Academic Affairs Annual Report, 2012-2013

Sara Varhus, Vice President for Academic Affairs

This is a statement of our progress on the goals set for the Academic Affairs division in 2012-2013, as well as a description of some of the additional accomplishments of the faculty and staff in Academic Affairs. This report is also a selective summary that cannot reflect the full wealth of activities of the faculty, staff and students this past year. So I will begin with thanks to all of the colleagues and students who together make Nazareth an engaged and productive community.

While 2012-2013 presented challenges, we made progress in several fundamental areas. We are refining and communicating the signature elements of the Nazareth experience (for both graduate and undergraduate students) through the 2020 process, the implementation of the core curriculum, and creating the nexus of experiential learning, assessment, and career preparation. Strategic Planning, the SAAP and APRC processes, and academic and administrative assessment have promoted an open discussion of our priorities and how resources can support them. Our awareness of challenges in the external environment has fostered an orientation among faculty and staff that is on the one hand pragmatic, and on the other, creative and innovative.

2012-2013 Academic Affairs Goals

1. Articulate a strategic plan in Academic Affairs, building on the Nazareth 2020 Strategic Plan.

The Academic Affairs Implementation Plan for Naz 2020 will constitute the strategic plan for Academic Affairs. It is in nearly final form and will be presented to the faculty for final comment in the fall; it will then be submitted to the president, with detailed implementation plans, no later than November 15. Administrative and academic departments have been asked to develop plans consistent with Naz 2020. The preamble to the Academic Affairs plan states that we “will prepare all students for life and work; we will support the success of a diversity of students; and we will be known as a community of teacher- and student-scholars who engage with questions, problems and opportunities in local and global communities.” In brief, the initiatives in the plan will prepare our students, both undergraduate and graduate, for life and work. In the current draft, key strategies include: articulating learning outcomes that address preparation for life and work for all undergraduate majors; continuing the implementation of the core curriculum and increasing student participation in research, service learning, study abroad, and internships; using assessment data to communicate the value of a Nazareth degree; enrolling and supporting the needs of a diverse student population; sustaining enrollments through academic program development, hybrid and online program delivery, and strong retention; and increasing our efficiency and reducing costs via creative uses of technology and ongoing assessment of our use of resources. We will continue to provide a student centered graduate and undergraduate education, and in so doing serve as a significant resource in the communities of which we are a part.

These themes and strategies have emerged through a three-year consultative process within Academic Affairs:

- April 2010: Academic Affairs 2020 Subcommittee received charge
- May 2010-April 2011: Academic Affairs Subcommittee prepared goal statements for the Strategic Plan
- August 2010: Participants in Appreciative Inquiry Summit explored the signature experiences of a Nazareth education
- January 2011: Assembly Day participants “test” draft strategic propositions; January 2012: Draft Naz 2020 focus of Faculty and Staff Assembly
- April 2012: Trustees endorse Naz 2020
- Fall 2012: Deans and Directors forward unit strategies for AA plan
- November 2012: Dean’s Council, Council of Chairs, and Directors provide input on all proposed strategies
- September 2013: Faculty provide will final input
- November 15, 2013: Academic Affairs 2020 Implementation Plan will submitted to President

2. Conduct administrative assessment in Academic Affairs using the Excellence in Higher Education (EHE) process. (August 2012)

Although we did not complete the EHE assessment this year, we made progress. When the VPAA, Associate VPAA, Assistant VPAA, Directors, and Chairs embarked on the assessment of Academic Affairs in August 2012, it became clear that the scope of Academic Affairs as an administrative organization was not well understood. This may have stemmed from the relatively recent reorganization into schools, and from the changing roles of department chairs with respect to planning and assessment. Consequently, in 2012-2013, the assessment project addressed several areas for improvement, in preparation for completion of the EHE process. These included developing a mission statement for Academic Affairs, and redrafting of the position description for department chairs. In 2013-2014, individual groups and units within academic affairs will complete EHE, preparatory for a division-level assessment in summer 2014.

3. Continue to develop articulations with area and international colleges, including community colleges.

A second Naz/MCC “summit” was held at MCC in July, focusing on improved articulation in the following programs—CSD, OT, PT, NURSING, Philosophy, Art Studio, and Art Ed—as well as improved support for students in 2+2 programs. We have seen increased applications and deposits for Fall 2013 transfer students in several of these areas. This year, Academic Advisement focused on rewriting articulation agreements with MCC and FLCC and will complete this process in fall 2013.

We are currently writing articulation agreements with four universities in China, the PT Department is exploring a partnership with a university in Kerala, India, and in process is a proposal for a collaborative African Studies minor with Dakar University, Senegal, using online instruction. We have finalized an articulation agreement with the New York Chiropractic College and a cooperation agreement with Unity Health, and HHS is also exploring partnerships with RIT, U of R, and the Highlands of Pittsford. We are offering Nazareth courses in the Honeoye and McQuaid high schools, and we are in process with the same in the Aquinas and Spencerport high schools.

The Transfer Advocacy Group (TAG), made up of faculty and staff from Enrollment Management, Academic Affairs and Student Development reviewed existing data and recommendations, compiled details about new transfer initiatives, and gathered best transfer practices from other institutions. With progress made on several transfer initiatives in the members’ respective departments, TAG also focused on prioritizing additional recommendations and best practices to guide the committee’s future work of promoting an optimal transfer experience.
4. Identify future program directions and resource priorities, completing the SAAP process and refining the methodology for ongoing strategic analysis.

The SAAP Committee, which was charged with preparing “a comparative summary of individual programs’ strategic value, as defined by a set of agreed upon qualitative and quantitative criteria,” completed its report after a year of active deliberation about the methodology of the survey and the analysis of survey results. Led by a representative committee, the process was structured around eight criteria and grounded in standard data. It adopted formal processes to ensure the objectivity of the analysis, and it provided opportunities for participating departments and programs to respond to and correct information.

The magnitude of the work carried out by the SAAP Committee and the chairs and directors who participated in the survey was huge and not fully appreciated. While it is recognized that some of the resulting comparative ratings were not valid for various reasons, and significant criteria were omitted or “under rated,” most of the scores presented a valid comparison of academic programs with respect to strategic criteria. In addition, there is now a greater understanding of the use of data in decision making, and the ensuring discussions of analytic criteria have led to a broad consideration of what we value as an institution. A subcommittee of the SAAP committee is currently preparing a revised template to be used in the ongoing strategic assessment of academic programs. I thank the faculty and staff on the SAAP committee for conducting a careful, objective, and considerate process.

5. Review the faculty evaluation process as described in the Faculty Manual and make revisions as necessary to improve clarity and transparency.

The Faculty Manual establishes a strong faculty evaluation process, providing for pre- and post-tenure reviews, and both formative and summative evaluations. As part of the FEC-led process of updating and revising the Faculty Manual, the role of the deans in appointment and evaluation has been specified, and the Council of Chairs has clarified that the documentation for faculty being considered for renewal, tenure, and promotion should be made available to departmental faculty involved in making recommendations.

Both the Council of Chairs and the Council of Deans have discussed and affirmed the critical importance of chairs’ evaluations of faculty with respect to our continuing ability to achieve the distinctive mission and goals of the college. This year, to facilitate faculty annual reports and self- and chair-evaluations, this process was conducted via Chalk and Wire. This will also enable us to aggregate and describe data about faculty accomplishments in general. This initiative, which involved configuring Chalk and Wire for this purpose and conducting training sessions for faculty, was led by IR&A.

6. Develop a division-wide plan for increasing student participation in international experiences.

Development of a comprehensive plan, with a projected level of student participation, a timeline, and budget was not completed, but will be finalized by November 1, 2013, for inclusion with the Academic Affairs Strategic Plan.

A number of individual efforts already under way will be part of the forthcoming plan:

- The International Scholar Designation (ISD). Implementation is planned during the academic year 2013-14 under the leadership of CIE in collaboration with the Registrar and the Experiential Learning Committee.
• The Medaille Global Commons which will integrate American and international students in a joint living environment, co-sponsored by the CIE and Res Life. Implementation is planned during the academic year 2013-14.
• The Global Internship Initiative, which will establish Nazareth College as a regional hub for providing overseas internship opportunities not only for Nazareth students but also for sister universities across the region. This is a joint initiative between the CIE and the Office of Professional Internship Program. Implementation is ongoing.
• Global Civic Engagement, which aims to expand opportunities for Nazareth students to engage in community service and youth leadership. It builds on the already successful Leeds model. This is a joint initiative between the CIE, Center for Civic Engagement, and Center for Service Learning. Implementation is ongoing.
• The International Consortium for Overseas Programs. The program, which is in the early stages of development, aims to increase overseas opportunities for students from Nazareth, RIT, and SUNY Brockport.

7. Develop pilot projects that model new ways of delivering the learning experience.

In four meetings in spring 2013, a dozen faculty members who currently constitute the Nazareth “Skonk Works” defined eight innovative projects for exploration and implementation. These were only some of a larger compendium of possible projects that would respond to challenges or take advantage of opportunities. The seven proposals are: strengthen the campus social environment through fraternities and sororities; make Naz a lead institution in the integration of liberal arts and professional learning; create a design-your-own degree program; create blocks of courses (break out of the 3-credit model in order to integrate subject matter); offer intensive learning experiences in May and January (mini-sessions); shorten the calendar time to degree completion; promote active learning through “drawing to learn.” The “works” will continue in the coming year; new participants are welcome.

8. Continue implementation of Core Curriculum, including pilot of P@N and increasing student involvement in high impact practices (undergraduate research, internship, service learning, and study abroad).

As planned, we are in position to implement the revised core curriculum and P@N this fall. This has been possible because of the dedicated and focused work of the Core Director, the Core Curriculum Committee, and many faculty and staff who have served on a variety of working committees and participated in program development workshops. We know that the 2010 Core Curriculum is ambitious; recent feedback at national conferences suggests that Nazareth is implementing what will be a model integrative curriculum.

Specific accomplishments include:

• Finalizing the Integrative Studies, Experiential Learning, and Health & Wellness component of the core (lots involved in each of these, esp. IS).

• Creating a new Writing Across the College (WAC) committee to facilitate support and assessment of writing across the college.

• Conducting pilots of FYS, ACS and P-EQ courses. Nearly 100% of old PI courses have been converted to P-EQs. A full complement of FYS and ACS were offered in fall 2012.
• Translating Core student learning outcomes (SLOs) into assessable rubrics that can be used college-wide, and used early and late in programs to gain value-added data. ACS, V/P Arts, RES, SCI departments, and Partners for Learning piloted rubrics (in P@N). Other P-EQ areas are currently piloting reflection rubrics on paper. Value-added data will be available once incoming students have been assessed again in junior/senior year.

• Analyzing assessment results in ACS, FYS, and P-EQ to inform professional development workshops and improve student learning.

• Piloting P@N for degree programs in SWK and EDU.

9. Clarify “What/Who is Academic Affairs” and develop an organizational mission, vision, and values statements for AA.

See discussion of goal #2, above.

Academic Affairs Mission Statement:

Academic Affairs (the VPAA, deans, academic department chairs, and administrative staff) leads by shaping and maintaining the academic learning community in which we prepare Nazareth students for meaningful careers and instill in them a dedication to the ideal of service. Through ongoing planning and assessment and in collaboration with faculty governance and the other divisions of the college, we

• Ensure that students are taught to lead engaged lives as world citizens through study in the liberal arts and sciences and the professional programs;
• Provide an integrative and transformational learning environment that supports success for all students;
• Cultivate a pluralistic campus community and nurture a diversity of ideas and perspectives to challenge students to develop their intellectual, personal, ethical, cultural and social competencies;
• Support the ongoing development of faculty as teachers, scholars and practitioners, and stewards of the academic mission of the college;
• Provide opportunities for ongoing staff development to support student success.

10. Clarify roles, expectations, and responsibilities of AA senior administrators, Council of Chairs, program directors, and relationships among these groups.

See discussion of goal #2, above.

Other Accomplishments in Academic Affairs:

• The intellectual vitality of the Nazareth academic community is evident in the scholarly and creative activities of the faculty and students. The many professional achievements of the Nazareth faculty in 2012-2013 can be found on the following page in the Academic Affairs web site: http://www.naz.edu/academic-affairs/general-information. An indication of their productivity is the fact that our 181 full time faculty reported completed projects in more than 200 publications, performances, and exhibits, in addition to participating in 375 conferences and
other academic events. Similarly, the CARS celebration, which coincided with the announcement of the current capital campaign, showcased the creative activity, scholarship, and research of 149 students, supported by 33 faculty.

To promote these activities, the summer grant process was restructured to provide stipends for projects in two categories: Scholarship and Innovation Stipends to support new creative activity, research, or scholarly projects consistent with institutional strategic goals, and the Summer CARS Grants, which are intended to serve as a catalyst for faculty-student creative activity, research, and/or scholarship.

- Although they are not “glamorous,” several significant improvements in processes and infrastructure were accomplished by Academic Affairs staff and faculty. Wilmot Library implemented Ebsco Discovery Service, a tool that allows patrons to search all of the library’s data bases at once, and the Get It System Toolkit, which will enable ILL and Acquisitions to work together to provide resources in a timely and economical manner. The Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs worked with the deans and the budget office to create an accurate, decentralized adjunct budget. The Director of Institutional Research and Assessment took the lead in automating and making more efficient the preparation and tracking of adjunct contracts. She also configured our electronic portfolio system, Chalk and Wire, to support faculty annual reports and self evaluations, a development that will enable us to describe and report on faculty accomplishments with ease, and she improved the process for reporting and confirming faculty workload. IR&A staff also restructured the Fact Books and implemented an automated web-based daily enrollment report. FEC completed the project to update and revise the Faculty Manual.

- To support the strategic directions of the college, we have created a new administrative cluster in Academic Affairs, encompassing Core, Portfolio (P@N), Career Services, Experiential Learning (Internships, Undergraduate Research, and Service Learning), and Student Learning Outcomes Assessment. There will also be strong links to Advisement and International Education. Locating Career Services in Academic Affairs will allow for the integration of career preparation across the curriculum and throughout students’ time at Naz.

- The School of Management implemented the first year of the program in Entrepreneurship and formed an extern advisory group for this program.

- There were several notable accomplishments in the Student Support Services area: the Center for Student Success was established to serve as a clearinghouse for students in need of tutoring, coaching, and other academic or personal support services; Starfish, an early warning software to support student success and retention, was identified and purchased; the Veteran’s Office implemented a successful recruitment plan and began to identify the on-campus needs of veterans; and there were significant improvements in the academic performance of HEOP/Excel students via a “scholars program” that requires a commitment to participation in additional counseling, tutoring, and 90% class attendance. The reorganization of student support services will continue this coming year when retention will become a formal responsibility of Academic Affairs and responsibilities among individual student support areas will be further clarified, with the leadership of the full time Assistant Vice President for Student Services.
We made significant efforts to recruit and support a diversity of students. In addition to the work of the Veteran’s Affairs office (see above) and the Transfer Advocacy Group (also see above), the Associate Vice President for Student Support Services led an initiative to recruit minority students in science, technology, and mathematics, resulting in the enrollment of ten students from the Medgar Preparatory School in Brooklyn. The AVPSSS and the Director of Students with Disabilities arranged for an external evaluation of the Office for Students with Disabilities. And a proposal for Prior Learning Assessment has been drafted, to serve primarily adult and veteran populations.

Online and hybrid courses were offered as follows: Fall 2012, 14 online and 22 hybrid; Spring 2013, 11 online and 46 hybrid; Summer 2013, 23 online and 28 hybrid.

The Graduate Student Success Team, under the leadership of the Director of Graduate Services, gathered comprehensive qualitative and quantitative data and advanced findings and recommendations relating to tutoring and writing support for graduate students, student support and counseling, course scheduling and instructional delivery modes, and opportunities for professional and leadership development for graduate students.

Several programs to enhance enrollments and respond to student interest were approved: Pre-med Post Baccalaureate Certificate (submitted to NYSED); BS Finance (NYSED Approved); BA Legal Studies (NYSED Approved); BA Chinese (NYSED Approved); BFA Visual Communication Design (NYSED Approved); MS in Human Resource Development (Approved by Faculty); BA in Community Youth Development (Approved by Faculty); 5-year MS in Creative Arts Therapy (Approved by Curriculum Committee); BFA Studio Arts (NSYED Approved); BA Asian Studies (NYSED Approved).

The School of Management received IACBE (International Assembly for Collegiate Business Education) Accreditation.

We installed a Chapter of Phi Kappa Phi and inducted the first Nazareth PKP cohort. Thanks to the Assistant Vice President, the PKP officers, and the charter members of PKP for their enthusiasm and support of this effort to recognize academic excellence across the college.

7/24/13