

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Middle States Commission on Higher Education last site-visited the State University of New York Downstate Medical Center in 1996. The nine-member team commended Downstate for a Self-Study report that “was excellent in content, complete in detail,” as well as for the “quality, enthusiasm, and dedication of the students,” the excellence of the library, and the responsiveness of the faculty and administration. Following the site team’s visit and recommendations, the Middle States Commission affirmed the accreditation status of SUNY Downstate. In 2001, Downstate submitted its five-year Periodic Review Report, and was approved to submit its Self-Study for the next ten-year accreditation cycle in 2006.

Planning for the 2006 Self Study began in 2003, with the appointment of a Steering Committee; it selected the Comprehensive Self-Study Design, one of the options described in the Association’s *Designs for Excellence: Handbook for Institutional Self-Study*. This approach provided an excellent framework for studying the campus and assessing its multiple components. Over the ensuing two years, key performance indicators were assessed, challenges identified, and recommendations for change and improvement reviewed.

Since the last Middle States site visit, the campus has experienced a number of new developments. Some reflect actions taken in direct response to the recommendations made in the 1996 Self-Study and by the 1996 Middle States site team; others are the tangible results of the institution’s planning efforts; and some are developments that have been taken in response to or to meet the challenges of external trends.

HIGHLIGHTS OF SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS SINCE 1996

Appointment of a new president: Dr. John C. LaRosa was appointed president in 1999. Under his leadership, the campus has become re-energized, with the stage set for future growth and development. The campus has developed new academic programs and new systems for internal control, refreshed the business and research enterprises, and positioned itself as a leader in biotechnology through the creation of an advanced biotechnology incubator—the first such space to be built in New York City in over a decade.

Additional key leadership positions filled: As noted in the 2006 Self Study Report and accompanying documents, key positions have been filled with the appointment of new deans, chairmen, and administrators. Of note are the appointments of Dr. Dawn Morton-Rias, dean of the College of Health Related Professions (2003); Dr. Daisy Cruz-Richman, dean of the College

of Nursing (2003); Dr. Susan Schwartz-Giblin, dean of the School of Graduate Studies (1997); Fred Hammond, Chief Financial Officer (2004); Bert Robles, Chief Information Officer (2005); and Debra Carey, Chief Executive Officer of University Hospital of Brooklyn (2005). Dr. Eugene Feigelson, dean of the College of Medicine, has announced his intention to retire; a search committee for a new dean has been formed and is in process.

Strategic Planning / Institutional Renewal: A five-year strategic plan for the academic programs was completed in 2000, with five committees addressing research, education, public service, patient care, and “crazy ideas.” An update on the progress of programs implemented as a result of the strategic planning process implemented in 2000 is included in the documentation accompanying the 2006 Self-Study. While current strategic reviews are in place for key areas such as information services, campus facilities, and research, a comprehensive new five-year cycle of campus-wide strategic planning will be implemented after the appointment of a new dean for the College of Medicine. The campus has also worked closely with SUNY administration on *Mission Review*, a SUNY system-wide planning exercise that helps campuses set and reach goals that build academic excellence. *Mission Review* is being used as a springboard to conceptualize the next round of academic strategic planning.

New Academic Programs: Since 1996, a new Master of Public Health Program, housed in the College of Medicine, with a focus on urban and immigrant health, has been implemented; planning is underway for the creation of a School for Public Health. A 15-month Accelerated BS in Nursing program has been developed for individuals who already hold a bachelor’s degree in another field but wish to pursue a career in nursing. In the School of Graduate Studies, a Joint PhD in Biomedical Engineering was launched with Polytechnic University; and the School streamlined the six programs existing in 1996 to two: Neural and Behavioral Science, and Molecular and Cellular Biology. Four of six CHRP programs have transitioned to master’s level. That Downstate is meeting its educational mission is evidenced in the quality of students that Downstate attracts; quality indicator trends in recruitment and retention are strong.

Accreditation of Academic Programs: In the last two years, Downstate has been reviewed or has been preparing to be reviewed by almost every relevant academic accrediting body. The Liaison Committee on Medical Education granted the College of Medicine a full eight-years accreditation status; the Council on Education for Public Health awarded the MPH program five-years; the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education awarded the undergraduate and graduate programs in the College of Nursing ten years. Between 2000 and 2004, five of six of the specialized educational programs in the College of Health Related Professions (Diagnostic Medical Imaging, Midwifery, Occupational Therapy, Physician Assistant and Physical Therapy) underwent assessment by their specialty accrediting body; each review and subsequent on-site evaluation resulted in full, continued accreditation of the respective educational program.

Development Office: The Chancellor of the State University of New York set new expectations for external funding and directed that each SUNY campus strengthen its development function. In 2000, Dr. JoAnn Bradley was appointed Senior Vice President for Institutional Advancement and Philanthropy and has been strategically growing this area. Downstate is actively participating in a SUNY system-wide fundraising campaign, the \$3 Billion Challenge, and has to date exceeded annual fundraising goals.

Information Technology: The appointment of Mr. Robles as CIO in 2005 has yielded significant results, including campus-wide IT upgrades and enhanced web-based academic systems. A new integrated student information system, Banner, has been implemented, and a new software system, Luminis, is in the process of being implemented.

Outcomes Assessment: Outcomes Assessment continues to be an integral part of planning at Downstate. The Outcomes Assessment Coordinating Committee has been refining processes under the guidance of its chair, Dr. Pascal J. Imperato. The Office of Institutional Research and Evaluation, which compiles state and federal reports, has been strengthened.

Campus Diversity and Community Outreach: Since 1996, service to the Brooklyn community has increased through new outreach programs, including the Community Service Program for students. Diversity on campus is a reflection of the importance of Downstate to its surrounding community: inclusion of students from ethnic and racial minorities and providing access continues to be an important part of all our educational programs.

Research Enterprise Strengthened: Reflecting the strategic goal to increase research funding, research awards at 2005 year's end totaled \$61.05 million; for the fiscal 04–05 year, committed expenditures totaled \$52.6 million; placing us fourth in rank among SUNY campuses for research funding. This is approximately double the level of awards Downstate was attracting prior to Dr. LaRosa's appointment. Planning is in progress for a new strategic plan to further strengthen the research enterprise. A key project that bridges the research and business development enterprises is the Advanced Biotechnology Incubator and Park, which is spurring the creation of technology companies and innovations. Another key initiative is a Brooklyn Center for Health Disparities, created with a \$1.1 million grant from the National Institutes of Health.

Nobel Prize in Medicine or Physiology: No discussion of Downstate's highlights since 1996 would be complete without mention of the Nobel Prize. In 1998, Dr. Robert F. Furchgott, distinguished professor emeritus of Downstate Medical Center, was co-recipient of the Nobel Prize in Medicine or Physiology for his breakthrough studies on nitrous oxide. Beyond its importance in scientific circles, the prize underscored the importance of basic research here on campus.

Downstate has advanced its mission on many fronts since 1996 and the institution is significantly stronger. However, there are challenges that remain, as captured in some of the recommendations in the Self-Study. One of the key challenges is the appointment of a new dean for the College of Medicine, which will also entail review of several administrative structures that are currently under the supervision of Dr. Feigelson in his dual role as senior vice president for biomedical education and research. These include developing a new administrative structure for various academic support services and a reorganization for the research enterprise. The Advanced Biotechnology Incubator is positioning the campus to lead the development of the industry sector, both in Brooklyn and in New York City; it will be critical to maximize this project's potential. It is critical that the campus "footprint" be expanded, and that parking and the aging infrastructure in key buildings be addressed.

As Brooklyn's only academic medical center, Downstate plays a unique role in the life of the borough. The Middle States Self-Study process has provided an excellent springboard for future growth and development.