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State University of West Georgia
Annual Report of Institutional Progress
1996-97

SUMMARY OF MAJOR INSTITUTIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN THE PRECEDING YEAR

During 1996-97, the State University of West Georgia accomplished many institutional and System goals. First and foremost, the university made progress in maintaining its commitment to Educational Excellence in a Personal Environment. Through more stringent admission standards and the Freshman Center, West Georgia substantially improved retention rates achieved. The Advanced Academy of Georgia had another very successful year attracting, retaining, and developing aptitudinally-talented students. The university enhanced its use of modern technology, increased the level of funding generated through gifts, and modernized campus facilities. Faculty improved their scholarly productivity and prepared for semester conversion.

Educational Excellence in a Personal Environment

The university’s commitment to Educational Excellence in a Personal Environment did not waver. That is, the institution continued to build on its long-standing commitment to offer first-class academic programs in the context of a caring, personal atmosphere. The following examples epitomize accomplishments toward this continuous goal:

♦ The university made progress implementing undergraduate research as an integral part of individualized student learning by establishing the Faculty Council on Undergraduate Research. The goal of this initiative is to cement the relationship between student research and academic programs. In Chemistry, students are actively involved in research and presented 17 papers with faculty at professional meetings. Geology students are actively involved in research projects and seven graduating seniors presented their research at the Georgia Academy of Science and published abstracts in the Georgia Journal of Science; two students were sponsored in the Foundation’s Student Research Assistant Program and 10 worked on projects funded from external sources.

♦ West Georgia’s Honors Program enrolled 230 intellectually gifted undergraduates and provided many unique opportunities for students to engage with faculty in research and independent study. Honors students presented research at the 1996 National Collegiate Honors Conference, the annual Georgia Sociological Conference and the Southeastern Regional Honors Council, and participated in the Social Research Forum of the institution’s Celebration of Scholarship. West Georgia’s 1997 Academic Recognition Day honoree, an Honors student majoring in nursing, earned distinction with research dealing with the Hepatitis B vaccine, and the postpartum unit of Tanner Medical Center is implementing procedures from her research.

♦ The 1997 Regents Teaching Excellence Award for the best department among all state and regional universities went to West Georgia’s Geology Department.

♦ In the Georgia Academy of Science meeting, West Georgia won top honors in six out of nine categories, leaving the rest of the State to divide up the remaining three.

♦ West Georgia’s College Bowl team did very well in the regional tournament, and placed ahead of the University of Georgia, Berry College, and Georgia State University. One of West Georgia’s students was among the top five individual scorers.

♦ West Georgia’s Debate team qualified for the National Debate Tournament for the 25th consecutive year. This is the tournament’s 50th year, and West Georgia’s qualifying record places among the top universities in the country.
Thanks to University System of Georgia’s open budget hearings established by the Chancellor and the institution’s internal redirection of funds, West Georgia was able to establish new faculty positions in the College of Arts and Sciences, the College of Education, and the College of Business. However, considerable unmet need for additional faculty positions still exists.

The 1997 Georgia Teacher of the Year is an alumna of West Georgia.

Improved Retention Rates

Retention rates at the university improved markedly during the last year. Two major institutional changes will continue to account for improved retention rates. The first is more stringent admission standards, consistent with University System of Georgia initiatives. The Admission’s Office has increased admission standards modestly for several years. Currently the university does not admit students with more than one College Preparatory Curriculum area deficiency. Furthermore, the university has increased the minimum required standardized test score and high school grade point average required of traditional freshmen for admission. In Fall Quarter 1996, the university implemented the University System of Georgia’s transfer admission requirement for 2001. The cumulative effect of these increases is demonstrated by the following example: 20 percent of West Georgia’s Fall Quarter 1991 entering class would not have been admitted under admission requirements for Fall Quarter 1996. During that same period, first year retention rates increased 19 percent. Moreover, the 1996 entering class is on track to be retained at rates that exceed those of the 1995 entering class.

The second is the development of the Freshman Center. The Freshman Center offers academic advising to all undecided students and serves numerous students as a clearinghouse for career and major explorations. Between 700 and 850 students took advantage of the center’s advisement and registration services each quarter during the academic year. First quarter retention rates increased from 88.36 percent for Fall Quarter 1995 matriculants to 94.21 percent for Fall Quarter 1996 matriculants. The margin of improvement increased for the second quarter; second quarter retention rates increased from 75.77 percent for Fall Quarter 1995 matriculants to 84.80 percent for Fall Quarter 1996 matriculants. Furthermore, the university has begun a review of its early interactions with students, including business practices, provision of information and services, and academic advising. Complete review of all facets of a student’s first year experience promises to build on the present levels of retention gains. The university also introduced modified learning community concepts and plans to assign academic departments responsibility for retention of their respective program majors. The Freshman Center is another good example of West Georgia’s commitment to Educational Excellence in a Personal Environment.

The Advanced Academy of Georgia

The Advanced Academy of Georgia finished a very successful second year. The entering class had average SAT scores of approximately 1290, high school grades that average 3.74, and most students earn advanced placement through testing. The Academy offered excellent academic and extra-curricular experiences. Last year 26 students completed the program and graduated from their local high schools while becoming either college sophomores or juniors, depending on their classification when they entered the program. Eight students are continuing at West Georgia, five transferred to Georgia Institute of Technology, three entered the University of Georgia, and one is continuing at Georgia State University. Others are continuing at Emory University, Agnes Scott College, the Honors College of the University of Michigan, and the University of Washington. Academy scholars from the 1996-97 class were accepted at John Hopkins University, Duke University, University of Houston, Boston University, American University, Williams College, Baylor University, Yale University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and the University of Tennessee. Restated, Academy graduates go to some of the
best institutions in the United States, including West Georgia. Faculty report great enthusiasm at having these students in their classes, and Academy students are very enthusiastic at the opportunities that are made available to them.

Thanks to the support of the Chancellor, The Academy received $400,000 of Special Initiative funds. Then, thanks to the generosity of an anonymous donor, The Academy received $425,000 of external funds over a three-year period. This support provides infrastructure for increasing the size and quality of Academy offerings in coming years, and will be used to expand opportunities for innovative experiences for participating students. These gifts demonstrate tremendous support from public and private sources. Two years ago, when West Georgia started The Academy, the institution could not have hoped for such outstanding academic success, internal rewards, and external recognition.

Technology Enhancements

The State University of West Georgia enhanced its application of technology in instructional activities during the last year. The College of Education delivered 22 technology-training workshops to more than half of the college’s faculty, increased the proportion of faculty who use multi-media classroom formats to 70 percent, delivered 16 distance education classes to 66 sites, developed by faculty committee a distance learning technology plan for the college, and increased faculty reliance on computers and email for course preparation, professional activity and communication. Technology highlights from the College of Arts and Sciences include receiving Regents’ approval of the new Technology Enhanced Learning Center, investing over $260,000 to bring multi-media and computer technology into classrooms for regular instruction, offering computer workshops on a regular basis for faculty and staff, and facilitating Banner training and advising sessions for all Arts and Sciences departments. The College of Business expanded the application of new technologies with 75 percent of faculty trained to use distance learning and multi-media techniques, and 70 percent of the college’s faculty actually employ multi-media techniques in classroom instruction. Furthermore, over 90 percent of Accounting and Finance faculty can instruct distance learning courses. Over half of the Management and Business Systems faculty have developed courses which include technology and distance learning as a major component of their course delivery mechanism. Management and Business Systems is preparing a comprehensive distance learning certification program, which strives toward a 100 percent faculty completion within the next three years. Moreover, the introductory Business Information System course uses computer based training, and technology has been integrated into the instructional/learning processes in 70 percent of the course offerings in the Marketing Department.

Administrative units also enhanced technology. The Division of Student Services continued to pursue the goal of utilizing new technology, and in cooperation with Computer Services, continued rapid implementation of the Banner Student Information System. The Banner system allowed students to register at several on-campus and off-campus locations. Furthermore, Student Information Systems continued training faculty and staff with Banner, and pursued other efforts to decentralize many traditionally centralized functions. The Admissions Office implemented an on-line admissions application, procured modern technology equipment, and improved customer service through a new telephone system. Residence Life plans to complete installation of a card access security system for residence halls this year, and Financial Aid implemented an electronic financial aid application process.

The Division of Business and Finance continued to pursue technological equipment and employee development that will allow staff to perform their jobs as efficiently as possible. The division continued to upgrade dated systems with Pentium technology that has adequate random access memory to function with the Internet and the upgraded Banner System. Furthermore, Auxiliary Services installed a new network server that connects the Student Center for the Auxiliary and Student
Activities functional areas, and added a new debit card system. Public Safety added a computerized ticket writing system and a new criminal investigation system. Business and Finance committed funds to purchase a document management system that will allow electronic filing of those records that must be maintained, eliminating the need for file cabinets and storage space. The division also added a training coordinator position that served university-wide personnel, and supported professional development for Business and Finance employees. Purchasing Services is experimenting with a purchasing card that will eliminate the need for purchase orders for certain items.

Technology Planning

The vice president for academic affairs established the Technology Planning Committee and charged it with developing a vision statement and strategic goals for the Computer Services unit. By holding several open forums and encouraged campus-wide participation, the committee developed a technology vision and associated goals. Furthermore, the committee recommended establishing a permanent council to assist Computer Services in implementing the new vision. In a parallel action, a subcommittee of this larger group conducted a comprehensive search and selected a new director of Computer Services. The committee’s activities are posted at http://www.westga.edu/~mmiller/technology/.

Teacher Education as a University Priority

The university has committed to teacher education as a university-wide priority. Restated, the focus of teacher education moved from the exclusive responsibility of the College of Education to an increasingly shared responsibility among faculty across campus. To achieve statewide objectives of continuous improvements in P-12 student performance, West Georgia continued to make improvements in teacher education training. West Georgia continues to be an important actor in those efforts statewide, and the leader in West Georgia’s service area. This priority reflects the increased connection of student learning with discipline-based knowledge.

The College of Education is serving the state through many initiatives. The university received one of four statewide, P-16 grants for $200,000, with an additional Council of Basic Education grant for $24,000. These funds will be used to help reform education in Georgia. Through its P-16 grant, the university was designated as a national site for Pacesetter training. The college is also heavily involved in technology training of its faculty and teachers of local school systems, as it has been for the last six years; recently education faculty co-authored a technology-literacy grant with Coweta County Schools, which was subsequently funded for $190,000. Furthermore, the college’s Professional Development School operates two sites, one in Dalton that serves four schools, and one in Carroll County serving one school. Another College of Education program is the Administrative Diagnostic Center, which assessed 18 students and served over 200 professional development participants during the last year.

Economic Development

The College of Business reallocated 20 percent of faculty and administrative time to activities that support regional economic development, including service to committees and co-sponsoring activities of the Carroll County Chamber of Commerce, providing regional economic profiles and forecasts, and providing 27 community service programs within the last year. Furthermore, the College of Business secured funding to start a Small Business Development Center on West Georgia’s campus.

The Division of Continuing Education served 2,193 participants by co-sponsoring 145 general programs for the Leadership Training Institute. Organizations such as Southwire Company, Maplehurst Incorporated, U. S. Can Company, and Fitel Lucent technologies, among others, participated. Warranting special note is the program for Magna-Lomason, in which Continuing Education trained 35 supervisors with team building and quality concepts. Moreover, Continuing Education helped the Holox Corporation save its federal contractor status by serving 150 Holox associates.
throughout the southeast. This program allowed Holox to meet the thirty-day federal Environmental Protection Agency deadline for training in business ethics.

**Productive Faculty**

Despite West Georgia’s unwavering commitment to small class enrollments and faculty teaching (as opposed to graduate teaching assistants), West Georgia faculty had another productive year of research. During 1996-97, faculty members produced 66 books and manuscripts, 259 peer reviewed publications, 632 papers and presentations, and 252 other publications. Faculty also held numerous offices in professional organizations. Compared with the previous year, faculty book and monograph production increased 214 percent, peer reviewed publications increased 12 percent, paper/presentations and other publications increased 34 and 79 percent respectively.

Faculty applied for more than two million dollars of grant funding, and secured more than half the amount they sought. New federal grants in two departments are noteworthy. West Georgia’s Biology Department received a $475,000 grant from the National Institute of Health for the recruitment and retention of minority graduate students. The National Science Foundation awarded West Georgia’s Chemistry Department two nationally-competitive instrumentation and laboratory improvement grants; the fact that a single department would receive two of these competitive awards in a single year is reflective of West Georgia’s high caliber chemistry faculty.

**Semester Conversion**

Through the orchestration of several committee structures the faculty have revised every program and every course for purposes of semester conversion. In some cases, this constituted a simple translation of a quarter structure to a semester structure. In other cases, however, the course and much of a department’s curriculum was reconceived. The re-conceptualizing of the programs went as far as revising the Core Curriculum, the general education requirement of the University of Georgia. In this case, the institution committed itself to interdisciplinary education by requiring at least one of several newly devised interdisciplinary courses in Area C of the System Core.

All of these curricula and courses have gone through appropriate committees and virtually all were approved and are in process for the new catalogue which should come on-line as soon as it goes to print production, thereby making available the semester catalogue several months in advance of the students’ needs.

The university has also committed itself to increased efforts in advising students and faculty concerning semester conversion by creating two web sites that are dedicated to advising and semester conversion. These are linked to the West Georgia Homepage and reside at http://www.westga.edu/semcon/. The web sites provide answers to frequently asked questions concerning semester conversion and provide several charts to match quarter courses with semester courses. This use of web technology accomplishes both a saving of paper, and a means to reinforce technological literacy for all West Georgia students.

**Academic Affairs**

Academic Affairs is furthermore committed to making presentations to faculty in a variety of settings concerning the challenges of advising during semester conversion. The office is likewise assisting in the effort to ensure that every student admitted to the university will be assigned an advisor and will receive notification from that advisor inviting the student in for an appointment to discuss the new curriculum as well as other issues relevant to a student’s academic success.

**Increased Financial Support**

Thanks to the efforts of the Division of University Advancement, West Georgia made progress in the amount of funds generated through gifts. This year’s A DAY FOR WEST GEORGIA, which is a major part of the university’s annual fund, saw the total soar to a record high of $1,050,000, thanks to many generous supporters. Thanks to the efforts of Dr. Lewis Larsen, the State Archaeologist who is a
West Georgia faculty member, the Waring family donated a $1 million gift earmarked for Archaeology, the largest single gift in the institution's history. The Foundation's assets increased 44 percent during the year, and now total $4,943,676.

The activities of Continuing Education increased the amount of funds the unit generated during the year. West Georgia set an all-time record for revenue generated, participants served, and Continuing Education Units (CEU). During the year, Continuing Education generated $412,000 of revenue, served 12,061 participants, and generated 21,243 CEUs.

Organizational Changes

During the year, the university continued to implement the many organizational changes reported in the President's Annual Report, 1995-96. Other organizational changes during the year include:

- Purchasing was combined with Risk Management under the authority of the director of business services. This change did not require additional personnel.
- The reporting responsibility of the Post Office was moved from Auxiliary Services to Budget Services. This change did not require additional personnel.
- The Minority Achievement Program was combined with the Freshman Center to capitalize on the natural synergy of the offices' missions. This change did not require additional personnel.
- The university replaced the Division of Planning and Assessment with the Department of Institutional Research and Planning by reassigning the assessment function to the pertinent divisions. This change eliminated one position.
- The university merged the Honors Program, The Advanced Academy of Georgia and off-campus credit programs under a new unit titled Special Programs.
- With Board of Regents approval, West Georgia renamed the three academic schools; the colleges now hold the more appropriate titles of College of Arts & Sciences, the College of Business, and the College of Education.
- The university changed the reporting structure for Internal Auditing and Affirmative Action so that the president shares authority over these offices, consistent with Board of Regents policy.
- The university assigned the Affirmative Action function to Human Resources/Payroll. This change eliminated one position.
- Learning Support Services now reports through the library. This change did not require additional personnel.
- The university replaced the Computer Center's chief information officer structure with a center for information technology structure.

Facilities Improvements

Facilities completed many projects during the year. The institution continued to strive toward compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act by adding handicapped restroom facilities in each academic building, and six elevators to academic and administrative buildings that needed them. Furthermore, Facilities is renovating the Bonner Lecture Hall, and preparing Strozier Hall to serve as the administrative home for Learning and Freshman Centers. Recently Facilities completed renovation of the President's house to serve as the new Alumni/Development facility, put a new gym floor in the HPE building, and installed new restrooms in the Murphy Fieldhouse, among several other projects.
ANNUAL PROGRESS IN INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGIC PLANNING

During 1996-97 the State University of West Georgia clarified its strategic planning process and structure, established new priority areas, developed specific goals and action plans for these new priorities, committed to planned enrollment targets, established admission phase-in plans, and linked annual budgeting and strategic planning by using West Georgia's Annual Budget Allocation Proposal as an opportunity to pursue funding for operational and tactical initiatives that are pursuant to broader strategic goals. Furthermore, the institution began a comprehensive master planning process, and started design work on a new facility.

Planning Structure and Process

West Georgia's planning process follows a participatory, continuous and responsive model in promoting reciprocal communication, both vertically and horizontally, while assigning decision responsibility to the strategically appropriate level. The President, as chief executive officer, holds ultimate responsibility for the process of strategic planning at the State University of West Georgia. The President's Advisory Committee, which functions as the university's strategic planning team, sets the general vision and direction for the institution and encourages solicited and unsolicited review and suggestions from internal and external constituents who are relevant to the particular planning topic. Moreover, West Georgia's strategic planning process is "top-down" only to the extent of establishing the general vision and direction of the institution. The President and the President's Advisory Committee use many avenues of feedback in their participatory planning process. Full participation and open communication by members of West Georgia's community serve strategic planning well by ingraining it with associated decision-making. Relative to its established vision and direction, the President and the President's Advisory Committee consider participant input judiciously. Eventually through this participatory process emerges a more precisely defined institutional direction.

Priority Areas and Specific Goals

During 1996-97, the State University of West Georgia established the following priority areas and specific goals:

Priority Areas

- The State University of West Georgia will increase the proportion of citizens of West Georgia's service area that hold a baccalaureate degree.
- The State University of West Georgia shall become a leader in the training of technology and educating students through technology; the university will take full advantage of technology for administrative use.
- The State University of West Georgia will continue to serve as a major contributor to Georgia's graduate education.
- The State University of West Georgia's commitment to diversity will continue as unwavering.
- The State University of West Georgia will promote regional economic development.
- The State University of West Georgia will use academic program review to improve effectiveness and environmental scanning to identify emerging societal needs.

Specific Goals

- The university will recruit and enroll undergraduate students who are likely to persist and graduate; the university will promote student persistence.
- The university will require each academic program to systematically evaluate its activities every five years; the university will consider judiciously new academic program proposals.
- The university will consider the use of technology as permanent and connect permanently technology needs to the institution's budget to protect West Georgia's investments in technology in future years.
- The university will continue to emphasize graduate education, particularly in educational fields.
The university will provide students and faculty with a diverse learning environment by continuing to attract and retain traditionally under-represented persons.

The university will preserve its commitment and practice of "educational excellence in a personal environment."

Detailed action plans, designed to help realize specific goals, are located in West Georgia’s Strategic Plan. This report is on file with the University System of Georgia’s Office of Planning and Policy Analysis.

Enrollment Planning

During 1996-97, the State University of West Georgia committed to planned enrollment targets. Enrollments at West Georgia will grow between 1998 and 2002, even in the face of more stringent admissions standards. This growth will occur for several reasons; the most important reason will be improvements in undergraduate retention rates resulting from more stringent admissions requirements and institutional efforts. Through increased recruitment efforts, the university’s first-time undergraduate student enrollments will grow slightly from fall terms 1998 through 2002. Graduate student enrollments will grow slightly via increased use of distance learning technology, initiatives that involve training teachers with technology, and new programs designed to satisfy regional needs. The university will continue modest growth of out-of-state and international student enrollments. Furthermore, if the System is successful at making two-year institutions the cornerstone of enrollment management, entering transfer students may increase. West Georgia’s complete Request for Proposed Enrollment Plans is on file with the University System of Georgia’s Office of Planning and Policy Analysis.

The university also began planning for the University System of Georgia’s admissions initiative, scheduled for full implementation by 2001. Tighter admission standards and changes in the student population led Learning Support and Testing to expand its scope and redefine its mission. While Learning Support anticipates substantial decline in remedial courses for traditional students, the unit also expects a continued need for some form of learning support for adult, international, and continuing education students.

Facilities Planning

The university, in cooperation with the University System of Georgia, has embarked on a master planning process that will conclude in six months with a comprehensive master plan. Important objectives of this process are to improve the appearance of campus, reduce vehicular traffic, and alter the campus design in favor of pedestrians. Possible means of obtaining these goals include closing roads, relocating parking areas, establishing walking paths, and improving the institution’s shuttle service.

In early June, West Georgia was among 27 universities and colleges that presented 52 requests for major capital projects (defined as a building costing $5,000,000 or more). Interestingly, West Georgia has never had an on-campus building whose construction cost exceeded even $4.4 million. Thanks to the Chancellor, for the first time presidents were allowed to make their best case directly to the Board of Regents. West Georgia’s Technology-enhanced Learning Center (a core curriculum building that will be used to teach a number of fields, and will house faculty in Physics, Chemistry, Interdisciplinary Studies, and Writing Across the Curriculum) was ranked fifth out of the 52 projects presented. Planning for this project started in Fiscal Year 1998, and construction will start in Fiscal Year 1999 with occupancy scheduled by fall of the year 2000. West Georgia is delighted with the Regents endorsement of this plan.
ANNUAL PROGRESS IN ASSESSING INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

External Accreditation

The State University of West Georgia enjoys a strong record of accreditation. The highest external recognition of effectiveness takes the form of institutional and discipline-based accreditation. The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools accredits all of West Georgia’s programs. Furthermore, some disciplines offer the opportunity for national accreditation, a very demanding and rigorous process. Currently, all of West Georgia’s 30 active graduate programs have achieved this highest honor of national accreditation. No university in the United States has a better record on this dimension.

The university maintained its accreditation from many discipline-based organizations, including the American Chemical Society, the Consortium for Diversified Psychology Programs, the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration, the National Association of Schools of Music, the American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business, the National League of Nursing, and the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education. Furthermore, the institution continues to actively pursue National Association of Schools of Art and Design accreditation for the Art Department.

During the last year, the College of Business had its visit for national re-accreditation by the American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSBS), and received an excellent report by the visitation team that unanimously recommended it be re-accredited. Now that AACSBS placed West Georgia on a 10-year re-accreditation cycle, the university belongs to a very prestigious set of institutions — in Georgia, only the Research Universities and one other school are at this level, as are only about 20 percent of business schools across the country. Furthermore, the College of Business continues to make progress towards AACSBS’s accounting specific accreditation.

Academic Program Review

The university has begun the process of periodic program review by holding discussions between the academic vice president’s office and academic deans. Conceptualizing the structure for program review will be completed at the dean’s level and initiated at the department level during 1997-98, with the plan of developing the structure for review during the first year of semester conversion, and having programs review themselves (one fifth of the programs every year) in Fiscal Year 2000. The Dean of the College of Business has volunteered his programs to undergo the first series of reviews.

The guiding philosophy of the university on program review is to focus on qualitative assessment of learning outcomes and benchmarking programs with parallel programs in the nation. The theoretical principles influencing the university in this effort are fundamentally twofold. The first phase is to initiate a self-study by each program, guided by core values, principles, and correlating methodologies that result from the stage of conceptualizing. The second and exceedingly important phase of this program study is to bring off-campus evaluators for each program to help in the assessment of learning outcomes.

While it is the university’s commitment to excellence that engenders the force of program review, a force that is willing to look at programs in the sometimes glaring light of impartial assessment, the academic vice president and academic deans are mindful that a great deal of the work of program review has been done in the process of semester conversion and periodic assessment by departments; therefore, every phase of program review takes into consideration what has been done so that the essence of the review is by no means disruptive or destructive but rather a tool that enables each department to attain its goals of academic excellence and national recognition.
Assessing Learning Outcomes

At the beginning of Fiscal Year 1997, the university assigned the responsibility of assessing student learning outcomes to the most appropriate level — the faculty, academic deans, and academic vice president. The process of assessing student learning outcomes at West Georgia is faculty-driven, and student-centered. Faculty are encouraged to use multiple methods of inquiry for each level, general learning outcomes (the core curriculum), the undergraduate major, and graduate programs.

Assessment processes and results for the College of Arts and Sciences during the last year include:

♦ For a second year, all Biology graduates that applied to Mercer’s early decision Medical School were accepted.
♦ Art students participated in five juried student exhibitions and won four awards. Over 90 students from 17 Georgia high schools attended the high school workshop conducted by the department.
♦ In Chemistry, graduates had a 100 percent acceptance rate to professional schools.
♦ The English & Philosophy department tracks student test scores on the Regent’s Exam. Average passing rate for the essay portion of this exam during the year was 82.6 percent, which placed West Georgia in the top 30 percent of all institutions in the University System.
♦ The Geology department exceeded fundamental goals. The department received the Regent’s Teaching Excellence Award. Furthermore, Geology students received best undergraduate student paper awards from the Georgia Academy of Science.
♦ In History, assessment results showing need for improvement in the area of historical research, need for a broader prospective, and need for better composition skills led the department to require heavier loads of historical methodology courses and related senior seminars, strengthen the emphasis on writing in lower-level sections, consider ways to build global perspective into the curriculum, and hire a specialist in African history. According to its assessment report, the department attracted able students who were satisfied with their major field of study and 64 students were initiated into honor societies in social sciences or history.
♦ In Math and Physics, according to pre- and post-tests, math students in MAT150 and MAT151 (core courses) demonstrated an increased ability to use computational skills in problem solving and numerical information in an applied context. Upper level math students demonstrated a broad knowledge on the oral comprehensive exam and the Teacher Competency Test. All students who graduated or are scheduled to graduate during the year performed well on the oral comprehensive exams. Physics and dual degree students demonstrated adequate proficiency in being able to discuss and solve problems. Several students demonstrated their ability to apply math and computer techniques in problem solving.
♦ Last year, the National Association of Schools of Music, Commission on Accreditation found West Georgia’s Music department to be in good standing. A comprehensive restructuring of courses and programs was completed in Fiscal Year 1996. This year, fourteen new courses and over 100 restructured or modified courses were approved. The instructional plan for each of these courses was refined and implemented. The initial analysis of test results indicates that student achievement has improved in most subject areas. Improvements can be attributed to improved instructional modes and to the admission of a more academically able student. Several students received annual honors, and many performances were presented on and off-campus.
♦ In Political Science, all undergraduate and graduate programs were reviewed for the semester conversion and course descriptions were substantially rewritten. Integrating the undergraduate planning degree into the political science B.S. degree created a special track. During the year, eleven graduate students completed their exit papers and received M.P.A.
degrees, and three students completed internships.

- The Psychology department used assessment data to revamp the curriculum for semester conversion, and added a new course. A review of the curriculum indicated that the department teaches the necessary courses for Master's degree students to become licensed as required by Georgia. During the year, four Master's students were accepted into doctoral programs.
- In Sociology and Anthropology, students were actively involved in educational and research projects.

Assessment processes and results for the College of Business during the last year include:

- AACSB reaffirmed accreditation of all undergraduate and graduate programs for ten years, and the pending Accounting specific accreditation received a one-year deferral.
- Over 80 percent of Business Information Systems majors received multiple offers for employment prior to graduation. Business Education and Management majors had similar success in job placement upon graduation.
- Over 40 percent of Real Estate graduates successfully completed Real Estate licensing exams.
- The Accounting Department was recognized as one of the top five departments in the nation in promoting and rewarding effective teaching. The department was also nominated for the Board of Regents Departmental Teaching Excellence Award. Furthermore, accounting students won four externally competitive scholarships, eight scholarships for CPA review courses, and constituted 50 percent of the inductees honored by Beta Gamma Sigma. The accounting Honor Society for achievement honored twelve students. The placement rate of graduates with average or higher salaries was 97 percent. Both APAT and FACIT scores are above the national norms. Students performed well on the CBK test. Using the results of assessment, the department restructured courses for semester conversion and added courses to the semester-based BBA and MPACC programs, improved teaching techniques, and increased the use of technology and multimedia in courses.
- In Economics, 85 percent of graduating seniors passed the assessment examination. Assessment processes and results for the College of Education during the last year include:
  - Over 96 percent of undergraduate students passed the Teacher Competency Test (TCT) on their initial attempt.
  - Departments received consistently high ratings from students on course evaluations.
  - According to the college's survey on student satisfaction, most students held positive perceptions of advising, accessibility to faculty, and overall services provided.
  - For students completing graduate degrees in the Department of Counseling and Educational Psychology, all Ed.S. students successfully passed the oral exams that focused on the assimilation and integration of theory to application. All students who completed the M.Ed. in school counseling passed the Georgia TCT exam and became certified as school counselors; most of the graduates in the community counseling program successfully passed the LPC licensure exam after obtaining the required post-degree supervised experience.
  - In Early Childhood Education all graduate students participated in and successfully passed final examinations.
  - In additional to traditional modes of assessment, Educational Leadership and Foundations implemented new evaluation procedures: portfolio assessment, learning logs, issues identification and problem solving exercises, and simulations. Furthermore, the upward mobility of recent graduates is impressive: five students were promoted from teacher to assistant principal, seven from assistant principal to principal, one from area director to assistant superintendent, one from assistant superintendent to superintendent, and one from teacher to instructional supervisor.
- In Middle Grades Education nearly all of the
graduate students who completed the M.Ed. or Ed.S. agree that the program is of high quality and that it effectively prepares them for the classroom. The average rating of student evaluations of teachers and courses was above five on a six-point scale.

- In Physical Education, several changes in the curriculum were made for the semester conversion based on student and faculty comments and assessment. New courses were created and some courses were modified to reflect the current status of recreation. A number of courses will be eliminated under the semester system because of program and course assessments.

- In Special Education students consistently rated the department high on program and student teaching evaluations. The faculty and chair ensure current knowledge and relevance by reviewing course evaluations; syllabi and class content revisions are based on these evaluations.

- In Research, Media and Technology, several students have made presentations, received funding, or produced publications. Furthermore, the university requires all units to submit operational unit plans, statements of assessment results, and funding priorities. These reports require units to link assessment, planning and budgeting. The President’s Advisory Committee used these documents to assist their efforts with developing the university’s Fiscal Year 1998 budget. That is, budget development does consider unit assessments relative to the units established goals.

**Overall Institutional Health**

**Major Institutional Changes**

During the last year, the State University of West Georgia did not have any major changes in the overall health of the institution. However, several important changes did occur, including preparation for semester conversion, improvement in retention rates achieved, enhancements in the use of technology for instructional and administrative purposes, contributions toward regional economic development, improvements in facilities and progress toward the System’s admissions requirements for 2001. Furthermore, the institution clarified its strategic planning process, updated its strategic plan, committed to planned enrollment targets, and began a comprehensive master planning process.

**Need for Additional Support**

Through West Georgia’s Fiscal Year 1998 Budget Allocation Proposal and the Board of Regents open hearings for facility requests, West Georgia identified two specific areas of need for additional support from the System — additional faculty positions and new facilities. West Georgia is grateful to the Board of Regents and the University System for partially addressing these needs. However, considerable unmet needs still exist, which must be met if West Georgia is to preserve its commitment to *Educational Excellence in a Personal Environment*.

West Georgia needs additional faculty positions. The institution is committed to its enrollment targets for fall terms 1998 - 2002, and thus a mathematical "what-if" analysis shows that it would take an additional 14 faculty positions by fall term 1998 just to return the student/faculty ratio to the underfunded 1991 level. Furthermore, it would take an additional 25 faculty positions to equate the number of undergraduate degrees conferred during Fiscal Year 1997 to the underfunded Fiscal Year 1991 degree/faculty ratio. Moreover, the preceding numbers do not consider the import changes brought on by enrollment increases through improvements in retention. Upper division programs require different configurations of resources than do lower division courses. Restated, enrollment increases at West Georgia will come from advances in retention rather than
advances in admission, and the costs of delivery of instruction to a greater proportion of upper division students will rise.

During the last decade, West Georgia’s enrollment grew nearly 40 percent, while the institution’s facilities (in square feet) grew by less than eight percent. Moreover, nearly 90 percent of the institution’s facilities (in square feet) were constructed prior to 1976. The areas of strongest need include thoroughly renovating the current Student Center and constructing a Physical Education and Lifelong Learning Center.

The renovation of the existing Student Center would consist of relocation and replacement of the major mechanical systems from the first and second floor to the basement floor area, demolition of the interior partitions of the first and second floors, and renovation of these areas to provide the necessary functional space as required. Renovations would include necessary architectural, structural, mechanical, and electrical replacements or enhancements. The Student Center has become very dated and needs to be modernized to accommodate the needs of our growing resident and commuter student populations. These needs include West Georgia’s ability to accommodate students’ recreational as well as their activity requirements. This project is critical to the successfully recruitment and retention of students, and to the students’ cultural and social development. The building’s current configuration renders much space unusable for recreational and social needs of today’s students.

The State University of West Georgia needs a Physical Education and Lifelong Learning Center that would serve the primary areas of undergraduate and graduate physical education majors and continuing education participants, and would be used by all students. West Georgia’s current physical education facility was built in 1965, and the institution leases space to accommodate continuing education offices and activities. Of the space provided by a new Physical Education and Lifelong Learning Center, greater than 80 percent would be dedicated to instructional space. The facility would increase the available space for student and adult learning from 49,900 square feet to 135,940 square feet. The new structure would contain instructional classrooms, distance learning classrooms, faculty offices, staff and graduate research space, necessary storage space for instructional equipment, aerobics classrooms, a large instructional assembly area, conference and seminar rooms, faculty and student locker rooms, and a human performance laboratory. The building would be located in an area to be determined by the Campus Master Plan currently in process. Access and utilities are in place and adequate.