

**Consultants' Report in Support of Institutional Effectiveness
University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff**

**Prepared for the
Arkansas Department of Higher Education**

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Executive Summary

The University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff is an institution of higher education that has an impressive history. It also has the potential for playing an increasingly vital role in the economy of Arkansas and in the lives of its graduates. The institution has laudable strengths, including its caring and compassionate community, treatment of students needing academic support, assessment plan, and strategic plan. However, the institution also has areas where there are opportunities for growth, including institutional effectiveness, administrative control, and research. Recommendations focus on raising the quality of programs and increasing the numbers of both undergraduate and graduate degrees, while decreasing reliance on developmental education for revenue generation. The institution must pay particular attention to those programs requiring external accreditation and licensure. Finally, the consultants recommend that UAPB update its internal governance and service delivery process.

Introduction

The decision of an African American young adult to attend college defies monumental historical and current trends. Historically, this decision meant defiance of years of discrimination. For current students, such a decision often amounts to rebelling against chronic poverty, impoverished living conditions, high dropout rates, high incarceration rates, splintered family lives, and warehouses that masquerade as K-12 schools. Despite their courage, many are ill-equipped for such a fight and never achieve the college degree that would have provided a better life. It is incumbent upon the state and its assigned institutions of higher education to share in these students' efforts, as these students cannot do it alone.

One such institution that has a mission of working with African American young adults, in particular, and anyone desiring an education, is the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff (UAPB). The University sits in the Arkansas Delta region and is self-described as the "Flagship of the Delta." The University's vision requires UAPB faculty and staff to "provide accessible and affordable offerings that are innovative and relevant, and where course offerings and students' performance ascribe to the highest principles and standards of academic excellence" (UAPB Website, 2010). Happily, this institution has a 137-year history of doing exactly that, as evidenced by a long line of successful alumni found in every human enterprise. Even more important, many graduates have found UAPB to be the catalyst of their life missions, preparing generations of productive and good citizens who lead lives protecting children, the elderly, and the vulnerable.

With this context in mind, it is the purpose of this report to support UAPB's efforts at matching its institutional purpose with institutional performance measures. We write this report with all deference due to this venerable and storied institution. Furthermore, our bias bends toward this notion – that what sustains student learning in the short run will sustain the institution in the long run. Therefore, with history, institutional mission, and sustainability framing our observations, we believe that candid advice will be of the greatest help to the institution. We would be remiss if we did not first recognize the unified effort and sacrifice of UAPB's faculty,

staff, and administration. We do not want our frank advice to be confused as an attack against them. Rather, it is our undiminished admiration of them and their students that we write with directness and urgency.

In higher education, the primary performance measure is student learning, and the assessment of student learning and associated processes (instruction, advising, etc.) is at the heart of institutional effectiveness. The questions for this report are as follows: What are key institutional strengths and weaknesses? Based on assessments done by UAPB, how has the institution made improvements? Based upon assessments, how has the institution stopped activities that are not working? Are internal processes effective and able to support opportunities for growth and improvement? What recommendations may sustain the institution as it begins to place much more emphasis on graduate education?

Procedures

The Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE) contracted two consultants to review institutional effectiveness at UAPB, with a focus on the relationship between internal processes and outcomes. First, the consultants reviewed a wide variety of information including communications among the ADHE, UAPB, and various accrediting bodies; various documents related to University operations; *Change of Role and Scope* documents; and the website. The consultants then spent a day and a half interviewing key individuals from various subunits, faculty, staff, current students, and alumni. The consultants then examined the data independently for patterns and themes related to the institutional effectiveness questions listed above. They organized the report below by strengths, concerns, findings related to institutional effectiveness, and recommendations.

Institutional Strengths

Institutional strengths abound at UAPB and are too numerous to list completely. The team selected those that were repeatedly mentioned or evident through observation.

1. Caring and Compassionate Community. Faculty and staff concern for the students is evident throughout the University community. Unquestionably, the UAPB focus is on students and student success. Anecdotal stories of faculty and staff “going the extra mile” were abundant and told in almost every focus group. The value of this extra effort is incalculable in its contributions to the high retention and graduation rates experienced relative to the educational preparedness of the students currently admitted. If the historical average ACT for incoming freshmen is approximately 16.25 (16.23 in 2009), UAPB’s retention and graduation rates are quite excellent when compared to similar cohorts of regional universities.
2. School Pride. Students and alumni exhibited unashamed pride with their association with UAPB. They were pleased with the total educational experience and hold the faculty, staff and administration in high regard.
3. Aggressive Outreach Effort. UAPB faculty and staff are relentless recruiters aggressively seeking highly qualified students. Many students in the focus groups

related that though they were attending or intended to attend another university, they chose UAPB instead after being approached by a faculty or staff member.

4. **Well-Coordinated Student Advisement and Retention Policies and Procedures.** UAPB makes great effort to advise and monitor students. A comprehensive follow-up and early alert plan exists for at-risk students. All first-time freshmen are placed in the University College and closely monitored until 30 hours are reached. After 30 hours or when a major is selected, students are released to the appropriate academic department for advisement. UAPB dedicates eight staff to this effort.
5. **Assessment Program.** A model assessment program closely aligned with the requirements of the Association of Technology, Management, and Applied Engineering (ATMAE) recommendations was presented by the Industrial Technology program. An advisory board composed of industry representatives was established to annually review the program and give recommendations on program content and direction based on industry needs. Additionally, graduates and employers are periodically surveyed for input on strengths and weaknesses of the program. The information is used in a continuous improvement process. Similar assessment procedures were indicated in assessment report provided to the team.
6. **Mid-level Assessment Results.** The mid-level assessment instrument – Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP) – showed significant improvement in the academic achievement of the UAPB students. With ACT scores significantly below and CAAP scores only slightly below the national average, it is evident that the UAPB students have “come a long way.” UAPB should be commended for the “value added” to the students.
7. **Physical Plant.** The campus was very attractive and well-maintained. The faculty, staff, students and alumni all appeared pleased with the physical condition of the campus.
8. **Strategic Plan.** The University has a very aggressive and well-defined strategic plan that includes adding a master’s degree program in Computer Technology and adding a Ph.D. program in Aquaculture.
9. **STEM Academy.** UAPB has an ambitious goal in increasing the number of STEM students by 10 percent annually. The Academy begins with a 10-week summer program designed to better prepare students for STEM disciplines. Students are introduced to research very early in their college careers with the anticipation that this research will motivate and invigorate them to achieve greater academic success.

Concerns

Also listed are concerns that the team believed vital to the continued growth and success of the institution.

1. Institutional Effectiveness. Retention/persistence rates, graduation rates and pass rates on nationally recognized or licensure exams are often used as indicators of an institution's effectiveness in preparing students for success locally, regionally, nationally and globally. Of particular concern are the low retention and licensure pass rates in disciplines where marquee programs should exist. For example:
 - a. Nursing. Low pass rates of students taking the National Council Licensure Exam (NCLEX) has resulted in the suspension of the program by the Arkansas State Board of Nursing (ASBN). This appears to be a continuing problem and systemic within the discipline at UAPB. Of particular concern is the persistence rate of the students. According to the faculty, approximately 40 to 50 students are admitted annually. Of this number, according to the data provided, 12 took the NCLEX in 2007 (10 passed); 17 took the exam in 2006 (15 passed). Most nursing programs experience significantly higher percentages of entering students who ultimately take the NCLEX. To regain full accreditation, the ASBN is requiring a pass rate of at least 75 percent in FY11 and FY12. According to the nursing students interviewed, there are seven or eight students remaining in the class that are scheduled to graduate in 2011 and three in the class of 2012. Two problems were identified: (1) extremely low persistence/retention rates for these two classes; and, (2) number of students taking the NCLEX is so small that one or two not passing can have a significant and detrimental effect on the pass rates and re-accreditation. The low pass rate results in a very high cost per licensed graduate and an inadequate supply of registered nurses.
 - b. Dietetics. Accreditation for the Dietetics Program was withdrawn by the Commission on Accreditation for Dietetics Education (CADE) due to the low first-time pass rate of its graduates on the Examination for Registered Dietitians. The program was placed on probation in 2008 and accreditation withdrawn in 2009. Application for reaccreditation was made in 2010 after the one-year waiting period. The application is under review by the CADE. Sufficient progress and corrective measures were not made during the probationary year to regain full accreditation.
 - c. Education. In 2007-2008, the total headcount in the School of Education was listed as 437 while the number of students graduating that year was 33 – 26 undergraduate students and 7 graduate students. This represents a completion rate significantly lower than other regional universities.
2. Administration. The administration has strong dedication to the mission of the University. Further, the administration has even exhibited self-sacrifice in the face of budget shortfalls. Clearly, the administration has sustained a good rapport with faculty, staff, students, and alumni. However, significant issues face the administration.

- a. Faculty Salaries. In a meeting with one faculty group, an issue with the lack of faculty salaries increases was raised. Annual bonuses were given; however, no increases to the base salary had occurred since 2005. Though salary data were not obtained, they are believed to be low in comparison with College and University Professional Association for Human Resources (CUPA-HR) and Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) averages. Low salaries have or will ultimately affect the institution's ability to attract and retain qualified faculty and staff.
 - b. Professional Program Accreditation. UAPB seeks accreditation from the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP). UAPB should be complimented on seeking loftier goals; however, ACBSP accreditation will require doctorate-qualified faculty at a significant increase in cost to the University. The concern is the availability of adequate resources to maintain ACBSP accreditation.
 - c. Graduate Programs. UAPB intends to add a Ph.D. program in Aquaculture and a Master's degree program in Computer Technology. These are potentially low enrollment programs that may prove costly to the University. Given other more immediate needs of the University, UAPB should reconsider the expansion of graduate programs other than the Ph.D. in Aquaculture until the institutional and undergraduate program needs are met.
 - d. Interim Positions. There appears to be an inordinately large number of positions with interim titles. Stability in leadership is important to ensure program quality and progress. It is essential that good leadership is quickly sought and supported in these positions.
3. Research. The team did not have an opportunity to thoroughly explore the scope of research occurring at UAPB. This is unfortunate in light of the more than \$17million in external research funds awarded to the University in 2010. Furthermore, UAPB participates as one of five institutions in the Arkansas Research Alliance. Research, as frequently mentioned in the University's STEM documents, plays an integral role in motivating students to better performance and to further study at graduate or professional schools. According to the Department of Biology external review, research is occurring in collaboration with the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences. This is commendable and should be expanded. The report also indicated a lack of adequate research space. Research is an important component of teaching and learning and should be emphasized throughout the University. Additionally, research is foundational to graduate education. It is important that the University gives sufficient emphasis and commits more resources towards research and scholarly activities.

General Findings Related to Institutional Effectiveness

Use of assessments at UAPB. The team found widespread use of assessments of student learning at UAPB, particularly in University College. These assessments included the ACT COMPASS Placement Test and Terra Nova Basic Skills Test. Based upon these assessments, UAPB places students in courses according to their strengths or readiness. Other academic

knowledge and skill assessments include the CAAP, University College Exit Exam, and the English Proficiency Exam. These assessments provide information about students' academic proficiency after completing lower division courses. As a supplement to the academic measures, UAPB has administrated the Cooperative Institutional Research program (CIRP) survey.

Other schools, colleges, and units or activities at UAPB reported wide use of a variety of discipline-appropriate assessments. For example (this list is not intended to be comprehensive), Art uses annual student self-assessments, Chemistry examines work in a capstone course, English uses a senior comprehensive exam, Music uses formal juried assessments at final recitals, Social Work uses surveys focused on field experiences, Business uses employer satisfaction surveys, Education uses PRAXIS exams and internal evaluations, and Agriculture uses student satisfaction surveys of students, alumni, and employers. Other units/activities assess through satisfaction surveys include advising, registration, financial aid, and residential services.

These assessments are part of the UAPB assessment framework that includes all academic departments. The assessment framework requires assessments at four transition points, entry, mid-level, exit, and follow-up. The institutional research and the assessment offices provide support for these myriad efforts. It is easy to conclude that UAPB has a *culture of assessment*, particularly in its academic units.

Relationship between assessment and improvement. The UAPB assessment framework also includes planning. Based on these assessments and surveys, University College provided evidence of planning across a range of years and across all academic units. Based upon assessments, UAPB provided evidence of change. For example, after examining pre-instruction and post-instruction assessments, Math instructors are instituting a major change in the delivery of developmental math. They will essentially increase students' learning time by making a key course a four-hour course rather than three. Additionally, improvement based upon assessments of student and support services was also evident. However, data-driven change seemed to be a relatively newer activity for these areas. Recent students' ratings of registration, advising, residential services, and even academic programs are worrisome.

Opportunities for Growth and Improvement. The institution has some externally identified opportunities for growth and improvement. As an example of what may be a generalized opportunity, the Nursing department has recently lost full approval of its Baccalaureate of Nursing program. Despite active deployment of the assessment framework, student pass rates on the nursing licensure exam have dropped to unacceptable levels. Assessments did not capture curriculum and instruction (C&I) issues, student dissatisfaction, or the inadequacy of how C&I issues and student dissatisfaction are reported by students or faculty. Unfortunately, this issue arose while the institution sought approval for a doctorate in Aquaculture/Fisheries.

UAPB has also self-identified many opportunities for growth and improvement. One example of such areas can be classified as intake processes (e.g., registration, advising, and financial aid), areas where students consistently have reported dissatisfaction both in surveys and in the consultants' interviews. These processes seem heavily dependent on manual processes that appear to produce confusion, frustration, and waste. They often result in less than satisfactory products, like the availability of a course needed for speedy graduation or adequate housing. Students specifically identified financial aid, student readiness, availability of courses, and

housing as urgent issues. Still, UAPB's most important asset appears to be its historically strong *in loco parentis*/family environment and culture. A new source of pride for undergraduates was certainly the Ph.D. in Aquaculture/Fisheries. The institution will need to draw upon this history and pride in order to close the gap between expectations and outcomes.

Ownership of Opportunities for Growth and Improvement. Clearly, the primary owner of these opportunities is the administration. In closing the gap, the administration must realize that its great asset – family environment – may, at times, be at odds with good institutional effectiveness practice. In fact, interrelationships among faculty and staff, may, at times, supplant principle and policy enforcement. For instance, the recent problems with the Nursing program seem associated with a problem-solving strategy of “kicking the can down the road.” There was clear failure to report critical curricular problems to administration.

While Nursing is a localized issue, the intake issues described above are an existential crisis for the University. To support this conclusion, students spoke of their peers skipping class because of long waits at the financial aid office, students who could not afford textbooks, course time conflicts, and inadequate student housing. *The Comprehensive Review* conducted by the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service (CSREES) (USDA, 2006) identified similar issues in faculty support services that seem to resonate with this report including CSREES findings like “a lack of full disclosure of the budgeting process,” omissions that reduced administrators’ ability to monitor faculty, and “outdated practice.” The institution must move now to institute a new regimen of institutional effectiveness.

Recommendations for Institutional Effectiveness

Principles and Assumptions.

- *Outcomes-Based Institutional Effectiveness.* As an institutional effectiveness document, the recommendations below are ends/outcomes-oriented (Nichols & Nichols, 2000). Of course, the ultimate end is intended student learning.
- *Emphasis on Process.* However, because UAPB is already assessment-rich, the reader will also find a focus on process and process-oriented assessment. After an assessment, there is always the question of “Now what do we do with this information?” The recommendations below can help the institution begin to answer that question.
- *Focused Intensity.* The recommendations below are not definitive but do represent a starting place for internal discussion, reflection, and action. As the recommendations below are absent the lived experience of UAPB, administrators may be well-served by bringing focused intensity to the most critical problems that will bring about the greatest good (value) for the University. Focused intensity will require emphasis on licensure programs or any program that has an external high-stakes evaluation. Focused intensity also means that not all programs can be treated the same – performance will need to drive priorities and resource allocation.

1. Institutional Effectiveness. While open admission is key to the University identity, low enrollments plus large percentages of students with significant learning needs cannot be sustained indefinitely by any higher education institution.
 - a. While it may seem counter-intuitive in some areas, in the long run, a focus on quality will solve many issues faced by the administration. For example, there is a long history of institutions raising entering standards and, after a short-term drop in enrollment, experiencing sustained enrollment increases. A notable example is Prairie View A&M University.

The administration should abandon the *ethos* that the institution is “open admissions, but not open exit,” and must afford all students, regardless of preparation, an “opportunity.” In practice, UAPB’s open admissions is creating open exit in the extreme. It stretches the bounds of good practice to accept students who have no real possibility of obtaining a degree. In fact, it is self-deception to equate the entry of anyone, particularly weak students, as an opportunity for those students. UAPB must not allow its open door to become a revolving door. This note is mentioned for three reasons:

- First, the *ethos* was repeated by all levels of administrators, faculty, staff, and even students. Clearly, the principle is part of the culture of the University.
- Second, accepting students who have a very low probability of success saps a good deal of institutional energy. UAPB can implement processes that allow for a standard, while providing students opportunities to work toward that standard and improve their core set of academic skills – prior to formal admission. These opportunities could include new partnerships with feeder public schools, adult basic education programs, and community colleges.

- Third, large developmental education programs seem incongruous with the role and scope of a doctoral granting university. The lone exception would be if this institution generated research about and granted a degree in developmental education. As mentioned by one consultant during the interview, UAPB's developmental education program could be a living laboratory.
 - b. Correlate CAAP scores with program expectations and rigor. Though significant progress is made with students admitted to UAPB, in many cases, preparation appears inadequate to support student success in programs such as Nursing, Dietetics, and Education. Aquaculture/Fisheries appears to require minimum CAAP scores for entry into its programs.
 - c. Review admission criteria in programs leading to licensure to ensure that only students with a reasonable probability of success are admitted. The institution should realize that students with multiple and deep academic concerns may never take rising junior exams, so results of these exams (e.g., CAAP) could be deceptive. The institution should seek to raise the percentage of an entering class that can move to an upper division program. Of students who name a license as their goal at entry to the institution, UAPB should raise the percentage of those students who actually meet that goal.
 - d. Should the institution choose to begin slowly raising entering standards, it should seek special funding from federal and state sources to create an early college high school program (ECHS) in partnership with the Pine Bluff school district (its largest feeder institution). If UAPB raises entering standards, it will be critical that the local school district simultaneously improve the exit quality of its students. An ECHS program will increase the chances that students have the opportunity to be introduced to algebra, for example, well before entry into high school and before students choose a high school academic track. For example, an ECHS starting now could focus on 7th graders, who would be the fall 2016 entering class at UAPB.
2. A new social contract is needed among administration, faculty, staff, and students that shifts the emphasis from history and family to a sustainable future and quality. While the history is laudable and critical, it is important that faculty and staff can articulate the future of their units. Further, they must be able to tie resources generated and received to both action and strategic plans. Therefore, administration must move toward greater levels of transparency and faculty input while taking a more active role in the monitoring sub-unit effectiveness.
- a. This also means that administrators must value hard questions from faculty about processes and finances. Students, faculty, and staff must be able to trust administrative oversight. Trust will flow from the resolution of longstanding problems solved in an appropriately transparent manner. The administration should include meaningful faculty input on the budget, particularly in light of the need to raise admissions standards and to fulfill the strategic plan.
 - b. As a basic tenet of institutional effectiveness, UAPB should implement the following: Make sure that the strategic plan has measureable goals. Anchor the budget to the

strategic plan. Focus the budget on strategic initiatives and track success by evaluating annual action plans. Budget realities may force realistic revisions of the strategic plan. This is a good thing. For example, what will the University look like in 2015 and 2020, and what types of enrollment and other revenue will be needed to sustain that vision? What types of improvements in student and support services will be needed?

- c. The institution should base its enrollment management strategy on efforts to increase quality in strategic areas. Increasing quantity (number of students) in other, non-strategic areas may be needed in order to support these strategic areas (See Table 1 for more on this logic). What follows are examples of how this logic could work. Clearly, the University's aquaculture program approaches stardom (high quality and high quantity). Nursing and teacher certification are two areas where increasing quality can lead to winning programs. Once high quality is externally certified, these programs should increase quantity. Developmental education is an example of a high quantity and low quality (by definition) revenue producing program. It requires special consideration. While developmental education produces significant revenue, it can sap a good deal of institutional energy, in terms of human and other resource allocation. Furthermore, developmental education does not directly produce degrees (a fundamental institutional outcome). Later in this report, we call for UAPB to increase its entering standards. This will mean a reduction in the number of developmental education students. The institution must be prepared to shift resources to upper division programs, so they can grow in both quality and in number of students. Therefore, as the number of students in developmental education courses decreases, both the numbers of students and quality of upper division and graduate programs must increase. Finally, with degree production a fundamental outcome of the University, the institutional goal should be to reduce non-degree producing programs, while increasing winning and star degree producing programs. These winning and star programs can go a long way in feeding and sustaining new, growing graduate programs. Low quality, low enrollment programs may need to be closed. In conclusion, the idea here is to focus instructional energy on those programs that produce the best results in institutional outcomes. Here is a suggested strategy:

- (1) Focus on degree granting programs, start with a market analysis. Where is there the greatest demand?
- (2) Redesign programs to fit the market.
- (3) Focus resources – scholarships, positions, and support – toward these programs.
- (4) Then, market the program aggressively.

The Nursing program is a case-in-point. Nursing is a perennially high-demand profession, and it should be, at least, a winning program, with no end to streams of students. It is an economic game-changer for women in particular. UAPB should use scholarships to bring in cohorts of top students. In particular, UAPB should market to community college-level nursing students. The program should be anchored by key top faculty, persons who could be the center of a marketing campaign focusing on high quality. This program may need an innovative design of some sort, like some courses offered via distance learning. Of course, increased marketing means increased

monitoring. This is a place where administrative focused intensity should produce good results for the program and for the University.

Table 1. Types of University Programs			
Quality	High Quality	Winning Programs	Star Programs
	Low Quality	Programs subject to being cut	High Revenue Programs
		Low Quantity	High Quantity
		Quantity	

- d. High performing programs must be rewarded with more resources. If the Nursing program is unable to turnaround, then UAPB must close the program and redirect those resources to programs that perform well.
- e. Study graduates who come from the developmental education program with the following question: What levels of developmental education can the institution reliably remediate? Based upon these findings, begin slowly decreasing the percentage of students who have a low probability of successful completion.
- f. Move aggressively to enhance any undergraduate retention programs.
- g. Move aggressively to grow the graduate school but only in focused, highly market-driven areas, like education. Establish externally recognized success and quality in one program before starting the next program. Faculty must have incentives to do this, including reassigned time to develop programs and recruit students.
- h. Carefully review the increase in graduate programs offered and accreditation by ACBSP. Evaluate the cost-benefit ratio of these relatively low-enrollment programs.
- i. Evaluate progress on the strategic plan with annual action plans. Action plans are annual plans that convert focused aspects of the strategic plan into action within a particular year. Track progress toward strategic plan by linking results of various action plans across time.
- j. Administrators must increase salary for faculty and key staff. These increases should be across the board first, then driven by merit. In targeted areas, new faculty are needed, and they may need disproportionately higher salaries.
- k. Slow but assured increases in tuition and fees will certainly be needed. While increases in graduate revenue will primarily supplant developmental education losses, tuition and fee increases should be directed to improved services.

- l. Prepare for the future by filling interim positions with new talent from outside the University. Key positions need to be filled with strong leaders who are given a mandate to change operations in order to increase the success of various outcomes.
 - m. Adopt strategies from finance systems similar to responsibility center management (RCM), where the bulk of contact hour/tuition dollars are returned to the units that generate them. RCM is a way of operationalizing the focusing of priorities, and it encourages sub-unit entrepreneurship. It also forces hard discussions about institutional values, as there will always be valuable programs that will need help from high revenue-producing units or external funding sources (e.g., grants and contracts) in order to maintain operations.
 - n. There appear to be many problems with internal processes, like how paperwork flows from one department to another. These new leaders must have the power to improve time-wasting processes. Once done, they should also be able to redirect resources (human and otherwise) to other problems or initiatives. For example, from the outside, requiring students to visit with an advisor prior to exiting University College appears to add little value to either students or the institution. It seems as though this process could be automated in some way.
 - o. As a rule, intake departments and programs (in the case of UAPB, upper divisions), manage advising of incoming students. In this way, programs can get a better idea of the number of courses needed in upcoming semesters. Intake program advising can aid the planning of course rotations. The goal should be to lessen delays in student graduation. If both University College and intake programs have staff-level advisors, administrators must come to terms with what could be an unneeded duplication of services.
 - p. Identify areas above that may be heavy-laden with traditional ways of doing things. Consider hiring a consulting group to help change long-standing practices that may be wasteful of time and resources.
3. Research.
- a. Research is often neglected at undergraduate institutions. The “we’re a teaching institution” attitude can undermine good intentions. Good research is good teaching and learning. Ensure that research is a priority by allocating identifiable rewards for good effort that may include being an integral part of the tenure and promotion system.
 - b. To provide guidance and direction, develop research mission statements, strategic plans, and goals for the University and each academic unit. The goals should be measurable and the academic units held accountable to the goals.
 - c. Identify and provide sufficient resources (faculty, facilities, equipment, supplies, etc.) for good undergraduate research. Develop a University plan and timetable to provide needed facilities (biology, for example).

- d. Recruit and hire faculty who will support undergraduate research at UAPB. Provide reasonable start-up funds and other resources.
4. Developmental Education.
 - a. Surveys are needed to help model relationships among student satisfaction, behavior (e.g., attendance, use) performance, and student starting characteristics.
 - b. The institution must examine the success rate of students with deep and multiple deficiencies and adjust enrollment management efforts accordingly.
 - c. Even while the program examines data, changes need to follow the data. For example, a major change is being made to developmental math (increasing time on task by increasing the number of hours each week that students attend class). While this is probably a good idea, there was little evidence beyond grades that the new method would work for students (i.e., no pilot test or modeling of data was reported). This work may have been done, but the consultants did not see it. With 4a above in mind, some curricular changes may work better than others, depending upon students' profiles. For instance, students with deep, multiple deficits may need developmental education spread out over time, so that they can focus on one deficit at a time – perhaps. This idea is closely related to the notion of triage and lean higher education (see Balzer, 2010). With the student in mind as the beneficiary, finance and institutional researchers should calculate costs of remediating students across various profiles. These data will support administrative efforts to prioritize expenditures. For example, could the institution be better served by redirecting resources (advisors, tutors, instructor time) away from students with severe deficits to those with a greater chance of success? In what ways is value added by the developmental experience, especially for those students with severe deficits who incur debt in order to matriculate? Even the students who were interviewed by the consultants noted that for many students, much more remediation is needed prior to formal admittance. They also noted that academically stronger students (actually those on academic scholarships) need to have priority in the delivery of some services (e.g., housing). In short, the institution should examine and use various value-added metrics for decision-making.
 - d. The institution must examine effectiveness of labs and whether coordination of labs will better serve students. Coordination will be based on need to support students who have multiple deficiencies.
 - e. Developmental education departments/programs should consider partnering with the School of Education for the development of advanced degrees and certifications in developmental education.
 - f. Depending upon findings from studies of developmental student profiles, programs that deliver developmental education may want to consider instructor looping, where a single instructor follows a cohort of students through a series of courses. This practice is

consonant with the culture of the institution, and the strong interrelationships may increase retention through gateway courses.

5. Student and Support Services

- a. Student and support services have to live up to the strategic direction of the institution.
- b. Allocate additional funding for academic support in areas including equipment, research facilities and supplies, and library resources. Deficiencies were noted in several external reviews.
- c. There should be zero tolerance for students not having books or not having adequate housing. The institution must move to preempt situations where students' basic needs (food, housing, materials for classes) are unmet. Well in advance of matriculation, students must be aware of full costs. Some universities have adopted public/private partnerships in order to build apartment complexes near the University. These partnerships reduce costs for the University while filling housing needs. Should enrollment drop, the University does not have to worry about empty dorm space. UAPB should find ways to strategically buy books, like partnering with the local community college or working with consortia of universities to get high volume discounts on books or seek out highly reusable books. Perhaps there are ways to get alumni and local townsfolk to sponsor a student for one book, and then print names of sponsors in some official publication.
- d. For all services, administrators and staff should chart workflows of activities and eliminate unnecessary and wasteful steps for students and faculty. Every process needs a workflow, and these workflows must be public and open to periodic review.
- e. Become obsessive about the website, making sure information is up-to-date and free of grammar problems.

Conclusion: A Bright Horizon, But Never Again . . .

UAPB is poised to march toward a bright horizon, a new day in the history of the institution. Impressively, this new vision includes research and new knowledge generation. It also requires attracting stronger students and faculty who are dedicated to a research vision for this HBCU. Luckily, as the institution moves forward, it has a solid institutional research and assessment foundation. Further, the assessment framework alluded to in several documents and in the interviews with consultants is a laudable decision-making resource.

However, there is an old saying that captures UAPB's current position in light of this report: "What got you where you are today ain't gonna get you to where you want to go." As UAPB expands its mission and reach, the institution also needs to change how it views and practices institutional effectiveness. IE is much more than assessments, plans, and vision; it is the agile monitoring and adjusting of plans and curriculum, the relentless pursuit of quality, the focusing of budgets on priorities, and the eliminating of waste.

A scan of concerns and recommendations also indicate that the institution must take great care in its choice of next steps. UAPB administration, faculty, and staff should resolve to never again allow its name to become associated with low quality or failed programs. If graduate education is a new priority, then graduate education must grow while developmental education becomes more restricted. In fact, the relationships among various parts of the institution (various student and support services) will need to change in order to support this vision of growth. Finally, no one at UAPB should suffer under any illusions: Change is inevitable. Increasingly, for all higher education institutions, future successes will be measured by external agents. Therefore, the institution must, at this time, master its internal parts and processes so that they consistently deliver externally measured success. UAPB's community, its 137-year history, its future, and its students demand this.

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