



Conclusion

During difficult times for higher education in the last decade, Doane College has maintained its financial viability while continuing to expand and improve its programs and services for both traditional and nontraditional students. Doane has consistently maintained a balanced budget, yet also developed the resources to invest in improvements by constructing the new George and Sally Haddix Recreation and Athletic Center, the Chab Weyers Education and Hixson Lied Art Building, and renovating the living and learning spaces in our residence halls in Crete and also buying and renovating the Fred D. Brown Center in Lincoln. Doane has raised the level of academic challenge, established the Liberal Arts Seminars for first year students, and expanded opportunities for undergraduate research on the Crete campus, expanded our programs in Grand Island and added new programs such as the RN to BSN and the Education Specialist degrees. Enrollments at all of Doane's campuses are strong. Strides have been taken in expanding development programs for both faculty and staff, including the creation of the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning and the Doane Leadership Quotient program. The college has established effective means of communication with local community leaders and with our alumni.

Our self-study efforts combined with a year-long discussion on our identity and revised mission have yielded a number of insights. As we summarized in the introduction several themes emerged including:

1. Doane College has a clear commitment to the importance and role of the liberal arts in all our academic programs and the development of leadership capabilities on all our campuses and throughout our programs for students, staff and faculty.
2. The college's learning programs are placing a growing emphasis on the application of knowledge to produce students who are both skilled practitioners in their professions and engaged citizens in the world they will face after graduation.
3. The college has a broad understanding of the Doane way of education, centered on a close relationship and interaction between students and faculty that runs through all its programs.
4. The college is committed to fiscal policies that allow us to improve our educational environment and yet protect the resources for the future.
5. The college is determined to continue to raise the level of academic challenge and thus of student responsibility for learning that began in the strategic plan in 2006. Closely connected to this goal is the commitment to enhance resources and time for faculty development and scholarship.
6. The college will continue to enhance communication and a broad sense of shared mission across all three campuses.
7. The college will work to develop faculty, staff and student populations more broadly reflective of the Nebraska population and the nation at large, and to educate our students on the meaning of inclusive concepts of community.
8. The college community will work with our new President, Dr. Jacque Carter, to create a rolling five-year strategic planning that permits us to respond to the challenges and opportunities presented in this report.

More specific lists of strengths and challenges are summarized at the end of each criterion chapter. Overall, Doane is committed to using the self-study as the foundation of a renewed strategic planning process during 2011/12. Doane, more than many small institutions, is in a position to discuss innovation to prepare for the higher education of the 21st Century. But we also realize the challenge of finding the balance between our hopes for encouraging faculty scholarship and curricular innovation and finding the additional financial resources to support that innovation. Doane has choices to make on our future goals for the size and structure of the institution, the relation of undergraduate and graduate programs, and the best means for delivery of programs in the ever-changing social and technological landscape 10 years or 20 years from now. We look to ground ourselves in solid partnerships with our host communities in Crete, Lincoln and Grand Island but also to prepare students for participation in the larger global community. With excellent traditional liberal arts and sciences programs in Crete and nontraditional programs in Lincoln and Grand Island, we have the opportunity to experiment with new models of education that draw from the strengths of each to forge a unique experience for all our students. In doing so, we will continue to explore ways to enhance the impact of international education, the uses of technology to support learning, and the role that the college can play in helping to develop the economic and environmental sustainability of the state and the region. We truly look forward to the challenges of continuing to forge a creative, collaborative and inclusive community that prepares our students for lives rooted in intellectual inquiry, ethical values and a commitment to engage as leaders and responsible citizens in the world.