

**SUMMARY OF SELF-STUDY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND
SUGGESTIONS**

Recommendations

Section 1 Principles and Philosophy of Accreditation

None

Section 2 Institutional Purpose

None

Section 3 Institutional Effectiveness

3.1: 2 of 9 *The institution **must** define its expected educational results and describe its methods for analyzing the results.*

Recommendation 1. The Self-Study Committees recommend that:

1. USA expand the published requirement for individual student access to a personal computer (with specific software and communication capabilities) and include a statement on the attainment of minimum levels of skill in using basic computer applications (e.g., word processing, spreadsheet applications, and computer-based communication) and that those expectations be incorporated in USA requirements for the core curriculum:
2. the departments of Dramatic Arts, English, Foreign Languages, History and Philosophy adopt statements on computer proficiency expected of students within their respective undergraduate degree programs, including specific course-completion requirements and/or other means of assessing students computer competencies;
3. USA proceed with plans to evaluate and adopt institutional-level methods of assessing the educational results of its core curriculum and general education requirements, including administration of examinations (such as those available in the ACT Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency

Program) to students who have completed sixty semester hours of credit in the institution;

4. department chairs be charged with periodic review of the syllabi to ensure that they reflect programmatic learning objectives;
5. the program descriptions contained in the University Bulletin be reviewed to ensure that the student is informed of the specific knowledge, skills, and aptitudes he or she is expected to attain thorough completion of the program; and
6. the college and departmental assessment plans presented during 2000-2001 be reviewed and revised as necessary to ensure that methods of evaluation of learning-based outcomes are appropriate, consistently applied, and relevant to the division's or department's educational goals.

3.1: 5 of 9 *The institution **must** develop and implement procedures to evaluate the extent to which these educational goals are being achieved.*

Recommendation 2. The Self-Study Committees recommend that:

1. the staff of the Office of Institutional Research and Planning provide continuing assistance and academic support to departments in the selection of assessment measures and development of assessment procedures relevant to the department's instructional, research, and service programs.
2. the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs mandate involvement of each dean in the review of annual assessment plans to ensure that all departmental plans conform to the requirements established for the assessment of each aspect of the department's educational activities, including instruction, research, and public service.

3.1: 6 of 9 *The institution **must** use the results of these evaluations to improve educational programs, services, and operations.*

Recommendation 3 The Self-Study Committees recommend that:

1. all departments document the use of information from assessment activities to plan and implement program improvements.
2. the staff of the Office of Institutional Research and Planning provide continuing assistance to academic and academic support departments in the development of assessment plans that are relevant to the department's instruction, research, and service programs. This assistance should include individual meetings with department chairpersons and program heads to discuss deficiencies in the Assessment Activity Reports and to provide assistance in rectifying the deficiencies.
3. the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs mandate involvement of each dean in the review of annual assessment activities reports to ensure that all reports conform to the requirements established by the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and that all departments describe how the use of the results of assessment is used to improve the department's educational activities, including instruction, research, and public service.

3.2: 2-5 of 6 *For each administrative and educational support service unit, the institution **must** (1) establish a clearly defined purpose which supports the institution's purpose and goals, (2) formulate goals which support the purpose of each unit, (3) develop and implement procedures to evaluate the extent to which these goals are being achieved in each unit, (4) use the results of the evaluations to improve administrative and educational support services.*

Recommendation 4. The Self-Study Committees recommend that:

1. each administrative and support service unit in the institution be required to develop a statement setting forth the purposes of the unit and relating these (1) to the purposes of the institution as described in the USA mission statement and (2) to the purposes of the division within which the department is located.
2. the staff of the Office of Institutional Research and Planning develop and distribute, along with the instructions for each years planning reports, a

common format for documenting administrative and support unit statements of purpose.

3. The staff of the Office of Institutional Research and Planning conduct a workshop for administrative unit heads that will include discussion of purpose statement development, the planning and evaluation processes adopted by the Long-Range Planning Committee, preparation of annual goals and objectives, and principles of institutional effectiveness and assessment.

3.3: 3 of 5 *An institution **must** regularly evaluate the effectiveness of its institutional research process and use its findings for the improvement of its process.*

Recommendation 5. The Self-Study Committees recommend that the Assistant Vice President for Institutional Research and Planning periodically evaluate the institutional research process and use the evaluations to improve the institutional research process.

Section IV Educational Programs

4.2.5: 6 of 6 *Orientation and advisement programs **must** be evaluated regularly and used to enhance assistance to students.*

Recommendation 6. The Self-Study committees recommend that orientation programs and academic advising throughout USA be evaluated regularly, and the results should be used to enhance assistance to students.

4.3.2: 12 of 12 *It (the institution) **must** regularly evaluate its admission policies.*

Recommendation 7. The Self-Study committees recommend that the University Graduate Council institute a formal process for evaluating general admission policies at a minimum of once every three years. Further, the Committees recommend that the Council require all programs to evaluate their specific policies at a similar interval.

4.3.6: 1 of 6 *Each institution **must** conduct a systematic, effective, program of graduate academic advising.*

Recommendation 8. The Self Study Committees recommend that all graduate programs establish a formal, systematic procedure for evaluating the effectiveness of academic advising programs.

4.3.6: 4 of 6 *An institution **must** ensure that the number of advisees assigned to faculty or professional staff is reasonable.*

Recommendation 9. The Self-Study Committees recommend that all academic units ensure that the number of advisees assigned to faculty is reasonable.

4.3.6: 5 of 6 *An effective orientation program **must** be made available to all full-and part-time graduate students.*

Recommendation 10. The Self-Study Committees recommend that all departments establish an orientation program available to all full-time and part-time students. It is recommended that such programs incorporate formats suitable to the student population in that unit.

4.3.6: 6 of 6 *Orientation and advisement programs **must** be evaluated regularly and used to enhance effective assistance to students.*

Recommendation 11. The Self-Study Committees recommend that all departments implement a formal and regular system for evaluating their orientation and advising programs.

Section V Educational Support Services

5.1.1: 4 of 6 *Learning Resources and services **must** be adequate to support the needs of users.*

Recommendation 12. The Self-Study Committees recommend that the administration provide increased support for collection development, including electronic resources, the cost of which is approaching \$200,000 of the University Library's materials budget.

5.1.3: 2 of 6 *Access to the library collection **must** be sufficient for support of educational, research, and public service programs of the institution.*

Recommendation 13. The Self-Study Committees recommend that, as in 5.1.1:4 of 6, funding for the University Library be increased to adequately meet the needs of student and faculty research.

5.1.3: 4 of 6 *Institutions offering graduate work **must** provide library resources substantially beyond those required for baccalaureate programs.*

Recommendation 14. The Self-Study Committees recommend that funding for the University Library be increased so that the library resource needs of graduate students in all departments are adequately met.

Section VI Administrative Processes

6.3.10: 1 of 4 *The institution **must** have a written statement of its investment policies and guidelines approved by the board.*

Recommendation 15. The Self-Study Committees recommend that the Board of Trustees adopt investment policies and guidelines applicable to investment assets held in the current and plant funds.

6.3.10: 4 of 4 *Investment policies and guidelines **must** be evaluated regularly.*

Recommendation 16. The Self-Study Committees recommend that the Board of Trustees review investment policies regularly to ensure that these are within guidelines and in accordance with USA's stated position.

SUGGESTIONS

Section V Educational Support Services

5.3: 10 of 10 *There **should** be a clearly defined program for maintaining and replacing equipment and software so that they remain consistent with current technology.*

Suggestion 1. The Self-Study Committees suggests that USA develop a clearly defined program for maintaining and replacing equipment and software in order to remain consistent with current technology.

Section VI Administrative Processes

6.1.2:7-8 of 15 *In addition, the (Board of Trustees By-Laws) document **should** include provision governing the removal of a board member from office. A board member **may be** dismissed only for cause and by procedures involving due process.*

Suggestion 2. The Self-Study Committees suggests that the Board consider amending the bylaws to provide for dismissal of a board member for cause and by procedures involving due process.