CRITERION FOUR

The institution can continue to accomplish its purposes and strengthen its educational effectiveness.

Over the past 35 years, MCO has demonstrated a consistent ability to adapt and evolve, even when confronted with rapid change from external, uncontrollable forces (e.g., Balanced Budget Act of 1997). The institution quickly and effectively responds to rapid changes because of the strengths inherent in its planning and decision-making processes, in the commitment of its faculty and staff, and in the responsiveness of executive administrators. Continued success requires strong leadership to capitalize on current strengths while providing a vision for MCO's growth. President Frank S. McCullough, M.D. has provided a vision that outlines MCO's direction for the future. The Self-Study has demonstrated that MCO has the resources to make that vision a reality.

While the ability to predict the future is an imprecise science, careful evaluation of four key factors provides evidence of an institution's ability to continue to accomplish its goals and purposes. The key factors we consider predictive of future success are MCO's past ability to meet challenges, strong human, financial, and physical resources allocated and organized to support planning for anticipated future changes, a clear vision for the future, and ongoing evaluation and decision-making processes that support continued prosperity and success.

ABILITY TO MEET PAST CHALLENGES

MCO has an outstanding track record of meeting educational and financial challenges that today face all academic health centers. Educationally, MCO has grown from a single school of medicine to four schools offering
multidisciplinary programs. In the past ten years, MCO has initiated four new degree programs and four new certificate programs while maintaining high quality standards in all of the existing programs. The level of quality is evident by the fact that all of MCO's degree programs are fully accredited by the appropriate accrediting bodies.

In addition, MCO has changed its curriculum offerings to reflect changes in today's educational and technological needs. Specifically, MCO has:

- Supplemented scheduled didactic lectures with self-paced and self-directed learning, such as the problem-based learning courses in the School of Medicine.
- Integrated the training of the various health professions into programs that emphasize interdisciplinary teamwork and redefined traditional roles. Examples of this include shared elective courses and the Managed Care College.
- Increased the use of interactive and two-way electronic learning and increased the use of the Academic Intranet.
- Supplemented education and training in the hospital and the classroom exclusively with educational experiences in the ambulatory and community settings.
- Developed stronger curricula in evidence-based health care, practice organization and management, healthcare policy, continual process improvement, interpersonal communications, lifelong learning skills, informatics, public health, community-based care, alternative and complementary medicine, and cultural diversity.

Financially, MCO has a history of raising funds for multiple purposes. Program development grants have provided funding to develop and implement new educational programs. The MCO Foundation has consistently increased its financial support of the institution's academic mission. Capital improvement funds have been raised and used to construct the Collier Building that houses
the School of Allied Health and the School of Nursing and to expand and renovate the emergency room and operating rooms.

MCO also has met the challenges imposed by the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 by prioritizing and aligning its financial resources to support both the academic and clinical service missions of the institution. MCO implemented an institution-wide Competitive Repositioning program to reduce costs, enhance revenues, and increase productivity. MCO’s past accomplishments are fully detailed in the Introduction and in the sections for Criteria Two and Three.

**RESOURCE BASE**

Historical success is not sufficient to ensure future viability. Building for the future requires a solid human, financial and physical resource base. The Self-Study reveals that MCO demonstrates strengths in each of these areas and has the ability to address future needs.

**Human Resources**

MCO’s greatest resource is its people. Faculty, staff and administrators are committed to MCO’s continued prosperity and growth. Through the practitioner-teacher model, MCO’s highly qualified faculty members serve the academic health science center in many ways, including education, research, patient care, and community service.

There has been a steady growth in both the number and quality of our faculty over the last ten years. There are currently 409 faculty, of which 349 are full-time and 60 are part-time. While most departments and schools are adequately staffed, additional faculty members might be needed in the future if current programs grow. The qualifications of the faculty have contributed to the consistent and positive growth and the stability of MCO and its programs. At the same time, MCO has reached that point in its history where there is a
small, but healthy, turnover in the faculty and departmental chairpersons. The college has used these new appointments to revitalize departments with new faculty, resulting in renewed vigor of existing faculty. Dedicated faculty and staff working together are bringing MCO prominence and are leading the teaching efforts that are educating health care professionals and biomedical researchers of tomorrow.

MCO has made a strong commitment to ongoing faculty development with the establishment of the Faculty and Staff Development Office, which supports and encourages faculty to reach their full potential as educators and to keep abreast of the latest applications of educational research.

Financial Resources
MCO had total revenues of $240,698,661 in fiscal year 1999 and $241,359,317 in fiscal year 2000. MCO has projected revenues for fiscal year 2001 of $245,841,890. The breakdown of MCO's revenue in terms of origin is shown in Figure 7.

Currently, the MCO Hospitals generate 58 percent, state of Ohio 16 percent, and federal, state and private grants 8 percent of the institution's total financial resources. MCO also generates revenue at a rate of approximately 12 percent from investments, contractual relationships with the University of Toledo and Bowling Green State University as well as cooperative undergraduate programs in Nursing and Allied Health. As with any state institution, changes in the economic climate of the state affect MCO's stability. MCO is committed to operate within its board-approved budget each year. A defined budget process is implemented each year that incorporates projected changes in state funding, and changes in health care and research funding. The budget is monitored monthly to ensure MCO's success in achieving its projected results.
In fiscal 1997, the state of Ohio implemented Senate Bill 6 reporting that requires MCO to submit quarterly financial statements to the State. The Ohio Board of Regents then prepares various ratio analyses to assess the financial health of each state institution. MCO has remained financially strong and is currently ranked fourth among Ohio's 38 public institutions of higher education.
MCO always pursues new ways to generate revenues. MCO has developed specialty clinical centers such as the Fertility Center, the Cancer Institute, the Center for Successful Aging, and the Geriatric Psychiatry Center. MCO also implemented new clinical programs such as liver transplantation along with faculty recruitment plans. These new initiatives provide improved services to the community and produce new revenues for the institution.

In addition, MCO has initiated strategic alliances within the community as an innovative way to address the fiscal challenges facing health care institutions. Mercy Children's Hospital, a unique partnership established in 1999 between St. Vincent Mercy Medical Center and MCO, provides the main pediatric training site for MCO's residents and students. These alliances provide high quality care to the community, offer educational opportunities for future health care providers, and conserve limited fiscal resources.

As we look to the future, the MCO Foundation plans to raise $25 to $35 million by 2003 to support MCO's mission. To become true architects for the next age, MCO will use these funds to design and build its future with a special focus on: enhancing education with the latest technology ($11 million); endowing scholarships for future nurses, physicians, researchers and members of the allied health professions ($16 million); and creating innovative clinical and research centers ($8 million). As of December 2000, over $12 million has been raised and/or pledged.

**Physical Resources**

As documented in Criterion Two, MCO has an outstanding physical environment that supports health education, research and patient care programs. The Board of Trustees continues to support investment in facilities that promotes MCO's educational mission. This was evident in the approval of two new educational centers in the year 2000: the MCO-Mercy Health Partners Creative Education Center and the Clinical Skills Center.
The MCO Board of Trustees approved in May 2000 the construction of a 36,000 square foot Creative Education Center to be located on the south east side of the Block Health Science Building. The MCO/Mercy Health Partners Creative Education Center will bring together people, function and purpose to focus on teaching, learning, and assessment. It also will support research on educational methodologies, including outcomes and best practices.

The Clinical Skills Center, located in the Ruppert Health Center, provides live and virtual environments for interdisciplinary clinical skills education. Using simulated and standardized patients permits faculty to test students and residents for professional competence. The Academic Test Center was established to support computerized testing, professional licensure examinations, specialty board certifications, and other national standardized tests. The Clinical Skills Center and the Academic Test Center will eventually relocate to the MCO/Mercy Health Partners Creative Education Center.

**Facilities Planning**

A facilities audit is conducted annually to ensure that MCO's physical plant is capable of supporting MCO's educational mission. The audit evaluates the existing physical condition and functional performance of the buildings and infrastructure, and their maintenance needs. The facilities audit provides a basis for decision-making on routine maintenance, capital renewal/deferred maintenance, functional improvements, replacements and the disposal of our organization's facilities as they deteriorate beyond repair. Using the audit to inspect building and infrastructure conditions helps maintenance personnel in prioritizing projects for capital budgeting.
MCO's VISION AND STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

For MCO to continue to accomplish its purposes, a clear vision for the future is required. Frank S. McCullough, M.D. provided that vision when he was appointed president in 1997. MCO's vision is to become "a recognized leader in health care education," a vision that capitalizes on MCO's strengths and its unique position in northwest Ohio. To accomplish the vision, a strategic planning process was initiated. Four strategic planning committees as well as a strategic plan council with broad representation from the Board of Trustees, administration, faculty, students, and staff members were formed. Consensus was reached to develop new products, resources and markets. Armed with these goals and Dr. McCullough's vision, the committees began the planning process. Recommendations for the future focused on creating new and unique services that would distinguish MCO from other academic health care centers or scientific institutions in both the region and the country. To gain national and international recognition by reinventing the institution and to meet the challenges of the 21st century, the plan was to:

- Foster excellence in the selection of students and faculty;
- Revise and modernize the curricula;
- Place more vigor in the faculty promotion and tenure process;
- Focus the research and the clinical resources on a few select areas of excellence where MCO is a recognized leader;
- Continue to enhance MCO's available resources via Competitive Repositioning and partnerships; and,
- Unify the strategic planning processes between MCO, the Associated Physicians of the Medical College of Ohio and the MCO Foundation.

To implement the vision, a comprehensive strategic plan was developed using input from faculty, administration, students, and support staff personnel. Private interviews conducted for this Self-Study with MCO leadership, faculty
and staff, confirm that individuals at all levels of the organization share the same vision and sense of priorities, with education as the first priority.

The strategic plan recommendations, developed by MCO faculty, staff, students, and administration, were approved by the Board of Trustees in January of 1998. They provided a framework for MCO to assess, prioritize, and distribute resources related to its academic mission with its four arms: education, research, information technology, and the clinical enterprise. However, the pace and rate of changes occurring in academic health science centers requires continuing reevaluation of priorities and constant planning. MCO is able to meet this challenge through its ongoing planning and evaluation. To ensure that MCO continues to stay current in its planning and ability to respond to a rapidly changing health care environment, a new restructured strategic planning committee, chaired by the Provost/Executive Vice President, was appointed in the fall of 2000. This committee is charged with assessing successes and challenges related to the 1997-1998 strategic recommendations and developing a new and continuing set of priorities for the institution while always keeping the strategic vision for MCO "to be a recognized leader in health care education," as the focal point.

ONGOING PLANNING AND DECISION-MAKING

The strategic plan requires ongoing planning and decision-making processes that capture input from all members of the MCO community. Throughout its history, a mix of formal and informal planning and evaluation processes has guided MCO's growth and development. The formal processes are embedded within the committee structures governing the individual schools, clinical institutions, and the college as a whole. In addition, various task forces within each school have been formed to gather data and develop long range planning strategies that will complement the overall institutional strategic plan. Among the notable examples of the strategic planning efforts are the:
• 1986-1987 School of Medicine Task Force on Curriculum;
• 1997 School of Nursing strategic planning initiative;
• Year 2000 School of Nursing 5-Year strategic planning initiative;
• Annual facilities audit;
• Capital improvement annual plan;
• Year 2000 Student Services Strategic Plan.

Short-range planning is done predominantly within the institution’s faculty committee structure. Much ongoing planning also centers on preparing for periodic external examinations of the various programs at MCO. Decision-making is closely interwoven with planning processes. MCO faculty, staff and students have numerous mechanisms and opportunities for input into the planning and decision-making processes within the institution. These processes are outlined below.

**The President’s Cabinet**

As an academic health center, MCO has education, research, and service missions, not an easy balance to maintain in today's health care environment. The president has weekly cabinet meetings to ensure that decisions are evaluated for their impact on all three missions. The cabinet meetings are attended by all vice presidents, allowing for input from areas of education, service, finance, operations, and institutional advancement. Participants pool their observations, share opinions, discuss problems, and check progress on a wide range of strategic and operational issues. Once a month, the same individuals, along with invited guests, meet for day-long retreats that are even more strategically focused, and generally centered on one or two major issues. Weekly cabinet meetings and president's retreats serve as the principal means of monitoring progress in meeting strategic objectives. When a critical mass of strategic issues is reached, or a single issue is particularly complex, or resolution requires multiple perspectives, a formal planning effort, involving others outside the President's immediate circle, is initiated. In
general, narrowly focused issues are addressed through appointed task forces, and broader issues through institution-wide strategic planning.

**Dean's Meetings**

The Provost, who also is the Dean of the School of Medicine, and the deans of the other three schools meet on a monthly basis and whenever necessary. The purpose of these meetings is to address educational issues arising within each school, issues common to all schools, as well as addressing institutional issues (e.g., budget) that may impact the ability of the schools to meet MCO's educational mission.

**Faculty Senate**

Faculty members at MCO have an opportunity to raise issues and voice their concerns at an institutional level by participating in the institutional Faculty Senate. The Senate provides proportional representation of all departments within each school within the college. Senators are elected by the faculty in their departments. Faculty members are encouraged to present concerns to their senators, who bring the issues to the Senate Steering Committee. Faculty members also are encouraged to attend Senate meetings. In addition, all faculty members receive a copy of the previous meeting's minutes and a meeting agenda. This facilitates communication and provides regular encouragement for faculty participation.

MCO also has formal processes by which educational issues can be addressed within each school. MCO's four schools have standing committees for educational policies and practices. In addition, each school has an executive committee and each department holds faculty meetings to discuss pertinent issues.
Executive Committees/Councils

The School of Allied Health's executive committee is composed of the dean, associate dean, and chairpersons of the departments: Occupational Health, Physical Therapy, Physician Assistant Studies, and Public Health. The School of Nursing's executive committee includes the dean, the associate dean for the graduate program, the associate dean for the undergraduate program and the department chairpersons. The School of Medicine's executive committee includes chairpersons from each of its departments, and the Graduate School's executive committee includes associate deans, program directors from each program, and a student representative. Each committee meets on a monthly or bimonthly basis to provide an ongoing opportunity for open communication among administrators of the various programs. Issues or concerns are addressed, problem-solving strategies discussed, and methods for communicating with faculty and staff determined. Executive committees often identify problems that need multiple perspectives to solve, and each dean has the prerogative of appointing a task force to address the specific concerns. Task forces provide another forum through which faculty members and staff have input into their school's decision-making process.

Departmental Meetings

All schools hold regular departmental meetings where issues specific to that department are discussed and decisions made. Departments also provide opportunities for faculty to influence MCO's future direction by establishing both individual and departmental goals.

Department chairpersons provide annual department reports of their respective departments. These reports encourage faculty to reflect on what has been accomplished during the previous year and make decisions regarding what direction they want their particular department to take in the upcoming year. Goals are identified and determined by faculty within each school. Faculty members take ownership of this process and thus shape the
future direction for each school as they work to meet MCO’s mission and vision.

**Standing Committees**

The work of the schools is done through the efforts of standing committees that are comprised of faculty members, staff and students. For example, curriculum committees make recommendations regarding curricular issues that then are brought forward and decided upon by the faculty as a whole. In addition, faculty members, through the departmental and/or committee meeting structure, have the option of asking that a task force be appointed to address a specific area of concern not currently addressed by a standing committee.

In addition to faculty involvement in decision-making processes that influence MCO’s educational mission, a number of other committees engage in ongoing planning. Examples include plans that have been developed for academic space utilization, capital investment, library development, faculty development, curriculum development and evaluation, safety, diversity - affirmative action, and recruitment. These committees contributed significant benefits by their impact on recruiting students and faculty, improving curricular and educational opportunities, and increasing the services provided to faculty and students.

The Self-Study has identified research planning at MCO as one area of strategic development that needs to be strengthened. Although the quality of individual research efforts is often outstanding, MCO seems to lack an overall focused and coherent research agenda. A need was recognized for a unifying vision that draws individual research efforts together and creates synergy between them. Recently, with the creation of the Cancer Institute, this type of focus has begun to emerge in the area of research planning. The Cancer Institute offers a unifying vision for basic and clinical research related to cancer treatment and care.
In addition to the structured, formal planning processes, MCO has informal processes by which many different voices can be heard. MCO is moderately sized, and most of its people are concentrated on a fairly small campus. Many of the faculty and staff are long-time MCO employees with a vested interest in the ongoing success of the institution. There are numerous committees, workgroups, and administrative meetings that systematically bring together faculty and staff from throughout the campus, ensuring wide representation of the major issues facing MCO.

Employees, and particularly faculty members, have many opportunities to take issues directly to the President or Provost/Executive Vice President. Monthly town hall meetings that are open and Breakfast with the Dean meetings in the School of Medicine provide an opportunity for every MCO employee to speak directly to the president or dean, ask questions, raise issues, and offer suggestions. In addition, senior administrators have an “open-door” policy that enables any student, faculty or staff member to schedule an appointment to discuss their specific problem or concern with a top administrator.

This high degree of personal involvement by top administration ensures that information, issues, and ideas move very quickly across the institution, particularly in an upward direction. Executive leadership is generally aware of operational details and the personalities, politics, opportunities and challenges in each of MCO's major divisions. The end result is a rolling planning process that can adapt relatively quickly to changing needs and circumstances, yet still ensure follow-through on prior decisions. A drawback, however, is that the process is occasionally perceived as top down, or as a "black box" by some faculty and staff. Moreover, there appears to be a general lack of front-line awareness of specific initiatives and institutional strategies. Ways to enhance communication were undertaken recently to attempt to address this issue.
There is now additional and ongoing institutional-wide communication conducted through newsletters (Pulse), minutes of the Board of Trustees meetings, the Monitor (a daily on-line news and information service), and presidential e-mails and meetings, in addition to institution-wide town hall meetings.

**Strengths**

- **Outstanding resources:**
  - Faculty and administrative commitment to excellence.
  - Modern, technologically advanced physical plant.
  - Well established financial resources.
  - Clear vision for the future.
- Long-range strategic plans have been reevaluated by the newly restructured strategic planning committee.
- Institutional and individual school committees that provide for faculty, staff and student input into decision-making.

**Challenges**

- Continue to encourage faculty and staff to take full advantage of the available vehicles for input in the planning and decision-making processes.
- Maintain MCO's financial strength.
- Increase MCO's ability to compete for state and federal funds.