addition, the SPTF said that it would issue periodic printed updates of its work to the campus beginning in the fall semester. This Task Force Update represents the first in a series of such communiqués planned for the remainder of the year. The SPTF seeks your help, individually and collectively, as we all proceed with the task of solving the puzzle of determining SSU’s optimal future and how best to achieve it together.

Over the summer the SPTF continued its work on a variety of fronts that were highlighted at the campus forum in April and that are reviewed below. Regular updates will provide more detailed information as well as present further opportunities for campus participation in the strategic planning process.

Identifying Institutional Strengths and Weaknesses

One of the key elements in any strategic planning process is identification of the institution’s major strengths and weaknesses as these are perceived both internally and externally. To gather input on this important matter, the SPTF invited additional faculty and staff members to attend two workshops — the first, in June, to brainstorm fairly comprehensive lists of SSU’s main strengths and weaknesses in five designated areas (human resources, financial resources, institutional image, physical plant and campus climate/culture); the second, in September, to narrow and prioritize items from the previously generated lists. The next issue of this newsletter will summarize the outcome of these discussions and solicit comments on how the product can be further refined.

Securing Community Input and Support

Another integral part of strategic planning is eliciting ideas from segments of the surrounding community on how the university can better anticipate and meet their future needs. To gather this information, the SPTF created five Strategic Planning Advisory Committees (SPACs), each with a special focus: the public sector, the private sector, the artistic/cultural sector, the minority community and the education community. These committees worked individually over the summer under the guidance of their chairs, who were from SSU, and they are now meeting with the SPTF one at a time to share their conclusions and recommendations. A future issue of this newsletter will relay the results and ask for reactions.

Scanning the Institution’s Environment

Strategic planning also generally involves analysis of the environment in which the university will function in the future. To gauge more adequately the likely impact of external influences on the university’s operations and developmental options, the SPTF assembled four scanning groups, each of which was asked to explore environmental factors expected to affect Sangamon State during the decade. The four groups examined, respectively, economic/technical factors, social/demographic factors, political/legal factors and educational/competitive factors. Like the SPACs, the scanning groups met throughout the summer. They are now submitting their analyses to the SPTF. When this dialogue is complete, the central findings will be shared in the newsletter, again with provision of an opportunity for members of the campus community to offer feedback.
Surveying Campus Attitudes and Values

Finally, as part of the process now underway, the SPTF is preparing to administer a campus-wide survey that will assess individual and group views on the university. When taken collectively, personal preferences for particular institutional goals and functions are an important expression of Sangamon State's identity educationally, socially and politically. Therefore, matching internal campus attitudes and values with external perceptions and trends constitutes a crucial part of the planning process as we envision it. The Institutional Values Committee has overseen arrangements for the administration next month of an institutional goals inventory from the Educational Testing Service, similar to the one undertaken here during SSU's last accreditation self-study, but supplemented by 20 local items specifically designed for Sangamon State. The survey will be administered to faculty and staff in group sessions and to students within selected courses. The next issue of the newsletter will provide further details about this essential component in strategic planning. Individual participation will be vital if the results are to be truly representative of the university community as a whole.

Synthesizing These Materials with the Consultant

When materials from the workshops, advisory committees, scanning groups and questionnaires have been assembled, the SPTF will arrange for a return visit to campus by its consultant, Robert Shirley, who will help the Task Force to synthesize these data as a prelude to preparation of an initial draft of the SSU strategic plan. The plan will then be circulated both on and off campus for feedback, which will also be sought at open meetings announced for that purpose.

The SPTF appreciates your interest and participation as we proceed with our work. We welcome your help in solving the puzzle of SSU's optimal future.

SPTF Members

Administrators: Nancy Ford (chair), Wayne Penn, Carl Long, Homer Butler, Brian Alley, Judy Everson

Faculty: Alfred Arkley, John Collins, Marcellus Leonard, Lynn Pardie, chair of Faculty Senate Long-Range Academic Planning Committee (to be named)

Staff: Betty Harryman, Carol Moore

Students: Bill Schureman, Charles Myart

Community Members: Mark Ferguson, State Rep. Karen Hasara
Identifying Institutional Strengths and Weaknesses

An integral part of Sangamon State’s strategic planning process involves identifying the university’s major strengths and weaknesses as they are generally perceived both on and off campus. To develop the most accurate and useful overview of these institutional qualities and how they relate to the university’s future direction, the Strategic Planning Task Force (SPTF) has devised a three-stage process. This process consists of (1) generating initial summary statements of SSU’s key strengths and weaknesses in five topical areas (human resources, financial resources, physical plant, institutional image and institutional climate/culture), (2) narrowing and prioritizing these items and (3) seeking campus-wide reaction to the resulting lists as the basis for their further refinement. This issue of the newsletter describes how the first two stages of the process were completed and invites you to participate in the critical third stage, which is now underway.

Stage One: Generating Initial Statements

Although the SPTF is comprised of representatives from several crucial constituencies on campus and in the community, its members decided that generating the initial lists of major university strengths and weaknesses should involve additional participants. Supplemented by 18 additional faculty, administrators and staff members selected for their areas of expertise or positions within the university, the SPTF met on June 7 for a workshop to discuss the university’s assets and liabilities. Alfred Arkley, facilitator for the workshop, assigned every participant to one of five topical sub-groups. After a brainstorming session, the sub-groups reassembled to hear summary presentations on each discussion and to offer reactions. At the SPTF’s invitation, SSU’s president, Naomi B. Lynn, also attended this de-briefing session. A copy of the lists, revised to reflect emerging group consensus, was subsequently circulated to all participants for review and comment.

Stage Two: Narrowing and Prioritizing

During his visit to campus last April, Robert Shirley, consultant to the SPTF, advised the task force to avoid focusing on too many details. As a way of limiting the areas for attention, he suggested that the SPTF prepare a final list of no more than five key strengths and weaknesses in each of the designated areas and that the items be prioritized as well.

A follow-up workshop was held for this purpose on Sept. 6, and again additional participants were asked to join SPTF members. Bill Miller facilitated this workshop, assigning each participant to one of the five newly constituted sub-groups (some holdover members from the June 7 assignments plus some new members). The same procedure was followed: Sub-groups met to narrow and prioritize their respective lists, a summary of the results was presented to the full group for response and a revised summary statement was circulated for subsequent review.

Stage Three: Soliciting Campus Feedback

On the reverse you will find SSU’s prioritized strengths and weaknesses in the five designated areas. SPTF members and the other workshop participants hope that you will review these and share your reactions with us, either in person or in writing. If you would like to ask questions or offer comments, you may:

1. attend an open meeting scheduled for this purpose on Thursday, Oct. 3, noon to 1 p.m., PAC conference rooms H and I
2. send written reactions to Judy Everson, SPTF secretary, at PAC 574.

We are eager to hear from you, and we thank you for your interest.

1These participants were Velma Carey, Jerry Curl, Larry Dale, Lois Defend, Ron Ettinger, Terri Jackson, Karen Kirkendall, Pat Langley, Dick Lofgren, Janet Marshall, Linda McCaffrey, Bill Miller, Aaron Shures, Regan Smith, Bill Stevens, Brad Swanson, Jim Veselnak and Dick Williams.

2These participants were Bill Bloemer, Carol Bloemer, Lois Defend, Ron Ettinger, Rob Gordon, Barbara Hayler, Terri Jackson, John Kennedy, Karen Kirkendall, Linda McCaffrey, Bill Miller, Charlie Schweighausser, Aaron Shures, Regan Smith, Jim Veselnak and Dick Williams.
Institutional Climate/Culture

Strengths
1. Curricular flexibility allows changes to meet emerging needs and permits programs, as well as faculty, to assess the value and effectiveness of such changes more readily; program autonomy gives faculty who deliver the curriculum the authority and responsibility to assure that it is appropriate.
2. SSU is oriented toward teaching in general and toward providing a personalized education for students in particular; this manifests itself in a commitment to supporting individual learners and is enhanced by relatively small classes.
3. The SSU tradition of involving students in decision-making and policy development throughout the university should be maintained and strengthened, not as a pro forma institutional obligation but as an educational opportunity.
4. The university's public affairs mandate should continue to be broadly defined, encouraging faculty and students to become involved in various activities, not just those connected with state government.
5. The overall quality of SSU's faculty, not only as teachers but also as scholars and professionals active in their fields, should not be underestimated, especially because institutional support of these activities has not always been strong or consistent.

Weaknesses
1. Unlike other colleges and universities in the state and nation, SSU lacks a campus-wide program of cultural and artistic events and activities to complement the classroom experience.
2. Although our students come from various backgrounds with wide-ranging preparations, the university has not developed a unified sense of what constitutes an undergraduate education and, therefore, of what students should experience at SSU. The PAC/LSC/AST requirement covers so many different kinds of experiences that it cannot serve this unifying purpose.
3. While SSU has strengthened some of its formal policies and procedures, a poor campus climate still exists for women and minorities, primarily because of expectations and assumptions as well as available models and levels of leadership.
4. SSU needs to more adequately support its evening and non-traditional students, as well as the faculty and staff who serve them, and to view them as challenging learners with something different to contribute to the university, rather than just problem students.
5. Although lip service is paid institutionally to a broad range of goals, there is no clear vision of the university's mission, nor is there sustained commitment of resources to help SSU make progress toward identified aspects of this mission.

Financial Resources

Strengths
1. SSU's location in Springfield gives us access to the Board of Regents, Illinois Board of Higher Education, General Assembly and other state agencies and boards.
2. The university budget process is being opened up to the campus community.
3. The university budget process is being tied more closely to institutional priorities such as minority support programs, teacher education initiatives etc.
4. New goals and objectives are being met by intra-institutional cooperation with regard to allocation and reallocation of resources.
5. We have the capacity to seek and obtain non-traditional financing — for example, in the area of providing student housing on campus.

Weaknesses
1. An inadequate base budget affects daily operations, growth potential and efficient use of resources.
2. Incremental budgeting is not adequate to maintain or support institutional growth; a critical mass of students requires certain support services that the budgeting process, which is not tied to growth in student population, cannot provide.
3. Institutional salary inequities exist with SSU's market competition.
4. Only modest attempts have been made to capitalize on opportunities to expand SSU's grants activity, foundation endowment and other external funding endeavors.
5. Existing resources are unequally distributed between programs and other units of the university.

Human Resources

Strengths
1. SSU faculty have a strong teaching ethic; they value teaching as their primary professional activity for the most part.
2. SSU faculty and staff are oriented toward student service, emphasizing responsiveness and receptivity to student needs and concerns.
3. SSU's student body has become a richer mix of older, non-traditional students and younger, more traditional students; furthermore, because most of these students are placed, they tend to appreciate the chance to complete their education in this area.

Weaknesses
1. As the number of students increases and the number of faculty and staff does not increase proportionately, the ability of the institution to keep pace lessens, and resources become both more strained and more unevenly distributed, resulting in some employees being regularly overextended while others are consistently underutilized.
2. SSU students come from many different academic backgrounds, but, upon entering the university, they are often not adequately assessed, nor are they consistently monitored as they move through the institution.
3. Furthermore, our student body lacks the cultural diversity that is representative of the world outside its immediate service area.
5. SSU faculty, on the whole, are well qualified and experienced in serving adult learners; SSU staff are generally mature, well-trained, competent and experienced.
5. SSU tends to be characterized by an informal, non-hierarchical operating style that allows the cooperative resolution of problems.

Institutional Image

Strengths
1. SSU employs many highly qualified and very skilled faculty members.
2. SSU's faculty, administration, curriculum and student programs are closely and effectively tied to state government.
3. SSU offers strong services to the community-at-large, including SCAN-17 TV, WSSU radio, SSU Auditorium events, Illinois Issues and continuing education activities.
4. SSU has good support services, such as its efficient food services operation, its increasingly attractive physical plant and its excellent student housing.
5. The student population is comprised of a mix of students, from non-traditional learners to international students, that enriches the quality of life on campus as well as the classroom experience.

Weaknesses
1. In some disciplines, SSU is perceived as having uneven standards, devaluing degrees in these fields.
2. SSU has a history of chaotic internal affairs and is viewed as devoting too much energy to faculty/administration battles.
3. SSU is seen as being a difficult place to find necessary courses at convenient times in some parts of the curriculum.
4. SSU has never brought to Springfield the benefits most longer-lived universities bring to their communities, perhaps because of its relative distance from downtown.
5. SSU doesn't know how to promote itself effectively.

Physical Plant

Strengths
1. For a university of its size, SSU has an extremely high quality library (including both the collection and the facility).
2. The university's Public Affairs Center and auditorium is an attractive and valuable asset to the central Illinois community.
3. When completed, the new Health and Sciences Building and related site improvements will greatly improve the campus physical and academic environments and serve as a recruitment tool.
4. The university's continuing education activities and its conference facilities, together with the high quality food service, are major assets.
5. The university's maturing landscape and site improvements continue to make the campus increasingly attractive.

Weaknesses
1. The quantity and age of microcomputers and their networking are becoming a major deficiency. The inadequate number of copy machines in the library and old, out-of-date audio visual equipment is also becoming a problem. The campus telecommunications system is in need of updating.
2. Although existing university housing is popular and of good quality, there is not enough of it to meet current demand.
3. The quality and diversity of recreational facilities is inadequate. Expanded day care center facilities are needed. Common areas, including lounges and other socializing-type spaces, are needed.
4. The size and number of classrooms, as well as sound transmission between classrooms, especially if electronic media are used, is a problem, particularly in Brookens Library. Heating and cooling of classrooms in Brookens is uneven.
5. Access to the university is presently available via two two-lane roads. The anticipated 11th Street extension project would greatly alleviate current and future traffic problems.
A major reason institutions undertake strategic planning is to determine whether the goals they have been pursuing should be maintained or modified in light of changing circumstances. Sangamon State, like other universities, has historically articulated a variety of goals, both in relation to external outcomes and to the campus climate. When taken together, individual and group preferences for particular institutional goals constitute an important expression of the university's identity. To reach a clearer understanding of the internal goal preferences and associated values at SSU, the Strategic Planning Task Force (SPTF) will shortly administer a campus-wide survey called the Institutional Goals Inventory (IGI).

The Institutional Goals Inventory

Several features of the IGI make it particularly well-suited for use in SSU's strategic planning effort. First, the IGI was specifically developed by the Educational Testing Service (ETS) to help universities clarify their goals and determine their priorities. Second, it was designed to accommodate supplementary items tailored to individual institutions, so that questions of particular relevance to SSU could be included. Third, the survey can be tabulated fairly rapidly through computer scoring by ETS. Finally, IGI data from other colleges and universities will be available for comparative purposes.

The Local (SSU) Items in the IGI

During several brainstorming sessions, the SPTF developed 20 items that focus on strategic issues now facing Sangamon State. These items will be included, along with the more generic items, in the IGI instrument that will be administered on campus within the next few weeks.

Administration of the IGI

Feedback from the university as a whole is essential to the strategic planning process, so the survey will go to all campus faculty, staff and administrators and a representative sample of students. This represents a valuable opportunity for employees and students at Sangamon State to indicate how they see the university functioning at the present time versus how they would like to see it function in the future. Administering the IGI to a sample of the total student population was dictated by practical constraints that make it impossible to survey all currently enrolled students. The student sample will be drawn from 34 courses selected by the Institutional Values Committee, which is comprised of Lynn Pardie, assistant professor of psychology; Diane Long, registrar; Horace Chapman and Melissa Little of Institutional Studies; and Renee Lange, assistant professor of psychology. Specific courses within all four schools at SSU have been chosen to participate based upon proportional representativeness according to such factors as undergraduate/graduate status, day/evening scheduling, on-campus/off-campus location, gender and racial background of enrollees etc. Administration of the survey in these courses will begin during the week of Sept. 30. Committee members regret disrupting a class session in each of the selected courses, and they greatly appreciate the cooperation of the faculty and students in those courses.

The IGI Schedule

The IGI will take about an hour to complete; responses will be completely anonymous. Because of the survey's length and the complexity involved in adding the supplementary local items, the IGI will be administered to faculty, staff and administrators in group sessions where trained volunteers can assist with the process and answer any questions that might arise. To make the survey as accessible as possible and to maximize the opportunity of employees to participate, four days of open survey times have been scheduled at a single location. Sessions will be held at 8 a.m., 10 a.m., noon, 2 p.m., 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. in PAC conference room G on the following dates: Monday, Oct. 7, through Thursday, Oct. 10. Faculty, staff and
administrators may choose to attend any of these group sessions.

The committee realizes that for some it may be impossible to make any of the open sessions. Therefore, anyone unable to attend is invited to participate in the survey by contacting Lynn Pardie (Brookens 488, 786-6696) to request an IGI and a copy of the relevant instructions. Everyone’s participation is crucial to ensure that the survey results are not only as meaningful as possible but also truly representative of the university as a whole.

Survey Results

Completed surveys will be sent to the ETS for tabulation, and results will be returned to the SPTF in about three weeks. The committee will assist the SPTF in consolidating the findings and formulating an appropriate summary. The findings will then be presented to the campus in a future newsletter, and an open follow-up meeting will be scheduled to obtain your comments and perspectives on their implications for the university’s future.

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Strategic planning in higher education must place the institution within the context of its primary service region. This is important not only in terms of how well the university has met the community’s past needs and expectations, but also in terms of how the university might more effectively interact with its immediate environment in the future.

Sangamon State University would never have been established without the commitment and support of many individuals and groups in this area. Since the university opened in 1970, however, it has made no systematic attempt to sample community perspectives on how Sangamon State functions with respect to its perceived role. The need for such feedback has never been more urgent because, as state funding for public higher education declines, SSU must increasingly attract private support to fill the gap. Just as successful community fund raising depends upon productive dialogue between town and gown, so a successful strategic plan makes both the campus and the community feel like shareholders in the university’s future.

With this in mind, the Strategic Planning Task Force created five Strategic Planning Advisory Committees (SPACs). Each focused on a particular segment of the surrounding community and consisted of selected representatives from that group. The SPACs and their membership appear below:

**Artistic/Cultural:** Carole Kennerly, chair
Margaret Boswell, entertainment editor, *State Journal-Register*; Kay Feurer, executive director, Springfield Area Arts Council; Dick Morse, Melotte-Morse Ltd.; Naomi Ross, director, Voices of Love, Joy, and Peace; and Terry Scrogum, former assistant to the governor in the arts.

**Education:** Leroy Jordan, chair
Valerie Christman, vice president for human resources, Horace Mann Educators; Phil Davis, director of planning for regional medical programs, Southern Illinois University School of Medicine; Mary Loken, director of special education, District 186; Karen Siciliano, research and test development, Central Management Services; and Norman Stephens, vice president for academic affairs, Lincoln Land Community College.

**Minority:** Allan Woodson, chair
Carolyn Blackwell, director of federal programs, District 186; Carl Fox, director of budget and planning, City of Springfield; Robert Moore, Robert Moore Associates; J. Barron Robinson, assistant principal, Lanphier High School; and Howard Veal, president, Springfield Urban League.

**Private Sector:** Michael Ayers, chair
Michael Boer, president, Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce; Julie Davis, Julie Davis Realtors; Caroline Oxtoby, Maldaner’s Restaurant; Sergio Pecori, vice president for marketing, Hanson Engineering; John Staudt, president, Marine Bank of Springfield; and Guerry Suggs, senior vice president, First National Bank of Springfield.

**Public Sector:** J. Michael Lennon, chair
Dave Anderson, Illinois State Bar Association; Linda Hawker, Secretary of the Senate; Charles Wheeler, *Chicago Sun-Times*; Lauren Scholnick, legislative liaison, AFSCME; and Douglas Whitley, director, Illinois Department of Revenue.

The SPACs initially convened on May 6, when the university’s strategic planning process was reviewed and the role of the SPACs in that process was explained. Each SPAC then met individually over the summer to prepare a summary report for consideration by the task force in the fall. This newsletter summarizes the major conclusions and recommendations of the five SPAC reports. It also contains summaries of subsequent discussions the SPTF conducted, first with each SPAC individually and then with all SPAC members at a follow-up meeting hosted by President Naomi B. Lynn on Oct. 7.

Please review the conclusions on the reverse side and share your reactions with the task force, either by forwarding written comments to Judy Everson, SPTF secretary, PAC 574, or by attending one of three open meetings scheduled for this purpose and announced below:

- **Thursday, Oct. 24**
  - Noon to 1 p.m.
  - PAC 3-J

- **Thursday, Oct. 24**
  - 5 to 6 p.m.
  - PAC 3-J

- **Friday, Oct. 25**
  - Noon to 1 p.m.
  - PAC 3-J

As always, the task force appreciates your interest and participation.
Artistic/Cultural

1. The arts, broadly defined to include performance, spectator and critical opportunities, should be part of a comprehensive undergraduate experience. SSU has defined public affairs too narrowly and needs to provide students with cultural refinement as well as technical training. While understanding the challenges posed by the university’s upper-division status, the SPAC believes we must strengthen undergraduate exposure to the arts—perhaps through survey courses, use of qualified community members as adjunct faculty and greater cooperation with other schools.

2. The SSU Auditorium is widely viewed as a commercial adjunct to the university rather than a community resource or public service facility. Its rental fees and ticket prices exclude many individuals and groups. A community advisory committee and a downtown or White Oaks ticket outlet are recommended.

3. Diversity of artistic programming over WSSU was commended, especially the use of regular arts reviewers and reporters.

4. A future town & gown meeting should be scheduled on an artistic/cultural issue rather than the usual fare of political, economic or educational topics.

5. Interns from the community arts management program need to be well qualified and prepared as institutional representatives to the area’s arts community.

Education

1. SSU should revisit its mandate to serve as a capstone institution for community college transfers, with a view toward strengthening this aspect of our mission. We could help community college faculty and staff perform their jobs more effectively via conferences, workshops and courses. We could also assist these schools in conducting needs assessments regarding lower-division and upper-division course work.

2. SSU should expand its articulation efforts with community colleges, building upon its existing record in this regard. Equivalent programs or departments could cooperate across institutional lines by sharing personnel and facilities as well as discussing common curricular concerns. Such collaboration might attract external grant support.

3. SSU should become more creative in providing educational services, pursuing joint programs with other institutions, targeting specific needs for intensive formats, developing customized or contract courses for the public and private sectors (on site as well as on campus) and exploring options like interactive television instruction, self-study videos and correspondence course work.

4. SSU should establish more internship programs at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, first assessing what has worked and not worked in this area in the past. An internship advisory council would be helpful, along with a general flyer on all SSU internships and a toll-free number to call for information on them.

5. SSU should seek and publicize excellence in all of its academic programs by asking them to submit annual reports as the basis for an institutional snapshot for internal and external distribution. SSU should use its expertise in survey research to poll the community for perceptions of its performance.

6. SSU should provide leadership in improving the quality of education offered by area school districts and colleges. We could offer graduate courses for college faculty and do follow-up studies of our graduates with their employers.

Minority

1. SSU should conduct in-service training for area teachers to sensitize them to the needs of at-risk African-American children, especially 12- to 17-year-old males in danger of dropping out of school.

2. SSU should better market its credit-for-prior-learning program in the African-American community. For financial reasons, many blacks enter the workforce directly out of high school and may not realize that their work and other experiences could qualify them for college credit.

3. SSU should enhance its efforts to recruit minority faculty and staff members, particularly at the senior level, not only to diversify its workforce, but also to serve as role models for its minority students. SSU needs to explore how it can be Springfield can be made more attractive to African-Americans both socially and culturally. Black professionals from the community might be asked to help host prospective minority hires during their visits to campus.

4. SSU should pursue private funding for tuition waivers for minority students. For example, we could develop an articulation agreement with LLCC to cover the CILCO-sponsored students there with waivers so that they can continue their education here. We should also support the Board of Regents’ articulation effort with Chicago city colleges and implement work-study programs to help students finance their educations while gaining practical employment experience.

5. SSU should consider helping to improve existing leadership programs for youth (such as the Chamber of Commerce’s) as well as setting up its own, perhaps in cooperation with another organization.

6. SSU should seek approval for an African-American studies minor at SSU. Furthermore, an African-American advisory group should be established on a permanent basis. Finally, SSU should devote resources to an annual research project on the black community in Springfield, perhaps through one of its centers or via a PAC.

Private Sector

1. SSU is located in the midst of an agricultural region, but this is not heavily reflected in our curriculum or service. We need to review our courses, workshops etc. to see how to recognize this reality more appropriately.

2. The value of specific business degrees has been oversold as a path for entering or advancing in the labor market. Performance is more important than credentials in getting promoted, and the performance areas where recent college graduates seem deficient are communication, computational and computer skills. SSU needs to stress these basics to make its graduates competitive.

3. SSU should build better bridges with the private sector through faculty sabbaticals with area businesses, internships for students with area businesses and participation by university personnel in area business organizations and activities.

Public Sector

1. SSU has defined public affairs too exclusively in terms of state government and needs to expand its coverage to local as well as regional levels and beyond. This is essential because the federal and state governments are shifting problems to the municipal level and because many of the factors facing Illinois are Midwestern (i.e., economic decline, demographic trends).

2. SSU needs to hire a governmental liaison of our own rather than rely exclusively on the lobbying efforts of the Board of Regents’ representative. This person could gather information about pending legislation as well as advocate institutional interests. We are the only one of Illinois’ 12 public universities not to have such a person on staff, and it has compounded our image problem at the Capitol.

3. SSU should play a more aggressive role in gathering and disseminating information. Monographs and books may be needed in some areas, while conferences, courses or workshops will suffice in others. The university might produce or generate material in some cases, while serving as a coordinator or clearinghouse in others.
SSU Strategic Planning

Task Force Update

Solving the Puzzle Together

One way strategic planning differs from other forms of planning commonly conducted in higher education is that it involves careful analysis of the potential future environment of the institution. Strategic planning tries to anticipate the major external forces or trends that could affect the institution, as well as identify the possible opportunities or threats such factors might represent for its long-term interests.

To determine the potential impact of external influences on Sangamon State's future operations and options, the Strategic Planning Task Force (SPTF) last spring assembled four environmental scanning groups: Economic/Technical, Educational/Competitive, Political/Legal and Social/Demographic. Each group, chaired by an SPTF member and consisting of other representatives from the campus or the community, met during the summer and fall to review pertinent information and to prepare a written summary with recommendations. Over the past month the SPTF has met individually with each scanning group to hear and discuss its conclusions.

Newsletters #5 and #6 (forthcoming) provide highlights of these reports and discussions for your review and reaction. As always, you are invited to share your comments with the SPTF in two ways: Send written remarks to Judy Everson, SPTF secretary, PAC 574, or attend an open meeting with SPTF members. Hearings on the two reports covered in this newsletter -- Economic/Technical and Educational/Competitive -- are scheduled as follows:

Thursday, Nov. 14, noon-1 p.m., Hatmaker Room, 5th floor, PAC
Thursday, Nov. 14, 5-6 p.m., PAC conference room G
Friday, Nov. 15, noon-1 p.m., PAC conference rooms A/B

Thank you for your interest and participation. We look forward to hearing from you.

Members of Economic/Technical Environmental Scanning Group
Brian Alley, Chair      Dick Brewer      John Munkirs
Chip Boley            Ron Ettinger      Bill Rogers
Mike Bohl             Ted Mims

Members of Educational/Competitive Environmental Scanning Group
Peg Boudreau, Chair    Ann Larson       Jim Stuart
Stu Anderson          Mike Lennon

Economic/Technical

The group considered three major economic/technical forces that could affect SSU in the future: economics, technology and demographics.

Economically, the group concluded that, while Springfield is relatively recession-proof, it is disproportionately affected by the persistence of flat or declining state revenues. One result, for example, is that fewer state agencies can support their employees' continuing education or training. Members stressed, however, that Springfield offers several potential targets of opportunity for SSU economically. The area's banking, insurance and health industries seem strong and should expand.

Second, the group examined technical trends and concluded that rapid changes in both computer and telecommunication technologies will continue. This promises to place SSU at a competitive disadvantage with other universities because of its heavy reliance on appropriated funds for equipment acquisition and the tendency to cut back on such purchases in tight times. Rival schools that choose to keep current with the latest technology could then effectively compete with SSU for certain local markets, causing the university to lose not only local students but those from outside the area. This, in turn, would have a deleterious effect on the university's reputation and standing.

Finally, members examined likely demographic trends. At best, the group can foresee only limited population growth in SSU's immediate service region (basically, within reasonable commuting distance of campus). This has negative implications for the university's ability to extend indefinitely its 20 semesters of continuous enrollment growth, unless it is able to attract students from either underserved population groups in this area or from further afield. If the university chooses to strengthen and extend its recruitment efforts beyond the immediate region, additional student housing will be essential.

After identifying these trends, the group analyzed more systematically the opportunities and threats posed by each. Considering SSU's location in the state capital, members felt that, although service to state government represented a prospect for modest future growth, the numerous nonprofit associations centered here constituted the university's largest untapped source. Within the private sector, the group also believes that SSU should deal more systematically and responsively with the local banking and insurance industries, especially through the School of Business and Management and the Center for Entrepreneurship and Enterprise Development. The new Health and Sciences Building affords a chance for SSU to enhance its visibility in the allied health fields.

Sangamon State University
preferably in conjunction with area hospitals and the SIU School of Medicine. Such inter-institutional initiatives in the past, however, have been compromised by the need for time-consuming program and budget reviews within Illinois' higher education system of systems, which often makes unencumbered private institutions more flexible and attractive partners.

In terms of technical threats and opportunities, SSU should make greater use of existing and emerging technologies. This would permit more-effective outreach beyond the campus. This opportunity becomes a threat, however, if the university cannot afford to remain competitive with rival schools that use the same technology to offer more instruction or training here on a remote basis, perhaps without adequate Illinois Board of Higher Education coordination or control. Reliance on appropriated funding for equipment purchases and the tendency to cut these rather than personnel lines in tight times has limited SSU's access to state-of-the-art equipment as well as its capability to network both on and off campus. This has long-term implications for the continuing currency and marketability of our faculty and staff.

The group also identified other potential threats that SSU should anticipate and, if possible, forestall. As state funding for public higher education declines, SSU is further handicapped by its reticent pursuit of external funding, especially grants and substantial private donations. When faculty salaries fail to keep pace with either inflation or the marketplace, SSU's historic difficulty in defining the proper balance between employees performing research or consulting services through SSU and those on the faculty, the university’s traditional lack of emphasis on research, and the university’s decision to limit support for this activity could lead to frustration and failure and dampen aspirations to become a doctoral-granting university. Finally, in an era of shrinking resources, SSU may have greater difficulty adequately serving its two different types of students — the adult, part-time student who needs more evening support services than the university provides, and the younger, full-time student who expects a more well-rounded campus life than the university provides. This could have a negative impact on recruiting and retaining such students.

Educational/Competitive

This group concluded that SSU enjoys several potential competitive advantages over other schools that could be more fully exploited. Many of these advantages, however, also suggest related disadvantages — both real and potential — that must be considered as well.

Members agreed on SSU's key advantages:

1. Extensive experience in educating transfer students,
2. Success in serving returning adult learners in flexible formats,
3. Integration of younger students into the fabric of campus life,
4. Traditional position as one of the least expensive of the 12 public universities in Illinois,
5. Reputation for providing students individualized attention through relatively small classes and personalized advising, and
6. Commitment to providing students with a public affairs education, both in terms of citizenship preparation and governmental training.

Implicit within these advantages the group identified the following disadvantages that also require institutional attention:

1. As competition for transfer students increases, SSU must stress that these students are the rule here, not the exception, and that the university's assessment and follow-up efforts ensure that these students are more likely to complete their degrees.
2. SSU could attract additional adult learners by promoting the Credit for Prior Learning program more effectively, providing private support to compensate for financial aid policies that don’t fit older students and offering off-campus learning opportunities.
3. SSU should expand extra-curricular activities for younger students and broaden its athletic programs.
4. Forensics should be implemented as a complement to our public affairs mandate.
5. SSU should determine how the cost of higher education affects SSU students' enrollment decisions and use this information to monitor future increases in tuition and fees.
6. SSU must realize that as the average class size rises, faculty is further challenged and SSU's reputation for having smaller classes than larger public universities is threatened.
7. SSU's ability to deliver a public affairs education to a statewide clientele hinges in part on expansion of residential housing on campus.

The group also examined the competitive advantage represented by certain SSU programs, either because they are unusual or because demand for their graduates seems likely to rise. SSU has not realized its potential in terms of graduate enrollment, especially by full-time non-commuters. Those programs that should be more aggressively marketed beyond SSU's immediate service region include community arts management, environmental studies, gerontology, health services administration (BA and MA), individual option (BA and MA), legal studies (BA and MA), management information systems, public health and social justice professions.

The group further examined SSU's relationships with Lincoln Land Community College, Illinois Central College and Millikin. While there has been inter-institutional cooperation in the past, these efforts should be expanded to include joint recruitment and career planning for students, shared utilization of faculty and facilities, enhanced computer networking and coordinated professional development activities for staff. LLCC, which operates 30 off-campus centers to SSU's four, might discuss SSU's selective use of these facilities. The pros and cons of maintaining the current Peoria offerings should be carefully analyzed, given the difficulties involved, but SSU's offerings through Millikin's Graduate Center and in Jacksonville should be expanded.

Finally, the group explored the issue of SSU's possible conversion to a four-year institution, a matter of vexing complexity that cannot be long ignored. To offer a more conventional baccalaureate, many senior-level institutions have already converted. Some local students, who now go away or go without, might prefer to earn a four-year degree at SSU. The topic is a contentious one for faculty. Some would like to control undergraduates' general education experience through this means. Others, however, do not want to teach lower-division courses. The unlikelihood of new funding must also be added to the equation. Political responses have been mixed at best. Not surprisingly, both local colleges — with which SSU has enjoyed amicable relations — have announced strong opposition to the proposal.
This issue of the Update summarizes the reports of the political/legal and the social/demographic environmental scanning groups. Please review the conclusions and share your response by writing to Judy Everson, SPTF secretary, PAC 574, or by attending one of the following open meetings with SPTF members:

Monday, Nov. 25, noon - 1 p.m., PAC conference room F
Monday, Nov. 25, 5 - 6 p.m., PAC conference room F
Tuesday, Nov. 26, noon - 1 p.m., PAC conference room F

The SPTF appreciates your interest and participation. We also thank the members of the scanning groups:

**Political/Legal Scanning Group**
Larry Golden
Ron Michaelson, executive director

**State Rep. Karen Hasara, chair**
**Memorial Medical Center**
**State Sen. Vince Demuzio**
**Nancy Ford**

**Social/Demographic Scanning Group**
Chris Narcisse
Mike Townsend
Bill Warren

**Homer Butler, chair**
**Horace Chapman**
**Harriet Kandelman**
**Diane Long**

**Political/Legal**

This group analyzed eight external forces or trends that SSU should consider in planning for the future. Members tried to identify both opportunities and threats posed by each force or trend to the institution.

1.) **SSU’s mission**

It is vital for any university to understand and articulate its overall mission clearly. As part of its strategic plan, SSU must refine its mission statement to reflect not only the institution’s past experiences but also its present circumstances and future prospects. Each element of SSU’s mission needs to be revisited to determine whether it should be retained and, if so, how well it is currently being met and how it could be performed more effectively. This self-scrutiny assures that the university keeps faith with those who founded it and those who fund it.

There was agreement that SSU’s mandate to be innovative, in particular, has been neglected and that, if it is to be retained, it will need to be revitalized. Several reasons for the inattention to this mandate were suggested: The rest of higher education has caught up with some of SSU’s early experimentation, so the university no longer appears to be on the cutting edge; SSU has been more inclined to try new things than to evaluate how well some of them work; successful innovative efforts have not been effectively publicized through conferences or publications; and administrative turnover, as well as reorganization, has sent mixed signals internally about the value of innovation.

2.) **Public affairs mandate**

Another part of SSU’s mission that needs to be reviewed is its public affairs mandate. The group agreed that this mandate was both a “given” and a good thing overall but disagreed about some of its implications. This is not surprising, since there has never been complete clarity, consensus or consistency on campus about how this mandate should be interpreted and implemented. While SSU has probably gained more than it has lost from the resulting ambiguity thus far, this could change for the worse if the university continues to face declining resources, coupled with rising demands for external accountability.

The university needs to decide how important public affairs should be within its overall mission and how to best carry out associated instructional, research and service activities. Because of SSU’s location in the state capital, it was originally conceived and promoted as the public affairs university of Illinois. Recently, however, the university has officially been presenting itself as a comprehensive institution with a public affairs emphasis. The distinction is significant, since each approach carries curricular and staffing implications. A related issue is whether public affairs should pervade the curriculum and be the responsibility of all faculty, or whether it should be the focus of designated parts of the institution, such as the public affairs colloquia (PACS) and the Institute for Public Affairs. SSU has tried both models — the diffused and the concentrated — with mixed results.

3.) **Doctorate in public affairs**

Illinois lags behind many industrial states in providing doctoral-level education in public affairs, particularly for practitioners in state government. SSU’s D.P.A. proposal, which has been approved internally and by the Board of Regents, has been resubmitted to the Board of Higher Education following revisions suggested by the Commission of Scholars. There are many opportunities associated with the D.P.A., including its consistency with the public affairs mandate, its potential for enhancing the scholarly climate on campus and its contribution to institutional visibility. The major threat associated with pursuing the D.P.A. at this time is the lack of state funds for its implementation, should it be approved. Without $238,500 in new monies for first-year start-up costs, implementation might have to be delayed.
4.) Four-year conversion option

Equally fatal for SSU’s future is the question of whether it should become a four-year institution. Group members concluded that this is the hottest political issue SSU faces. Nationally, the number of senior-level institutions has declined substantially in the past decade. This trend can be partly explained by demographic trends: Four-year schools have had to accept community college transfers they had previously discouraged.

Several opportunities are associated with this option. First, SSU’s enrollments would increase because of more effective competition with other four-year schools. Also, by controlling upper-division as well as upper-division course work, SSU would be better able to ensure the coherence and integrity of its students’ programs of study. Institutional costs would be reduced by economies of scale not now possible. Finally, the quality of student life on campus would improve.

Associated threats must be weighed, however. SSU is experienced in serving an adult, part-time commuter population; conversion to four-year status would attract a different population, one that would be younger, full-time and live on campus. Many SSU faculty prefer to teach advanced undergraduates rather than freshmen and sophomores. Given Illinois’ fiscal problems, new state funds may not be available for introducing lower-division course work at SSU. Both Lincoln Land Community College and Springfield College in Illinois have voiced strong opposition to a possible conversion, and cooperative arrangements with these and other transfer institutions might be jeopardized. Finally, SSU must consider the optimal size and student mix toward which it aims.

5.) Peoria option

Since 1975, SSU has offered baccalaureate degree programs in Peoria. Enrollment there has grown from around 250 to more than 450 students. Group members agreed that there is still a substantial underserved population in the Peoria area that SSU could continue to serve. No additional state funding is available for this purpose, however, and resources spent in Peoria must be subtracted from those needed on the Springfield campus, where student growth is also occurring. Also, the Board of Higher Education’s grant program has strengthened ties between Bradley University and Illinois Central College, while weakening them between SSU and ICC. SSU needs to decide now whether it has the resources to continue this outreach effort at a level of sufficient quality or whether it can make better use of its resources without sacrificing too much enrollment.

6.) Law school

There is some local support for SSU acquiring a law school, especially one that would offer instruction in an evening and weekend format. Such a program could build on existing legal studies faculty expertise as well as library resources on campus and in the community. SSU could offer an innovative curriculum, perhaps emphasizing public law or developing an interdisciplinary focus. Inter-institutional cooperation is also a possibility.

State funding for a new law school at a public university, however, appears unlikely for some time. In addition, the legal studies master’s degree program might be jeopardized by competition with a local law school, and many legal studies faculty may not have the desire or the necessary experience to teach in law school. Also, opposition from other universities with law schools can be expected, along with concerns that the local market for lawyers is already glutted.

7.) Health

The health care industry in Springfield and central Illinois is growing, and SSU should take advantage of this development whenever possible. Such efforts are compromised, however, by the slow process for program and budget approval within public higher education, as opposed to the speedy response time permitted in private institutions. Two ways to make SSU’s health care graduates more competitive in the local market are to encourage them to become better educated rather than narrowly trained and to design more exit points for graduates so that employers can hire them year-round.

8.) Higher education funding in Illinois

State funding for public higher education in Illinois has followed a feast or famine cycle in recent years, making long-term planning difficult. Two possible future trends in funding could affect the university. First, the legislature may reconsider the current 1/3-2/3 ratio in funding between higher education and elementary/secondary education. If this occurs, higher education is likely to suffer because more legislators and voters perceive the unmet needs of grades K-12 as greater. Second, the legislature is under growing pressure to reexamine the amount of state support for private higher education in light of unmet needs among public institutions. If this happens, SSU could benefit from the resulting shift in resources.

Social/Demographic

This group examined some of the major social and demographic changes that have affected SSU over its existence and anticipated some consequences of future trends.

Among the key social changes identified were —
1.) Students have become more politically conservative and job-oriented.
2.) SSU’s faculty is growing older on average, while the university’s full-time student body is growing younger.
3.) SSU remains a rural/suburban campus but, as it attracts growing numbers of inner-city students, urban problems will increasingly manifest themselves here.
4.) Substance abuse is more prevalent now at SSU, particularly alcohol abuse in student housing.
5.) Although there is growing awareness of civil rights and sexual harassment issues, there has been an increase in racial incidents on campus that reflects a changing national climate on these sensitive subjects.

Among the key demographic changes mentioned were —
1.) The six years of successive enrollment increases at SSU.
2.) Illinois’s population and SSU’s student body is becoming increasingly diversified.
3.) Retention rates for SSU’s African-American and Hispanic students equal those for their majority student counterparts on campus and exceed those of minority students at other institutions.
4.) SSU’s student body has undergone a gender shift from 60 percent male/40 percent female in 1970 to 60 percent female/40 percent male in 1991.
5.) Over the past decade, the number of 17-23-year-olds has increased, while the number of 24-34-year-olds has decreased.
6.) LLCC continues to be SSU’s major undergraduate feeder, and most of the university’s students still come from the 10 counties contiguous to Sangamon County.
7.) The continuing shift in program enrollments from the liberal arts and social sciences to business suggests that SSU might consider capping enrollments in some oversubscribed programs.

The group also recommended that, in order for the university to continue to recruit and retain a sufficiently diverse student body, SSU focus on minority students in local secondary schools and area community colleges as well as pursue more aggressively HECA grants and other external sources of support for such efforts.
Survey results summarized

During the fall semester of 1991, the Strategic Planning Task Force (SPTF) administered a campus-wide survey to assess individual and group preferences for particular institutional goals and functions. The survey included 90 goal statements from the Institutional Goals Inventory (IGI) and an additional 20 goal statements that focused on strategic issues now facing Sangamon State University. Participants gave their perceptions of how important each goal is at SSU and their opinion of how important each goal should be. The Institutional Values Committee which guided the survey process and analyzed the results was comprised of Lynn Pardie, assistant professor of psychology; Diane Long and Rupa Kodachwad of the Registrar's Office; Horace Chapman and Melissa Little of Institutional Studies; and Rense Lange, assistant professor of psychology.

Faculty, staff, administrators and a representative sample of students were asked to participate in the survey. Surveys were distributed and returned in envelopes to ensure anonymity of responses. Although it was originally planned that the survey would be administered to employees in open group sessions, attendance at the scheduled sessions was low. Therefore, surveys were mailed to all those who had not previously attended a group session. Surveys were administered to students during class time, with the permission of their instructors. Of 1,150 surveys distributed, 732 were completed and returned to the Educational Testing Service for tabulation.

Typically, 80 of the IGI statements are condensed into 20 basic goal areas. Thus, rudimentary statistical analyses were conducted on the tabulated data for the 20 basic goal areas, 10 individual IGI goals and 20 goals specific to SSU. A summary of the results is presented here; however, the full report is available at the Brookens Library Information Desk for review.

Although there were response rates for faculty, staff and administrators were lower than expected, comparisons between the obtained groups and target populations on variables such as school/division, race/ethnicity and gender tended to support the representativeness of the survey participants. Overall, results of the survey showed a notable convergence of group perspectives on the present and preferred importance of many institutional goals. Such convergence is exemplified in the graph on the back of this newsletter. The graph presents the average preferences of students, faculty, staff and administrators regarding how important each of the 20 basic goal areas should be. The rating scale is anchored at 1 = of no importance/not applicable and 5 = of extremely high importance. Fourteen of the 20 broadly defined goal areas, eight of the 10 individual IGI goals and 11 of the 20 goals specific to SSU were identified as being of high importance to constituents at SSU. The most significant goals for a university are generally considered to be those which are given highest importance by its constituents and for which the university has farthest to go in achieving them (Peterson & Uhl, 1977). The following seven goals emerged as being most significant to constituents at SSU:

1) "To ensure that students who graduate have achieved some level of reading, writing and mathematics competency."
2) "To maintain or work to achieve a reputation standing for the institution within the academic world or in relation to similar colleges."
3) "To maintain a climate in which there is faculty commitment to the general welfare of the institution, open and candid communication, open and amicable airing of differences and mutual trust and respect among students, faculty and administrators. (Community)"
4) "To be organized for continuous short-, medium- and long-range planning for the total institution."
5) "To promote public appreciation of the nature, purpose and accomplishments of the university."
6) "To make special efforts to ensure that all students complete their degrees."
7) "To foster a rich program of cultural events, a campus climate that facilitates student free-time involvement in intellectual and cultural activities, an environment in which students and faculty can easily interact informally, and a reputation as an intellectually exciting campus. (Intellectual/Aesthetic Environment)"

The SPTF and the Institutional Values Committee thank all members of the university community who completed the survey.

Sangamon State University
Institutional Goals Inventory Profile Chart
Sangamon State University
Should Be

Academic Development
Intellectual Orient.
Individ./Personal Dev.
Humanism/Altruism
Cultural/Aesthetic
Trad./Religiousness
Vocational Preparation
Advanced Training
Research
Meeting Local Needs
Public Service
Social Egalitarianism
Social Criticism
Freedom
Democratic Governance
Community
Intel./Aesthetic Env./
Innovation
Off-Campus Learning
Accountability/Effic.

Undergraduate
Graduate
Faculty
Staff
Administrators
### Example of "Matching Process" in Program Mix Decisions

**Inputs to Decisions (Evaluative Criteria)**

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