

UNIVERSITY OF WEST FLORIDA

REVIEW

JULY – OCTOBER 2006

James L. Fisher, Ltd

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Recommendations are numbered and in bold print throughout the text

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I. INTRODUCTION

On September 10-11, 2006, a team of two persons, each widely experienced in higher education and none having any present association with the University of West Florida, reviewed the general condition of the University (Appendix A). The Review included assessing materials and conducting interviews from July 19, 2006 through October 31, 2006.

The purpose of the Review was to assess the condition of the University from an objective and uninvested but informed perspective. The Board of Trustees felt that a completely objective assessment would candidly identify and address issues affecting the University of West Florida, assess the direction of the University and help establish a tentative agenda for the immediate future.

The Review considered the following in terms of strengths, limitations, and/or aspirations:

1. General
2. Academic programs
3. Faculty
4. Students
5. Administration
6. Technology
7. Budget and finance
8. Fund-raising
9. Public relations
10. Governance
11. Senior Administration

Before beginning interviews, team members read and evaluated materials assembled by the University of West Florida staff. All counted, interview and focus groups included more than 75 persons including faculty, students, staff, alumni, elected/appointed officials, area residents, local business persons, members of the Board of Trustees and the Board of Governors, benefactors, persons selected because of special knowledge including leaders of professional associations and other universities and randomly selected persons from the community. Interviewees were based on position, stratified random sample, and random sample. All interviews followed a general format that included 16 separate areas (Appendix B).

Interviewers were to ask about, but not press, each of the areas and all interviewed were advised that their opinions might be used in the final report but *without* attribution.

Readers should bear in mind that although much of the Review can be documented, much of it is based on the opinions of those persons interviewed. Wherever the opinions of the Review team are expressed, it shall be obvious.

This Review is the exclusive work of James L. Fisher, Ltd and should not be attributed to individual members of the Review team.

II. OVERVIEW

The University of West Florida (UWF) is an institution sprinting along an upward trajectory. With the stated goal of being recognized as the best comprehensive public master's degree institution in the United States, UWF has dramatically improved its effectiveness and status since the turn of the century. Further, it has done so against significant odds, surmounting financial stringency, sometimes adverse demographic trends, unpredictable weather calamities and its own historical inertia.

Over the years, the University has been buffeted by a series of hurricanes, the most recent being Ivan (September 2004), which caused an estimated \$15 million in damage at UWF and closed the institution for three weeks. Astonishingly, the institution has bounced back from the blow of Ivan to repair physical damage, stabilize itself financially, minister to wounded campus and regional morale and even record the largest freshmen class in its history. At the same time, it has vastly increased its interaction with the City of Pensacola and the surrounding region, expanded its roster of degree programs, generated tremendous progress in its use of technology in and out of its classrooms, dramatically increased its offerings in online education and mounted what has thus far been a highly successful quiet phase to a major capital campaign. *The Princeton Review* recognized these achievements by including UWF on its list of the best institutions of higher education in the southeast.

These are impressive achievements by any measure, all the more imposing because of a set of environmental circumstances that are largely beyond the control of the University. UWF's home campus is located in Pensacola in the western end of Florida's Panhandle. So situated, it is well removed physically from the remainder of the state in nearly every sense. Economically, the Panhandle is less prosperous than the remainder of the state; Escambia and Santa Rosa counties, the two primary counties in UWF's primary home campus service zone, rank among the highest in Florida and the United States in terms of the incidence of poverty. While the region is rich in terms of military facilities, it hosts relatively few large firms and corporate development in the Panhandle region falls far short of the rest of the state.

“Pensacola is in a different time zone than the rest of Florida, both literally and figuratively,” a Florida higher education official observed to us. *“The residents of that region often relate more to Alabama than to Florida,”* commented a state university president, and our visit revealed that the intercollegiate athletic teams of the University of Alabama and Auburn University may well have more fans than Florida institutions such as the University of Florida and Florida State University.

The upshot is frequently it has been difficult for the University of West Florida to capture the attention of the remainder of the state. Historically, this has been true in a variety of ways, including a paucity of admissions applications and student enrollment from the remainder of the state, but also in terms of legislative inattention and a degree of corporate indifference. A local official lamented that, *“I don't know how many times we have scheduled a meeting here that people from the rest of the state miss because they don't know we're in the Central Time Zone.”*

Thus, UWF's commendable progress upward over the past few years has not taken place on the proverbial velvet staircase. *“Prior to 2001, UWF was caught in a bit of a time warp,”* according to a state higher education leader. *“They were a bit behind the times, but really didn't know that was true,”* was the assessment of an independent sector university president. Considerable resistance to change existed (and still does in some quarters on campus), enrollment had stagnated, the institution's mission was fuzzy, and most noticeably, the institution's relations with the City and the region had withered. *“UWF was widely regarded as the institution 'up there,’”* commented a public official who had scored the University for its attitudinal remoteness and its lack of involvement in the welfare of the region. UWF's reputation was especially parlous in the African-American community, where UWF was stigmatized as the *“University for White Folks,”* along with several other unprintable observations.

To add to this, the state's policy of funding enrollment increases, though largely not funding inflation or operational needs, dealt a body blow to UWF. First, UWF's enrollment was stagnant. Second, the University's enrollment was staggered by Hurricane Ivan and this placed downward pressure on its appropriation. Third, the general lack of population growth in

Escambia and Santa Rosa counties made it especially difficult to generate additional budget dollars.

Nevertheless, UWF has substantially surmounted these environmental impediments. It has introduced several attractive new academic programs, including a flexible Master of Administration degree and an undergraduate nursing program. It has vastly expanded its efforts in Okaloosa and Ft. Walton counties and placed new emphasis on its Emerald Coast campus. In addition, UWF has vaulted forward into the provision of online education and most recently generated about eleven percent of its credit hours from exclusively online courses. As a consequence, campus enrollment is back to pre-Ivan levels and the outlook for future enrollment expansion is bright.

Key to the University's renaissance has been the joint efforts of a highly motivated group of faculty, administrators, and staff, along with a dynamic and visionary President. With respect to faculty, UWF always has boasted many faculty members who have been impressive pedagogues. This continues to be the case. *"I'm simply amazed how much time my faculty are willing to spend with me,"* praised a mature student who said his children had attended large public institutions in the state, but has done so largely without substantial faculty attention. *"Teaching effectiveness always has been a very important thing here,"* noted a dean who also observed that a candidate for tenure who could not present strong evidence of teaching effectiveness would simply not receive a positive recommendation.

One of the many impressive aspects of the forward thrust of the University of West Florida is its willingness to evaluate and assess its standing and progress. While much remains to be done, the institution is deserving of applause for its moves to specify learning outcomes for its general studies programs and each of its majors. Further, each of its academic programs is reviewed on a seven-year cycle and that review includes an evaluation by outside experts. True, much of the verbiage surrounding these assessments is just that---verbiage. However, several areas of the University have move ahead to verify their students' learning and progress by means of externally validated examinations. College of Business students, for example, take a nationally standardized examination that focuses on knowledge that undergraduate business

majors should acquire. UWF students have performed very well on this examination and on average achieve at about the 80th percentile nationally.

The University's external efforts have been cranked up several notches during Dr. John Cavanaugh's five-year presidency. UWF has committed its resources to the City of Pensacola and the region on numerous occasions and its investment in downtown Pensacola in the form of a maritime museum, a Public History and Heritage Center, ownership and restoration of much of the historical district and the offering of coursework. These initiatives have been very warmly received. Indeed, President Cavanaugh resides in a restored home in the historical district, which a local business leader lauded as "*a tremendous show of faith in Pensacola and the most visible way possible to show UWF's determination to make a difference.*"

Meanwhile, UWF has revived its connections to the military, some of which had withered in past years. Approximately one-third of UWF's approximately 10,000 headcount students either are active military, or are spouses or dependents of military personnel. Two large military facilities are nearby---the Naval Air Station Pensacola and Eglin Air Force Base, which is near the Emerald Coast campus. If the University were not paying attention to the needs of the personnel at these bases, it would be tragic. We are pleased to report that military leaders now sing the praises of UWF for its efforts on behalf of uniformed and civilian personnel connected to these two bases. UWF now offers many online courses that are attractive to mobile military personnel with variable schedules and bodes to be an important cog in the relatively new Navy College. In addition, UWF's offerings of courses in downtown Pensacola has met with the approval of military personnel, who otherwise would have to commute a much longer distance to UWF's home campus.

While military personnel add diversity to the UWF student body, its composition has been becoming steadily more diverse over the past decade. About one in four of this fall's entering freshmen class were members of minority groups and the number of international students has been growing slowly, with students from Brazil perhaps being most noticeable. The number of out-of-state students likely will increase with the newly acquired ability of the

institution to offer substantially reduced tuition rates to residents to Alabama, which now provides more than 400 students to UWF.

Fully 37 percent of UWF students attend the institution on a part-time basis, though almost three of every four graduate students do so. UWF now boasts 1,500 on-campus residence hall beds and is desirous of increasing the number of full-time students who live on the campus. A widening set of social and non-academic programs is being offered to make on-campus residency more attractive to students. Almost one-half of freshmen choose to live on-campus.

The blossoming of UWF clearly has included its academic offerings. Every academic program that is eligible for substantive disciplinary accreditation has earned such. Its programs in anthropology and archeology (especially public archeology and marine archeology), as well as public history and museum studies are frequently cited as beacons of excellence by those on- and off-campus. Teacher education, marine biology and accounting draw special praise from external authorities. Key to the strength of these programs and others within the University has been the UWF faculty, which consist of more than 300+ full-time and another 200+ part-time members. Faculty typically are well prepared academically and often draw praise from students for their classroom skill and their willingness to spend time with students.

While UWF's endowment is approaching \$60 million, it is fair to say that until recently, its fund raising "*has been somewhat lackadaisical*" (the view of a development professional at another institution). Lackadaisical history or not, UWF now is devoting much more attention to fund raising. Vice President Van Galen is assigned considerable credit for injecting new energy into UWF's development activities and to bringing best practices to the University's development work. Much work remains to be done. Alumni participation in UWF's annual fund remains embarrassingly low (about five percent); UWF has yet to raise significant amounts of money (typically between \$2 million and \$4 million annually); and, its fund raising expenses are rather high (above \$.20 per dollar raised). Nonetheless, the trends are positive and the responses the institution has been receiving during the "quiet phase" of its forthcoming capital campaign have been heartening.

In the past, fund raising has been handicapped by undistinguished alumni programs and mediocre external publications. A significant turnaround appears to be in progress in alumni programming, where, for example, the institution is obtaining accurate addresses and contact points for many of its alumni for the first time. The quality of UWF's publications, however, is best described as *"only adequate"* (the assessment of a professional at another institution) and therefore the institution's publications have yet to project the University's achievements as well as several professionals believe is possible. The same might be said for the UWF web site, which *"rates only a C"* in the view of an information technology professional at another institution.

The architect of the forward surge of the University of West Florida has been its President, Dr. John C. Cavanaugh, who joined UWF in 2002 after a very successful stint as Provost at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington. With the fervor of a missionary, President Cavanaugh has raised the sights of UWF personnel and even the City while proclaiming the goal of UWF becoming the best comprehensive master's degree regional institution in the country. With few exceptions, faculty and staff have climbed aboard and speak with unusual enthusiasm about their institution and Dr. Cavanaugh. *"He's given us goals to shoot at and has turned us around, no doubt about it,"* praised a senior faculty member.

State higher education leaders voice approval of UWF's outreach to the Panhandle region of the state and extol the institution's willingness to cooperate with other four-year institutions and especially with community colleges. Those talents have served him well as he has chaired two organizations of state university presidents, positions that have thrust him into the limelight in Tallahassee with legislators and state higher education officials. *"John knows how to get people together. He doesn't pound the table, but is always looking for coalitions to get things accomplished,"* evaluated another university president.

Outside observers also give Dr. Cavanaugh kudos for his superb leadership in dealing with the effects of Hurricane Ivan. *"He demonstrated he was a leader,"* observed one official *"and brought that campus together as a team. Other presidents could learn from this."* In the opinion of a national higher education leader, *"This could have ended up being a multi-year*

disaster from which the place wouldn't recover for a decade, but he actually used this tragedy as a means to unite that campus and move them ahead."

President Cavanaugh neatly combines an ability to project UWF externally with an obvious concern for things academic. *"He has never forgotten his academic heritage,"* complimented a faculty member. *"He's a brilliant guy with a big vision and lots of ideas,"* noted the president of another Florida institution. It is apparent that Dr. Cavanaugh is endowed with a finely tuned sense of how to motivate individuals, but also with an understanding of what is possible. In that sense, he is *"an idealistic pragmatist,"* opined a faculty member.

Dr. Cavanaugh exhibits the qualities of a true multi-tasker in that he has developed and is pursuing an extensive agenda of activities for UWF. Hardly any area of the University has not been affected by his vigorous vision. His five years of service have called forth the best from the campus community and have infused energy into faculty and staff, some of whom *"were just put-putting along,"* in the view of a dean. One undeniable source of that energy has been the President's ability to reallocate funds to address long-term salary problems, especially among faculty. *"He's done more than talk about the problem; he's begun to solve it,"* complimented a senior faculty member.

UWF is not without problems. Indeed, its goal of becoming the foremost comprehensive master's degree institution in the United States realistically is far in the distance. *U.S. News and World Report's* 2006 rankings rank UWF only 56th among southern comprehensive institutions. The differences between UWF and the two top-ranked southern comprehensive institutions, Rollins College and James Madison University, are many and relate to facilities, fund raising, student quality, faculty scholarly productivity, salary policies, internal governance, location and the like. Still, UWF's progress in recent years has been encouraging, even thrilling, to those who know and love it. They anticipate progress in the years ahead.

III. ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

The University of West Florida is classified as a comprehensive master's degree institution even though it does offer the Doctor of Education degree (Ed.D.). The University offers approximately 50 distinct baccalaureate degree programs (far more than this if one counts specializations within these programs), about two-dozen master's degree programs, two education specialist degree programs, and the Ed.D. **(1) At its heart, however, UWF is an undergraduate institution (we believe, this primary emphasis should remain) and less than 14 percent of its headcount enrollment is graduate. Fully 72 percent of its graduate students are part-time, reflecting the occupational and regional focus of its graduate programs.**

As noted in the section above, every UWF academic program that is eligible for substantive disciplinary accreditation has earned such, including programs in areas such as business and teacher education. The University's programs in anthropology and archeology (especially public archeology and marine archeology), as well as programs in public history and museum studies, have attained strong external peer reputations for excellence. Further, teacher education, marine biology and accounting draw special praise from external authorities; nursing is also noteworthy. At the other end of the spectrum, programs in communications, arts and computer science are deemed to have problems, the former because of important equipment and technology inadequacies, and the latter because of personnel difficulties.

Of particular interest is UWF's substantial commitment to non-traditional modes of learning. Its history of educating military personnel has made it especially sensitive to their needs and the University allows current or former military personnel to present as many as 30 semester hours of USAFI/DANTES credit. At the same time, students can earn up to 30 semester hours of credit for experiential learning, for example, in their jobs. Further, students are allowed to present up to 30 semester hours of correspondence credit as well as 30 semester hours of credit from military service schools. In actuality, many of these categories overlap and in any case a student ultimately must complete 30 semester hours in what is termed "a planned program" at UWF and a student's final 30 semester hours must be completed in residence at

UWF, though residency appears to be loosely interpreted, for example, study abroad in a UWF program counts.

We applaud UWF's recognition that University-level learning can occur in many different ways and in many different locations. At the same time, it does appear that UWF has not yet rigorously specifically evaluated most of these programs and the students within them to determine if the programs really do promote learning, or if the students who exit with such credit are comparable to students who take conventional programs. **(2) We recommend that UWF devote additional resources to the rigorous assessment of these alternate modes of granting academic credit. The institution should determine the effectiveness of these alternate modes of learning and compare the products of these programs (holding appropriate demographic variables constant) to other graduates. For example, how do students who have been granted civilian nontraditional academic credit, or USAFI/DANTES academic credit, compare to other UWF students? This is one of several questions the institution needs to answer in this arena.**

General Studies Program

The University's general studies program is required of all baccalaureate degree candidates and is one that many other public institutions should emulate. Not only does the program require coursework in English, mathematics, the social sciences, literature, the fine arts, contemporary values and the sciences, but also students must demonstrate competency in a foreign language, demonstrate college-level writing skills and take multicultural coursework. The contents of the program are worthy of commendation.

Of course, even good things often can be improved and there is sentiment on the UWF campus to take a new look at the program and its requirements. For example, faculty in the humanities believe much more could be done in the program to promote and support writing across the curriculum.

If there is a problem associated with UWF's general studies program, it is that there has been insufficient assessment of whether it really accomplishes its objectives. In a phrase---does it really work? **(3) While we recognize the steps the University recently has taken to help generate answers to this question, we nonetheless recommend the institution expend additional resources on solid, rigorous assessment of its general studies program. Pre-testing and post-testing of students probably should be a part of this program, which should focus on verifiable educational outcomes and national comparisons. If UWF truly aspires to walk among the comprehensive institution elite, then it must be able to compare itself to such institutions. Locally based assessment, while valuable, will not accomplish that task. UWF's general studies assessment also should focus on the extent to which differences exist between UWF students who spend their entire careers on campus and those who do not because either they transfer into the University, or because they take courses at other locations such as the Emerald Campus. We recognize the overriding influence of the transfer policies of the State of Florida, but believe such data are essential if UWF is to educate all of its students well and fulfill its mission.**

The Absence of Foreign Language Majors

Even though some years ago UWF offered several foreign language majors, today it offers only a minor in Spanish. This is despite the fact that its students will graduate into a world that is increasingly multicultural, multilingual and international in character. UWF currently risks graduating students who will be unprepared to live and compete in such a world.

Perhaps we carry coals to Newcastle when we observe that Spanish is the second language of the United States and in fact the first language in numerous locales, many of which are in the State of Florida. A UWF graduate who is not facile with Spanish probably will operate at a disadvantage in the future.

Earlier, we applauded the presence of a foreign language competency requirement in UWF's general studies program. This requirement vitiates the impact of UWF's underinvestment in formal foreign language curricula and majors. **(4) Nevertheless, it is high**

time that the University change and improve this circumstance by raising Spanish to the level of a major and adding an academic minor in at least one Asian language such as Chinese or Japanese. We recommend that President Cavanaugh, in concert with the faculty, ensure that this is accomplished in the near future. UWF cannot aspire to true leadership among comprehensive institutions with its current stable of foreign language offerings.

The Center for University Teaching, Learning and Assessment

It is beyond the scope of this report to assess the effectiveness of the Center for University Teaching, Learning and Assessment. We can say, however, that its stated purposes are excellent and that the range of activities it appears to sponsor are essential to the mission and scope of UWF. Some faculty almost instinctively become effective teachers; others must struggle to attain effectiveness. Relatively few of the most prestigious doctoral programs in the United States do very much to improve this situation because they largely ignore the single activity (teaching) that will occupy most of their graduates' time after they have earned their degrees. **(5) We applaud UWF's commitment to improving this situation and recommend in particular that the Center devote attention to effective teaching techniques in distance learning. Even the most effective face-to-face classroom teachers sometimes discover that online instruction is a very different animal.**

Doctoral Programs

The University currently offers an Ed.D. degree within the State of Florida's classification of Curriculum and Instruction. Such a degree program often is within the academic program inventory of comprehensive, regional public universities, though it is not always clear that such programs are a good investment of faculty and financial resources. Further, at many AASCU (American Association of State Colleges and Universities) institutions, relatively few of the faculty who propel such programs have generated the externally refereed scholarship in high quality outlets that is a prerequisite to leading advanced graduate students and supervising excellent dissertations.

It is beyond the scope of this institutional evaluation for us to evaluate the scholarly credentials of all of the faculty connected to UWF's Ed.D. program. **(6) However, we recommend that UWF take steps to ensure only those faculty who have extensive records as published scholars in refereed outlets plus relevant educational experience (both are necessary) are allowed to teach in the program and supervise dissertations. This presumes rigorous graduate faculty standards and periodic reviews of faculty credentials both by peers and administrators to ensure that participating faculty are maintaining their credentials. This is one of the prices associated with comprehensive institution leadership.**

Related to this, (7) we also recommend that President Cavanaugh put a formal hold on the development of any additional doctoral programs at UWF. Doctoral education is not the road to distinction for comprehensive institutions. Excellence in the classroom, distinguished regional outreach and public service, and focused research are. UWF should not succumb to the siren's song of doctoral proliferation.

Research

UWF is not a research institution in the context of the University of Florida and during 2005-2006 its faculty received only \$12.6 million in extramural research awards. This is down from a high of \$20.3 million in 2000-2001, but a substantial portion of this decline is due to the spin-off of the Institute for Human and Machine Cognition. **(8) Some speak of the current UWF/IHMC relationship as a "separation" when indeed, according to our reading, the appropriate word would be "affiliation." If this were emphasized, it would be to the mutual advantage to both UWF and IHMC. We believe that this prospect should be thoughtfully considered and, passing this test, strongly emphasized in the future.**

Of course, one of the primary determinants of total research grants is the number of faculty and UWF's 252 FTE faculty in 2005-2006 was down 13 percent from a high of 286 in 1998-1999. (The FTE faculty number differs from the total number of faculty positions because of administrative and other assignments.)

Nevertheless, it should be noted that the average FTE faculty member at UWF generates almost \$50,000 of extramural research funding annually. This is a respectable number and actually has been as high as \$88,775 in 2002-2003 when Institute for Human and Machine Cognition numbers were included.

The change in the relationship with the Institute appears to have made fiscal and administrative sense but has had a major negative impact of the research numbers UWF reports and, as such, has diminished the true overall impact of UWF's research and scholarly activities on the region and state. Reality has not changed, but external perceptions may have. Emphasizing the "affiliation" could help change the perception.

It is fair to say that the University of West Florida is not permeated by a research culture. *"Research is encouraged here and sometimes we receive some good support, but they don't really push it,"* commented a senior faculty member in the College of Business. Unless a faculty member has outside funding, he/she will teach three or four sections per semester; graduate research assistants are not plentiful; and, research sabbaticals are not prolific in number. *"Ultimately, we're mostly a teaching institution,"* observed a dean, though he also noted that approximately one dozen UWF faculty have legitimately earned national reputations as scholars and researchers.

We do not quarrel with this emphasis or the resource allocation that supports it. UWF can best serve its students, its region and the State of Florida by providing strong, high quality, student-oriented academic programs. After all, the State already supports four institutions (UF, FSU, USF and UCF) each of which generates more than \$100 million in annual funded research and two doctoral institutions (FAU, FIU) that have research institution status. The truth is that the University of West Florida is unlikely to obtain fame and fortune by imitating these institutions.

(9) That said, we believe there is some room for a reorientation of UWF's research agenda to place additional emphasis upon addressing regional problems and issues. UWF

already is notable for its excellence in specific disciplines and research areas. We commend these developments. Other viable areas where the University has related strengths include oceanography, environmental and water-related issues and still other topical areas such as the military and gerontology. It is not our purpose to specify UWF's research agenda and we do not argue that UWF has not already been addressing some or all of these issues. Rather, our recommendation is that UWF attempt to achieve even greater focus in its research and that it recognize that being a pale, downsized imitation of larger public research institutions probably is not a winning strategy. The University can make scholarly waves if it focuses its programs and research resources and we recommend it explicitly plan to do so. This will require choice-making and “*choosing winners*” (the language of an external research expert). Such decision-making never is easy, but it will be necessary if UWF is to maximize its impact and progress toward its goal of becoming the best comprehensive master's degree institution in the country.

The Emerald Coast Campus and Online Instruction

Even while headcount enrollment by conventional students who meet their faculty face-to-face on the Pensacola home campus has tapered off or even declined in some disciplines, UWF is experiencing very nice increases in student enrollment at its Emerald Coast campus and in online course instruction (which typically are offered by, and credited to, the Pensacola campus). The Emerald Coast campus serves the most rapidly growing section of the Panhandle and now accounts for approximately ten percent of the University's headcount enrollment. Online instruction, in turn, has increased rapidly and was responsible for eleven percent of all credit hour generation this past year.

An administrator put the situation this way: “*You don't have to be a genius to see what's going on. We're shifting gears and off-campus and online coursework is becoming much more important. This is only going to continue when you consider the demographics of the Pensacola area.*” But, the same administrator also offered this caveat: “*I don't think either faculty or staff around UWF have adjusted their thinking to this new world. We haven't really perfected our model for teaching, research and service away from the home campus and some of us still think*

distance learning is easier and less expensive than regular instruction. They're quite wrong about all that."

The Emerald Coast operation is likely to grow significantly in the future. How should faculty there be considered and evaluated? Several Emerald Coast faculty to whom we spoke evinced a sense of unease about being evaluated for promotion and tenure by home campus faculty they rarely saw and with whom they interacted only on occasion. "Anyway," asserted one Emerald Coast faculty member, "We're doing different things here than they are there, but they want to apply their standards to us. They're out of touch." This tension is hardly new in higher education; numerous institutions with branch campuses have confronted similar challenges over time. **(10) We recommend that President Cavanaugh commission a small group of UWF faculty and staff (including a generous Emerald Coast representation) to examine best practices at other institutions that maintain multiple campuses. The group should examine how branch campuses are governed; how faculty and staff there are evaluated; what admissions standards should be applied, etc. The group should generate options for the President to consider and the campus to ponder rather than making firm and final recommendations.**

With respect to online education, UWF's dramatic improvement in its information technology capabilities has smoothed the way for its increased distance learning enrollment, which accounted for 10.5 percent of all credit hours generated in Fall 2005. Even so, the typical experience of numerous institutions involved in distance learning is that it is expensive in terms of both time and financial resources. **(11) We recommend that additional attention be given to how faculty loads and compensation will be determined as online education expands; the extent to which adjunct faculty members will be used in online education (a model that is increasingly common elsewhere in higher education); what facilities, equipment and software support will be needed in the future, etc.** We do not mean to suggest that UWF has not been giving attention to these questions. Rather, we wish to note that relatively few UWF faculty and staff have extensive experience with distance learning and thus far have largely been playing it by ear. Once again, we believe UWF would benefit from learning about best practices and options elsewhere in distance learning education. **(12) Accordingly, we recommend that**

the President appoint another study group to examine the future of distance education at UWF, that this group explicitly assemble information about best practices, and that it present President Cavanaugh with a set of options for his consideration and campus discussion. We fear that some members of the campus community do not yet understand the full impact of online and distance education on campus services and their own activities.

IV. TECHNOLOGY

If there is a single area where UWF has advanced by leaps and bounds, it is in its deployment and use of technology. President Cavanaugh found a campus that was technologically out of date and has transformed it into a campus that abounds with instructional technology and Internet capability. But, “*he’s moved us up to the front ranks,*” boasted a faculty member. This has occurred in a variety of ways, including increasing the number of PCs on campus and constantly updating them; purchasing new software; enabling lightning fast Internet access by virtue of UWF’s connection to the Lambda Rail; making nearly all of the campus wireless; and, vastly improving the skill and turnaround time of those who service and repair technology equipment and respond to faculty and staff problems.

The upshot is that UWF has been listed as one of the more wired campuses in the country. The institution’s future plans for expansion and enhancement of technology nonetheless are audacious and frankly stimulate the inevitable “*Who’s going to pay for all this?*” question (which was posed to us by several individuals who juxtaposed information technology funding with the institution’s campaign to increase faculty compensation.) Regardless, students can conduct the most critical aspects of their business via the Internet. They can register for classes, pay bills, view their progress toward fulfilling degree requirements, etc. Every residence hall bed has a high-speed Internet connection. Many campuses have yet to achieve the same capabilities.

In contrast to our experience at many other campuses, UWF personnel were quite complimentary of the quality and promptness of the service they receive from information technology staff at the University. “*They come quickly,*” praised a department chairperson, while an administrator said, “*They usually take ownership of a problem and don’t try to sneak out the back door in order to avoid it.*”

Special note must be taken of the successful campaign of President Cavanaugh and others to connect UWF to the Lambda Rail. This was a coup of major proportions. To be candid, relatively few institutions similar in background and mission to UWF have made it on to the

Lambda Rail. While not without costs, the connection has vastly improved the University's capabilities in nearly every Internet category, but especially its ability to conduct state of the art research and the speed of its Internet connections (which will be critical to its online instructional thrust). UWF must now ensure that this capability is utilized for something more than the rapid downloading of digitized movies by students.

The academic course software UWF uses is D2L, which is similar to more widely utilized software packages such as Blackboard. Faculty who use D2L generally like it; however, one-half or more of all faculty do not use it, either because they do not know how to use it, or because they do not approve of the use of technology to this extent. **(13) Nevertheless, faculty who teach courses online virtually must use software similar to D2L. Hence, we recommend UWF redouble its efforts to familiarize its faculty with D2L by means of training sessions that perhaps focus on particular disciplines. There will be a significant payoff to the institution, both in online and face-to-face instruction, if more faculty have mastered and utilize D2L. While there is scant evidence that students actually learn more when they utilize technology, there is abundant evidence that many prefer to use technology and it is indisputable that students cannot take an online course without technology. Hence, UWF would be well advised to make as many faculty as possible comfortable with D2L and other technology-related items.**

Related to this, only 39 percent of UWF classrooms are multimedia in character (such classrooms contain a PC, DVD and VCR, and have Internet access, and perhaps have a white board as well). **(14) Almost needless to say, even faculty who are trained cannot use technology that is not in their classrooms. It is an expensive proposition to provide classrooms with multimedia capability, yet this is another investment that UWF must continue. Every classroom in the University need not have multimedia capability, but a strong majority should be so equipped.**

Administratively, UWF relies upon Banner for financial and human resources activities, though it utilizes a "legacy," locally developed software package for student records. "*Our student records software is long in the tooth,*" criticized an administrator who wishes the

institution would move rapidly to a more modern student information system. This, too, would be expensive and may not be the highest priority for UWF unless the existing legacy software is likely to fail in the near future. **(15) To be sure, a modern student information system would make life much easier for administrators and students alike and would enhance the University's ability to deal with distance learning students. Still, other information technology needs may be more pressing, though the replacement of the existing system should only be delayed, not avoided. UWF's current IT Strategic Plan deals with these and many other issues, but does so in a very general context and in any case needs to be updated frequently in light of the frequent changes that occur in the technology arena.**

V. FACULTY

The UWF faculty constitute an undeniable strength of the institution. Taken as a whole, they are well-educated, devoted to their tasks, and productive. Their special strength is their skill as classroom and laboratory pedagogues. By common consent, UWF's faculty contains a healthy number of master teachers and a host of other individuals who "*are inspiring,*" according to many students, who particularly praise the ability of faculty to apply knowledge to what they term "*practical situations.*"

Long-serving UWF faculty have supported the institution through thick and thin, where "thin" refers not only to below national average salaries, but also to circumstances such as those generated by Hurricane Ivan. "*We're strongly committed to this place,*" commented a veteran humanities faculty member who did not always endorse the current directions of the institution, but proclaimed his loyalty to UWF nonetheless.

We discovered that some faculty are uncertain, perhaps even confused, about their responsibilities and UWF's expectations of them. More recently appointed faculty tend to have much stronger interests in research and scholarly productivity than faculty with longer tenure, but expressed uncertainty and worry about what level of scholarly productivity actually would be required of them. "*I'm going to be evaluated by people who haven't done anything,*" charged a junior, nontenured faculty member, who acerbically contended his evaluators should bow to the expertise of outside reviewers of his publications. We also found more recent additions to the faculty to be much more interested in merit and market salary funding than more mature faculty. "*Right now, except for getting promoted, it doesn't make much difference how I perform. I'm going to get paid the same,*" alleged a rambunctious junior faculty member who has been quite productive as a scholar.

Some more senior faculty, on the other hand, believe they are "*being shunted to the sidelines*" and "*no longer are valued*" because of the institution's increased emphasis on research and refereed scholarly productivity. Many of the same faculty also professed they were uncomfortable with UWF's venture into online education and questioned whether adjunct faculty

would provide quality instruction in such courses. This concern seeps over to face-to-face instruction as well, where 36.4 percent of all UWF course sections in Fall 2005 were taught by adjunct faculty. It is not clear UWF has in place the training, mentoring and monitoring tools necessary to ensure quality instruction by adjuncts, some of whom feel *“We really aren’t given any type of welcome to our departments; we’re simply inputs that they more or less ignore.”* (16)

We recommend that the Provost, with faculty advice, devise a system whereby adjunct faculty are given orientation, provided with appropriate training and then monitored and evaluated. Peer visitations into adjunct faculty classrooms are both appropriate and necessary. This accomplished, adjuncts can be remarkably effective as well as save precious dollars.

Overall, we found faculty morale to be good. The typical UWF faculty member is pleased with the institution’s emphasis upon increasing their salaries, though a few have begun to connect the additional salary dollars to decreased operational budgets and support dollars for their academic programs.

Faculty Teaching Loads

The typical full-time faculty member at UWF teaches three courses per semester. This is not especially burdensome to the typical faculty member, given that 94 percent of all class sections have 50 or fewer students at UWF and a considerable segment of the faculty does not generate significant refereed scholarship. In Fall 2005, UWF generated 220.5 credit hours per FTE faculty member. If the typical course taught by a faculty member is three semester hours, then this equates to 73.5 students per faculty member per semester. This is not a heavy load in the context of comprehensive public institutions nationally.

Of course, major differences exist among disciplines in terms of the nature of their courses, the size of classes, laboratory responsibilities, and the like. Still, we believe the typical faculty teaching load of three sections per semester and 73.5 students (this number is probably smaller in the spring) is on the light side if a faculty member is not heavily involved in research and public service. It represents an expensive use of scarce faculty resources and no doubt

results in UWF hiring more adjunct faculty. **Accordingly, (17) we recommend that the Provost, with the explicit endorsement of the President, and in consultation with the deans, inform faculty that those faculty members who have not demonstrated significant commitments to research and public service are likely to have their teaching loads increased to four courses per semester (a typical teaching load at many comprehensive institutions). Action in this regard should begin in the Fall 2007 semester for the most obvious cases. This policy should not be interpreted as requiring all, or even a majority of, faculty members to teach twelve hours, or as preventing new faculty members from enjoying a three course teaching load in their first few years at UWF. Instead, the policy should focus on faculty members who realistically have made long-term choices in terms of how they have chosen to allocate their time and should adjust their teaching responsibilities accordingly.**

Faculty Salaries

Historically, the University of West Florida often did not choose to hire faculty at market salaries and over a period of time the institution fell behind peer institutions in salary rankings. Early on, President Cavanaugh enunciated as a high level priority the bringing of UWF faculty salaries at least up to regional averages. Via a series of internal reallocations of funds in addition to annual State of Florida salary increment funds, UWF has made substantial progress toward that goal.

The table below records UWF faculty salaries in relation to a varying group of peer institutions. First, with respect to public master's degree institutions nationally, West Florida's faculty salaries are almost indistinguishable and now vary no more than \$1,200 from that group in any rank. On the face of it, this suggests that UWF should be able to compete adequately to attract and retain quality faculty.

There are three other public master's degree institutions in Florida and UWF trails the average faculty salary of this group at every rank, though not by large amounts. With respect to still another peer group, the University fares better. Three putatively similar institutions in

Georgia and Alabama are Georgia Southern, West Georgia and South Alabama. UWF pays its faculty more than the mean of this group of institutions, though once again not by large amounts.

The final group of comparator institutions consists of three doctoral, though non-flagship institutions in Florida. These institutions pay their typical faculty members more than UWF, the gap ranging from a low of 4.0 percent at the Associate Professor rank to a high of 11.8 percent at the Professor rank.

These regional and national salary comparisons suggest that UWF has closed the gap between itself and similar institutions, though it trails other institutional groups such as the non-flagship doctoral research institutions in Florida. All things considered, this is marvelous progress and the President and his colleagues deserve major credit for it.

Of course, when any salary comparison is made, much depends upon the cost of living, that is, what the salary will buy. Price indices reported for Pensacola typically are several percentage points lower than nationwide averages. Further, housing prices in the Pensacola area have not yet approached those in the remainder of the state, or those nationwide. Overall, the cost of living in the Pensacola MSA appears to be about four percent lower than the national average. Of course, fluctuating housing conditions could change this picture rapidly.

The bottom line is that Pensacola probably does not benefit dramatically from a lower overall cost of living (though several UWF personnel maintain this is so) though it appears to be slightly less costly to maintain a given economic lifestyle in Pensacola than many other locations. Further, when one evaluates the attractiveness of an institution's salary offer, one must take other things into consideration, for example, culture, crime, education and the like. Pensacola does not appear to fare quite so well here. Several statistics found in *Places Rates* that measure crime and K-12 class sizes are above average, while education expenditures are below average. A national climate comfort index places Pensacola below the national average. Still, many regard the region as an attractive place to live and note that an impressive variety of viable living options exist.

What does all this mean? Taking all things into account, UWF now appears to be roughly competitive in the overall faculty salary arena. Nevertheless, it appears to suffer competitive salary problems in certain disciplines and specialties. For example, UWF has found it difficult to react to changing faculty job market conditions in disciplines such as accounting. That said, the most recent rendition of its collective bargaining agreement with the local UFF chapter does contain a provision for funds amounting to two percent of the faculty salary base that will be devoted to dealing with salary compression problems and merit circumstances that arise within salary compression. This provision represents a beneficial difference between UWF and most other Florida public campuses and the UFF deserves credit for recognizing the institutional need for such and agreeing to it in negotiations. The problem here is that the two percent funding was generated by UWF reallocating funds from other purposes and it is doubtful the University can continue on this path in the future lest it injure its operation and support capabilities, library funding, and the like. Despite the desirability of increasing faculty salaries, there is no free lunch in terms of funding sources.

Overall, UWF devotes only small amounts of money to rewarding meritorious faculty performance. It has tended to give the equivalent of a financial C to every faculty member, almost regardless of that faculty member's performance. Across the board raises have ruled. Hence, a faculty member's starting salary at UWF determines nearly everything about his/her financial future because lock-step raises dictated by the collective bargaining contract circumscribe any future action. *"It can be difficult for us to keep really good faculty,"* lamented a dean, *"because if they do good things that attract national attention, we can't really do anything for them other than get them a quicker promotion. Once you're a full professor, that's the game."* (18) **We recommend that the UWF administration, faculty governance and UFF representatives do whatever possible to introduce additional market and merit factors into faculty salary determination. We recognize the nature of the collective bargaining in Florida, but also observe that very few of the institutions UWF seeks to emulate ignore market and merit in their faculty salary determinations. The road to the top is not paved with across the board salary increments.**

Separate from the merit and market issue, (19) we recommend that the President commission a rigorous study of the existing UWF salary structure to ascertain if any gender, ethnic or compression disparities exist that are not explicable by accepted measures of performance and qualifications.

NINE-MONTH FACULTY SALARIES

AAUP DATA FOR 2005-2006 (000s)

<u>Institution</u>	<u>Assistant Professor</u>	<u>Associate Professor</u>	<u>Professor</u>
University of West Florida	\$53.3	\$61.9	\$80.1
Public Master's Degree Institutions Nationally	\$52.9	\$62.7	\$78.9
U. North Florida	\$50.0	\$59.1	\$81.5
Florida Gulf Coast U.	\$52.4	\$65.8	\$82.4
Florida A&M	\$58.2	\$66.3	\$80.9
Average	\$53.5	\$63.7	\$81.6
Georgia Southern U.	\$52.0	\$59.1	\$75.5
U. South Alabama	\$53.2	\$63.6	\$85.1
U. West Georgia	\$48.2	\$55.9	\$75.8
Average	\$51.1	\$59.5	\$78.8
Florida Atlantic U.	\$57.5	\$64.2	\$89.2
Florida International U.	\$63.6	\$70.6	\$92.4
Florida Tech. U.	\$53.7	\$60.7	\$82.9
Average	\$58.3	\$65.2	\$88.2

Staff Salaries

Readily comparable staff salary data are not available and many markets for many staff personnel are strongly influenced by local factors. The propinquity of military bases to UWF is one such local factor. Nevertheless, our discussions with a wide variety of individuals on the UWF campus lead us to believe that certain staff salaries may now be farther away from regional salary means than faculty salaries. “*We just can’t keep some of our best people,*” lamented a supervisor. Plainly put, it now is difficult for the University to attract and retain certain staff, especially those who have marketable skills. **(20) We recommend that President Cavanaugh give this topic attention and devise the ways and means of providing market level compensation to those staff employees whose skills make them especially valuable in regional markets.**

VI. STUDENTS

A substantial majority of UWF's almost 10,000 headcount student body appears to be composed of first generation college students who tend to have a strong vocational or occupational focus. *"I'm here because I want to earn a business degree that will help me find a good job,"* offered a straightforward, but representative business major. Supportive of this orientation, several faculty members told us that most UWF students were serious individuals whose eyes were focused on specific goals. *"While most of our students are talented, typically they are less interested in the liberalizing aspects of higher education and more interested in obtaining a credential that will serve them well when they look for a job,"* observed a department chairperson.

The ability level of students at the University of West Florida is somewhat variable. Though the mean ACT score this fall for entering freshmen was 23.5 (some three points above the national mean), the 25th percentile score for entering freshmen was 19. Hence, at least one-quarter of UWF freshmen present an ACT score well below the national mean. In addition, each year the University enrolls about as many transfer students as it does new freshmen. These students have highly variable credentials. Some are talented, motivated and have life experiences *"that make them a genuine joy to have in the classroom,"* averred a faculty social scientist. Another faculty member asserted that these students, many of whom have a military connection, *"know what they are doing and push the younger students."*

At the same time, some transfer students present academic credentials that are inferior in terms of standardized test scores and *"sometimes they drag down a class,"* according to a faculty member in the sciences. Or, alternatively, these students (as well as conventional UWF students) have work, family and social commitments that impinge on the time they devote to their coursework. The end result, they aver, *"is below average academic performance."*

One consequence of the unevenness of the academic preparation of UWF students and the differing demands within their lives is mediocre student retention rates. Rather large numbers of UWF students drop out of UWF. If they are in the military, they may well end up

graduating from another institution, but they do not graduate from UWF. Data on UWF's web site disclose that only 21 percent of the entering cohort of freshmen in 1998 graduated within four years; 37 percent graduated within five years; and, 41 percent graduated within six years. Only 73 percent of the most recent crop of freshmen returned for their sophomore years. These undistinguished numbers are dramatically below comparable data for the institutions UWF seeks to emulate. James Madison University's six-year graduation rate, for example, is about 30 percent higher.

Hence, UWF has lots of work to do in its quest to rise to the top of comprehensive institutions. One place to start is to improve student retention. **(21) We recommend UWF engage in a rigorous multivariate analysis of the reasons why students depart from the institution and why they fail to graduate.**

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) offers some hints and additional data. On five major benchmarks, for example, "level of academic challenge," or "supportive campus environment), UWF freshmen rank their experience at the institution below the national average for comprehensive institutions. The same gaps between UWF and all comprehensive institutions exist for seniors, though these differences sometimes are even larger. Apparently some of these disparities can be explained on the basis of the characteristics of UWF students and UWF itself. Perhaps. However, UWF aspires to leadership among comprehensive institutions and these data clearly indicate there is much spadework to be done. **(22) We recommend UWF candidly address what its students are telling it via the NSSE and develop an action plan for improving these results. Why, for example, do many students apparently not view the UWF environment as supportive?**

All is not dark, however. Students to whom we talked were generally pleased with the University and the opportunities it is offering them. Many heaped praise on faculty and staff who "go out of their way to help us" and "spend extra time with me when I need it." Further, they find the campus attractive, "almost like a park," and "very safe." Students sense that UWF is "an institution on the way up" (as a graduate student put it) and often exhibit a sense of pride about it. Several students were especially pleased that the University is beginning to offer more

courses in downtown Pensacola. Students at or near the Emerald Coast campus are quite pleased that UWF is expanding its efforts there.

Even so, the NSSE contains a variety of cautionary data. UWF freshmen students grade their interactions with faculty below the national average for comprehensive institutions and the responses of UWF seniors place the institution only at the 30th percentile in that regard. To the extent these data reflect reality, they contradict the self-image UWF has developed of itself.

Several faculty to whom we talked were puzzled by these responses, saying that they were constantly interacting with students. Even so, the NSSE data should be taken seriously by UWF.

(23) We recommend that the Provost lead a study that examines the ways in which faculty can or should interact with students. For example, a very basic consideration is faculty office hours. Are they sufficient? Do faculty actually keep their office hours? Are they available when students, especially those who have job or family responsibilities, need them, or are the office hours during time periods less convenient to UWF's actual student body? This analysis should be conducted with explicit faculty input and probably include the UFF. The focus should be upon the phenomenon from an institutional point of view. What's going on here and how can UWF improve its performance? Is there a dichotomy between students who start at the Pensacola campus as freshmen and other students? The list of possible questions is long, but the answers are critical to the institution's future.

Finally, we note that UWF students, both residential and commuter, would like to see the University sponsor more activities on campus, recreational, academic and programmatic, social, etc. The age-old "*There's not enough to do*" statement was heard often by us from UWF students. However, student attendance at UWF intercollegiate athletic events does not inspire confidence in the notion that many more students would be drawn to the campus if more events were sponsored. **(24) We recommend that Vice President Ford continue to monitor the need for additional on-campus activity and that UWF experiment with a variety of events that might attract different populations. Nevertheless, UWF's position here is hardly unusual and reflects a typical situation at metropolitan institutions.**

Intercollegiate Athletics

The University of West Florida is a member of the NCAA Division II Gulf South Athletic Conference, which contains 15 members (twelve public, three independent institutions). The enrollments of the institutional members vary from 1,500 to more than 11,000. The conference operates in two divisions, with UWF being a member of the East Division. The divisions serve to reduce travel costs.

UWF appears to be pursuing an approach to intercollegiate athletics that is both sane and sensible. It does not play football (a decision that immediately reduces its costs and enables it to invest in the so-called “minor” sports) and plays basketball in a campus field house that seats fewer than 2,500 fans. Student athletes as a group earn a higher cumulative grade point average than the student body as a whole.

UWF has won national Division II championships in men’s golf and men’s tennis and this fall will host seven NCAA Division II national championship competitions on its attractive campus. Other conference members have won almost two dozen other national championships in sports ranging from baseball and men’s basketball to women’s golf and men’s ice hockey (an anomaly in the south).

Financial support for UWF intercollegiate athletics comes predominantly from student fees and the institution spends about \$3.8 million annually on intercollegiate athletics. Despite the fact that students pay the freight for UWF intercollegiate athletic programs, it is fair to say these programs currently hardly make a stir among students on the campus. We were hard put to find any students who were not also athletes who regularly attended home contests and even a weekend men’s basketball game might attract 200 or fewer fans. UWF athletics have not caught on with the Pensacola public and very few non-University individuals attend any contest.

Given the relative absence of large corporations and *Fortune 500* firms in the Pensacola region, there are few immediate prospects for extensive private support of UWF intercollegiate athletics. **That said, (25) we recommend that UWF increase its efforts to market its many fine intercollegiate athletic teams to the citizens of the region. Community leaders ought to**

be invited to athletic events and treated to an excellent meal and hospitality at the same time. Military personnel ought to be provided free admission and transported to some contests. Families (especially those of UWF personnel) ought to be provided with free admission and refreshments. The point is to introduce UWF athletics to individuals who currently appear to be unknowledgeable or even ignorant of such. If the institution is going to spend almost \$4 million annually on intercollegiate athletics, then it should resolve to use those teams as a tool to market the entire University. Provided intercollegiate athletic programs are kept in proper perspective, such promotion is likely to achieve positive results.

VII. ADMINISTRATIVE OPERATION AND ORGANIZATION

Our own observations revealed that UWF's home campus is visually attractive and that the grounds are well maintained. When students refer to the UWF Pensacola campus as "*park-like*," they are not far afield, as many of its 1,600 acres are part of a University-created nature preserve. Said a staff member, "*The campus looks good and that makes me feel good when I come to work each day.*" Even during tough financial times, UWF has made the maintenance of its grounds a high priority and this is readily evident.

The physical plant of the campus affords a somewhat different story. Cumulated deferred maintenance on general fund buildings approximates \$70 million and some \$35 million in deferred maintenance needs exist in buildings that are part of the University's auxiliary operations. It is not that UWF has ignored such needs. Rather, the reality is that the State of Florida has virtually abdicated its duty to provide such funds. It is not clear how UWF and other public Florida institutions will deal with obligations of this magnitude. Yes, such problems can be postponed, but not eliminated and, as the television muffler advertisement advises, "Pay me now, or pay me **(more)** later." **(26) Our recommendation here is obvious and therefore perhaps not especially helpful. UWF, in concert with other public institutions of higher education, must convince the Legislature to heed these needs. This campaign will not be easy, and doubtless has little political sex appeal, but is critical to the future of higher education.**

Our conversations with UWF personnel indicate that the institution delivers basic administrative services well. It cleans offices adequately or better; it pays bills on time; it provides parking that is more than adequate in terms of quantity and price when compared to other urban campuses, etc. Demonstrably, the individuals who deliver basic services to the campus excelled after Hurricane Ivan, which provided them with an unprecedented test of their ability to adapt and perform. "*These guys and gals really did the job after Ivan and we would have lost the entire semester without their hard work,*" observed a senior administrator.

With respect to parking, students pay only about \$30 to park on UWF's home campus and this is not merely a hunting permit. There are places for students to park, though not always in the location they would prefer. Faculty and staff pay only a little bit more and can purchase a reserved spot for less than \$100 annually. Legions of faculty and staff at other metropolitan institutions would shout hosannas if such prices existed on their campuses. The price of a reserved parking spot on many urban campuses costs per month what UWF charges for an entire year. Campus personnel should count their blessings in this regard.

On the face of it, UWF's administrative organization is unusual and confusing. There is a Provost (the chief academic officer) and an Executive Vice President (the chief operating officer) who report to the President. However, things quickly become more complicated because of a set of "dotted line" relationships that exist between several vice presidents and other areas and the Executive Vice President. The UWF web site states that the Executive Vice President is responsible for the University's legal affairs, human resources, communications, information technology and special projects. In fact, Vice President White appears to be responsible for much more than this. He is widely acknowledged to represent and speak for the President in a host of situations. Further, several vice presidents (for example, those dealing with student affairs, development, and administrative affairs) have the aforementioned "dotted line" relationship to Vice President White. Various, they told us either that they talk with him frequently, or that they seldom talk with him at all.

It will suffice for us to observe that there is confusion on the campus about the role and responsibilities of the Executive Vice President. *"No one really knows what he does or what his responsibilities are,"* commented a department chairperson who spoke for many. We do not contend that this makes this arrangement and the Executive Vice President's role illegitimate, but does produce confusion and not a little campus gossip. For example, **(27) many on campus are not clear either about who the "number two" administrator is, or who would take the place of President Cavanaugh. We understand steps are being taken to deal with this situation and recommend that the decision be made decisively and then clearly communicated to all constituencies on the campus.**

There is another administrative concern that looms large on the UWF campus and it is allegation that administrative proliferation exists. A faculty member stated the issue plainly: *“We have lots more administrators than we need and the number has increased much faster than the size of the campus.”* It is difficult for us to evaluate this hypothesis without knowing precisely what each administrator does, trends in the allocation of funds, and locally important idiosyncrasies that demand administrative attention (the large military presence in the region and the University’s commitment to historic Pensacola are possible cases in point). Even so, in our judgment, UWF hardly appears to be undernourished administratively. Further, the proportions of the University’s budget spent on instruction and instructional support are not particularly large. **(28) These observations lead us to recommend that President Cavanaugh find ways to increase the proportion of the institution’s budget that is devoted to instruction and instructional support such as the library. There is an opportunity cost associated with every dollar spent on administration and it may well be an equivalent expenditure on the most basic element of UWF’s mission, namely, classroom teaching. UWF should make every effort to hold the line on, or even reduce, its expenditures on activities that do not directly generate student learning and produce credit hours.**

VIII. BUDGET AND FINANCE

UWF is a well-managed institution, financially speaking. Its audit reports generally contain few substantive comments, it does not have excessive accounts receivable, it is not overloaded with debt, and it is relatively open in its financial dealings compared to other institutions. “*UWF has become an efficient, well-run institution in recent years,*” commented a higher education official.

This was not always the case. The advent of Interim Vice President for Administrative Affairs Bert Hartley was a sage move by President Cavanaugh. Vice President Hartley brought instant credibility with him because of his long and distinguished service at the University of South Florida. His large fund of experience and straightforward demeanor “*were just what the doctor ordered,*” according to another Florida public university president.

One concern with current budgetary practice and resource allocation has been the penchant of UWF to reallocate operational and support funds to support faculty salary increases. We endorse the reallocations that have occurred, but query whether this can continue. If UWF was “fat” prior to the reallocations, then it no longer is so. If it wasn’t fat, then many of its units must be gasping for breath as their operational budgets have been constrained or reduced. **(29) We applaud faculty and staff salary increases and congratulate President Cavanaugh for honoring a commitment he made in his inaugural address. Still, the process of reallocation cannot go much further without creating harm and we recommend that the institution move with caution in this arena in the future.**

Another concern with current financial and budgetary operations centers on the budget committee that President Cavanaugh has created to provide him with advice. The committee, which contains a diverse membership of individuals, has the power only to make recommendations concerning budgetary issues and priorities. Nevertheless, it is widely seen as actually making the decisions and the perception is that the President “*is reluctant to cross the committee*” (the view of an administrator). Incidents that were reported to us alleged that the

President returned issues to the committee for further consideration, only to have the committee refuse to change its views, followed by the President acquiescing to that decision.

We can neither vouch for the accuracy of the reports, nor for the interactions that occur between the committee and the President. We can observe, however, that the perception among many key individuals is that the budget committee has effective decision-making power. The problem is that this, if true, clearly separates authority from accountability (which falls upon the President, not the committee). Bad things generally result when those who make decisions are not accountable for those decisions. We could cite chapter and verse from other institutions where the absence of accountability on the part of decision makers has led to unwise and even irresponsible choices not in the best interest of their institutions. **Hence, (30) we recommend that President Cavanaugh not delay in clarifying his authority to make final budget decisions, to amend the recommendations of the budget committee as he sees fit, and to be the final judge of what financial and budgetary decisions are best for the University. Ultimately, he is the only individual who has the overall view and interests of the entire institution at heart and is the single individual who is accountable for the University's performance. Other individuals, when faced with tough budgetary choices, can decide to go on vacation or opt to stay home, but the President cannot and therefore he must visibly and unmistakably unite authority and accountability in matters financial.**

IX. FUND RAISING, ALUMNI AND PUBLICATIONS

Many AASCU institutions (largely the public comprehensive institutions across the country) historically gave sparse attention to fund raising and other external activities. In some cases, they did not view these things as major assistance to their overriding goal of providing excellent instruction. In other cases, they did not have the right people on board to accomplish quality fund raising even if they regarded it as important. Both general circumstances appear to have applied to UWF over the years. Institutional focus was upon teaching and upon increasing the institution's state general fund appropriation. Further, personnel often were not present who were capable of altering this situation.

The environment has changed. It now is recognized that state appropriations have not and will not pay the bill for the many things UWF realistically needs to do. President Cavanaugh, the Board and UWF in general now realize that extramural fund raising must be a very important part of the institution's future and that UWF cannot attain several of its goals without developing a highly productive development program. That understanding has led to a variety of changes, including the appointment of Vice President Van Galen and the addition of personnel to the development office. **(31) We note here, however, that it is typically considered axiomatic that all "public relations" activities should be associated with development thereby making a case for reassigning Marketing, Community Partnership and Government Relations to Vice President Van Galen, who might be retitled Vice President for Institutional Advancement. We recommend that this arrangement be considered.**

One of the first tasks was to modernize the University's development efforts. UWF now says it has "good" addresses on 90 percent of its alumni (though only a miserably low five percent contribute to its annual fund). Solicitation of alumni via a variety of means, including an annual telethon, has become institutionalized. Alumni activities have increased. *"I think it is fair to say they've done most of the right things,"* said a development professional at another institution, who nonetheless threw in a caveat---*"Only experience will demonstrate if they have*

the right people to attract major gifts, convince donors to put them in their wills, and persuade foundations to support UWF.”

The results thus far are comparatively modest. UWF typically raises only \$2 million to \$4 million annually and, as noted, alumni support has been low. Further, UWF now expends more than \$.20 in order to raise a dollar. A quality development operation will spend less than \$.10 to raise a dollar. *“The best is yet to come,”* enthused an administrator, who noted that UWF now is in the quiet phase of a capital campaign and that initial feedback has been excellent. We also note here that after the destruction of the hurricane alumni were not solicited (a thoughtful decision).

One problem UWF has is that its alumni often are torn by dual loyalties. Many transferred to UWF and thus have another institution, perhaps a community college, to which they also have loyalties. Others, especially those in the military, are highly mobile and do not have roots in the region. These factors militate against high alumni contribution rates. Further, UWF still is a young institution, only forty years old, and has not yet accumulated a large number of mature, successful wealthy alumni. Hence, *“it is difficult to raise money,”* commented a sympathetic faculty member, who said he had spent unproductive time attempting to do so.

Alumni programs have improved in recent years and viable alumni chapters now exist in several cities outside Florida. Alumni and other friends of the institution receive a magazine three times a year that tells the UWF story and some 17,000 alumni receive e-mails concerning the University. These are all positive steps, though the quality of the magazine is not yet as high as it needs to be. **(32) We recommend that UWF utilize an experienced external consultant to detail the purpose of its magazine (this does not seem to be clear) and improve its look and content.**

(33) One of the major points of visibility of any institution of higher education today is its web page. Knowledgeable professionals give UWF’s site no more than a C grade, saying it is not especially inviting and sometimes hard to traverse. We recommend that

UWF engage a professional, experienced consultant to improve the site. Apparently, this effort is now underway.

An external area where the University now receives high grades is its relationships with regional public officials, legislators and the media. President Cavanaugh deserves most of the credit for these improvements, although other individuals, particularly Executive Vice President White, have been involved as well. The tone has been set and effective steps taken to change the external perception of UWF. Media coverage now is largely favorable and community leaders and media professionals now regard the University as a consistently positive influence in the region. We were advised that it was not always this way. One cannot recreate a University's image out of whole cloth; there has to be substantial reality attached and that reality gradually has been generated at UWF. Nonetheless, friendly, open initiatives, the willingness to listen and change, and innovative outreach to community groups and the media can work wonders.

X. SENIOR OFFICERS

President John C. Cavanaugh

Dr. Cavanaugh receives very high grades indeed for his five years of sterling service as President of the University of West Florida. *“He has a realistic and very attractive vision for us,”* observed a staff member, while a faculty member asserted that *“John has provided us with goals to shoot for and has made us feel good about ourselves. We’re losing our inferiority complex.”*

President Cavanaugh is widely regarded as a friendly, humane leader who exhibits concern for everyone around him. While initially many faculty and staff did not understand why he was not present on campus more often, with some exceptions on the faculty, most now understand the need for him to project UWF externally. We note here that student leaders in particular replied that he was very *“accessible.”* They praise his commitment to Pensacola and the historic district and more than a few noted that he has chosen to live there.

“John has become very comfortable in his own skin,” commented an administrator, and *“knows how to get things accomplished,”* said a community leader. Another university president offered the view that, *“He really knows how to read situations and then to devise an action plan.”* Dr. Cavanaugh often thinks strategically.

It is commonly acknowledged that UWF’s enrollment *“might have tanked”* during the past few years except for Dr. Cavanaugh’s development of the Emerald Coast campus, his emphasis upon online instruction, and his superb response to Hurricane Ivan. The latter crisis *“really brought out the best in President Cavanaugh and knitted us all together,”* according to a faculty member.

Faculty leaders offer praise for Dr. Cavanaugh’s open approach to them and his willingness to involve them in critical decisions. *“He’s made shared governance a viable concept on this campus,”* said one.

Dr. Cavanaugh's supporters repeatedly cite his commitment to raising faculty salaries and (to the amazement of some) the fact that "*He's actually done what he said he would do.*" They also commonly reference his commitment to the City of Pensacola, the region and the military. More than a few praise him for improving the institution's previously parlous situation with the African-American community.

Overall, Dr. Cavanaugh has had a very successful five years as President. UWF is much better off because of his efforts. One senior administrator put it this way: "*I attribute nearly all of our gains over the past five years to John.*" When observers criticize him, it usually is because they regard him as indecisive, or as an individual who unnecessarily delays tough choices. Others believe he has too casually allocated decision-making power to groups such as faculty who ultimately are neither responsible nor accountable for their decisions (or lack thereof). "*Some of John's 'feel-good' ways of administering probably are going to catch up with him or the University in the future,*" predicted another President.

In this regard, one should bear in mind that, on its face, the Presidency of UWF is unusually difficult. Why? In addition to the questionable Florida laws regarding public higher education and the potentially problematic UWF Bylaws (see Chapter XII), the UWF Presidency is further compounded by an extraordinary egalitarian history. This makes for one of the most testing presidencies we have seen.

Regardless, President Cavanaugh's conspicuous success at UWF and his ability to inspire a wide variety of different campus constituencies cannot be ignored. His tenure has visibly improved the lot of UWF and nearly all elements within it. He is now a "hot" individual insofar as presidencies at other institutions are concerned and the Board of Trustees should thoughtfully consider this prospect. (See Recommendation 42 in Chapter XII.)

Provost Sandra Flake

Dr. Flake, who is a Professor of English, is an intelligent, hard-working academic leader who is unafraid to make difficult decisions. She is a strong advocate of Academic Affairs and has earned a reputation as being especially scrappy on behalf of academic programs when the allocation of funds is in question. An administrator labeled her “*courageous*,” while another observed “*She’s willing to make hard calls and then stick with them.*”

Several individuals praise her for helping the institution recruit a first-class group of new faculty at market salaries. “*That will be an important legacy of hers*,” said an admiring faculty member who also gave the Provost credit for increasing standards in many areas, including promotion and tenure.

In general, newer faculty members are more supportive of Dr. Flake than those who have been at UWF for longer periods of time. The latter group contains individuals who variously feel ignored, or somewhat threatened by new developments. Dr. Flake appears to have more supporters in areas such as business and the sciences than in the humanities.

Some faculty believe Dr. Flake should be less tolerant of deans who make poor decisions, or who have objectionable personal styles. “*If a dean simply isn’t effective, she should get rid of him/her*,” argued another faculty member.

One of the Provost’s strong suits according to several observers is her willingness and ability to recruit, hire and promote minority faculty and administrators. They praise her for appointments that “*have changed the face of an otherwise white, male establishment.*”

Provost Flake is not a “*warm and fuzzy person*,” observed a critical faculty member. A representative faculty member utilized a medical metaphor to criticize her: “*She has a chilly bedside manner.*” “*She’s not a very good listener*,” charged several faculty members. Her approach sometimes has resulted in adversarial relationships with other individuals, including some senior administrators. “*She’s not always a team player*,” observed another vice president. Nevertheless, when funding is not in question, Dr. Flake often is viewed as an individual who is

cooperative and is willing to share credit. In net terms, her contribution to the institution is clearly positive.

Executive Vice President Hal White

“Hal White is the President’s go-to guy,” suggested a senior faculty member. *“We’re not exactly sure what he does,”* opined another, but *“It’s clear he speaks for the President and has President Cavanaugh’s confidence.”* The lack of campus clarity about Vice President White’s responsibilities has led to his being labeled *“the stealth vice president”* and on occasion has fed the fire stoked by those who allege that administrative bloat exists on the UWF campus.

Mr. White is energetic, articulate and devoted to UWF. His experience at other institutions and his legal background have proven to be very useful to the University. The areas under his aegis, in spite of the uncertain reporting arrangement, appear to perform effectively. He is regarded as *“influential”* outside of the institution and knows his way around Tallahassee. *“He brings lots to the table,”* complimented another vice president.

A few critics of Vice President White regard him as an individual who *“always has a lot of agendas and too often some of them are hidden.”* *“We don’t always know what he’s up to,”* said another. These views aside, Mr. White has been an important and valuable contributor to UWF. **(34) We suggest that a lot of this uncertainty could be cleared up by changing the University organization chart.**

Vice President for Student Affairs Debbie Ford

Dr. Ford receives strong, positive reviews from nearly all quarters. Descriptives such as *“friendly,” “energetic,” “respected,” “forward thinking”* and *“collaborative”* are frequently used to portray her. There is little argument over the notion that Vice President Ford has simultaneously reenergized Student Affairs and attached it more firmly to the remainder of the University. *“Student Affairs has gained new respectability because of Debbie,”* complimented a senior faculty member.

While an occasional observer says “*Dr. Ford can lose her temper,*” nearly all regard her as a good listener, someone they can work with, and a skillful advocate for her positions. She earns many compliments for “*her sharp intellect*” and her “*excellent communications skills.*” “*She’ll be a president in a few years,*” predicted an administrator.

Vice President for Development Dean Van Galen

Dr. Van Galen is a Ph.D. chemist, an unusual background for a development professional. Nevertheless, he generally receives very high marks from those connected to UWF’s fund raising and University Relations activities. More than a few observers asserted that, “*He’s turned that place around,*” and that “*He’s easy to get along with even while he’s pushing us ahead.*”

Vice President Van Galen clearly is intelligent and is regarded as a thoughtful, wise individual who listens before he leaps. He receives many kudos for his devotion to UWF and to improving its fund raising and external image. Those who have observed him say he relates very well to donors.

What has not yet been demonstrated, some say, is his actual ability to raise funds. “*Can he really court and convince big donors?*” queried an external observer, who noted that UWF’s fund raising activities continue to be rather expensive when compared to funds raised. Others would like to see him spend a bit more time on the institution’s publications, web site, alumni and other external activities, which they regard as no better than average, but believe are related to fund raising. Thus, Dr. Galen has a full plate in front of him and several people noted that “*He did not inherit a great situation.*” He deserves a full opportunity to succeed.

Vice President for Administrative Affairs Bert Hartley

Vice President Hartley is serving in an interim status though many would like to see him remain for a much longer period of time at UWF. “*He’s given them instant credibility,*”

commented a state higher education official. Early on in his service at UWF, faculty and administrators realized that Mr. Hartley brought the institution a tremendous wealth of experience and not a little wisdom.

Several individuals commented favorably on his “*candor,*” “*sometimes dry humor,*” and one labeled him “*the resident financial curmudgeon we really needed.*” The general consensus is that the longer he stays at UWF, the better off will be the institution.

XI. STRATEGIC PLANNING

The current, abbreviated version of UWF's Strategic Plan appears in the University's 2005 Quality Enhancement Program (QEP) submitted to the Southern Association of Schools and Colleges (SACS). The University now is in the process of revising that Plan and has outlined an extensive approach by which it intends to do so. To the extent that UWF follows the proposed approach, it will do several things that many other institutions fail to do, namely, clearly indicate who is responsible for implementing recommended actions and assigning realistic costs. The bottom line is that UWF's planning process appears to be more firmly grounded than most.

(35) Our concerns with the planning process are several. First, President Cavanaugh must lead the process and provide visible constraints and goals within which the process must function. UWF must avoid assembling unrealistic wish lists and it must ensure that those made responsible for actions connected to the Plan actually have the authority to take necessary actions. Second, it must be recognized that a good Plan does not function as a rigid recipe that never can be contravened or changed. Indeed, most strategic plans are at least partially out of date as soon as they are printed because the world they address changes so rapidly.

One of the major virtues of strategic planning is the conversation and discovery that accompanies the planning process. When all of the major constituencies of an institution are in the same room and have the opportunity to investigate and discuss the institution's environment and options, the understanding and sense of team that result can be highly beneficial. Campus and community constituents, even those who ordinarily are naysayers, emerge with an enhanced comprehension of available options and what is possible. Thus, when tough times come, or unavoidable choices arise, there is a greater sense of unity, understanding and joint destiny. Strategic planning, then, can be a superb way for an institution to communicate, internally and externally, and thereby promote common purpose.

The current skeleton Strategic Plan of UWF is admirable for its brevity, but does not enunciate the University's preferred future directions in any detail. Nor does it sufficiently explore the future environment in which UWF will operate. Presumably detail will be supplied and consensus achieved during this academic year.

XII. GOVERNANCE

Internal Governance

As is true at nearly every institution that has collective bargaining for faculty, the faculty union tends to focus on compensation and working conditions, while the Faculty Senate's aegis is nearly everything else, but especially academic programs and standards. The UWF Faculty Senate's membership consists of about two-dozen faculty plus five ex-officio, non-voting members including the President and the Provost. Approximately a dozen committees exist and they cover the usual academic areas plus budget.

The Senate's reputation is mixed. One senior and respected faculty member asserted to us that, "*No really good faculty member would ever become a member of this Senate,*" while others argued the Senate's membership contains some of the institution's best people. Current relations between the administration and the Senate appear to be satisfactory, though some faculty believe the Senate has tended to be too adversarial, while others believe it has been too reticent.

(36) Most unusual is the custom of the Senate in effect to dismiss the President and other ex-officio members from a meeting after they have given their reports. While we do not believe that administrators should be voting members of a faculty senate, communication and mutual respect between administrators and faculty are encouraged when administrators are not excluded from a meeting. We recommend this practice come to an end. If the President and the Provost are indeed members of the body, then they should be present (if they wish) during all of its deliberations.

A brief segue to the Staff Senate is merited. **(37) The Staff Senate is a comparatively new development at UWF and both its role and effectiveness are yet to be determined. To the extent that the Staff Senate promotes communication and understanding, it will be a useful device. However, if it becomes a vehicle for conflict and adversarial relationships,**

then President Cavanaugh should not hesitate to change its form or even abolish it in favor of an alternative.

Board of Trustees

UWF Board members are distinguished persons who voice strong commitments to the mission of the University. Virtually all are accomplished and most are seriously engaged in other nonprofit organizations; others regard them with appreciation and respect. They appear to clearly understand the difference between policy and management and conduct themselves accordingly.

However, the University Bylaws and Board Development Plans are in some places at odds with both historic canons of American universities and enlightened corporate management practices. However, according to our interviews, the behavior of Board members, including the Board Chair, does not reflect these exceptions.

(38) Nonetheless, we emphasize that the constitutional premises of any effective organization should clearly define the role of all invested parties for a university; this includes the board, president, faculty, staff, students and alumni, for it is from this foundation that all policies, practices and behavior should flow.

The Role of the Board

The key to an effective presidency in any corporate setting is position legitimacy; in universities this is by far the most important condition a board can grant to a president. In effect, a governing board must insure that the president is empowered; only then can the president empower others and not be pressed toward ultimately nonproductive and self-defeating behavior. After appointing a president, the primary role of a board is to review, audit, inspire and evaluate the performance of the institution and especially its CEO (as UWF is presently doing). No board should be directly involved in the management of the institution. To do so is to ensure an ineffectual president or a brief presidential tenure, for in such a condition the accountable president is effectively neutered and replaced by an unaccountable collective (faculty, staff

and/or students). Today, in many institutions, including Florida, because of politics, micro-management, a deeply entrenched status quo and unaccountable authority, it is impossible for most boards to honestly hold their presidents accountable.

No board or board chair has ever effectively led or managed a university for long; nor has any faculty council or senate. Too many otherwise informed board members forget this classic truth; few would think of running their own affairs this way. Individual accountability must maintain throughout the organization, starting with the president who should be completely empowered by the board; in turn the president can employ any style that gets the job done, subject to the close, enlightened and regular evaluation by the board.

The president who does not empower others, will ultimately fail the test of evaluation by the board for those affected by decisions should have a voice in their making, but the president as the ultimately accountable officer should be the final authority. This especially applies to faculty. With few, if any, exceptions (informational and some social functions), a board should not engage in formal relationships with others in the university community. The president is the board's; everyone else is the president's, and a wise and enlightened board will ritualize this relationship in its **operating by-laws**. These conditions apply to businesses, companies, and non-profit organizations including government and military organizations, and certainly to **colleges and universities**. It should again be noted that, these things done, the fully empowered president may now be fairly and completely evaluated by the board and either celebrated or exposed in that process. *UWF has work to do in this area.*

There are two primary documents that are generally accepted as standards against which the condition and conduct of a university are measured: *The AAUP 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure* and *The AAUP 1966 Joint Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities*. Faculty, administration and governing boards consider these documents as fundamental roots for university governance. When applied to university governance, both documents are essentially consistent with enlightened management and effective leadership. As discussed below, in this regard, the Bylaws at UWF are wanting.

The 1940 Statement on Academic Freedom and Tenure

The 1940 Statement was enacted after a series of joint conferences that began in 1934 between representatives of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) and the Association of American Colleges (AAC). Later, *The Statement* was officially endorsed by more than 100 professional organizations. Briefly, academic freedom means freedom in teaching and scholarship and is considered a fundamental declaration for the protection of the scholar/teacher and student. Under academic freedom, the teacher is entitled to full freedom in scholarship and publication of results, subject to the adequate performance of other academic duties. However, research for monetary return and external consulting for supplemental compensation should be based on an understanding with the institution's authorities.

However, the *1940 Statement* also adjures faculty to avoid introducing extraneous material into their classrooms and to exercise appropriate restraint in their professional utterances and their relationships with their colleagues. Further, faculty should make it clear that they are not speaking for their institution when they exercise their First Amendment rights off campus. These clauses often are ignored by faculty and others in favor of an interpretation of the *1940 Statement* that implies that it licenses unlimited and unrestrained expression by faculty in any arena. Not so. However, at UWF, by this review, faculty members are granted academic freedom and have generally conducted themselves responsibly in their classrooms, their relationships with colleagues, and with the general public. This is impressive.

The 1966 Joint Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities

This *Statement* was directed primarily to governing board members and presidents under an assumption of "*shared responsibility and cooperative action*" among the components of an institution. Generally, board members do not know it, nor do many faculty members. It is the academic underpinning for the widely held notion of "*shared governance*" in American higher education. Board members, presidents, administrators and faculty should know and take *The Statement* seriously, but it is subject to considerably broader interpretations than *The 1940 Statement on Academic Freedom*

It is important to note that although *The Statement* is promulgated as the joint statement of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), the American Council on Education (ACE), and the Association of Governing Boards (AGB), ACE and AGB did not endorse *The Statement*. (UWF is a member of ACE and AGB.) Rather it was stated that they "*recognized The Statement as a significant step forward in the clarification of the respective jobs of governing boards, faculties, and administrations*" and "*commend it to institutions and governing boards.*" *The Statement*, in any case, is not intended to serve as an exact blueprint.

The Statement speaks of the president's special obligation "*to innovate and initiate....,*" to "*envision new horizons....,*" and "*at times, **with or without support**, infuse new life....*" While *The Statement* emphasizes the role of the faculty, in several places it clearly states that the faculty "*recommends*" to the president who then acts, or, in turn, "*recommends*" to the governing board. It speaks to the "*initiating capacity and decision-making participation*" of all institutional parties, and of differences in "*weight*" of each voice determined by the responsibility of each party for the particular matter under consideration. Here, there are questions at UWF regarding the extent to which presidential legitimacy is eroded thereby inhibiting presidential leadership. Valid points are also made about the generally debilitating nature of unilateral action on the part of presidents and the importance of standard procedures for areas of responsibility, authority, and continuing review.

It states that the faculty's primary area of responsibility should be to determine the curriculum "*after an educational goal has been established,*" but even here, it points out, final institutional authority goes to the president and the governing board. Rarely, however, would a president or a governing board make any academic judgment against faculty recommendation, but under certain conditions, there have been exceptions. Typically, however, the president (not the governing board) would ask the faculty to reconsider the matter.

The Statement also recommends that faculty and, to a lesser degree, students be involved in long-range planning; decisions regarding existing or prospective physical resources; budgeting, including faculty salaries; the appointment of a president; and the appointment of chief academic officers. Note that *The Statement* says nothing about the evaluation of presidents or other institutional officers.

The Statement also assumes that the faculty, along with the board "*delegates authority*" to the president. Here we take **exception** to *The Statement* for the faculty is neither the originating nor the legal authority; *the board has all and grants all authority*. To grant authority without accountability is a recipe for turmoil. The only way a faculty can delegate authority to a president is in unfortunate instances where governing boards have granted the faculty the power to do so. And in such cases, the president is caught in an unbridgeable dichotomy and substantive change is virtually impossible.

The faculty should play a major role in setting requirements for degrees and determining when requirements have been met. And faculty members should have an important voice in the curriculum, methods of instruction, research, faculty status, and those aspects of student life that relate to the academic process. But the strongest language used in *The Statement* in this regard is:

*"On these matters, the power of review or final decision lodged in the governing board or delegated by it to the president should be exercised adversely only in exceptional circumstances, and for reasons communicated to the faculty. It is desirable that the faculty should, following such communication, have opportunity for further consideration and further transmittal of its views to the president **or** board."subject to "**the time element.**"*

The Statement **does not** call for direct formal contact between the faculty and the governing board. In this case, the current UWF Bylaws are in direct contradiction. Rather it calls for faculty (and student) recommendations to the president, who may or may not endorse their positions to the board. It calls for the president to convey "*faculty views, including dissenting views*" to the board and asks the president to inform the faculty and students of the board position.

Unfortunately, some governing boards, particularly in the public sector (i.e. Florida), (as well as some presidents) have misunderstood *The Statement's* call for faculty participation in decision making as a plea for close association between all decision making parties. A board does no service by being directly involved in "good" relationships with faculty; rather, a board

should be concerned that “good and effective” relationships are established by the **accountable** president.

A separate problem is associated with the membership and participation of faculty, staff, or students on the board's committees or the board itself as is the case at UWF. It too is often a recipe for grief and failure. There are three major reasons why faculty, staff, or students **should not** be members of the board or board committees. First, as noted above, this practice enables individual campus constituents to go around the president and deal directly with board members. Only the president, or the president’s authorized representatives, should deal directly with the members of the board, and only the president should represent the *entire* university to the board.

Note that not including faculty, students, and staff on committees of a board does not mean that these individuals should never talk with board members. *Rather it means that when they do so, it should be a privilege extended by the president, and not considered to be a right.* And there is a dramatic difference. Thus when an academic affairs committee is considering the subject of a new degree program or summer salaries, the president or a presidential delegate would typically invite elected and other faculty representatives to speak to the committee and present their views. But this should be an invitation extended by the president, or his/her agent, and a privilege extended, not a right. This will diminish disruptive and counterproductive behavior and contribute positively to the image of the president as the legitimate leader.

The board should, by means of a policy it adopts, charge the president with keeping the board informed about developments on the campus (There should be written presidential reports prepared for every board meeting.) and charge the president to provide the board with opportunities to interact with faculty, students, and staff, both in committee meetings (where they should not sit at the table with committee members, but be called upon as appropriate) and at lunches, lectures, tours, concerts, seminars and other events.

The second reason why faculty, students, and staff should not be members of a board's committees proceeds directly from leadership theory and empirical evidence. Those who exercise authority should also be held accountable. Faculty, staff, and students cannot be held accountable for anything related to the overall operation of a university except as individuals. Collectives cannot be held accountable. Only the board, and specifically the president, can

ultimately be held accountable for the operation of a university. Authority must be joined with accountability, and faculty, student, and staff membership on the board or board committees violates this fundamental rule.

The third reason why faculty, students, and staff should not be members of a board's committees is that there exists a conflict of interest. Individuals consistently vote on issues which directly affect their own circumstance and welfare. This is inappropriate. Note once again, however, that excluding faculty, students, and staff from a board's committees does not mean that they should be ignored. Far from it. Instead, they should be called upon by the president (or his/her designees) for their views as appropriate. This is all that is called for by both the traditions of university governance and the empirical research on effective management and leadership. While at UWF such membership is mandated by statute, we feel it important to note that the practice is an aberration at most colleges and universities. Finally, we must note that the presence of faculty and student membership on the Board at UWF has not been contentious; rather, in far greater measure, it has been constructive. **(39) The apparent contradiction noted, if faculty and student membership on governing boards is considered valuable, the state of Florida should consider appointing faculty and students from universities, preferably private universities, who can bring more dispassionate view points to the table.**

University of West Florida

As for the UWF Bylaws, excepting the areas discussed above, they are generally sound in the areas of Membership, Powers and Meetings. **(40) Under Board Committees discussed in Article III, consideration should be given to adding an advancement committee whose primary concern would be external support.**

Although presidential assessment and compensation is mentioned as a responsibility of the Executive Committee (Article III), it would be better if the responsibility were more pointedly defined and included in the Bylaws. **(41) The following is suggested:**

Presidential Evaluation and Compensation

- 1. The President shall be evaluated, in executive session, at the annual meeting of the Board, according to written objectives, specific and general, developed by the**

President, discussed with the Board Chair and presented to the Board before the outset of each academic year. The President shall report on these goals at each meeting of the Board.

2. The President shall be formally evaluated by the Board at least every four years or at any other time deemed desirable by the Board. The evaluation shall be conducted by an outside evaluator who will be appointed by the Board with approval of the President.

3. The Executive Committee shall serve as the President's Compensation Committee and based on the annual evaluation, meet in executive session to review the President's compensation package.

The adoption of the above would more nearly guarantee the effective conduct of the University in perpetuity.

We feel compelled to note that Florida Sunshine Laws make it more difficult to conduct university business and to attract first-rate presidential candidates. Indeed, the Florida presidential search process has been described as a “search and destroy process.” UWF is lucky to have President Cavanaugh. **(42) In this regard, we noted above that President Cavanaugh is an increasingly attractive presidential prospect. This in mind, the Board should thoughtfully review and reconsider his present contract.**

Finally, some comments about the Board Development materials:

(43) Increasingly, there are questions about the validity of the 360 evaluation process which is being considered by the Board. We suggest a careful review.

(44) The Board agenda implicitly undermines presidential legitimacy and authority, i.e., the “Vice President for Student Affairs will select a student to be recognized”... “the Provost will select a faculty member to be recognized”... “the Cabinet will help the President to select staff to be recognized” et al. While all of these activities are worthy there should be no formal association of presidential administrators with the Board except through presidential assignment. To do otherwise is to imply the “two masters” theory and to invite potential conflict.

(45) The Board agenda calls for vice presidents to make committee reports. While vice presidents and other staff should be assigned by the President to staff Board committees, reports should be made by the committee chairs. If possible in Florida, we also suggest at the conclusion of every Board meeting there should be an exclusive meeting of the Board and the President absent all other staff. This sends a powerful message.

(46) The Board invitation for University employees to contact trustees directly is also troubling. Universities are communities of healthy dissent but for the God figures (the board) to invite direct contact is questionable.

(47) Finally, the Board Development Plan calls for a Board member to serve as a liaison to the University Planning Council. This also implicitly undermines presidential legitimacy and the ability of the Board to fairly evaluate the performance of the President.

(48) We recommend that the Board appoint an ad hoc committee to consider the governance recommendations suggested in this Review. Other recommendations fall primarily under the province of the accountable President.

APPENDIX A

James L. Fisher

Brief Biography

James L. Fisher has been a consultant to more than 300 colleges and universities and is the most published writer on leadership and organization in higher education today. He has written scores of professional articles and has also been published in such popular media as *The New York Times*, *The Washington Times*, and *The Baltimore Sun*. The author or editor of ten books, his book, *The Board and the President*, "clearly established him as the nation's leading authority on the college presidency," wrote Michael Worth of George Washington University reviewing in *Currents*. His *The Power of the Presidency* was reviewed in *Change* magazine as "... the most important book ever written on the college presidency" and was nominated for the non-fiction Pulitzer Prize. His book, *Presidential Leadership: Making a Difference*, has been reviewed as "...a major, impressive, immensely instructive book, ...a virtual Dr. Spock for aspiring or new college presidents, and ...a must read for all trustees." *The Entrepreneurial College President* (2004) is "...to be commended..." "...a Bible for those who are presidents..." "...or engaged in research..." *The Journal of Higher Education* and Interactive Reviews. His recent book, *Positive Power*, is quickly gaining popularity throughout the United States and internationally:

AThe modern Machiavelli...from Aegon to Zenix...persuasive and to the point,@
Baltimore Sun.

AThere is definitely something happening with this book. We are out of stock already,@
National Book Network

He is presently writing two books, *The Entrepreneurial Personality in Corporate America* and *The Effective Board Chair*, which should be published in 2006.

A registered psychologist with a Ph.D. from Northwestern University, he is President Emeritus of the Council for Advancement & Support of Education (CASE) and President Emeritus of Towson University. He has taught at Northwestern, Illinois State, Johns Hopkins, Harvard, and the University of Georgia. He coined the term institutional review and has conducted hundreds of institutional and governance reviews for public and private institutions and systems. He also conducts board orientations and retreats and consults on presidential searches, evaluations and contracts.

Dr. Fisher has been a trustee at ten private colleges and universities and two preparatory schools. A former Marine, he presently serves as a board member of Millikin University, Florida Institute of Technology, Marine Corps University and the Marine Military Academy. He has received awards for teaching, writing, citizenship and leadership and has been awarded eleven honorary degrees. At Illinois State, The Outstanding Thesis Award was named by the faculty, The James L. Fisher Thesis Award. The faculty at Towson University recommended that the new psychology building be named after Dr. Fisher, and the CASE Distinguished Service to Education Award bears his name.

While president at Towson, *The Baltimore Sun* wrote that he was a "master educational politician....under his leadership, enrollment doubled, quality went up and costs went down." In Washington, *Newsweek* magazine reported that, while President at CASE, his national campaign, The Action Committee for Higher Education (ACHE) resulted in "more than \$1 billion in student financial aid." CASE also created and orchestrated the "America's Energy is Mindpower" campaign, "Higher Education Week" and "The Professor of the Year" awards. For several years, he did a popular daily radio commentary on WBAL in Baltimore and has been an occasional OP/ED feature writer for *The Baltimore Sun*. Through the years, Dr. Fisher has been encouraged by leaders in both parties to run for Governor or Senate.

James V. Koch

Brief Biography

James V. Koch is Board of Visitors Professor of Economics and President Emeritus at Old Dominion University, Norfolk, VA. Dr. Koch served as President of Old Dominion from 1990-2001. Prior to that, he was President of the University of Montana, 1986-1990. An Exxon Foundation study of American college presidents selected him as one of the 100 most effective college presidents in the United States. During his tenure at Old Dominion, the University recorded its first Rhodes Scholar, developed the largest televised, interactive distance learning system in the United States, and initiated more than \$300 million in new construction.

Dr. Koch is an economist who has published nine books and 90 refereed journal articles in the field. His *Industrial Organization and Prices* was the leading text in this specialty for several years. The focus of his current research is the economics of e-commerce. He has taught at institutions ranging from Illinois State University to Brown University, the University of Hawaii, and the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology. His *Presidential Leadership: Making a Difference*, co-authored with James L. Fisher, is regarded as the definitive work concerning college presidents and their boards. He has been individually or collectively involved in the assessment of more than 30 presidents and institutions of higher education.

Dr. Koch earned a B.A. degree from Illinois State University and his Ph.D. degree in Economics from Northwestern University. He has received three honorary doctoral degrees from universities in Japan and Korea and has received a host of honors from organizations such as the Urban League, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and several regional economic development agencies.

APPENDIX B
UNIVERSITY OF WEST FLORIDA
REVIEW INTERVIEW FORM

Name

Title

Date

The Board has asked us to review the condition of the University of West Florida. Please respond in terms of your impression of the following. Your answers will be kept in confidence.

1. GENERAL CONDITION OF THE UNIVERSITY (STRENGTHS, LIMITATIONS)

2. ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

3. TECHNOLOGY

4. FACULTY (QUALITY, MORALE, WORKLOAD, COMPENSATION, ET AL)

5. STUDENTS (FACULTY ADVISING, STUDENT SERVICES, CREDENTIALS, MORALE, AWARENESS, RACIAL, FINANCIAL AID, ET AL)

6. ADMINISTRATION

7. SENIOR OFFICERS (VICE PRESIDENTS, COMPENSATION, GENERIC COMPARISONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS)

8. BUDGET AND FINANCE

9. FUND-RAISING AND DEVELOPMENT

10. PUBLIC AND GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

11. ALUMNI AFFAIRS

12. CAMPUS GOVERNANCE

13. BOARD OF TRUSTEES

14. COMPARATIVE CONDITION OF THE UNIVERSITY, DOCUMENTATION IF ANY

15. PRESIDENTIAL EFFECTIVENESS

16. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND OBSERVATIONS

JLF 2006