

INDIANA UNIVERSITY SOUTH BEND

NCA SELF-STUDY

1999-2000

Executive Summary



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This executive summary provides an overview of the major findings of the Indiana University South Bend 1999-2000 Self-Study. The self-study, a product of a two year comprehensive process, provides extensive and comprehensive evidence that Indiana University South Bend meets all NCA accreditation criteria. It examines all aspects of the university, discusses our current status, and describes our future challenges.

SELF-STUDY PROCESS

The self-study began in August 1997. At that time a coordinating committee which included faculty, staff, administrators, and students developed policies and procedures to evaluate how Indiana University South Bend was meeting the NCA General Institutional Requirements and Criteria for Accreditation. Subcommittees ranging in size from three to six members were responsible for contacting colleagues and gathering specific data. Draft reports were prepared by each subcommittee by summer 1999.

To allow the new Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, who was appointed July 1999, the opportunity to review the report and to put his mark on the self-study, the institution requested and was granted the opportunity to move its site visit originally scheduled for spring 2000 to fall 2000. In spring 2000, meetings were held to allow campus constituencies to discuss and review the draft of the self-study that was available on the university web page and in hard copy. Revisions were incorporated into the final version of the self-study document that was submitted to the NCA Review Team and placed on the university web page during the summer of 2000.

The process has provided Indiana University South Bend the opportunity to: 1) evaluate how the university, in its pursuit of continuing accreditation by NCA, was meeting the General Institutional Requirements and Criteria for Accreditation; 2) to systematically identify the strengths of the University and the challenges it faces in fulfilling its mission as a public comprehensive university; and 3) to reflect on what we are, what we are doing, and what we want to become.

SUMMARY

Virtually every aspect of Indiana University South Bend has experienced change during the past ten years. These changes provide assurance that the University will continue to provide an environment of teaching, learning, and scholarship and excellence in the arts, liberal arts and sciences, and in professional programs.

The following are a few of the changes that have taken place at Indiana University South Bend since the last North Central Association Review:

- The campus community has engaged in strategic planning to focus the priorities of the University on students, on program excellence, on community partnerships, and on enhancing the image of Indiana University South Bend in the community.
- There was a smooth transition to a new leadership team, including a chancellor (hired 1997) and vice chancellor for academic affairs (hired 1999).
- New academic and professional programs have been implemented.
- The diversity of the faculty, staff, and student body has increased.
- Articulation agreements with neighboring two-year institutions have been implemented.
- A comprehensive assessment plan was developed and assessment has been implemented in all campus units.
- Computing facilities have been substantially upgraded and technology has transformed the campus.
- The physical face of the campus has changed with building renovation and construction including the development of a pedestrian mall at the center of campus.

The self-study report shows that Indiana University South Bend has a clear and publicly stated mission which enjoys widespread support. University resources, such as its faculty, staff, and administrators, its fiscal base, physical plant, information/computing services, student services, and library are configured to support the institution's mission into the new century. Opportunities exist for faculty and staff development, for curriculum development, and increasingly for student participation in curricular and extracurricular activities. The capacity for instructional technology exists throughout the campus, and physical facilities continue to improve and expand. The campus initiated a strategic plan which involved the campus community. The strategic initiatives adopted by the Academic Senate are informing decisions at all levels of the University.

STRENGTHS

Through the self-study process, Indiana University South Bend has identified institutional strengths:

- The faculty, who are a community and university resource, pride themselves on their commitment to teaching, scholarship, and service.
- The focus on teaching and learning, on faculty/student interactions, and on the strength of academic and professional programs are a source of pride.
- The increasing diversity of the faculty, staff, and student body is a strong attribute of the University.
- There is a long history of shared faculty governance at Indiana University South Bend.
- The University has made substantial progress in providing support for its instructional programs, including the development of technologically enhanced classrooms.
- The University has clearly articulated and communicated procedures relating to reappointment, tenure, promotion, and complaints.
- Through the strategic directions committee the University has implemented a planning process and campus priorities which have started to inform budget decisions.

- The University has a commitment to assessment and has created a process that examines the academic goals of campus units and their ability to accomplish those goals.
- The faculty, staff, and students at Indiana University South Bend demonstrate a strong respect for legal and ethical order.

CHALLENGES

Although the University is positioning itself well for the future, the self-study process identified several issues which require vigilance and special attention:

- How well the University handles the retirement/replacement of senior faculty during the next years will partially determine the continued strength of academic and professional programs.
- While change is valued at Indiana University South Bend, the reorganization and restructuring of the administrative units and of student services have created feelings of uncertainty and anxiety.
- Keeping personnel trained and equipped with technology is time consuming and costly.
- The relationship of the Indiana University system schools to regional campuses such as Indiana University South Bend needs clearer definition.
- The requirements of specialized accrediting agencies challenge the University's efforts to continue to reduce its reliance on part-time instructors.
- The implementation of the community college initiative in Indiana has the potential to impact enrollments, academic programs, and the fiscal well-being of the Indiana University campuses.
- Changes in regulations from the central administration at Indiana University, from the state, and from the federal government sometimes challenge the institution's best intentions to provide adequate information and services.

CONCLUSIONS

Indiana University South Bend will continue to take pride in its strengths and will continue to address its challenges and findings as they are revealed through institutional planning and assessment processes. This cycle of analytical activity will position the University for continued excellence into the 21st century.