INTRODUCTION

A team of consultant-evaluators from the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (HLC/NCA) will conduct a site visit for continued accreditation of The University of Toledo Feb. 27-29, 2012.

In preparation for the visit, the University has completed an institutional self-study report that the team will review before its arrival. The report demonstrates how the institution satisfies the accreditation criteria and formally requests continued accreditation from the HLC. The team will prepare a detailed report of its findings and final recommendations after its visit. The self-study report and the visit are the two critical components of the continued accreditation process.

This document summarizes the self-study report.

Accreditation is important because it promotes confidence in the integrity and high quality of the University’s programs and services and ensures that students can receive federal financial aid and research scientists can receive extramural research funding from federal agencies.

The self-study report took more than two years of research, evaluation, writing, and editing. Guided by a steering committee, more than 80 faculty, staff members, and administrators who served on six designated research and writing teams identified and documented key University strengths and weaknesses and made suggestions for improvements. Production of the self-study report involved circulation and posting of draft documents for feedback from the University community and widespread discussion and meetings with stakeholder communities.

The self-study process was characterized by openness, transparency, inclusiveness, and extensive consultation to ensure that faculty, staff members, and students were engaged, consulted, and informed during the self-study.

Valuable insights and suggestions for continuous improvement have been gained as part of a critical review of current programs, practices, and policies at the University in light of its mission, vision, and values and the accreditation criteria of the Higher Learning Commission. The self-study documented the continuous efforts to renew and strengthen the quality of many teaching, research, and outreach programs. It measured the progress the institution has made during its post-merger period and identified areas needing attention and improvement.

Huge opportunities that will require a tremendous amount of work await the University.

This summary is organized so that it corresponds to the five criteria for accreditation as established by the HLC/NCA as well as a special emphasis chapter focused on the merger. Those criteria are:

- Mission and Integrity
- Preparing for the Future
- Student Learning and Effective Teaching
- Acquisition, Discovery and Application of Knowledge
- Engagement and Service

To read the full self-study report, go to utoledo.edu/accreditation.
The University of Toledo Mission Statement: “The mission of The University of Toledo is to improve the human condition; to advance knowledge through excellence in learning, discovery and engagement; and to serve as a diverse, student-centered public metropolitan research university.”

The mission statement of The University of Toledo is clear and focused and is guiding a purposeful, dramatic transformation of the institution following the 2006 merger with Medical University of Ohio. It commits the University to improve and advance the human condition and improve the quality of life.

The mission statement accurately and clearly reflects the historic, metropolitan character of the institution, its distinctive and broad portfolio of undergraduate, graduate, and professional degree programs and its enduring commitment to learning, research, and public service. It anchors the University’s commitment to offer an accessible, affordable, high-quality educational experience to a diverse student body.

Created through an extensive consultative process that involved internal and external stakeholders, the mission statement enjoys broad and general understanding, commitment, and support from trustees, administrators, faculty, staff, and students.

Criterion One also explains the governance structure of the University, the close congruence of the University’s daily activities with the mission statement, and how programs and administrative policies and procedures ensure the University operates with integrity.

EVIDENCE OF CRITERION ACHIEVEMENTS

Integration of policies

The University has a comprehensive set of policies that govern the activity of faculty, staff, and students. After the merger, the University formed a committee to review hundreds of policies between the merged institutions. Out-of-date policies were rescinded while others were merged, updated, or reaffirmed. A permanent policy process was developed to ensure the following for each policy: consistent structure, a responsible agent, appropriate formal approval, and systematic review. The University’s policy process and website have drawn favorable comment for their convenience, accessibility, and organization from a number of universities that have contacted the University’s policy coordinator, including Cleveland State University, Shawnee State University, and the City Colleges of Chicago.

Embracing diversity

The mission, vision, and value statements; the Directions 2011 strategic plan; the University’s definition of diversity; numerous policies that mandate inclusiveness, tolerance, and respect for others; and college diversity plans lead the University’s strategies to address diversity. The University recognizes that the diversity of the student body, staff, and faculty is one of its most valuable assets, one that enhances the educational experiences for all students and helps them build skills for a global, multicultural society. Evidence of the University’s commitment to diversity is reflected in numerous curricular and co-curricular programs aimed at preparing students to work in a multicultural society; in its success in attracting a diverse student body, staff, and faculty; and in the increasing number of international
SELF-STUDY FINDINGS

Shared governance

While the University has a strong tradition of faculty participation in decision making and well-defined governance structures in place, the principle of shared governance continues to evolve and remains a central challenge. Like many universities and colleges, the University has struggled at times with the inherent tension between the desire on the part of faculty for extensive deliberation and study and full participation in important decisions involving the University and the ever-increasing need for the University’s administration and board of trustees to act more and more quickly. Differences relating to culture and working processes and practices of the two universities before the merger have contributed to the stresses. Conversations involving the board of trustees, administration, and Faculty Senate are occurring to arrive at a common understanding of the principle.

Balance between higher admission standards and historic open-enrollment status

The University must continue to work to find innovative ways to balance the higher admissions standards adopted by the colleges and its historic open-enrollment status. As an open-enrollment metropolitan research university, the institution has been a vehicle for fulfillment of educational aspirations and achievements for thousands of residents in Toledo and northwest Ohio. Options to achieve this balance include partnering with state community colleges to dually admit underprepared students so they obtain remedial, developmental course work before transferring to The University of Toledo and continuing remediation programs in reading, writing, and mathematics without state subsidy. These programs prepare direct-from-high-school students who have not fully benefited from their prior educational experiences or adults who have been out of school for many years and need time to refresh their academic skills.
CRITERION TWO: PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

The organization’s allocation of resources and its processes for evaluation and planning demonstrate its capacity to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its education, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

Criterion Two addresses how the University allocates resources and maintains evaluation and planning processes that demonstrate its capacity to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its education, and prepare for the future.

The University has addressed a remarkable number of challenges in the last six years — the 2006 merger between the University and Medical University of Ohio, development and implementation of two strategic plans, reorganization of the University’s colleges, and the impact of Ohio’s and the country’s most severe economic crisis since the Great Depression. The University has responded to the fiscal challenges by reducing expenses, by imposing stringent financial controls, and by maintaining strict fiscal discipline.

Environmental scanning at the institutional, division, and college level helps the University identify and respond to demographic shifts, changes in technology, globalization, social and economic trends, and other factors that may affect the University’s future operations.

The Directions 2011 strategic plan is a well-crafted blueprint with goals and metrics that will guide the institution through the changing environments of higher education and health care in the future. The goals, objectives, and outcome indicators were created through an extensive consultative process that involved internal and external stakeholders. Its broad guiding principles direct planning down to small University units and operations.

The University has made tremendous progress in enhancing the physical plant and in providing students with modern, state-of-the-art teaching, learning, and student-life spaces on university campuses.

EVIDENCE OF CRITERION ACHIEVEMENTS

Strategic planning

The University has put into action the Directions 2011 strategic plan, a recalibration of the Directions 2007 strategic plan developed immediately after the 2006 merger. It drives much, if not all, of university planning, budgeting, and decision-making; ensures institutional resources are directed to strategic education, research, and outreach goals; and provides evidence of a commitment to continuously improve the culture of the institution.

Academic health center partnership

The University and ProMedica Health System, Inc., the largest health-care system in the region, entered into an agreement in 2010 that has increased clinical experiences for University-trained medical, nursing, pharmacy, allied health, and other health-professions students and resident physicians. The agreement is aimed at creating a stronger physician pipeline to ensure a new generation of top-tier, local doctors as current physicians begin to retire. In addition, the partnership provides opportunities for increased clinical research collaboration.

Strategically aligned budget

Recognizing the critical importance of annual investments and reinvestments in mission-based initiatives, the University has utilized a strategic budgeting model during each of the last three fiscal years. The operating and capital budgets were developed with an objective of reallocating resources in direct support of the strategic plan, transformative new initiatives, and mission-critical programs and activities. The budget process is an important communication tool about the strategic plan and a monitor for acquisition and deployment of institutional resources.
Expansion of College of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences to Health Science Campus

The expansion of the College of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences to the new Frederic and Mary Wolfe Center on Health Science Campus is providing academic synergies and affording pharmacy students first-hand experience in a health-care setting and interaction with an array of health-care professionals and students from the colleges of Medicine and Life Sciences and of Nursing. The expansion also is leading to more research collaborations among students and faculty and enhances current collaborations in the fields of cancer, immunology and transplantation, diabetes, and neurodegenerative disorders.

Sustainability

The University is committed to the concept of sustainable and responsible use of resources and incorporates the concept into its planning processes. The University’s commitment to sustainability is evidenced through several components of the Directions 2011 strategic plan, a number of university policies, and numerous programs. The establishment of the Scott Park Campus of Energy and Innovation with a focus on advancing green technologies and becoming an internationally recognized leader in alternative energy technology as well as the focus of the Lake Erie Center to promote and protect a sustainable future for the Great Lakes are two examples of the University’s dedication to sustainability principles.

SELF-STUDY FINDINGS

Challenging economic trends

Despite enormously challenging national and state economic conditions, the University’s fiscal and financial operations are sound, well managed, and support the institution’s mission to provide quality educational programming. Economic trends, particularly in Ohio and the Midwest, will continue to challenge the University’s ability to rapidly invest in emerging educational modalities and technologies, to maintain the varied programs supporting globalization, and to maintain and preserve the physical plant. The University will need to continuously scan the environment to comprehensively assess and anticipate the impact of economic changes on the University’s educational programs and learning environment.

Work force reductions

Reductions in the work force across the University make it more difficult to provide student services effectively. The University must evaluate student services and processes to ensure resources are optimally aligned in support of the learning environment and student success. Economic realities require the University to use existing resources in the most efficient manner possible and to continue to prioritize academic and support programs. An increased emphasis and adoption of a performance-based budget and resource allocation model will be necessary to ensure strategic programs are strengthened.
CRITERION THREE: STUDENT TEACHING AND LEARNING

The organization provides evidence of student and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission.

The University is committed to excellence in teaching. Evidence can be seen in the processes used by the institution to monitor and evaluate assessment activity that continue to evolve, in the development of curricular and instructional strategies by qualified faculty members, in the use of state-of-the-art technology in classroom teaching, in programs that promote professional development of faculty members, and in recognition and rewards for outstanding teaching.

As befits a public, metropolitan research university that admits students from diverse socioeconomic and educational backgrounds, the institution provides an extraordinary range of academic/student support services and resources to help academically developing students meet the challenges of college study and adjust to the University’s environment.

The University’s culture of assessment continues to evolve and mature. The self-study has provided the opportunity to critically review, reflect on, and evaluate the ways in which the University gathers, analyzes, and shares outcomes data with the University community. These data are needed to provide educational and student/academic support services programs with the knowledge and understanding necessary to effectively engage in continuous quality improvement.

Many of the University’s highly competitive professional-degree programs have rigorous assessment processes in place to meet the standards of external accrediting bodies, and learning outcomes for programs at every level are in place.

The University has embraced technological advances over the past decade that have had a significant impact on teaching and learning by expanding access to information and enhancing communication.

The University also extends the teaching and learning environment through multiple partnerships and relationships in the region that increase teaching and learning opportunities available to teachers and students.

EVIDENCE OF CRITERION ACHIEVEMENTS

Evolving culture of assessment and accountability

The processes involved in effective assessment of student learning outcomes and accountability continue to evolve and become more refined. The University Assessment Committee is comprised of representatives from every college and academic/student support unit. The reporting requirements for both academic programs and academic/student support units capture great detail regarding the intended learning or service outcomes, the aligned metrics and methods used to gather data, the process of faculty review, and the dissemination of assessment results, as well as documentation of changes made as a result of data analysis and review. These processes will likely serve the institution well going forward. The curricula of many University professional programs such as medicine, law, nursing, engineering, business, pharmacy, and education are governed by standards set by external accreditation agencies and have rigorous student learning assessment processes in place.

Gateway programs

A broad range of advising services is available for students. Because the University attracts a wide range of undergraduate students with diverse backgrounds and diverse advising needs, a number of additional advising programs operate outside of the colleges in which students are majoring. The Gateway programs are geared to meet the advising needs of students who are either undecided about their majors or are completing prerequisites to enter the major of their choice.
Teaching technology advances

New technologies are enhancing effective student learning environments. Technology-enhanced classrooms, residence halls, computer labs, and teaching/simulation labs all contribute to an environment that facilitates innovation and creativity in teaching and student learning. Particularly noteworthy is the newly piloted Interprofessional Immersive Simulation Center, a highly sophisticated simulation center that provides education for students in the areas of interprofessional team training, electronic learning, competency assessment, and outcomes measurement. Simulation technology allows students to learn in a simulated environment with the goal of ultimately improving patient safety and health-care outcomes. In October 2011, the University and ProMedica Health System, Inc., announced they would commit to the development of a permanent $36 million Interprofessional Immersive Simulation Center.

Honors College

The renaming in 2010 of the 49-year-old Honors Program as the Honors College exemplifies the University’s commitment to create optimal learning environments and experiences for a diverse student body. One of the oldest University honors programs in the country, the college meets the needs of highly motivated, academically talented students from every undergraduate college who enjoy a challenging and nurturing environment conducive to intellectual growth and discovery. Small classes, interdisciplinary seminars, research opportunities, access to study-abroad programs, and a dedicated residence hall are all part of a special learning environment normally characteristic of expensive, private institutions.

Learning Ventures

An important initiative to promote teaching excellence is Learning Ventures, an administrative unit of the College of Innovative Learning. Learning Ventures offers programs that support the faculty in the design, development, and implementation of new educational programs and courses as well as programs to improve teaching skills.

SELF-STUDY FINDINGS

Continuing evolution of a culture of assessment

Processes used by the University to monitor and evaluate assessment activities continue to evolve and become more focused and standardized across college and reporting academic/student support units. Challenges remain related to assessing student learning at the program level and general education as well as using data to inform and support change across the institution. A future continuous improvement project for the University should be to strengthen documentation of how review and analysis of data informed changes made across programs, colleges, and the larger institution.

Resumption of formal program review

Formal, campuswide processes for program review for both undergraduate and graduate academic programs have been reinstated following a period of inactivity. Resumption of this process will improve the ability of the institution to make strategic decisions regarding academic programs and allocation of resources based on quality assurance information and data.

Staffing resources

In the years ahead, the University must find ways to ensure that staffing remains at levels adequate to support the numerous teaching and learning resources that are currently available for faculty and students. These resources are absolutely essential for student scholarship to thrive.
CRITERION FOUR: ACQUISITION, DISCOVERY, AND APPLICATION OF KNOWLEDGE

The organization promotes a life of learning for its faculty, administration, staff, and students by fostering and supporting inquiry, creativity, practice, and social responsibility in ways consistent with its mission.

The University of Toledo’s commitment to a life of learning for its faculty, administration, staff, and students, and the broader community is expressed in a variety of ways.

The mission statement and strategic planning documents clearly commit the University to prepare students to become successful lifelong learners and critical thinkers and to succeed in their careers. The documents also underscore the importance of students becoming engaged members of the society who make valuable contributions to an increasingly diverse and technologically driven world.

Faculty and staff have opportunities to enhance their skills and knowledge through professional development programs and a tuition waiver program that encourages attainment of a university degree. Support for teaching, travel, sabbaticals, and honors and awards all promote professional development for faculty members.

Research opportunities, creative projects, scholarly competition, outside speaker series, international educational agreements, study-abroad programs, internships, and cultural and community service experiences broaden the social, cultural, and global perspectives of students so they can become socially responsible leaders and global citizens.

Undergraduate and graduate programs offer opportunities for students to develop a broad foundation of knowledge and skills necessary for the changing professions of the 21st century.

As a public, metropolitan research university that discovers, interprets, disseminates, and applies new knowledge, the University has developed strong programs and policies to ensure those activities are conducted with integrity by faculty, staff, and students.

EVIDENCE OF CRITERION ACHIEVEMENTS

Research and creative activity

Research and creative activity are highly valued at the University.

The Directions 2011 strategic plan calls on the University to enhance its standing “as a major metropolitan research university with internationally recognized areas of research, scholarship and creative activity.”

Since the merger, the University’s research budget has grown from $57 million in 2006 to $75 million in 2010, and the University has made significant investments in renovating and expanding research space and creative spaces such as studios, recital halls, and performance halls.

The establishment of state-recognized centers of excellence in solar and renewable energy, in transportation and logistics, and in biomarker research and individualized medicine; the operation of the institution’s multidisciplinary centers and institutes; and the
University’s commitment to undergraduate and graduate research and creative activities are all congruent with the institution’s mission, vision, and values.

Cutting-edge research enriches and informs classroom teaching, and faculty and student research achievements continue to gain national and international recognition.

As part of its research mission, the University encourages undergraduate and graduate students to participate in development of new knowledge and in creative activities. The University offers extensive programming that promotes the cultural and performing arts.

**Living-learning communities**

Living-learning communities enrich the learning experience for students by offering a cohesive peer-support system that links on-campus living directly to the classroom. There are currently 11 themed living-learning communities in the residence hall system that involve more than 700 participants. Current living-learning communities include the arts; health professions; engineering; environmental sustainability; scholastically enriched environment; business; education; politics, law, and society; honors; global entrepreneurship and innovation; and leadership through service.

**Responsible acquisition of knowledge**

A key component of a life of learning is an understanding of the social responsibility that accompanies the acquisition, discovery, and use of knowledge. As a result of the merger, the harmonization of policies between the former institutions has strengthened the research integrity, education, and compliance programs on all campuses. To ensure the highest level of ethical conduct, the University provides both educational opportunities and oversight in this area through strong programs and policies in such areas as conflict of interest, plagiarism, human subject research, animal research, biosafety and radiation safety, laboratory safety and health, and cadaveric tissue research.

**SELF-STUDY FINDINGS**

**Faculty development funds**

Resources provided by the colleges for faculty development vary widely. In some colleges and departments, funds for conferences and for travel to conferences are contingent on availability within budgets and are at the discretion of department chairs or college deans. Some colleges do not have designated line/accounting budgets, and any funds allocated for faculty development come from college operating budgets. In some departments, newly recruited faculty members are provided start-up funds, which often include professional development dollars. Faculty members applying for extramural grants, particularly in the scientific disciplines, often include in their budgets funding to attend conferences and meetings, while extramural funding opportunities in other disciplines, particularly the arts, are limited and unequal.

**Preparing students to live in a global world**

A growing cosmopolitan, international learning atmosphere exists at the University that helps prepare students to live and to work in a global world. Students have numerous opportunities to gain the skills and experience that promote global citizenship and competence.
CRITERION FIVE: ENGAGEMENT AND SERVICE

As called for by its mission, the organization identifies its constituents and serves them in ways both value.

Community outreach and engagement are part of the fabric of The University of Toledo, a commitment that is internalized in the very ethos of the institution. The University is connected with the community in formal and informal ways that include a broad spectrum of internships, co-ops, academic service-learning programs, and volunteer programs.

Faculty members are passionate about community outreach, which allows the University to play a leadership role in addressing the economic, cultural, intellectual, health-care, and societal needs of Toledo and northwest Ohio. Faculty members provide their expertise on urban issues, work to improve local school systems, provide free health care, and work to make Toledo a more inclusive, tolerant city.

The University is an economic catalyst for the region through its technology transfer and entrepreneurial incubator programs; partnerships with industry, government, and economic development agencies; and educational degree programs that produce graduates required for the new knowledge economy.

In the process, these mutually beneficial engagement activities provide students with outstanding curricular and co-curricular opportunities to apply what they have learned in the classroom to real-world problems while engaging the institution in the economic, educational, and social needs of the community.

EVIDENCE OF CRITERION ACHIEVEMENTS

Strategic planning

University planning processes recognize ongoing engagement and service as an important and lasting function of the institution. The Directions 2011 strategic plan prominently features outreach and global engagement with nine subgoals to refine and strengthen engagement.

Educational programs that connect students with external communities

Many academic programs incorporate experiential learning components that enhance student learning while engaging the institution in the economic, educational, and social needs of its constituents. The University offers an impressive array of practical, experiential learning opportunities to students.

Shared partnerships

The University understands and appreciates that effectively responding to northwest Ohio’s educational, economic, and social needs sometimes can be accomplished best through partnerships with other organizations that have similar goals and values. University partnerships with other institutions of higher learning, health-care providers, and non-profit organizations allow the institution to provide positive educational opportunities by drawing upon each other’s respective strengths. One example of such a regional partnership is the College of Nursing’s Doctorate of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree program offered jointly between the University and Wright State University in Dayton.
Study of human trafficking

The University of Toledo has taken the lead and become a valuable resource in Ohio’s and the nation’s efforts to combat sex and labor trafficking, one of the most pervasive and damaging violations of children. A professor in the Judith Herb College of Education, Health Science and Human Service has become a nationally recognized expert on the subject of prostitution, sex work, and human trafficking and has presented at national and international conferences on the topic. For the past eight years, the University has provided considerable resources to raise awareness about her work by holding a large international conference that features talks, research presentations, and discussions by prominent figures in the study of human trafficking. These activities have helped law enforcement officials, social workers, attorneys, legislators, and others to understand the devastating economic, social, political, environmental, and psychological impact of human trafficking, to develop appropriate intervention strategies, and to inform public policy.

Community enhancement

A concrete example of the University’s commitment to community enhancement is revitalization of an area adjacent to Main Campus — the transformative $12.2 million Dorr Street Gateway Project. It is located along two streets that border the southwestern corner of Main Campus and is creating a college-town atmosphere with the development of restaurants, coffee shops, bookstores, student-living spaces, and other student-focused attractions. The project is scheduled to be completed in 2012.

SELF-STUDY FINDINGS

Economic development initiatives

The University continues to make tremendous strides in its extensive economic development initiatives and their concomitant connections to student and community learning opportunities. The University will need to ensure that any future non-college outreach and engagement programs consider and assess their contributions to student learning outcomes and plans for sustainability.

Careful assessment of resources

While engagement and outreach activities are characteristic of every college and division at the University, large initiatives are weighed carefully to ensure that sufficient capacity in terms of human and financial resources exist to provide meaningful and valued engagement. At times, the University has conducted such an analysis and decided that an engagement opportunity did not mesh with its educational, research, or service mission or the institution did not have sufficient financial resources.

Publicizing University outreach

Students, political and business leaders, and the public in general do not always fully understand and appreciate the breadth and depth of the contributions,
achievements, and stature of the outreach and engagement activities of the University. The challenge is to create a comprehensive and professional campaign to elevate the visibility of the University’s outreach and engagement to the institution’s multiple internal and external constituencies. The University’s record of community-engaged research, teaching, and service is an important institutional strength that needs to be communicated more broadly.

**Documenting engagement and service**

The institution has largely documented and assessed its engagement of and service to its constituents in a decentralized way, punctuated by comprehensive assessments at different points in time. The University Council on Outreach and Engagement was formed in 2003 to advance the mission as an engaged metropolitan research university. The council undertook a thorough cataloguing of the many engagement activities, solicited constituent input, and instituted the Edith Rathbun Outreach and Engagement Excellence Award. While the activities of the council were assumed by other offices during the merger in 2006, the Directions 2011 strategic plan includes the re-establishment of a portal for all university outreach and engagement activities.
SPECIAL EMPHASIS REPORT:
A NEWLY MERGED INSTITUTION LOOKS TO ITS FUTURE

“A Newly Merged University Looks To Its Future” is the special emphasis theme that The University of Toledo selected for its 2012 self-study for continued accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

The historic 2006 merger between The University of Toledo and Medical University of Ohio is now almost six years old, and progress has been made on many fronts, but much work remains. The challenge is to continue the renewal and transformation of the institution that resulted from the merger. The benefits of the merger are evident in three major areas — teaching, research, and outreach and engagement — and the potential for collaboration in many areas is substantial.

The special emphasis report affords the new University of Toledo a unique opportunity to identify the untapped potentials that will propel the new University to higher levels of achievement while taking action to remove or diminish the remaining barriers holding the University back. The focus of the study is to discover additional ways to advance the merger through strategic planning and deep, broader, systemic integration.

EVIDENCE OF ACHIEVEMENTS

New academic programs
New academic degree programs are combining the strengths of existing programs and responding to emerging areas of new knowledge and employer needs. For example, the new master of science in physics track offering training as a professional in photovoltaics was designed to provide students with a core foundation in physics plus laboratory experience, business courses relating to manufacturing, and a 24-week internship. The goal is to provide the talent needed for the growing solar-energy industry in northwest Ohio, thus making the region more prosperous and supporting the economic development mission of the institution.

Technology transfer
The merger helped change the culture for technology transfer and commercialization on Health Science Campus by bringing the more aggressive Main Campus technology transfer organization to a campus that had a passive approach to the program. Prior to the merger, Medical University of Ohio provided support for intellectual property protection, but did not actively seek out faculty members to look for promising technologies that could be marketable. The result has been a greater number of invention disclosures, patents, and license agreements from Health Science Campus. And the establishment of Innovation Enterprises and the University’s start-up incubation support led to stronger cooperation and broader contacts between the University and the private sector with respect to innovation.

Economic leadership for northwest Ohio
The University is an important anchor for economic development in Toledo and northwest Ohio. Significant University resources are helping in Toledo’s and northwest Ohio’s economic recovery and structural change and in linking University expertise to building new businesses. Senior administrators and faculty and staff members participate in trade missions and provide leadership on community and regional boards. Strong links to businesses are inspiring innovation and making sure that graduates have the skills employers need. Colleges such as the College of Business and Innovation are disseminating academic knowledge and expertise among regional employers. The University is working to enhance and revitalize an area near Main Campus through its Dorr Street Gateway project. Partnerships with a number of global companies are expanding the University’s and the region’s international influence and reach.
SELF-STUDY FINDINGS

A new university culture

The new University of Toledo is a work in progress — a complex, continuously evolving structure and culture. Despite the vagaries of economic, political, and educational conditions external to the institution, the University has been unwavering in its commitment to educate students for the 21st century; to engage with the community; and to further its mission, values, vision, and strategic plan. At the same time, it has been flexible in its response to rapidly changing external conditions and internal needs.

As result of the self-study, the University now recognizes the strengths and uniqueness of each campus culture. It is clear that the evolution of the University of Toledo culture has entered into a new phase. In the immediate aftermath of the merger, there was a sense that the two campuses had to come together to form one new University of Toledo culture, and that a unified Faculty Senate was a part of that process. The subsequent years have seen significant strides toward the development of such a culture, but now the members of The University of Toledo community have also realized that a single culture does not require homogeneity. While identifying with the University as a whole, its members now understand the need to recognize and embrace differences within various units throughout the University to increase efficiency and effectiveness.

Teaching and learning synergies

In a post-merger environment defined by a focused, strategic institutional commitment to interdisciplinary teaching and learning and a wealth of valuable teaching and learning resources, the University has moved beyond conversations to action and cooperation in a number of strategic ways. Faculty and administrators throughout the University have been involved in initiatives to enhance the teaching and learning environment. The University has more teaching, research, and service resources that promote connections across disciplinary boundaries than at any time in its history. Working groups are developing a number of new interdisciplinary programs of study, particularly at the graduate and professional levels, that are in various stages of progress.

An interdisciplinary approach to teaching will require recruiting new faculty members with interdisciplinary interests in teaching and research. In times of fiscal constraint, developing competitive start-up packages is a major challenge. It is challenging for an institution of the University’s size and research funding to match the start-up packages being offered at larger, more research-intensive universities.

In addition, new teaching and learning interdisciplinarities will require an infrastructure that can fully support the initiative. The current student information system (Banner) was implemented with its basic functionalities limiting the accommodation of the innovative ideas that will surface as a result of these new integrated teaching opportunities. Careful research and investigation of the student information system are critical to the success of this new interdisciplinary approach to teaching and learning and the University is, therefore, investigating untapped functionalities within Banner.

Meeting challenges of the state’s vision for higher education

The merger has improved the ability of The University of Toledo to meet the challenges of the University System of Ohio (USO) through its own mission and vision and to provide leadership for the USO. The merger created a much larger university with the potential to connect high-impact teaching, research, and service opportunities across a broad range of disciplinary and technological areas. The merger has helped the University maximize...
resources and be more competitive in obtaining external funding. Anecdotal evidence exists that the University’s vision and leadership influenced higher education strategic planning at the state level. The University’s 2007 strategic plan predated the USO plan and was widely acclaimed in Columbus, and there is considerable congruence between the two plans. In addition, the state emulated the University’s decision to freeze tuition for the 2007-2008 school year and imposed a tuition freeze for all state-assisted universities for two years after that.

Now, with a new administration in Columbus led by Gov. John Kasich, the challenge facing the University is that the future of the USO is not clear as the new chancellor’s major initiative is the creation of “Enterprise Universities.” Under the concept, universities would have the option of gaining more freedom from state regulations and mandates in return for a reduction of state share of instruction. Without clear guidance from the Ohio Board of Regents, the University is moving forward under the USO plans. It appears that the new Kasich administration will proceed with many of the ideas of the University System of Ohio concerning the role of universities in supporting economic transformation in their region. The University of Toledo’s mission and vision is well aligned with the USO’s in the area of economic leadership. The University will have to closely monitor and adjust to new higher-education initiatives emerging from the Kasich administration.

CONCLUSION

The University of Toledo self-study for the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools has provided the institution with an invaluable and timely opportunity to examine its effectiveness in achieving its mission “to improve the human condition; to advance knowledge through excellence in learning, discovery and engagement; and to serve as a diverse, student-centered public metropolitan research university.”

A recalibrated strategic plan, tremendous improvements in the physical infrastructure of the University, and continuing evolution and strengthening of university assessment programs are just a few of many key initiatives that characterize a university on the move.

Teaching at the undergraduate, graduate, and professional levels is a fundamental purpose of the University. The University combines its traditional strength in the arts and humanities with recognized leadership in the STEMM disciplines — science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and medicine.

Research and scholarship under way are creating new knowledge and expanding understanding of the natural and life sciences, and creative endeavors are enriching the cultural life of Toledo and northwest Ohio.

The University’s commitment to community outreach and engagement allows it to share its knowledge and expertise and to improve the quality of life in Toledo and northwest Ohio.

The last six years have been incredibly fast-paced as the foundation for the “new” University of Toledo has taken shape. The University has dramatically changed as a result of new leadership, opportunities, resources, and accomplishments. The merger has enhanced resources available for interdisciplinary education, research, and collaboration. The University is addressing difficult, challenging problems that require interdisciplinary solutions — access to health care, pioneering advances in solar and renewable energy, new biomarkers for individualized medicine, and new approaches to pressing K-12 education issues in urban schools.

The University is proud of its metropolitan mission and heritage as a provider of educational opportunities for students from diverse ethnic, religious, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Significant academic/student support resources are aimed at helping students from disadvantaged educational backgrounds achieve success and attain their educational goals.

Despite one of the worst economic eras in the nation’s history, the University is in sound financial shape. The University’s budget and allocation of resources are aligned with institutional priorities, and the University has worked hard to minimize the impact of the cuts on the core educational mission and done everything possible to maintain and enhance the educational experience for students and the academic pursuits of faculty.
The University is developing essential knowledge through its research to provide high-quality education that ensures its graduates are productive, global citizens equipped with critical writing and oral skills as well as a range of practical competencies.

The University is committed to continual self-examination as it seeks ways to better realize its mission and purpose. The benefits of the 2006 merger have taken time to be fully realized, and challenges remain.

However, the self-study has provided many reasons why the University should be optimistic and confident about its future and its ability to respond to future challenges and to strive to attain future aspirations.

The University of Toledo is a Higher Learning Commission accredited institution. For more information on the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, go to www.ncahlc.org.