2. Goals and Expected Outcomes for the Review

The campus community has been deeply involved in a revitalization of General Education for the past four years. At the same time we have been working on outcomes assessment; we created an assessment committee five years ago and have moved slowly and deliberately forward on the issue. Finally, the topics of undergraduate education and the services we provide our students have been addressed in every self-study for the past twenty years; as a very large commuter campus, we are dedicated to providing a holistic undergraduate experience that enhances the learning environment for our students, and we must ensure that the services we provide our students both increase and improve as the campus enrollment increases. The complicating consideration, however, is the need to improve performance in all of the areas just mentioned while operating under a fixed budget.

Our goals are straightforward. We expect to broaden the scope of the already-existing reflective dialogue about these issues to embrace not only the issues themselves but how they will—and should—affect the life of the entire institution. This will allow us to involve even more members of the institutional community and, at the same time, to develop an institutional consensus. The goal—institutional consensus in the form of policies and procedures—is less important in the long run than the institutional dialogue that precedes such a consensus.

Having grappled with these issues for half a decade, we would appreciate having external reviewers—conversant with the issues and knowledgeable about other institutions—visit our campus and critique our efforts. Although we regularly send delegations to major conferences (the AAHE is a good example), learning from others at conventions is not the same as having colleagues visit the campus, observe our efforts, and deliver a critique. Indeed, the preparation of an institutional self-study, and the subsequent visit by an off-campus team, will give the campus a further stimulus to focus our efforts as well as an external validation of those efforts.