Executive Summary

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SUNY Geneseo endeavors to advance its commitment to excellence in liberal arts while coping with the largest budget reductions in the college's history. The college has chosen transformational learning as a theme and organizing principle for its planning and for the current self-study. The self-study is divided into six chapters, each of which addresses multiple Middle States standards in a narrative intended to highlight critical issues and steps the college is taking to address them. Most standards are addressed in a single chapter, but Standard 6 (Integrity) is addressed in Chapters 3 and 5, and Standard 3 (Resources) is addressed in Chapters 1 and 4. All chapters are listed below along with the standards that are addressed and the major findings and recommendations that appear in each.

Chapter 1 — Mission and Goals

- mission and goals (Standard 1)
- planning, resource allocation and institutional renewal (Standard 2)
- resources (Standard 3)

The college mission is widely understood and shared by the college community, and it drives major planning, initiatives, and resource allocation. Major recommendations include a call for additional campus discussion of the importance of tradition and co-curricular activities and encouragement to follow up on more of the recommendations from the [Six Big Ideas](#) initiative.

Chapter 2 — Student Learning and Development

- educational offerings (Standard 11)
- general education (Standard 12)
- related educational activities (Standard 13)

Geneseo's educational programs, whether formal or informal, are woven through the lives of students and staff to create a truly transformational community. There is widespread student participation in high-impact learning experiences such as study abroad, and the college has actively supported experiences such as service learning. Reduced resources, however, place limits on the overall impact of these activities. The chapter recommends a re-allocation of resources to support faculty who include these activities in their teaching and who experiment with innovative courses. It also recommends an examination of how general education requirements help support other programs.

Chapter 3 — Student Success

- student admissions and retention procedures (Standard 8)
- student support services (Standard 9)
- integrity (Standard 6)

Geneseo's admissions process reflects the college's emphasis on transformational learning and has been successful in seeking out students who are in harmony with the college mission. Both academic and student services programs support the college's goal of developing students holistically, and the success of these efforts is corroborated by the survey responses of alumni and the employers of alumni. These programs can become even more effective by additional centralization of advising, tutoring, and internships. A greater effort to recruit out-of-state students and a review of first-year programs are two additional recommendations.

Chapter 4 — Resources

- resources (Standard 3)
- faculty (Standard 10)

The college has instituted sensible expenditure controls in response to substantial budget reductions. Major unfortunate consequences include academic program deactivations and lack of progress towards the goal of achieving a lower student/faculty ratio. The college's primary resource, its faculty, compares favorably with faculty at public four-year institutions and with its COPLAC and aspirational peers.

There is a strong and positive relationship between faculty scholarship, student learning, and student satisfaction with educational outcomes. However, even though faculty are frequently involved in numerous academic and co-curricular activities that fall within the framework of transformational learning, this approach to education is not, as yet, widely recognized by faculty and does not appear widely in the documents of academic departments and the college.

Recommendations focus on generating additional revenue internally and increasing student fees, creating a more systematic schedule of equipment replacement to better meet college needs, aligning physical plant and campus maintenance with sustainability standards, and conducting multiple-year planning to achieve important goals such as a lower student/faculty ratio and increased faculty diversity. In particular, additional planning and resources should be devoted to increasing institutional and faculty commitment to transformational learning.

Chapter 5 — Leadership and Governance

- leadership and governance (Standard 4)
- administration (Standard 5)
- integrity (Standard 6)

The roles of the various governance bodies are well defined and effectively support the mission of the college. The strategies developed within the college administrative leadership are shared with the college constituents and support campus-wide transformational learning. Participants in college governance are satisfied with their own experience. However, with broader campus awareness and involvement, both the College Senate and student government can be more effective agents for advancing the college mission. The chapter recommends that the college take a more explicit and intentional approach to campus leadership by designing leadership development activities for faculty, administrators, and staff and by providing greater recognition of campus service in tenure and promotion guidelines. It also recommends continuing the existing patterns of communication and transparent administration.

Chapter 6 — Institutional Effectiveness

- institutional assessment (Standard 7)
- assessment of student learning (Standard 14)

The college has in place processes and structures for both institutional assessment and assessment of student learning that are transparent, useful, and widely practiced, and that support the mission of transformational learning. There is room for improvement, however, and the chapter recommends more encouragement for participation, better communication of results to students, and greater visibility for the College Assessment Advisory Council.

Current measures that tap into college-wide transformational learning, such as The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and the American College Health Association Collegiate Health Assessment, present mixed results. Assessment results from small pilot projects to promote transformational learning are much more positive. At this point, both the projects themselves and the college's efforts to assess them are works in progress.

Conclusion

SUNY Geneseo is achieving its mission, whether that mission is stated in terms of developing "socially responsible citizens with skills and values important to the pursuit of an enriched life and success in the world" or in terms of transformational learning.Transformational learning encompasses key elements of the college mission, and it facilitates prioritization in a climate of declining resources.

The curriculum, the co-curriculum, student services, resource allocation, the physical plant, faculty and staff hiring and development, and assessment all contribute to transformational learning. By most measures, the college is succeeding in its goal to "provide every student the highest quality education." This success is clearest in the case of academic success and less clear in terms of civic engagement and social/emotional development. Demonstration projects such as Real World Geneseo and Extreme Learning courses have been designed specifically to achieve these other transformational learning outcomes and have shown positive results. As the college moves ahead, it is important to continue this progress by developing ways in which these outcomes can be achieved on a broader scale and in which progress can be assessed explicitly.