

July 13, 2004

Jean Avnet Morse
Executive Director
Commission on Higher Education
Middle States Association
3624 Market Street
Philadelphia, PA 19104-2680

Dear Ms. Morse:

We are pleased to respond to the report of the evaluation team which visited New York University in April, as well as to the report of the generalists who were here earlier in the academic year. The entire process was a positive experience for us and we are grateful to the team chair, team members, and the generalists for their hard work and their comments and suggestions. In particular, we appreciate the team's judgment that the self-study, together with the report of the University Presidential Transition Team (issued in 2002), "...provides a coherent and responsible blueprint of the major issues, as well as opportunities, facing NYU as well as a preliminary outline of possible ways of addressing them...."

We have a few comments.

The evaluation team mentions a "confusing split in the operational responsibilities" for student housing between Student Affairs and Auxiliary Services (page 9). The decision to split Housing from Residential Education, and to use a structure which is common in universities and colleges throughout the country, was designed to enhance the living and learning environment for our students while maintaining the financial integrity of the housing operation. Given the magnitude and complexity of this restructuring, we believe the transition has been successful in its first year, although not perfect. Staff are working to identify ways to address issues that need to be resolved.

The self-study recommendations and the evaluation team's suggestions are being referred to the appropriate NYU offices and schools for closer consideration and implementation. Indeed, many of the team's suggestions are already being actively pursued. For example, we are in the midst of an internal review of the Steinhardt School of Education, which we began in academic year 2002-2003 and expect to conclude by the end of 2004. The recommendations of several task

forces are being considered, including those that deal with areas of curricula overlap with other NYU schools. A strategic assessment committee is engaged in formulating a mission for the Steinhardt School that will position it within the University's overall mission and identify priorities for its future development and focus. With specific reference to undergraduate curricula, Steinhardt has begun to take steps to reduce professional education course requirements for its undergraduate programs so that students will have more opportunity to broaden their education and explore other interests. In addition, the College of Arts and Science and Steinhardt have begun to explore opportunities for creating for CAS students professional minors, dual baccalaureate-masters degree programs, and other innovations. CAS has already put in place an interschool minor with Steinhardt on nutrition and food studies.

On the issue of curricula overlap, the evaluation team referred to similarities between the College of Arts and Science and the Gallatin School (page 15). While Gallatin shares with CAS a focus on the liberal arts, it also emphasizes experiential education and an interdisciplinary approach that crosses boundaries between the liberal arts and the professions, and that works best outside a school that is structured by departments. We will use the opportunity presented by the Middle States report to further our ongoing discussions regarding the articulation and integration of our undergraduate schools.

In response to the comments of the team's generalists on the student learning assessment plan of the Stern School of Business (page 6 of their report), the School revised its plan. The new plan was included among the documents given to the team member assigned to outcomes assessment, who complimented it during the team visit in April.

Again, we thank the team members and generalists for their valuable work and the collegial manner in which it was conducted.

Sincerely,

John Sexton
President

Norman Dorsen
Chair, Self-Study Steering Committee

cc: Provost David McLaughlin