Report to the
Faculty, Administration, Trustees and Students
of
CHEYNEY UNIVERSITY
Cheyney, PA 19319

by
A Visitor/Team Representing the
Middle States Commission on Higher Education

Prepared After a
Follow-up Visit to the Institution on:
December 1, 2010

The Visitors:
Dr. Antonio Perez, President, CUNY Borough of Manhattan Community College
Dr. Bronte Jones, Treasurer, St. John’s College
Dr. Angela Suchanic, Assistant Vice President, Wilmington University.

Working with the Visitor:
Mary Ellen Petrisko, Vice President, Middle States Commission on Higher Education

At the Time of the Visit:
President/Chief Executive Officer:
Michelle R. Howard-Vital, Ph. D., President
Chief Academic Officer:
Dr. Ivan Banks, Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs
Chair of the Governing Board:
Kenneth M. Jarin, Chairman, Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE),
Ballard Spahr LLP, 1735 Market Street, 51st Floor, Philadelphia, PA 19103
I. Institutional Overview

From the Cheyney University website: “Founded in 1837 as the Institute for Colored Youth, Cheyney University of Pennsylvania is the oldest of the Historically Black Colleges and Universities in America. Today, Cheyney University students represent a variety of races, cultures, and nationalities who receive education instruction beyond the vision of Richard Humphreys, a Quaker philanthropist who bequeathed $10,000, one tenth of his estate, to design and establish a school to educate the descendants of the African race. Originally conceived as a teachers’ college, Cheyney graduates still become teachers, but students also enter careers such as journalism, medicine, business, science, law, communication, and government service.” The university offers certificates, baccalaureate degrees in more than 30 disciplines, and the master’s degree in education. Cheyney University is one of the fourteen institutions of the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE.) In 2009-2010, the University enrollment totaled 1500 students in the categories of undergraduate, graduate and non-matriculated.

The Cheyney University of Pennsylvania mission, from the website, “is to prepare confident, competent, reflective, visionary leaders and responsible citizens. We uphold our tradition of academic excellence as we maintain our historical commitment to opportunity and access for students of diverse backgrounds. Cheyney University provides a nurturing, intellectually challenging and socially enriching environment.” According to the website, the vision of the University Cheyney University of Pennsylvania is to “be recognized as a premier HBCU for the 21st century, whose graduates are respected members of their communities throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, nation and the world. Cheyney University graduates will be a diverse group of local, national and international students, who will apply the knowledge and skills gained from our rigorous and challenging academic programs to the advancement of the nation and global community.”

II. Nature and Conduct of the Visit

At the Middle States Commission’s session of November 19, 2009, they took the following action regarding Cheyney University: “To document receipt of the monitoring report, noting that it was of insufficient quality, contained limited institutional responses to requested information, did not provide evidence and analysis conducive to Commission review and necessitated extraordinary effort by the Commission’s representatives performing the review. To warn the institution that its accreditation may be in jeopardy because of a lack of evidence that the institution is currently in compliance with Standards 2, 3, and 6. To request a monitoring report, due by September 1, 2010, documenting (1) the development and implementation of a comprehensive institutional strategic plan that links long-range planning to decision-making and budgeting processes (Standard 2); (2) the development and implementation of a budget process and a long-term financial plan that are aligned with the institution's mission, goals, and strategic plan (Standard 3); and (3) the development and implementation of administrative and financial policies and procedures, in particular regarding financial aid, student accounts, and student registration, in a manner that ensures adherence to these policies (Standard 6).”

A small team visit was scheduled to follow the submission of the monitoring report. The team was chaired by Dr. Antonio Perez, President of CUNY Borough of Manhattan Community College. The additional members of the team were Dr. Bronte Jones, Treasurer of St. John’s College, and Dr. Angela Suchanic, Assistant Vice President at Wilmington University. The team visit was originally scheduled for October 7, 2010 and was postponed to December 1, 2010.
Individuals Met During the Visit

- Dr. Michelle Howard-Vital, President
- Dr. Ivan W. Banks, Provost/VPAA, and co-chair, Strategic Planning Council
- Dr. Bradley Buchner, Professor, and co-chair, Strategic Planning Council
- Mr. Gerald Coleman, VP for Finance and Administration
- Dr. Suzanne Phillips, VP for Student Affairs
- Mr. Lawrence Green, Interim VP for Institutional Advancement
- Dr. Wesley Pugh, Professor, Graduate Education, and co-chair, Strategic Planning Council
- Mr. Chris Hanlon, Director of Financial Aid
- Members, University College Task Force
- Members, University Wide Strategic Planning Council
- Members, Enrollment Management Committee
- Members, Unit Wide Task Force on Student Services

Documents Reviewed Before and During the Visit

- Monitoring Report to the Middle States Commission on Higher Education from Cheyney University of Pennsylvania dated September 1, 2010
- Budget Committee Minutes (March, May, 2010)
- Budget Committee Hearings for the 2010-2011 Fiscal Year
- Auxiliary Fund Budget Comparisons as of October 2010
- Cheyney University Organizational Charts
- 2010 Fall Admissions and Enrollment data
- Cheyney University Strategic Plan: Pathways to Excellence 2010-2015 and appendices
- “Establishing and Developing a University College to Ensure Student Success – A Continuing Activity” (Grant Application for the Historical Black Colleges and Universities and the Historically Black Graduate Institutions Program, 05/31/07)
- Comprehensive Fundraising Plan for Cheyney University 2009-2012
- Enrollment Management Plan with forms and appendices, 10/01/2009

III. Affirmation of Compliance with Requirements of Affiliation Under Review

Based on the review of the Monitoring Report to the Middle States Commission on Higher Education from Cheyney University of Pennsylvania dated September 1, 2010, and appendices, interviews and other institutional documents, the team cannot affirm that the institution continues to meet the Requirements of Affiliation under review in regard to Standards 2 and 3. Specifically, the University needs to attend to the following requirements in order to be compliant in these standards:

**Standard 2 Requirements:**

- Create a direct linkage between strategic planning and the budgeting process.
- Add timetables and assigned roles to the strategic plan. Both are needed for accountability as the plan is implemented.
- Revisit the measurable outcomes to ensure that they are reasonable and defensible based on internal longitudinal data and external trend data related to resources, employers, and competition for faculty, staff, and students.
- Create better connections between the numerous plans within the institution and ensure that all are driven directly by the strategic plan.
- Develop and implement a mechanism to assess the effectiveness of the planning process.

**Standard 3 Requirements:**
- The University should refine its financial planning process to ensure that the budgeting process is clearly aligned with the institution’s strategic plan.
- The final budget should include a clear linkage between asset allocation and the strategic plan.

**IV. Commendations and Summary of Institutional Strengths**

The University has made great progress in the last two years through aggressive hiring of Senior Administrators, rewriting policies, and the development of new Plans, Initiatives and Committees: Strategic Plan, Institutional Advancement Plan, Financial Plan, Enrollment Management Plan, and the Registration Team. The University re-engaged the Budget Committee for annual budgeting. A major initiative specified in detail is the University College.

**V. Compliance with Accreditation Standard(s) Under Review**

**Standard 2: The development and implementation of a comprehensive institutional strategic plan that links long-range planning to decision-making and budgeting processes.**

The visitors’ judgment is that, at this time, the institution is **not in compliance** with this standard.

**Summary of Key Evidence and developments:**

**Commendations:**
- Cheyney University has made considerable progress in developing and implementing a comprehensive institutional strategic plan.
- The process used to develop of “Pathways to Excellence” was inclusive. There was sufficient representation of affected constituencies.
- The plan is very comprehensive—as evidenced by the six strategic areas: (1) strengthen academic quality and excellence; (2) advance student achievement and success; (3) manage and secure financial resources and facilities needed to enhance institutional effectiveness; (4) nurture human capital; (5) cultivate public engagement and citizenship; and (6) use technology pervasively to enhance teaching and learning; including support services, business processes; and the procurement of external support. These strategies are clearly articulated and have specific actions attached to them.
- A regular monthly process has been established to enable reporting and monitoring of goal accomplishment at the unit and Vice-Presidential levels.
- Positive results are already being felt by the institution as a result of the strategic plan including: more coordination between plans in different areas (academic, enrollment management, advancement, financial, and the general strategic plan), improved policies, and other new initiatives intended to address each of the strategic areas. For example, although early in its development, the model of the University College is comprehensive and includes the components most critical to ensure student
persistence, retention, and graduation. It builds on the concepts of mentoring, advising, and engagement.

Weaknesses:
- On the actual strategic plan, there is no timetable or assigned roles.
- The process included relatively little environmental scanning. Without adequate external scanning, the institution cannot prepare appropriately for the dynamic environment in which it exists. For example, there is no evidence that any significant research on workforce needs was undertaken although it is cited as one of the three major components of the plan.
- The enrollment management plan fails to cover graduate enrollment; it also does not distinguish between the freshmen and transfer populations and the full-time/part-time populations. Because it does not include the graduate students, it fails to account for the shrinking graduate FTE population over the last ten years.
- Although there are numerous plans within the institution, some of the connections between them are not as complete as they might be.
- Certain critical topics are missing from the strategic plan (i.e., the role of the urban site, distance learning, and new academic programs under consideration). The plan includes no contingencies if enrollment does not materialize. The goal of 2000 FTE by 2015 may be difficult to attain. The plan also includes no contingencies if the goal of $9 million to be raised in 3-5 years contained within the Comprehensive Fundraising Plan is not realized.
- The measurable outcomes seem forced and unrealistic in some cases. The metrics for enrollment are not clear; the goals for retention and graduation rates are unclear and, as far as can be determined, unrealistic.
- No assessment of the planning process itself appears to have been built into the plan.
- Some critical positions remain open and may negatively impact accomplishment of goals (i.e., Director, Institutional Effectiveness and Research; Executive Director of the University College; Director of Enrollment Management; VP for University Advancement; and Director of Development.)

Requirements:
- Create a direct linkage between strategic planning and the budgeting process.
- Add timetables and assigned roles to the strategic plan. Both are needed for accountability as the plan is implemented.
- Revisit the measurable outcomes to ensure that they are reasonable and defensible based on internal longitudinal data and external trend data related to resources, employers, and competition for faculty, staff, and students.
- Create better connections between the numerous plans within the institution and ensure that all are driven directly by the strategic plan.
- Develop and implement a mechanism to assess the effectiveness of the planning process.

Suggestions:
- The monthly status reports might be better collected and synthesized on a bi-monthly or quarterly basis.
- Create a means by which the strategic plan is reviewed periodically to ensure that all critical topics are covered (i.e., the role of the urban site, distance learning, new academic programs, and the library).
• The enrollment management plan should be expanded to include graduate enrollment as well as various sub-populations at the undergraduate level (i.e., freshmen/transfer, full-time/part-time).
• Accelerate hiring of critical positions such as the Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Research.

**Standard 3: The development and implementation of a budget process and a long-term financial plan that are aligned with the institution’s mission, goals, and strategic plan.**

The visitors’ judgment is that, at this time, the institution is **not in compliance** with this standard.

**Summary of Key Evidence and developments:**

**Commendations**

• The draft financial statements for the FY10 reflect a surplus for the fiscal year which is extremely commendable. By producing a surplus in FY10 of $2.4M, as a result the University can begin to address its cumulative deficit that was reported at $7.7M at the close of FY09.
• The University’s Business Office has developed solid operational procedures for on-going monitoring and analysis of the institution’s financial position that should prove extremely valuable in sustaining balanced operating budgets.
• The University re-engaged its Budget Committee in 2009 to assist in the development of the annual university budget. The committee consists of the three vice presidents, controller, budget manager, and representatives from the collective bargaining unit.
• The University has developed a comprehensive budget process that includes clear budget assumptions, guidelines, and instructions.
• The University has filled several critical positions with experienced and impressive professionals who have been actively engaged in the development and implementation of the comprehensive budget process, Long Range Financial Plan and Enrollment Management Plan. In addition, their collective efforts have resulted in the financial aid responsibilities being returned to the University’s control.
• The University has smartly used its Title III and SAFRA to address the second strategic area of advancing student achievement and success. Likewise, the leveraging of general grant funding in science/health has been effective as has the funding for the Keystone Honors Academy.

**Weaknesses**

• The University’s Provost was present for only (1) budget committee meeting during the period March 2010 – August 2010. It is important that the Provost play an active role in the planning and development process of the annual budget.
• The FY11 budget process was delayed because multiple offices did not comply with the budget submission deadline. Of the 100 budget templates distributed only the Athletic Department and Institutional Advancement Office submitted all of the requested budget documents by the established deadline, according to the Cheyney University Budget Committee Minutes of 5-14-2010. The President’s Office and the Office of Student Affairs did not submit any budget documents by the established deadline.
• The July 1st internal budget deadline was not met. The final budget hearing was held on June 29th at which time it was reported that the draft FY11 budget reflect a $6.5M deficit. The FY11 budget was finalized at the August 2nd budget committee meeting.
• The FY11 budget was balanced by reducing all budget requests to FY10 actual spending levels which doesn’t appear to reflect any alignment to the strategic plan.
Requirements:
- The University should refine its financial planning process to ensure that the budgeting process is clearly aligned with the institution’s strategic plan.
- The final budget should include a clear linkage between asset allocation and the strategic plan.

Suggestions:
- The University should consider revising its budget timeline to ensure that a draft balanced budget has been approved prior to start of the fiscal year. Efforts should be made to ensure that all budget managers comply with the established budget deadlines.
- The University should revisit the assumptions utilized in the development of the Long Range Financial Plan, namely the enrollment and fundraising assumptions.

(Note: The historical enrollment trends suggest that reaching an enrollment of 2000 (FTE) by 2014-15 may be unrealistic given that the fall 2010 enrollment was 1444 (FTE) and at December 1, 2010, (968) students had balances for the fall semester. If the University follows its new policy which will not allow any student with a balance in excess of $1,000 (755 students) to register for the spring semester, the University will fall significantly short of their 2010-2011 goal of 1520 (FTE).

Standard 6: The development and implementation of administrative and financial policies and procedures, in particular regarding financial aid, student accounts, and student registration, in a manner that ensures adherence to these policies.
The visitors’ judgment is that, at this time, the institution is in compliance with this standard.

Summary of Key Evidence and developments:

Commendations:
- The policy revision process has been inclusive, thorough and public.
- The University has hired an experienced Financial Aid Director that has led the institution to a position of restoring the financial aid operations to university control.
- The University has made tremendous strides in implementing the Powerfaids financial aid software and will begin utilizing the new software with its financial aid awards for the 2011-2012 academic year.
- The University has developed appropriate policies and procedures for the financial aid, student accounts and registration processes. Demonstrable progress has been made in identifying and notifying students of their outstanding financial obligations.

Suggestions:
- Develop and implement a mechanism to keep all policies current and public.

VI. Summary of Compliance

We commend the institution for meeting the requirements for Standard 6 and making significant progress toward compliance with Standards 2 and 3. We are optimistic for the future of the institution based upon our
visit and the energy that was displayed by various members of the college community. With careful attention to the key requirements reiterated below, full compliance is within reach on Standards 2 and 3:

**Standard 2 Requirements:**
- Create a direct linkage between strategic planning and the budgeting process.
- Add timetables and assigned roles to the strategic plan. Both are needed for accountability as the plan is implemented.
- Revisit the measurable outcomes to ensure that they are reasonable and defensible based on internal longitudinal data and external trend data related to resources, employers, and competition for faculty, staff, and students.
- Create better connections between the numerous plans within the institution and ensure that all are driven directly by the strategic plan.
- Develop and implement a mechanism to assess the effectiveness of the planning process.

**Standard 3 Requirements:**
- The University should refine its financial planning process to ensure that the budgeting process is clearly aligned with the institution’s strategic plan.
- The final budget should include a clear linkage between asset allocation and the strategic plan.