2003

Academic Plan

This plan has been replaced by the Academic Plan adopted in 2007.
Go to http://academicplan.uconn.edu for the most current version.

ACADEMIC PLAN TASK FORCE REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Academic excellence demands effective planning. The Academic Plan provides a set of planning principles and objectives to assist trustees, administration, and faculty in choosing academic priorities over the next decade including 21st Century UConn and capital projects. It will function as a general roadmap for capital and operating expenditures. The goal is to use selective strategic investments to bring the University into the top tier of public universities.

The Academic Plan sets out six broad Areas of Emphasis to focus the creative energies of faculty. The resource reallocation model builds on existing processes that have been concentrating University resources on selected programs through budgetary realignment and strategic hires. Competition for resources within the framework of priorities is designed to enable the University to achieve excellence in each Area of Emphasis. This competitive process gives direction to the many kinds of research and teaching that mark great universities.

The Academic Plan process is supervised by the Chancellor for Academic Affairs who assigns resources to programs through colleges, schools, and centers, and through the proposed Chancellor's grant competition. As in the past, strategic investments in faculty, equipment and facilities will achieve measurable advances in excellence. To assess progress in such areas as student performance, diversity goals, external grants, productivity, and best academic practices, the University will measure achievement according to internal and national benchmarks. By focusing University resources, the plan will lead to higher levels of faculty achievement and student excellence.

The Academic Plan is intended to assure that the State of Connecticut's major investment in University facilities will achieve the maximum return for the entire range of University missions. Accordingly, the Plan sets out principles for facilities and physical planning on the several University campuses. Guidelines are provided for structures that best serve academic programs for maintenance efficiencies, and for consolidation of activities in fewer buildings. The plan also supplies a management model that ensures responsive, flexible use of classrooms.

The Academic Plan recognizes the necessity of assuring a strong administrative and professional infrastructure. A sufficient number of highly qualified staff will perform essential activities, with incentives for excellence. The plan also recognizes that library resources and information technology require support consistent with the aspirations of the University.

The Academic Plan supplies a general roadmap for decision-makers, not a blueprint. Familiarity with this map will enable all participants—trustees, administrators, faculty, staff, and students—to direct their energies toward advancing the missions of the University of Connecticut, elevating its stature, and fulfilling its purpose as a source of educational, economic, social, and cultural development for Connecticut, the nation, and the world.

<u>BENCHMARKS toward EXCELLENCE</u>

Introduction
In order to enhance the quality and stature of the University of Connecticut, and to assure accountability to its constituencies, the Academic Plan proposes six categories of measurement—benchmarks—for assessing University performance. These benchmarks are both internal (measuring ourselves according to our own past performance) and external (comparing University performance to that of other public research universities).

The external benchmarks include faculty and institutional measures. The external benchmarks discussed below involve comparisons only with other public research universities in the United States. It should be noted that the University of Connecticut is increasingly competing in an international arena. It is hoped that in the future benchmarks will be developed for such international comparisons as doctoral programs and publications in first-rank journals.

Internal benchmarks include standards for undergraduate students, graduate students, faculty, and institutional measures. The Academic Plan aims to enable the University of Connecticut to rise in national rankings and to meet the goals of the University diversity plan while the institution strives to be the best that it can be, independently of what other institutions may achieve.

Peer Institutions
Based on the model created by the Connecticut Department of Higher Education (DHE), peer institutions for purposes of quality comparison are:

Colorado State University	University of Missouri
Iowa State University	University of Nebraska
University of Iowa	Rutgers University
Louisiana State University	University of Tennessee
University of Massachusetts	West Virginia University

It should be noted that many of these are larger in size than the University of Connecticut so comparisons can be misleading.

The institutions listed above were chosen as peers based on such characteristics as:
- Public institution
- Land grant institution
- State flagship institution
- Similarities in research productivity, particularly research external funding through grants and contracts
- Comprehensive array of academic programs, from undergraduate to doctoral levels

These peers have been selected based on our present status. There are also aspirational peers that we wish to emulate in various ways as we realize the goals of our academic plan: University of California at Berkeley, University of Michigan, University of Wisconsin, University of Texas, University of Illinois, University of Virginia, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and University of California at San Diego.

Because some of these universities, particularly the aspirational peers, are substantially larger than University of Connecticut, according to some measures they will necessarily outrank us; however it is appropriate to meet or exceed their standards in many areas.

Key Characteristics of Actual and Aspirational Peers
- SAT scores and class rank of undergraduate students
- Student/Faculty ratio
- GRE/LSAT/MCAT/GMAT scores of graduate students
- Research expenditures
- Research expenditures/FTE Research Faculty
- Diversity of undergraduate students

The Goals

<p align="center"><u>*Internal:*</u></p>

Undergraduate Students
➢ Increase the mean high school rank in class of entering students by 5% over the next five years to the 85% range from the present 80% (2003).
➢ Increase the combined SAT score of entering students by 25 points over the next five years into the 1200 range from the 2003 score of 1170.
➢ Make comparable improvements for class rank and standardized admissions tests in professional school rankings.
➢ Meet the goals of the University diversity plan.
➢ Improve the freshman/sophomore retention rate at Storrs to over 90% during the next five years to make them more comparable to aspirant schools (2002 rate = 88%).
➢ Improve the six-year overall graduation rate to over 70% during the next five years (2002 rate = 68%).
➢ Compile data on prestigious national prizes (such as Rhodes, Marshall, Truman, Woodrow Wilson, and Fulbright) won by undergraduates to establish baselines as a precursor to increasing the number of recipients of these awards.
➢ Continue to monitor student performance on professional entrance examinations and increase pass rates if applicable (note: for many licensure exams, the pass rate is already 100%).
➢ Increase number of students admitted to honor societies, where applicable.
➢ Compile job placement data on students in terms of length of time to placement and types of jobs.

Graduate Students
➢ Increase mean Graduate Record Exam scores of entering students by five points per year for the next five years, with similar proportional increases for other graduate entrance examinations.
➢ Meet the goals of the University diversity plan.
➢ Double the number of training grants from NIH, NSF, and other prestigious agencies with a goal of 30 grants which support 80 students by 2008.
➢ Increase the number of externally funded graduate students.
➢ Compile data on prestigious national prizes and fellowships won by graduate students to establish baselines for future benchmarking. Fulbright, Woodrow Wilson, and other awards would be included.

Faculty
➢ Meet the goals of the University diversity plan.
➢ Move the scholarly and artistic or creative productivity of faculty up by 0.1 product per year for the next five years (present productivity: 7 per faculty member).
➢ Increase the number of invention disclosures from 13 in 2002 to 25 in 2005 and to 50 by 2008.
➢ Compile data through the Office of Institutional Research on prestigious national and international grants, fellowships, artistic commissions, and prizes so as to establish baselines for future benchmarking. These would include Fulbright, National Endowment for the Humanities, National Endowment for the Arts, John Simon Guggenheim, Rockefeller, Ford, Mellon, National Book Award, Pulitzer and national teaching awards.

Institutional
➢
➢ Increase research expenditures by ten percent annually for the next five years (present (2002) amount of research expenditures: 86.8 million).
➢ Approach national norms in grant size so that within two years, our federal grant size is 50% of the average federal grant size of our peer institutions and 90% within 5 years. (Where relevant, performance must be pro-rated according to the number of FTE Research Faculty and weighted with consideration to teaching load)
➢ Within 2 years, increase grant applications by research faculty in order to approach national averages in proportion of grants funded per application.
➢ Meet standards of peers for externally funded postdoctoral fellowships.

<u>External</u>

Faculty
➢ Elevate doctoral program rankings in the next National Research Council survey so that with respect to faculty quality the University of Connecticut will have five departments in the top quartile and twenty in the top half. [Present rankings in 1994 NRC survey: 2 departments, EEB and Psychology in top quartile, and 7 departments in top 50% (including EEB and Psychology)]

Institutional

➢ Increase external support from its current level by 10% per annum.
➢ Increase the number and quality of institutional partnerships, both corporate and nonprofit, and request the Office of Institutional Research to gather data on these efforts.
➢ Work to increase the "reputational" component of such rankings as U.S. News and World Report so that component matches the rankings for other components.

Best Academic Practices for Excellence

In order to establish appropriate and challenging goals, benchmarking peer and aspirational institutions is a critical component in assessing the University of Connecticut's place among the constellation of academic institutions. We will establish a process for constantly ascertaining and modeling best practices at other successful institutions.

The University of Connecticut has three primary methodologies in place for planning to emulate and improve upon best practices: the academic assessment process, the education of institutional leaders through participation in appropriate organizations and conferences, and the obtaining of expert advice in particular areas of need.

In terms of the academic disciplines, the university is now in its fifth year of academic program assessment. This assessment process, which involves a unit self study that includes comparison to peer institutions, is followed by a site visit by leaders in the field. This assessment program has already been extended in a limited number of cases to academic centers or academically related administrative units.

Academic administrators throughout the institution are involved with appropriate organizations that are a constant source of new ideas and information on best practices nation wide. Formation of the Center for Undergraduate Education and the successful First Year Experience program are examples of incorporating best practices into the fabric of the academic institution. This Task Force report contains a number of recommendations that are linked to successful practices at other institutions. Further, on an as-needed basis, consultants may be retained to make recommendations for specific issues related to the Academic Plan. A current example of this activity is retention of a consultant to carry out an evaluation of classroom needs.

AREAS OF EMPHASIS

INTRODUCTION

The University of Connecticut's primary missions are the discovery of new knowledge and the education of students. As is appropriate for a leading university, the basic and applied research activities of the faculty contribute importantly to the discovery of knowledge in a wide range of areas. Theoretical and practical advances in the fine arts, the humanities, and the natural and social sciences contribute to all great universities as does the diversity of its population, the welcoming environment of the institution, and its classroom culture. In addition, the University of Connecticut provides education in the highest sense, so that critical thinking and the questioning of assumptions leads students to the ongoing process of learning and discovery. Nested within this fundamental pedagogical mission is the additional requirement to supply training for specific careers and professions. As a public land-grant university, we also have the responsibility to provide continuing education and service to multiple constituencies in Connecticut. In order to better focus the activities of the University, the Academic Planning Task Force (APTF) proposes six Areas of Emphasis for the concentration of University resources so as to achieve excellence and recognition in Connecticut, national, and international arenas.

The Areas of Emphasis are intentionally inclusive for several reasons. First, we are planning for an institution where the human and physical assets are largely fixed for the next decade or so. Any plan should exploit the resources we currently possess. Second, consistent with the University's mission statement, we plan to identify our aspirations by establishing specific benchmarks. Third, we stress those areas where the University of Connecticut enjoys competitive advantages, including an existing critical mass of faculty, good facilities, and a favorable local environment (geographic, economic, social, and cultural) and a commitment to diversity. Fourth, we have considered our role as a Land/Sea Grant institution and the duties the state assigns to serve the social, economic, and cultural needs of the people of Connecticut. In addition, we have identified significant future areas of academic inquiry, with special attention to those that promise external funding. If an existing program is less central to University missions, it must demonstrate excellence in order to compete for University resources.

The APTF identifies six broad areas of concentration (listed alphabetically, **not** according to priority) to encourage all colleges, schools, departments, programs, centers, and institutes to focus their efforts to achieve measurable advances. We have avoided naming such units individually so far as possible. Excellence within disciplines is essential; however, the Areas of Emphasis are intended to encourage multidisciplinary collaborations as faculty with different sub-specialties join together to develop research proposals aimed at, for example, NEH, NIH, and NSF. We specifically identify certain components of "Undergraduate Enrichment" as an Area of Emphasis, without parallel attention to graduate programs, because the other Areas of Emphasis are research oriented, and implicitly incorporate graduate education. Similarly, the University has a firm commitment to diversity and to lifelong learning and outreach, but these

are not separately identified as "Areas of Emphasis," since they are an integral part of all activities.

Finally, we are eager to demonstrate that—diverse and multifarious as academic activities are—they will be more clearly focused than at present, and more in alignment with public priorities. We want everyone to understand that University of Connecticut scholarship and teaching contribute to longer, better lives for people here and everywhere, and to a more just, creative, rewarding, and achieving society.

ARTS, CULTURE AND SOCIETY FROM A LOCAL TO GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

This category emphasizes exploration of past and present human activities and cultural achievements in the context of contemporary global society. The fundamental thought embedded in the category recognizes that the contemporary world is complex and inter-related; circumstances even at local levels have global implications, just as global changes affect localities and individuals. The area recognizes existing strengths at the University of Connecticut in a number of disciplines and the need to enhance specific areas related to our strategic plan for diversity. This Area of Emphasis encourages collaborations within and among programs so as to raise the academic profile of the University, and to enhance understanding of the diverse peoples and cultures of the United States and the world.

Many areas of inquiry are naturally included within this heading: communications, both linguistic and technological; the development of thought and communication processes; globalization and multicultural perspectives on the globalization phenomenon; human rights; assimilation and diversity within the U.S. and globally; the histories and current operations of political, economic, and social structures and practices around the globe and in the U.S.; and the multilayered interactions, from local to global, of human experience. Because artistic expression in all its forms is so thoroughly interwoven in society, and so often influential, it is central to this Area of Emphasis.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

As world population increases and natural resources are consumed, sustaining the environment for all species arouses increasing concern. We are poised to build on our strengths in this area to achieve greater national and international recognition. This Area of Emphasis is closely linked to Life Sciences and to Scientific Innovations and Technology, as well as to Health and Human Services, for external research funding.

Environmental Sustainability covers a wide variety of subjects, including biodiversity, ecology, environmental change, urban and land use planning, population growth issues, energy generation and management, water resources, climate and weather, transportation, and the politics and culture of environmental consciousness.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICE SYSTEMS

This category recognizes the strengths and large investment that the University has in the areas of health and human services, and their importance for addressing acute and fundamental social needs. It encourages broad civic engagement and interaction, including service learning. This area will emphasize a systemic approach to addressing social issues, in recognition of the inter-relatedness and interdependence of various health and social services activities. As is the focus of many University of Connecticut programs, this area is of great importance to the people of Connecticut. It lends itself to grants and contracts. Further, in the areas of public health, and health care systems, and insurance, collaborations with programs at the University of Connecticut Health Center can be expanded.

This area includes insurance and access needs, K-12 educational enhancements, interventions to encourage healthful and socially appropriate human development and behaviors, health and social policy, the development of efficient health care systems that include the needs of people with disabilities, and the directive to address diversity through these foci.

INNOVATIONS IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

The University of Connecticut has been emphasizing scientific innovations and technology for decades. Through a practice of hiring and encouraging activity in science and engineering fields associated with this area, and through external grants, the University of Connecticut already has basic research strength in the disciplines of biology, chemistry, mathematics, and physics, as well as in engineering and technology. In the long run as well as in the near term, scientific innovations and technology promote the public good through economic development, especially of the state and region, and are particularly appropriate for the University in its role as the state's Land/Sea institution. There is great potential for future development, including evolving synergies with the University of Connecticut Health Center, and with all the Areas of Emphasis.

It should be noted that both basic and applied research in the natural sciences and mathematics are encompassed in this area. High performance computing and information systems are evolving technologies for which there is a vigorous international competition and industrial and social demand. Particularly significant are new approaches such as computer modeling, informatics, quantum computing, and laser telecommunications. Nanotechnology, imaging, and visualization are key in a number of existing areas of inquiry that promise future funding. The multiple topics associated with the emerging area of security will create significant demand for scientific innovations and technology. The University of Connecticut already has strength in the area of pharmaceutics research, both theoretical and applied, and there are significant funding opportunities in this area.

LIFE SCIENCES

This category, which is linked to Environmental Sustainability, Health and Human Service Systems, and Scientific Innovations and Technology, is widely recognized as an area of exceptional importance in this century. The University of Connecticut possesses unique strengths in several of the disciplines associated with the life sciences, which are complemented by strengths in the physical and psychological sciences. We possess the opportunity to build on these strengths to make the University of Connecticut a nationally recognized leader in this area. The various biologically-oriented departments and centers have established records of obtaining funding and recognition. They are complemented by basic and applied research in chemistry, physics, mathematics, and engineering. Synergies with Health Center research will be augmented.

New subjects of inquiry are constantly emerging. Research in this area currently focuses on molecular and cellular processes (including genomics, proteomics, structural biology, and regenerative biology), ecological processes, neuroscience and behavior, cognition, biodiversity, and evolutionary biology. University of Connecticut scientists investigate these questions using both a wide array of organisms and environments (terrestrial, freshwater, and marine). All areas of the life sciences have the potential for additional funding.

UNDERGRADUATE ENRICHMENT

This Area of Emphasis reinforces the University Strategic Plan's goal of improving undergraduate education and enhancing a diverse climate. The caliber of our entering classes is rising each year, as indicated by such measures as SAT scores and class rank, and our number of applicants continues to rise. We seek to further these trends by providing an intellectually stimulating and multifaceted experience for our undergraduates while enhancing the diversity of our student population.

Academic studies are the focus of our undergraduate experience so we aim to increase opportunities in undergraduate research, in experiential learning such as internships and service learning, and in guidance in the transition to careers. Academic advising will be structured to provide intellectual and career mentoring in addition to course registration advice. Retention is essential to our success. The Honors Program requires resources commensurate with its mission for providing challenging courses and activities for honor students and for piloting academic innovations that can be expanded to include all undergraduates. Library and information technology resources will be up-to-date and user-friendly. Diversity will be emphasized in accordance with the University's Diversity Plan, not only in the composition of the student body, faculty, and staff, but also in courses, research, and experiential learning that prepare undergraduates for a multicultural and globalized work environment. Instructional excellence should be fostered in faculty merit and promotion decisions, and through the

promotion of high quality instruction, student-centered learning, and new pedagogical techniques, often involving technology.

An improved environment for academic achievement involves not only the faculty and coursework, but also the active efforts of the Student Affairs staff to maintain and enhance an atmosphere conducive to intellectual exploration and achievement in the residence halls and in student activities as well as an environment welcoming all students. Faculty and Student Affairs will participate in each other's efforts to enhance the academic experience and atmosphere.

RESOURCE ALLOCATION AND THE CHANCELLOR'S COMPETITION

The Academic Plan aims at achieving a more focused allocation of resources within the University. To that end, the allocation of new academic resources within the institution should have two sources: *the existing budgetary process (for both capital and operating monies, including matching funds for external grants) and allocation though a new Chancellor's Competition, described below.* Resource allocation will continue to be pursued chiefly through the standard budgetary process through which the Chancellor and Deans allocate funds for hiring, operations, and matching funds, and the Research Foundation maintains its existing grant programs. The Chancellor and the Deans will continue to have their annual budget hearings for overall budgetary allocations. As part of the budgeting and financial expenditure process, however, the Task Force urges the Chancellor to require a statement by the Deans (or other academic administrators) as to how any particular hire or commitment of new monies will reinforce the Areas of Emphasis and/or the University of Connecticut's overall strategic mission.

The Chancellor's Competition is an additional mechanism for focusing our efforts. Here faculty will be invited to compete for additional moneys so as to advance the University to higher levels of recognition, and to enhance its capacity to compete for external resources. The Competition will evaluate proposals and recommend funding for new strategic initiatives that enhance the six identified Areas of Emphasis. The Competition will be funded by the Chancellor who will allocate university resources of up to one percent of the academic affairs budget.

A. Competition Procedures and Guidelines
1. The selection criteria are widely published.
2. Preliminary conversations by the applicants with the Chancellor's Office are held regarding the scope and design of strategic initiative proposals.
3. Each completed strategic initiative proposal is routed to a five-person "specialized" committee (including three or four external members) with expertise in the specific Area of Emphasis.*
4. Each specialized committee, chaired by a University of Connecticut faculty member, meets to rate proposals based on external references and their own assessments.
5. Specialized committees draft up to a 600-word evaluation of each proposal including: scholarly or artistic importance, relation to existing and future University research activities, external funding prospects, long-term significance, and the way the proposal will strengthen an area of emphasis.
6. Rated proposals go to a five-person General Committee of senior faculty (appointed by the Chancellor) for further evaluation within the University context in order to assign a priority ranking. The General Committee will prepare a written report with recommendations to the Chancellor.
7. The Chancellor assesses ranked proposals with their budgets, and makes awards.

Applicants are required to supply a list of six external scholars or artists who would be suitable evaluators. Ideally, they should come from high profile institutions and programs in the northeast and include members of the national academies or equivalents. They must not include previous mentors or co-authors with faculty included in the application. The chairs of the specialized committees will also usually select external scholars or artists not on the applicants' list to participate in the evaluations.

B. Principles for Grant Competition
1. Promotion of (generally) a small number of large grants, rather than the reverse.
2. Recognition of existing external grants, especially those that include scholarly evaluation.
3. Encouragement of applications that cross departmental or school boundaries, though awards may be made within a particular department or school.
4. Identification of specific goals by applicants so as to allow evaluation of performance during and after the grant period.
5. Establishment of a feedback mechanism to promote re-application, including providing the written report of the Specialized and General committees to applicants.
6. Ideally, awards will be made in all six Areas of Emphasis.

C. Schedule
1. The Competition is held biennially (every two years).
2. Applications are due in January.
3. Decisions are announced in April with the funds to be spent over 1-4 years.

D. Evaluation
1. Prior to the beginning of the second and third rounds of the Competition, the Chancellor and a group of advisors appointed by him or her and including members of the Chancellor's staff, the deans, and the academic department heads, will evaluate the operation of the Competition in supporting development of the Areas of Emphasis.

2. At the end of the fifth year from the inception of the Chancellor's Competition, the Chancellor will commission a special advisory group to evaluate the efficacy of the Competition in fostering achievement of the overall goals of the Academic Plan and to make such recommendations for change as it deems appropriate.

OPERATING PRINCIPLES FOR FACILITIES AND PHYSICAL PLANNING

Three major aspects of the Operating Principles are:

A. *To recommend principles for establishing priorities for the 21st Century UConn building program consistent with the Academic Plan.*
B. *To create principles for research, laboratory, performance, and scholarship space.*
C. *To create a model for classroom planning as a portion of 21st Century UConn Building programs.*
D. *To create a process for establishing and to some extent standardizing internet and telephony needs, and to develop a process for building these systems into the 21st Century UConn building program.*

A. *Principles for establishing priorities for 21st Century UConn include:*

1. The determination that the priorities for all projects planned for 21st Century UConn are consistent with the Academic Plan.
2. The immediate development of a classroom master plan and the earliest possible integration of that plan into 21st Century project planning.
3. The consolidation of major programs whose facilities and faculty are currently dispersed among a number of locations in Storrs, including the Depot Campus.
4. A continuing commitment to keep the formal teaching functions and department offices on the main campus at Storrs, and not to move them to the Depot Campus.
5. The gradual reduction of the total number of buildings the university is responsible for maintaining, and, in general, the consolidation of various programs into fewer actual buildings.
6. The achievement in our building and renovation projects of consistent minimal standards for effective work environments; including climate control, noise abatement, and environmentally sound facilities design and maintenance practices. These goals should drive all projects, including construction, renovation, and deferred maintenance.
7. A continuing commitment to the needs of regional campuses consistent with academic priorities.
8. The assurance of access for persons with disabilities in all new construction and in any renovations, to the greatest extent possible.

B. *Principles to aid in the construction and renovation of research, laboratory, performance, and scholarship space.*

1. Campus wide principles should be developed to aid in the construction and renovation of research, laboratory, performance, and scholarship space.
2. It will be the responsibility of the principal academic client in partnership with facilities to develop each architectural program to include the appropriate size and configuration of research, laboratory, performance and scholarship space.
3. All academic buildings will be assigned to an appropriate designated administrator for the purposes of facility coordination and maintenance review.
4. Appropriate academic gathering space will be considered in every building and renovation plan.

C. *Principles for classroom planning include:*

1. A master plan for classroom and budget development will be created and regularly monitored as to its progress and evolving needs, including maintenance.
2. The classroom master plan will accommodate a range of classroom sizes from approximately 500 down to seminar rooms in response to the need at the Storrs campus for an array of classroom sizes and configurations.
3. This plan will take into account enrollment projections, classroom capacity, and faculty scheduling to provide for the broadest possible array of class times and days, in order to maximize effective use of classroom space.
4. Classrooms will be spread throughout the Storrs campus with a mix of different styles of classrooms in particular buildings. Classrooms will generally be on the first two floors of buildings that are also occupied by department offices, faculty offices, seminar rooms, laboratories, studios, and rehearsal rooms.
5. In general, classrooms will be centrally scheduled.
6. Although certain types of non-standard classrooms, laboratories, or rehearsal rooms may be scheduled locally, all information regarding the use of all classrooms will be centrally collected and available.
7. The master plan for classroom and budget development will manifest itself as assignments of classroom space for every academic building planned, whether new construction or intended renovation.
8. It will be the responsibility of the principal academic client in partnership with facilities to develop each architectural program to include the appropriate amount of classroom space as required by the master plan. Each client group will have a representative from the Chancellor's Office to monitor how classrooms are being developed.
9. All academic buildings will be assigned to an appropriate designated administrator for the purposes of facility coordination, maintenance review, and general scheduling.
10. All academic building projects will have a project coordinator assigned by the principal client (Dean, Department Head) on the academic side to work with the project supervisor on the facilities side to help co-ordinate information within the client group.
11. Appropriate gathering and multipurpose space will be considered in future residence hall planning to provide for living-learning partnerships and to support community-building efforts.
12. This process will, as much as possible, seek to integrate disciplines and promote inter-disciplinary collaborations.
13. Appropriate academic gathering space will be considered in every building and renovation plan.

D. *In order to establish appropriately standardized internet and telephony links across campus*:

1. A master plan for computing, telephony needs, and internet connections will be developed for the University.
2. Appropriate standards will be set for basic computing packages for faculty and students, including email, operating system, and internet access.
3. The master plan for computing will be a part of the program development for all current and future building or renovation activities throughout the University.
4. All building projects will be reviewed at the programming and design phase to meet university standards for computing.

21ST CENTURY UCONN PHYSICAL PLAN PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are recommendations for priority projects during the first four to five years of 21st Century UConn. Please note that it is assumed that the University will continue to fund Deferred Maintenance (DM) and Equipment at a minimum of $10 million each per fiscal year of 21st Century UConn. Note that, unlike UConn 2000, 21st Century UConn does not have the same amount of funding for each fiscal year: it begins with a slow start in FY05, increases to a "bulge" of $125-130 million in FY s 09-11, and then decreases again.

The Academic Plan Task Force was reluctant to assign priorities to all 21st Century UConn projects in specific timelines because changed circumstances could intervene with priorities that far into the future. Therefore, it is assumed that the projects mentioned below will occur in the earlier parts of the 21st Century UConn timeline.

Please note that new building projects and renovation projects are addressed separately. The new facilities are specified by name. Since there are a number of renovation projects, the Task Force has indicated the principles that should be used in setting priorities, rather than naming those priorities here. Priority categories include:

➢ **EVERY YEAR**
   Continuous funding for Deferred Maintenance and Equipment, including Library acquisitions.

➢ **IMMEDIATE INFRASTRUCTURE NEED**
   Finishing North Hillside Road to end at Route 44 (at the earliest possible time).

➢ **NEW BUILDING PROJECTS – in priority order**
   (Note: The top priorities in this categories are hold-over projects from UConn 2000. There is a +/- one-year design phase for many of these projects prior to the beginning of construction. Procurement of significant external gifts for construction purposes could change this priority order.)

   1. Complete Biology buildings in the Technology Quadrangle

   2. Demolish Arjona and Monteith buildings and replace with appropriate classroom/academic buildings

   3. Complete these new building projects as funding becomes available in the 21st Century UConn program and within the framework of emerging university priorities (**not** listed in priority order):

❖ Fine Arts complex, with Third Parking Garage prior to or contemporaneous with Fine Arts construction

❖ Regional campus building projects identified in 21st Century UConn.

❖ Engineering building project

➢ **RENOVATION PROJECTS PRIORITIES**

These principles for renovation projects are in synchrony with the Operating Principles for Facilities and Physical Plan. As noted above, due to myriad factors affecting which renovation projects should be done first, individual renovation projects are not listed. The principles to be used in deciding the order of renovation projects are:

• Renovation projects should be linked to the overall implementation of the Academic Plan.

• All physical facilities should achieve the minimum standards for effective work environments as articulated in the Operating Principles for Facilities and Physical Plan. The further an existing structure deviates from these articulated minimum standards, the higher its priority for renovation.

• Whenever possible, in order to obtain maximum efficiency, the renovation schedule should be synchronized with other construction or renovation projects occurring in contiguous areas of the campus.

FOSTERING FACULTY ACHIEVEMENT

Fostering faculty achievement requires a broad range of commitments. It begins with hiring and retaining the most talented scholars, but faculty achievement also demands a superior professional support staff, gifted post-doctoral fellows, excellent graduate students, and the inclusion of visiting scholars in the academic community. Moreover, in order to achieve excellence, faculty require laboratory and information technology and library resources that are competitive with our actual and aspirational peer universities. All of these elements enable scholars to work efficiently, putting their knowledge and skills to their best uses.

I.   Recruitment:

Recruitment of new faculty entails many dimensions, including negotiating such issues as salary, tenure status, rank, teaching load, travel monies, and research and summer support. For new faculty involved in laboratory research, "start up packages" including laboratory construction or renovation and laboratory assistance is also critical.   In addition to the standard competitive part of academic recruitment, there are several small steps we can take. First, we think a "recruitment portfolio" should be developed for the university, which can be specialized by school and department. This would provide information on fringe benefits, maps, cultural attractions, quality of life, and the general advantages of the university, Connecticut, and the New England/New York region. Some relevant materials are already produced for the visitors' center and by schools such as Engineering. Second, we can cast a wider net in recruitment so as to assure diversity in our candidate pool as well as international awareness of our openings. Third, the needs of incoming faculty for child-care, spousal careers, and rental housing require attention.

We also encourage hiring faculty who have already demonstrated excellence and possess experience beyond the doctoral level. In some areas this will require significant start-up packages. This can assure that everyone we hire has superior qualifications for tenure before tenure decisions are required. Hiring must never be done merely to fill a position, nor tenure awarded to retain a position. Where tenure is denied, corresponding searches will be permitted in the following year, resources permitting and departmental policies remaining unchanged. The University must strive to match the standards for tenure and promotion at the best research universities.

II.   Retention:

Retention requires administrative responsiveness to external offers. We believe responsiveness already characterizes the university administration and that resources and flexibility in support for faculty will be continued and augmented. Retention also requires a welcoming environment and responsiveness to the personal needs and interests of faculty, especially those belonging to underrepresented groups. Assuring that new faculty understand tenure and promotion standards is also important. Enhanced mentoring will help all faculty irrespective of gender or race.

III.   Administrative Infrastructure:

Administrative infrastructure is an area that requires more support so as to be comparable to leading public research universities. We should recruit and retain excellent staff and enhance their professional development. Management should seek to make procedures as user-friendly as possible. Currently, the university is significantly understaffed in research support, so faculty are often left to perform activities that could be done by qualified support staff. Accounting and budget management, grant-writing, and a variety of office and laboratory activities need more support if we are to achieve the highest levels of performance from faculty. Library resources and information technology must also receive support consistent with the aspirations of the University.

IV.   Faculty Development:

Faculty development can be enhanced by the more active use of mentors to support faculty especially to explain tenure and promotion standards. Mentoring will assist Assistant Professors and Associate Professors with teaching techniques, career planning, development of research proposals, and allocating time among competing demands. Professors at all levels will be encouraged to consult mentors and to take advantage of appropriate faculty development programs. Efforts by the Teaching and Learning Institute, the Office for Sponsored Programs, the Office of Multicultural and International Affairs, the Humanities Institute, and others to develop and update teaching skills and techniques as well as grant and fellowship-writing skills will be encouraged.

In order to foster faculty development and encourage collaboration, the use of joint appointments should be increased.

V.   Faculty Performance Standard:

The general standards for faculty performance are described and defined in the Chancellor's Policy on Faculty Professional Responsibilities. They emphasize the interaction of research and teaching, as well as the need for service. This document remains paramount. In addition, the Academic Plan emphasizes the need to excel, individually and in collaborations. Accordingly, we urge that resources be focused so as to advance the research and teaching achievements of faculty. Rewards will be commensurate with achievement, and recognize the different expectations applicable in various fields. Standards for assessing achievement will be comparable to leading public research universities. Exceptional achievement in service also warrants reward.

Standards for tenure and promotion require gradual elevation. The most practical approach is to emulate the standards of leading public research universities. Publication rates and venues will vary according to discipline; thus the standards applied by the best peer institutions will be our guide. Clear and frequent communication of standards to faculty is the responsibility of the Chancellor, deans, and department heads.

<u>**FOSTERING STUDENT EXCELLENCE**</u>

PART ONE: UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION

The University of Connecticut will continue to promote a campus culture that fosters undergraduate intellectual development from recruitment through commencement at all University campuses. This goal was cited repeatedly in meetings with student government leaders, honors students, Student Affairs administrators and staff, and the Undergraduate Education and Instruction Offices. The University will continue to refine, enhance, and complement the many new programs and commitments undertaken in undergraduate education over the last decade. To achieve these goals, we will increase our efforts at coordination, synergy, and cooperation between academic affairs and student affairs.

I.   **Recruitment**:
        A high-quality undergraduate experience is our best advertisement so the University will continue to improve and augment the initiatives listed in the other sections of this subcommittee's report. In addition, all involved in the undergraduate experience will continue to work with Communications and Admissions to ensure that word of our many outstanding opportunities for undergraduates reach an excellent and diverse pool of applicants. In cooperation with Institutional Advancement, our goal is to increase the number of such important recruiting tools as Nutmeg and Day of Pride scholarships and establish new scholarships. We will build on our increasingly successful efforts to recruit and retain a diverse student body.

II.   **Curriculum and Academic Program Delivery Issues:**

        The curriculum and academic program delivery is at the heart of every undergraduate education. With the development of the Office for Undergraduate Education and Instruction in the 1990s, great strides have been made at the University of Connecticut in emphasizing and improving undergraduate education overall. However, challenges remain. Some of the most important of these are discussed below.

        Time to Degree: The University of Connecticut possesses a time-to-graduation rate that is in line with its peers. However, there are a number of students who do not graduate in the "traditional" four year time frame. There are many reasons for this phenomenon, including encouragement of experiential learning activities away from campus and, in a few cases, a curriculum that is structured more towards an anticipation of a four and one half year degree completion rate. While it is inevitable that some students will continue to take more than four years to graduate, the time to degree completion issue should be examined, with a goal of attaining the maximum four-year graduation rate.

        The First Year Experience: The University should continue to enhance its nationally-recognized work in the First Year Experience, including living-learning communities, themed block scheduling, one-credit first-year courses on study skills, and opportunities

for enrichment, support, mentoring, and community service. A welcoming, challenging, and supportive atmosphere for first year students promotes academic excellence and can improve the University of Connecticut's already strong record in retention.

Advising: The University should continue its efforts to provide advising that meets students' changing needs as they progress in their studies: 1) basic advising about general education and academic advising 2) more focused advising on courses of study and research within a major, and 3) mentoring for post-graduate study and/or careers. The American College Testing (ACT) advising survey administered in February 2003 will serve as a source of information about advising needs within schools, colleges, and departments; as a source of comparison with other universities; and as a benchmark to assess our continued progress in meeting the varied advising needs of undergraduates. The University will continue to coordinate and publicize student support services as well as research and experiential learning opportunities in order to make them readily accessible to advisors and students. The planned Writing and Quantitative Centers are examples of such services that augment advising and promote student achievement.

General Education and Major Courses: Courses at the University of Connecticut respond to a variety of needs in a variety of schools, colleges, and departments. Thus, the only rule of thumb that can be applied is that excellence in instruction should be reinforced. We will provide a suitable mix of small, intermediate, and large classes from the freshman through the senior year. The particular curricular needs of each course will be met through appropriate class sizes and classrooms, from small seminars to large classrooms and through up-to-date technology. In accordance with the University Senate's recently passed general education requirements, curricular development will include diversity and multiculturalism. We will continue to find means of evaluating, encouraging, and rewarding excellence and innovation in teaching.

The Senior Year Experience: As a complement to the existing First Year Experience, the University of Connecticut administration should continue to work with the deans and academic departments to ensure a program of options for the academic and personal development of seniors to assist them with a transition, in this case to post-graduate study and/or careers.

III. **Experiential Learning and Co-Curricular Activities:**
The University will continue to expand, coordinate, publicize, and complement various kinds of experiential learning, such as internships, research assistantships, and service learning. Such opportunities respond to great student demand and are an academically meaningful way of making the transition from college to career. The University will also continue to explore the possibility of co-curricular transcripts that highlight a student's leadership, campus activities, community service, and experiential learning as a complement to the academic transcript. Study Abroad opportunities can be expanded by providing increased capacity within UConn-directed programs and by facilitating the

transfer of credits from excellent programs directed by other universities. In order for these initiatives to succeed, faculty and student affairs will continue to reinforce their efforts to work together to promote a campus atmosphere that stresses that learning does not stop at the classroom door.

IV.   Enhancing Academic Excellence:
The University of Connecticut will continue to expand its efforts to provide opportunities for academic excellence for *all* students through the Undergraduate Education Office. Particular examples include:

*Undergraduate Research***:** We can build upon our current strengths by increasing, coordinating, publicizing, and funding opportunities for undergraduate research in all areas of the curriculum from the arts to the sciences to the professional schools.

Honors Program: We will continue to build a strong and visible honors program or college that will recruit and retain excellent and diverse students through scholarships and merit aid, challenging course work in general education and majors courses, and independent and group research, and civic and community engagement. The honors program will continue to pilot innovative pedagogical strategies that can be used throughout the university curriculum.

Prestigious Fellowships: The University has begun and will augment its efforts to identify outstanding students early and assist them in preparing for and applying for prestigious international fellowships such as Rhodes, Marshall, Fulbright, and Truman.

V.   Quality of Undergraduate Student Life
A great deal of UCONN 2000 and 21st Century UCONN capital investment has been in areas having a strong impact on the undergraduate population. Some of the most notable of these projects include creation of the Wilbur Cross Student Services complex, creation of the Center for Undergraduate Education, construction and significant renovations of dormitories, suites and apartments for undergraduates, and significant enlargement and renovation of the Student Union. These projects have positively affected the quality of the undergraduate student experience.

There are still challenges to be faced in improving the quality of student life at all campuses. While the physical facilities of the University of Connecticut have improved dramatically, the adjoining town continues to be perceived by many students at Storrs as lacking interesting places to go. Within the Storrs campus, recreational facilities seem inadequate for student needs.

PART TWO: GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

As part of its role as a Carnegie Research Extensive University, the University of Connecticut is committed to excellence in graduate and professional education. It is vital that we recruit and retain the best possible students, nationally and internationally, *and from diverse populations.* Our academic reputation will benefit from graduate and professional programs that will enhance the research, teaching, and career preparation of these excellent students

I.   Recruitment:

To attract graduate and professional students of the highest potential, the University of Connecticut should offer a package of stipends, health benefits, and fellowship opportunities that are competitive with those of our aspirational peers. In addition, the components of this package should be identified as early as possible each spring so that departments can recruit and commit students before they accept admission to other institutions. Travel money should be provided to bring prospective students to campus.

II.   Retention:

Time to degree: Time for research is as important to excellent graduate students as their financial package. Time to degree should be reduced wherever possible, though this time will vary by discipline. Students should have semesters without teaching or with reduced teaching, especially as they near completion of their degree requirements. We should increase the number of fellowships and research assistantships that do not carry teaching responsibilities and find a way that students honored with such fellowships can retain their health benefits

Travel funding: Student travel to research sites and to conferences is necessary not only for their professional development, but it is also a vital means of augmenting the reputation of the University of Connecticut as a Research Extensive institution. Travel funding, presently at one thousand dollars for the student's entire graduate career, should be substantially increased. These funds should also be made available to students pursuing a master's degree, especially where this is the terminal degree, for example, a Master of Fine Arts. Travel money should be provided in advance because most students cannot afford to advance such sums from their living expenses.

Quality of Life: Housing and child care should be available, affordable, and of good quality. Federally subsidized housing for graduate and professional students should be considered. The University of Connecticut should continue to include graduate and professional students in its plan for expanded child care.

III.   Educational Standards for Undergraduate and Graduate Students

The Graduate Faculty Executive Council and a similar umbrella committee <u>for undergraduate students</u> should oversee programmatic reviews of student requirements, education, and supporting environment. The committee should set basic standards that are fine-tuned by fields of study or disciplines.

Professional development should be an essential part of a dynamic student culture that is supported by faculty. Professional development should include professional ethics, diversity training, pedagogy, computer skills, writing skills, and career preparation and transition.

ACADEMIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

The true test of any plan is whether it is implemented effectively. In order to assure that the University of Connecticut Academic Plan become part of the fabric of university operations, the following implementation guidelines have been put in place:

➢ The Chancellor, through his designees, is responsible for implementation of the plan.

➢ The primary advisory group for implementation of the plan will be the Academic Deans and such members of the Chancellor's Staff as the Chancellor deems appropriate.

➢ The Chancellor will review annually the progress of the Academic Plan with the University Senate and make a report to the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees.

➢ The Academic Plan will be permanently posted on the Chancellor's website and will be updated annually as appropriate.