

**Fifth-Year Report
to the
Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
of the
New England Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools**

**Middlebury College
Middlebury, Vermont**

August, 2004

STATEMENT ON REPORT PREPARATION

Preparation of this report was coordinated by Eric L. Davis, Secretary of the College and Middlebury College's reaccreditation liaison officer with NEASC. The principal authors of the report were Mr. Davis and Rebecca H. Brodigan, Director of Institutional Research and Analysis. The enrollment and fiscal data tables were prepared by Jennifer M. Nueder, Research Assistant in Institutional Research; Patrick J. Norton, Controller; and Donna McDurfee, Assistant to the Dean of the Faculty.

INSTITUTIONAL OVERVIEW

Middlebury College is a residential liberal arts college located in Middlebury, Vermont, a college town in the Champlain Valley of Vermont with a population of approximately 8,000 people. Over the past two centuries, Middlebury's academic programs have developed to include not only a highly selective undergraduate liberal arts college, but also summer, graduate, and overseas programs that complement the core undergraduate college. In addition to the undergraduate programs in Vermont, the College also comprises nine intensive summer language schools on the Vermont campus, schools abroad in five European countries, Latin America, and China, as well as the Bread Loaf School of English and Writers' Conference. The College has an endowment of well over \$600 million and over 23,000 undergraduate alumni.

Over the past ten years, Middlebury has been pursuing a vision set forth by President John M. McCardell, Jr. in the fall of 1994. An essential part of this vision involved the development of areas in which Middlebury would stand out as offering exceptionally strong academic and co-curricular programs. These "peaks of excellence," resting on a foundation of general excellence in the liberal arts, include international studies, environmental affairs, language pedagogy, literary studies, and real world applications of the liberal arts. The Commons system of residential life, intended to provide a seamless integration of the academic and residential components of the liberal arts college experience, was identified as another peak of excellence for Middlebury in the fall of 1998.

Middlebury College now finds itself in an exceptionally strong position. Admissions applications and yield are at an all-time high, the College has hired a cohort of very strong faculty members over the past decade, two successful fund-raising efforts have been completed with aggressive goals surpassed, and a new library and technology center and a second Commons residential life complex will open in the fall of 2004.

In November 2003, President McCardell announced that he would step down at the end of the 2003-04 academic year. After a comprehensive national search, the Board of Trustees elected Ronald D. Liebowitz as the 16th president of Middlebury College. President Liebowitz, who took office on July 1, 2004, has been a member of the Middlebury faculty, as Professor of Geography, since 1984, and he has served in the College administration since 1993, for most of that time as Executive Vice President and Provost.

MAJOR CHANGES AND DEVELOPMENTS SINCE 1998-99

Governance

The corporation of Middlebury College – formally known as the President and Fellows of Middlebury College – adopted new by-laws in May of 2004, after a process of review and revision that extended over several years. Major changes in the new by-laws include increasing the maximum size of the board from 28 to 35 members, clarifying the distinction between the officers of the corporation and the officers of the College, and reorganizing the committee structure of the board to reflect both current campus priorities (e.g., making the Technology Committee a standing committee) and practices of good institutional governance (e.g., establishing a Compensation Committee to review and set the compensation of the President of the College and to review and comment on the compensation of other senior officers).

President Liebowitz announced a number of changes in the administrative structure of the College when he took office in July 2004. The office of Provost, which had been established in 1997 at a time when President McCardell was taking on substantial travel obligations in association with the Bicentennial Campaign, has been retired, with responsibility for overseeing the major sectors of the College now in the hands of vice presidents for academic affairs, administration (this vice president also serves as College Treasurer), and College advancement. The office of Dean of the College has been restored, with a major focus on integrating academic and residential life through engaging students, faculty, and staff in a comprehensive discussion of the Commons residential system and on building a stronger and richer campus community. The academic deanships have been reorganized along functional rather than divisional lines, so that all faculty, regardless of their divisional affiliation, will have a single point of contact with the administration for curriculum and instruction, and for faculty development and research support. As part of the reorganization of the academic administration, oversight of the Registrar's Office will move from the Dean of Student Affairs to the Dean of the Faculty effective in September 2004.

The organizational structure of the library and information technology services sector of the College was under review at the time of the last reaccreditation self-study in 1998-99. Beginning with the appointment of a new dean in 2001-02, the formerly separate library and information technology services departments became part of a new Library and Information Services organization. We are very pleased with the progress made in organizational integration in this area over the past three years, and believe the new arrangements offer much improved service to our students, faculty, and staff. With most of Library and Information Services housed in a new building, further opportunities will be presented for collaborative work among librarians, technologists, and other staff who support the academic program.

Academics

In the past decade, enrollment in the undergraduate college has grown, as planned, from 2100 to 2350 students, with a corresponding increase in the size of the faculty. Students may choose a major from among 40 departments and programs. The largest majors in recent years, by number of graduates, have been economics, psychology, English, political science, international studies, environmental studies, and history. Close to 40% of graduating seniors choose a single major in a traditional academic discipline, and about 30% of students complete a double or joint major combining two disciplines. Another 30% of students major in one of the College's interdisciplinary programs such as international studies, environmental studies, neuroscience, molecular biology and biochemistry, or women's and gender studies.

Since the last reaccreditation self-study in 1998-99, Middlebury has added new majors in neuroscience (replacing the former biology/psychology joint major) and film and media culture (replacing the former film/video track within the theatre, dance, and film department). The focus of the former women's studies major has expanded to women's and gender studies. We have added courses in Arabic and Portuguese to the undergraduate curriculum, the latter in conjunction with the opening of the Portuguese Language School in the summer and the Middlebury School in Latin America, offering programs in Brazil. We are in the process of substantially expanding our faculty resources and offerings in Middle Eastern studies, to include not only courses in Arabic language and culture, but also courses in the history, politics, geography, and religious traditions of the Middle East. A Middle Eastern Studies track will likely be added to the International Studies major within the next few years.

All undergraduates must complete a set of College degree requirements including a writing-intensive first-year seminar taught by their academic adviser, a second writing-intensive course, and eleven distribution and cultures and civilizations requirements covering the major areas of the liberal arts. Middlebury has a 4-1-4 academic calendar, with 12-week fall and spring terms and a 4-week winter term during which students take one course. The faculty engaged in an intensive review of winter term during the 2003-04 academic year, and voted to retain the 4-1-4 calendar rather than move to a two-semester system. However, students will be given the choice to "opt out" of up to two of the four winter terms. The number of courses required for the B.A. degree will remain at

36, so students who take winter term off will be required to make up the unit of credit in other ways, such as by attending a summer session of the Middlebury Language Schools, taking 5 courses in a fall or spring term, or by using an Advanced Placement credit. Separately, the faculty voted that beginning with students matriculating in September 2004, a student may count no more than 5 College Board Advanced Placement credits toward the Middlebury degree.

Middlebury College has offered intensive summer language programs since 1915. Students in the summer programs "take the language pledge," committing themselves to communicate only in the target language during the summer session. There are nine summer language schools: Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish. The language schools offer 9-week undergraduate sessions in the less-commonly-taught languages, 7-week undergraduate sessions in the Western European languages, and 6-week graduate sessions in those languages in which an M.A. is offered: French, German, Italian, Russian, and Spanish. Beginning in the summer of 2004, the Spanish School has offered a graduate program in Guadalajara, Mexico, as well as Middlebury, Vermont. Total enrollment in the summer Language Schools is approximately 1,200 students.

The C.V. Starr-Middlebury Schools Abroad are found in six overseas locations: France (Paris and Poitiers), Germany (Mainz and Berlin), Italy (Florence and Ferrara), Russia (Moscow, Yaroslavl, and Irkutsk), Spain (Madrid, Getafe, Segovia, and La Rioja), and Latin America (Buenos Aires and Montevideo). These programs offer instruction at both the undergraduate and (in all locations except Latin America) graduate levels. Over the past five years, the focus of many of the Schools Abroad has changed from offering courses for American students at "island" programs located in major cities to establishing partnerships with foreign universities at which Middlebury students can be fully enrolled. A new C.V. Starr-Middlebury School in China will open in the fall of 2004, in conjunction with CET Academic Programs, at the Zhejiang University of Technology in Hangzhou. The C.V. Starr-Middlebury Schools Abroad are designed to immerse every student as completely as possible in both the language and the culture of the host nation. All course work is taught in the target language.

More than 60% of Middlebury undergraduates spend all or part of their junior year abroad, in both Middlebury and non-Middlebury programs. Over the last several years, the College has worked to improve the integration between study abroad and the rest of our students' academic program, by requiring them to develop more complete academic rationales for their study abroad in consultation with faculty members, by establishing advisory boards of undergraduate faculty from both language and non-language disciplines for the Middlebury Schools Abroad, and, by faculty vote, deciding to count grades from work at all programs abroad toward Middlebury students' GPA and eligibility for graduation honors.

The Bread Loaf School of English offers graduate programs in English literature at five campuses: Ripton, Vermont; Oxford, England; Santa Fe, New Mexico; Juneau, Alaska; and, beginning in summer 2004, Guadalajara, Mexico. The Vermont program is

offered at Middlebury College's Bread Loaf mountain campus, while the other four programs are offered in leased facilities. Of the more than 500 students enrolled in the Bread Loaf programs in the summer of 2004, well over half are secondary school English teachers.

The Bread Loaf Writers' Conference, held in Vermont for two weeks every August, is recognized as one of the country's most academically rigorous programs for aspiring writers, and one that consistently attracts some of the nation's most distinguished authors of poetry, non-fiction, and fiction to its faculty. Applications for the Writers' Conference for summer 2003 were at an all-time high of 1466, up from 1281 in 2002, while the number of students in the program increased from 209 to 219.

Faculty

In the 2003-04 academic year, 288 individuals held appointment to the undergraduate faculty. Taking into account faculty on leave, and members of the faculty serving as department chairs, on major committees, and in the administration, the full-time teaching equivalent size of the faculty in fall 2003 was 209. There are 202 members of the faculty on regular (tenure-track appointment), and of these, 151 are tenured. Because of the growth in the faculty in recent years, Middlebury's faculty is relatively younger, and thus less tenured, than faculties at many comparable liberal arts colleges. The College's student-faculty ratio is 11-to-1. In the fall of 2003, 48% of all classes had 15 or fewer students, and 78% enrolled 24 or fewer students. Only 9% of classes had enrollments of 45 or more students. Because of the small size of most courses, and the fact that so many seniors do independent research, Middlebury's faculty are very accessible to undergraduates and spend much time out of the classroom working with students on academic and co-curricular projects.

In the spring of 1997, the Board of Trustees adopted a very competitive faculty salary goal: that the average salary for each of the three faculty ranks (professors, associates, assistants) should be in the middle of the top third of a list of 21 highly selective liberal arts colleges. Actually attaining this goal has been a challenge because many of Middlebury's peer institutions have also adopted aggressive faculty salary goals in recent years. In the spring of 2004, the board adopted a budget that reaffirmed the faculty salary goal, and we put a plan in place that is expected to result in faculty salaries at the desired level by the 2008-09 academic year. Middlebury has a strong total compensation program for faculty, with a full year's leave at 80% of salary after five years of teaching, and an institutional contribution to the retirement program of 15% of salary for faculty aged 45 and older.

Since 1998-99, the faculty has adopted several changes in the rules for reappointment and promotion, in many instances in response to recommendations of the task force that worked on the faculty standard as part of the last reaccreditation self-study. We switched from three to two pre-tenure reviews. Newly-appointed colleagues are now reviewed in their third year on the faculty, and are reviewed for tenure in their seventh year. The review for promotion to full professor now takes place at a time of the faculty

member's choice between five and eight years after tenure, rather than on a fixed five-year schedule, with most colleagues choosing to come up for review in the seventh or eighth year. We have a more formal mentoring program for junior faculty, and new rules have been adopted setting forth in detail the role of program directions in reviews. We also changed the structure of our faculty review committees, with one committee now responsible for reappointment and contract reviews, and a second committee responsible for promotion reviews to the ranks of associate professor and full professor.

Students and Student Life

In the 2003-04 admissions cycle, Middlebury received 5120 applications for 685 places in the Class of 2008: 575 spots in the September entering class and another 110 for February. Offers of admission were sent to 26% of those who applied. The yield on those admissions offers was 42%. The entering class includes 95 American students of color, 9% international students, and students from 36 nations and 48 states.

While not all high schools provide information on rank in class, 77% of those students in the Class of 2008 for whom we have this data were in the top 10% of their high school class. The mid-50 percentile ranges of standardized test scores were 690-750 on the SAT I Verbal and 680-740 on the SAT I Math. Since Middlebury does not require the SAT I, these numbers reflect the 52% of the class for whom such scores were available.

Middlebury College is committed to admitting undergraduates on a need-blind basis and to meeting admitted students' full financial need. Approximately 39% of Middlebury undergraduates (versus the long term goal of 40%) are receiving grant aid from the College this year.

With the support of the New York-based Posse Foundation, Middlebury has enrolled in each class that has matriculated since 1999 a group of approximately 10 students from New York City who are identified in their senior year of high school as having strong leadership potential. These students are provided with scholarship support and an intensive mentoring program both prior to enrollment at Middlebury and while they are on campus. The Middlebury student body also includes nearly 40 Davis United World College Scholars, graduates of the 10 United World Colleges, a worldwide network of schools offering the International Baccalaureate curriculum and dedicated to promoting international understanding through education. Through the generosity of the Shelby M.C. Davis family, these scholarships provide full financial aid for some of the world's most talented young people, who add immeasurably to the intellectual and cultural resources offered to all members of the Middlebury College community.

In recent years, in conjunction with the administrations, admissions officers, and faculty committees of other colleges in the New England Small College Athletic Conference (NESCAC), Middlebury has engaged in a thorough review and assessment of admissions policies as they relate to rated athletes. The number of students for whom

athletic considerations may be determinative in the admissions process has been reduced from approximately 20% of the first-year class to about 15% of the class.

The Alliance for Civic Engagement provides students with opportunities to make real world connections to the local community and beyond through service and educational outreach. This office demonstrates the College's commitment to fulfill the goal set forth in its mission statement to help students prepare to take their place as thoughtful, ethical leaders able to meet the challenges of informed citizenship. Over half the students at Middlebury engage in community service each year. An increasing number of faculty are incorporating "service learning" components into their courses, as a way of helping students make connections between liberal arts learning and the real world through focused community service and outreach activities.

Middlebury's five residential Commons form the backbone of student life at the College. More than 400 students, representing all four classes, live in each Commons. Every Commons is led by a team—including a Faculty Head (a tenured member of the faculty), a Dean (a student affairs professional), a Commons Coordinator (a staff member) and two Commons Residential Advisers (recent Middlebury graduates who live in the residence halls) - that advises and supports student residents and guides the cultural and intellectual life of the community.

Since 1998-99, the Commons program has moved forward in many ways. Two fully-articulated Commons, with dining halls, program spaces, and high-quality student housing, including apartment-type units for seniors, will be open by the fall of 2004. Our student deans' offices have been decentralized by Commons since 1999, and all reports indicate that these arrangements are working very well, with students able to establish close and continuing relationships with their Commons Deans. Demand for Commons housing from students who wish to continue in their Commons has been so strong that we have changed our room draw procedures to favor those students who wish to remain in their Commons from year to year. Commons Councils are sponsoring an increasing number of co-curricular and social events. The great majority of first-year seminars are now Commons-based, with all students in the course residents of the same Commons and thus able, because of their residential proximity, to work with each other on collaborative projects outside of class.

The physical infrastructure of two Commons will be completed by the fall of 2004. Moving expeditiously forward to complete all five Commons will be one of the College's major priorities in the years ahead. An architect was engaged in May 2004 to work on developing plans for program and dining space for two of the remaining three Commons.

The Campus

The facilities at Middlebury – academic, residential, artistic, and athletic – are among the very best in the country. Over the past two decades, the College has engaged in an ambitious building program and continued to maintain its facilities to a high

standard, with little deferred maintenance. Almost all of Middlebury's residence halls have been renovated or newly constructed since the mid-1980s. John M. McCardell, Jr. Bicentennial Hall, a 220,000-square-foot building completed in 1999, houses seven departments in the natural and social sciences and has won several awards for both energy and environmental efficiency and technological sophistication. A new library and technology center is opening in the summer of 2004. This 135,000-square-foot building will bring together the College's print, media, and electronic information resources and services in a single accessible and user-friendly facility, and will provide a "one-stop" point of contact for students and faculty who need assistance with research and course development projects.

The former library, Starr Library, will be renovated into academic space for departments in literature and the humanities. An architect was engaged in May 2004 to work on developing plans for converting the old library to classrooms, faculty offices, and other academic space.

Middlebury's technology infrastructure includes a high-speed network connecting all academic, residential, and administrative buildings on campus. This network supports both data and voice communication. Network connections are made available to all students without charge in their rooms, and ports for laptop connections are available in most classrooms and many public spaces on campus. The College is experimenting with wireless network connectivity in some heavily-used spaces. A steadily increasing amount of library resources are made available to students and faculty by means of the network, and about 40% of all classes make use of a course Web site. Over the past several years, Middlebury has made the transition from locally developed administrative software to the SCT Banner System, the final modules of which will be implemented in the second half of 2004. The Banner implementation has posed many challenges for the College, involving the need for developing new technical expertise among the staff and reviewing many of our business practices, but one consequence of deploying Banner has been the development of new cross-departmental patterns of communications and cooperation.

Fiscal Affairs

As of June 30, 2004 the preliminary gross value of the Middlebury College endowment was \$694 million. The majority of the endowment assets, approximately \$635 million, is pooled for investment purposes and is overseen by the Investment Committee of the Board of Trustees. The \$59 million balance is comprised of \$36 million in deferred giving assets such as charitable remainder trusts, and \$23 million of funds in which the College is an income recipient, but does not actively manage the assets.

As of June 30, 2004, Middlebury College had approximately \$247 million in debt outstanding. Under Vermont statutes, Middlebury is able to issue tax-exempt bonds under the auspices of the Vermont Education and Health Buildings Finance Agency. The

College has adequate quasi-endowment resources for capital purposes of approximately \$120 million to help manage this debt.

Middlebury College has a broadly diversified, equity-oriented portfolio with a significant allocation to non-traditional asset classes such as absolute return, private equity, and venture capital. As of June 30, 2004, the largest asset classes were domestic equities (31%), absolute return and hedge funds (25%), private equity/venture capital (19%), and international equities (11%). Over the past two years, the Investment Committee of the Board of Trustees has completed a rebalancing of the portfolio.

Overall giving to Middlebury College in the 2003-04 fiscal year was \$37.9 million, and Annual Fund giving was \$10.1 million. Both of these amounts were new records.

Middlebury College has completed two major fund-raising efforts in the last five years. The Bicentennial Campaign, which ended on June 30, 2001, had a goal of \$200 million and raised a total of \$213 million for the College. In October 2002, an anonymous donor pledged to make a gift of \$10 million – the largest gift in the history of Middlebury College to that time – if the College was able to raise \$30 million in new commitments, commitments to be secured by June 30, 2003 and payable in full by June 30, 2005. As of the close of business on June 30, 2003, the challenge goal was exceeded by \$1 million. Commitments of \$41 million were received from 1600 donors, including \$10 million from the challenge donor. Funds raised through these efforts were used to support the College's highest priorities: endowment support for professorships and financial aid and programmatic efforts to strengthen the "peaks of excellence."

In May 2004, President McCardell announced that an anonymous donor had pledged \$50 million to Middlebury College to support core institutional programs. This is not only the largest gift ever received by Middlebury College, but the largest gift ever received by a New England liberal arts college. An initial gift of \$10 million toward the challenge that will be required in conjunction with the \$50 million gift was also announced in May 2004.

The Middlebury College operating budget is approximately \$163 million for 2004-05. In October 2002, the College began a campus-wide process of closely scrutinizing current and planned budgets in order to bring them into line with the more constrained fiscal environment resulting from the underperformance of the endowment in recent years. Managers have spent much of their time over the past year and a half focusing on their budgets for both fiscal 2004 and fiscal 2005. In many areas the amount spent on operations in fiscal 2004 was actually less than in previous years—a feat which was accomplished with no layoffs.

Middlebury College received 35 institutional grants, totaling \$7.2 million, in fiscal 2003-04. In addition, the College received 42 faculty grants, totaling \$1.4 million. Most of the institutional grants, from foundations, agencies, and other organizations, support key institutional priorities in the area of financial aid for both undergraduate and

graduate students, the development of the academic peaks, and the library and Commons initiatives. One of the most significant of the institutional grants is a set of awards from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation that will provide over \$600,000 in support for faculty career development initiatives over the next four years. The College has also received extensive support from the Mellon Foundation for the Center for Educational Technology, which serves as a center for faculty and educational technology staff at Middlebury and other liberal arts colleges to develop innovative and effective uses of technology in teaching and learning.

Institutional Integrity and Ethics

The College has adopted a "Code of Conduct" for employees that will appear in the 2004-05 Middlebury College Handbook. This code covers topics such as proper use of College property and funds, accuracy of records and reporting, maintaining the confidentiality of information, and conflict of interest, particularly conflicts that may result when the College does business with firms owned or managed by members of the faculty and staff.

A major change in the student judicial system was approved by the faculty, and by a student body referendum, during the 2001-02 academic year and went into effect in September 2002. All academic disciplinary charges, including plagiarism, cheating, and all other forms of academic misconduct, are now heard by a single Academic Judicial Board, consisting of four student and three faculty members. Through 2001-02, cheating cases were heard by a student-only panel, and plagiarism cases were heard by a different board, with a majority of faculty members. Having all academic charges heard by a board with a majority of student members has helped strengthen the Honor Code at Middlebury, while the structure of the board keeps the faculty involved in all disciplinary cases as part of its general educational efforts.

RESPONSE TO AREAS IDENTIFIED FOR SPECIAL EMPHASIS

This section of the report covers those areas of special emphasis that the Commission asked us to address in its letters of March 3, 2000 and October 15, 2003.

Making Systematic Use of Information for the Purposes of Planning and Evaluation

Strategic Planning

In early 2003, Ronald Liebowitz, then Executive Vice President and Provost, made a series of presentations to trustees, faculty, staff, students, and alumni that reviewed the status of planning at Middlebury over the previous ten years. This retrospective outlined the four major planning documents for that period of time. Those documents were:

- The 1992 Strategic Plan
- Presidential address, 1994
- Board Resolution on growth, 1995

- Board Resolution on residential life, 1998

A copy of the handouts from President (then Provost) Liebowitz' presentation is enclosed as an appendix to this report. This document outlined the 13 elements of the original 1992 plan and highlighted progress on curricular issues, admissions and financial aid, residential and social life, space, grounds and facilities, summer programs, and financial goals. In addition, the goals laid out in the 1994 "Vision" Presidential Address (including the "peaks of excellence") were evaluated. The retrospective was rounded out by also evaluating progress since the Board resolutions on growth (1995) and residential life (1998). This document has laid the foundation that will support a new planning process, which is expected to begin in the spring of 2005 with the appointment of John Emerson, a senior member of the faculty, to oversee institution-wide planning. Professor Emerson, who was a member of the 1991-92 planning committee, will begin an administrative appointment as Secretary of the College on July 1, 2005.

Planning Support

The Institutional Research Office was only in its second year of existence when the NEASC visiting team came to Middlebury in the fall of 1999. Since the visit, an additional staff person has been added to the office, and the office is responsible for all outside reporting of information and also for internal consistency of information. This additional staff person has focused on reporting, which has allowed the Director to carry out higher-level analysis and decision support. There is a fact book on-line as well as detailed enrollment profiles, competitive analysis, and many special reports. In addition, the Director of Institutional Research has been a regular presenter at senior staff meetings and also presented and collaborated with other staff on regular Board of Trustees presentations. The office had reported to the Executive Vice President and Provost, and supported much of the work of the senior administration – especially competitive and historical information. Under the new administrative structure, the institutional research office will report to the chief planning officer, Professor Emerson.

Administrative Computing

Middlebury College was in the process of selecting administrative software when the visiting team was on campus in 1999. Since then, the College has selected SCT Banner and has implemented the Human Resources, Financial, Alumni, and Student Systems modules. In addition, the College has hired senior staff in both the Controller and Budget Offices who had direct Banner experience prior to coming to Middlebury. New technical positions have also been created in the controller's office, financial aid, and the Registrar's Office. The College also purchased Brio (a reporting tool) and has trained staff across the College in developing their own individual reports.

The rollout of the Banner computing system that began in the summer of 2001 will be completed in the fall of 2004. Although we are still learning about the capabilities of Banner, the system now gives us the ability to collect and analyze types of data that were not accessible to us with the home-grown transactional based administrative computer system that we had used for more than 20 years. Using Banner, we are now able to track budget encumbrances as well as expenditures, to provide on-line

registration for all students (including incoming first-year students and students studying abroad), to track students' progress toward the degree by credits earned in addition to time spent on campus, and to study the relationships between admissions decisions and students' academic choices and performance. Generally, we are trying to take advantage of the opportunities Banner provides us to share information across sectors of the College and thus reduce "silos." Additionally, more technical support for administrative computing is now provided in the user departments rather than through a central IT department.

Developing and Implementing a Plan for Assessing Student Learning Outcomes

The 1995 report of the "Committee on General Excellence in the Liberal Arts" offered the following as a definition of academic excellence at Middlebury:

At Middlebury, excellence in a liberal arts education should mean creating a community of learning, a community which fosters an atmosphere of intellectual curiosity, and which encourages independent thought. Middlebury should be committed to the argument that self-reflection is advanced by thoughtful dialogue, which should be prominent not only in the classroom, but throughout campus life. Excellence in the liberal arts requires a solid grounding in the ideas and scientific and artistic achievements of humanity which lay claim to being universal and timeless, and a serious effort to contextualize and apply those ideas and achievements in the contemporary world.

In December 2003, this definition is offered in one of the Peaks Reports (included as an appendix to this report) focusing on General Education in the Liberal Arts. A set of questions that were central to evaluating General Education was listed and a status report on implementation presented. Question #7 was *How do we evaluate the effectiveness of the educational programs at Middlebury? Who is responsible and accountable for the quality of both our general education requirements and our majors?*

Progress in answering this question has been slow to come. The new President has reorganized the academic administration, and has created a new Center for Teaching, Learning, and Research, housed strategically in the new Library and Technology Center. A copy of the mission statement for the Center is included as an appendix to this report. The Center is headed by the former Assistant Dean for Instruction, who will be instrumental in developing an assessment strategy.

Middlebury College has not yet developed a full-fledged student outcomes assessment plan and a great deal of time has been spent studying other institutions and looking at different models that are currently under development.

To date, Middlebury has relied heavily on self-reported data from graduating seniors – specifically the ACE/UCLA first-year and senior surveys. Middlebury has a long history of administering these surveys and has a longitudinal database that allows us to track trends over a sustained period of time. The Mellon funded assessment study at

Hamilton has used this same self-reported data as one method in their overall evaluation. Middlebury students report much stronger abilities and skills (compared with those at four-year private colleges) in all areas with the exception of religious beliefs and convictions. In addition, seniors also report a very high level of satisfaction with courses and faculty interaction. As reported in the section on the Commons, there has been an increase in sense of community, as well as the percentage of students who have visited a faculty member's home. Seniors also report an increase in the number of hours spent in class and the number of hours spent studying. Although Middlebury has no institution-wide senior work requirement, approximately two-thirds of seniors choose to complete a senior essay, project, or thesis of at least one semester in duration.

Middlebury does, however, review student progress at some of the critical junctures in their education through the first-year seminar program and study abroad. Several of these programs have undergone thorough reviews or revisions in the last several years.

First-year seminars are residentially based (Commons) and are required of all entering students, and are writing intensive. These seminars are limited to 15 students, and are taught by regular, full-time faculty who serve as advisors for the first three semesters. In addition to the first-year seminar, students must also take an additional writing intensive course.

Office of Learning Resources: In addition to the first-year seminars, the college has an Office of Learning Resources, which has a mission to *'assist students in fully utilizing their learning opportunities and assist students in the development and refinement of skills needed for academic excellence in the 21st century'*.

The Office of Learning Resources provides workshops, study groups, and one-on-one educational sessions which focus on oral presentation skills, effective note-taking, reading skills enhancement, test taking preparation, time and workload management, etc. Enhancing performance in these areas maximizes students' academic success and scholastic standing.

Study Abroad: A large percentage of Middlebury students study abroad each year – both in Middlebury programs and programs offered by other institutions. A faculty committee recently did a full review of study abroad options. The main recommendation concerned the faculty's ability to advise students about study abroad and the role it plays in an individual student's education. In addition, recommendations included:

Earlier advising on study abroad and how it fits into the overall education plan.
Advising on study abroad should begin in the first-year seminar.

Departments and programs should develop guidelines for integrating study abroad into the major and minor.

Clarify current policies and practices so that students know that they must seek approval from the appropriate department chair if they are going to get credit towards their major, minor, or distribution requirement.

Expand the current Advisory Board mandate to include an annual assessment of curriculum and of program quality.

Grades taken abroad should appear on the transcript, and be counted towards the GPA.

We also plan to use Banner to track the relationship between students' academic preferences in the admissions process and their choice of major, to see whether there are marginal interventions that could be made in the admissions process to increase the number of students who might end up majoring in areas of the curriculum in which there is relative under-enrollment today, e.g., the laboratory sciences

Achieving the College's Own Goals for Diversity on the Faculty and Staff

Middlebury College has undertaken several initiatives since 1998-99 in order to increase diversity among members of the faculty and staff. One of the most important was the establishment of a senior administrative position in the fall of 1999, at the Associate Provost level, responsible for coordinating and integrating the College's many efforts to enhance diversity in both employee recruitment and retention and the curriculum. As a consequence of the administrative reorganization in the summer of 2004, this officer's title is now the Dean for Institutional Diversity. The Dean heads up the Office of Institutional Diversity, and is charged with overseeing the College's efforts to obtain a more diverse faculty and staff, assisting faculty department chairs in their recruitment efforts, and identifying and developing new sources from which to draw applicants for faculty and staff positions.

The Dean meets with the chairs of all departments conducting recruitment for faculty vacancies, and encourages them to place advertisements for their positions in publications beyond traditional disciplinary newsletters and Web sites. New EEO language is now used in faculty position advertisements. The former language read, "Middlebury College is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Applications from women and members of minority groups are especially encouraged." The current language reads, "Middlebury College is an Equal Opportunity Employer committed to recruiting a diverse faculty to complement the increasing diversity of our student body." This change in language is intended to demonstrate a more pro-active commitment to recruiting a truly diverse faculty. The new language is also being used in advertisements for staff positions, especially those for which recruitment is conducted on a national basis.

All applicants for faculty and staff positions now receive, along with an acknowledgement of their applications, a voluntary self-reporting card in which they are asked to identify themselves according to the demographic categories used by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and other agencies of the U.S. government. Approximately 40% of applicants return the completed card. According to these self-reports, 91% of all applicants for faculty and staff positions at Middlebury College in recent years have been non-Hispanic white Americans. While these demographics are less diverse than the population in American graduate schools, they are more diverse than the population of Vermont, including just those Vermonters with at least a bachelor's

degree. Another question on the card asks applicants how they heard about the position at Middlebury. Approximately 60% report that their first contact with the College was a passive one. We recognize that we need to be doing more to recruit proactively, and to make knowledge of job opportunities at Middlebury more readily available, while not crossing the line to “raiding” faculty or staff at other institutions.

One of Middlebury’s most successful initiatives in recruiting a diverse faculty has been our participation in the Northeast Consortium for Faculty Diversity Dissertation Fellowship Program. This program, started by the New England Board of Higher Education, involves a group of colleges and universities that are committed to bringing one or more dissertation-level, underrepresented minority graduate students (U.S. citizens) to the campus for 12 months, in order that the students can devote substantial attention to the completion of their dissertation and become acquainted with their host campus and host department. Applicants for these fellowships must have completed all doctoral work except the dissertation and must demonstrate that they could complete the dissertation while at Middlebury. Middlebury provides the fellows with a half-time faculty salary, office space, computer and library privileges, and a faculty mentor. The fellows have the opportunity to present their work to students and faculty at Middlebury, and they will teach or co-teach one or two courses during their fellowship year. Of the four faculty who have come to Middlebury as dissertation fellows, three have remained at Middlebury, two of them in regular tenure-track faculty positions, and one on a continuing term appointment. The fellows have added to the curriculum, by enabling us to teach courses not previously offered (e.g., Latina/o anthropology and African politics), and have also served as excellent role models and mentors for undergraduates considering academic careers.

A task force on increasing staff diversity, co-chaired by the Dean for Institutional Diversity and the Director of Human Resources, began meeting in the spring of 2004 and will submit its report during the fall of 2004. The task force has been focusing on systemic issues, and will be developing recommendations on how various parts of the College can work together to create a climate that would be conducive to recruiting and retaining a more diverse staff. We believe that the success of the faculty dissertation fellowship program, with its emphasis on mentoring and making a successful transition from graduate school to employment, may offer some directions that could be followed regarding staff recruitment. Other initiatives taken in recent years in the staff diversity area include adding a component on diversity issues to the internal staff development training program for new managers, and Middlebury’s participating in the meetings of NCORE (the National Conference on Race and Ethnicity in Higher Education) and SACNAS (the Society for the Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science).

Evaluating the Effects of the Commons System

At Middlebury College, a Commons is a Residential living/learning unit based on three cornerstone principles:

- Continuing membership – approximately 450 students living in the same Commons all four years
- Decentralized dining – five separate and distinct units
- Proximate housing for Faculty Head(s)

The College is moving ahead with an ambitious facilities plan so that each of these elements are in place in all five Commons.

Administratively, the College made the shift to the Commons structure in September 1999, when it decentralized the Dean of Students office and placed a dean in each Commons. Thus, at the time of the last reaccreditation visit to Middlebury in October 1999, the Commons system was in its infancy.

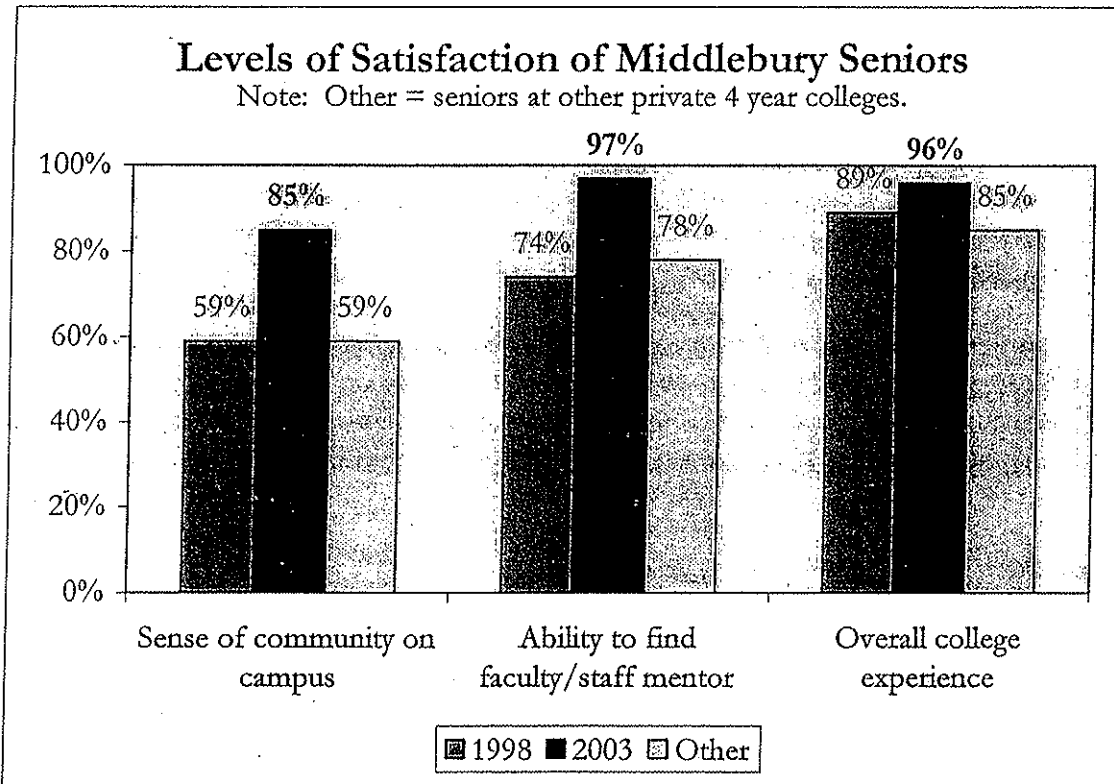
The Board of Trustees had accepted the Enhanced Residential Life Plan shortly before, in October 1998. This plan cited a variety of reasons for enhancing the Commons. Although Middlebury was one of the nation's finest liberal arts colleges, we recognized the need to build upon our reputation of academic excellence and offer a comprehensive, seamless education to our students, in an environment in which education could take place at all times and in all settings. Such a program would enable us to close the gap between academic and residential life, and to provide additional support for academic and cultural life outside the classroom. The Commons system would also provide the opportunity to build more intimately scaled communities, to accommodate the size of the student body that was planned to increase to 2350.

Other reasons for adopting the Commons system were to address concerns about our residential life system that developed during the 1990's: lack of respect for people and property (reflected in about \$60,000 a year in dorm damage), substance abuse, inhospitable living conditions for minority students, tensions around racial and sexual identity, and a general breakdown in civility.

In 1998, plans were on the drawing board for a new residence hall, dining and program space in Ross Commons. In addition, architects had been commissioned for master planning for three of the other four Commons. Support within the student body was weak, and many questioned the necessity for smaller living and learning units.

In the past five years, much has changed. Ross Commons is complete (with the exception of proximate housing for the Faculty Heads). All other program elements are in place, including senior housing, a new dining facility, outdoor space and smart classrooms. Atwater Commons is now ready to open a new dining facility that includes a smart classroom and two new upper-class residence halls with teaching and study space. An architect has been hired to do master planning for Wonnacott and Brainerd and design either one dining facility which meets the needs of two Commons, or two separate dining facilities. There is currently a committee in place that is working with the architects and is expected to recommend a site and building specifics to the Trustees in October 2004.

The College annually administers both a senior survey and a parent survey. Current results compared with results five years ago show some substantial changes in attitude towards the Commons and overall satisfaction with the College in general. Indeed, lack of sense of community was one of the reasons for considering changes to the residential system. When comparing levels of satisfaction with community and an overall sense of satisfaction among graduating seniors, we have seen a positive change in attitudes reported by seniors. They also report an increase in the ability to find a faculty or staff mentor.



Most of the comments from parents that are related to Commons express dissatisfaction with the progress the college is making on completing the physical infrastructure – the inability to accommodate all students who want to stay in their Commons from year to year. As noted earlier, we have revised our room draw procedures to make a larger number of rooms available for students who wish to remain in the same Commons, particularly for the first and sophomore years.

Many of the issues related to the Commons that were highlighted by the visiting team in 1999 are still under active consideration. During the 2003-2004 academic year, Executive Vice President Ronald Liebowitz charged several working groups with review of each of the *Peaks of Excellence*. Two of those peaks were Commons (residential life)

and General Excellence in the Liberal Arts. Reports from both of these working groups are enclosed as appendices to this report.

After being appointed to his new position, President Liebowitz began to reorganize the administration. He asked Professor Timothy Spears to serve in the newly-established position of Dean of the College. Professor Spears has been involved in the Commons from the start, and has served as Dean of Commons and Associate Dean of the Faculty. The charge to the Dean of the College, as set forth by the President, is as follows: *A major focus of this office will be to engage students, faculty, and staff in a comprehensive discussion of the Commons residential system and on building a stronger and richer campus community. As we complete this fall the physical infrastructure of the second of five residential commons, and have experienced five years of a decentralized dean model, it is time for us to assess what aspects of the Commons system have worked best, what have not, and how the major goals of the system, articulated in 1998, have been achieved, or not, and why. Concurrently, a discussion with faculty and staff about the challenges to the College's traditional strong sense of community as we have grown, both in size and in bureaucracy, needs to begin if we are to preserve one of the characteristics that makes Middlebury a special place to live, work, and learn.*

Within the new administration, the Dean of Student Affairs will now report to the Dean of the College, and the student affairs division will undergo a planning process that could lead to a reorganization. By the time of our next reaccreditation visit, the new structure will be in place and the assessment of Commons should be complete.

SUMMARY APPRAISAL AND PLANS

Middlebury College will be undertaking its next comprehensive self-study for accreditation during the 2008-09 academic year, in preparation for a site visit by a NEASC team in the Fall of 2009. By the time the self-study is prepared, the new administration that is being assembled now will have been in office for four years, and will be able to report on its accomplishments during its early years. Over the next several years, the College will complete a revision of its strategic plan and, when the next reaccreditation self-study is being written, will likely be in the midst of a capital campaign designed to accumulate the resources needed to carry out the objectives of that strategic plan.

The details of those plans will become clearer in the months and years ahead. We can state with certainty, however, that they will build on the accomplishments at Middlebury College during the last decade, and that a key part of those plans will be maintaining and enhancing the human capital of the members of the Middlebury College community – students, faculty, and staff – in order to take full advantage of the remarkable physical, curricular, and co-curricular resources that have been developed at Middlebury in recent years.



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Director of the Commission
CHARLES M. COOK
E-Mail: ccook@neasc.org

Deputy Director of the Commission
BARBARA E. BRITTINGHAM
E-Mail: bbrittingham@neasc.org

Associate Director of the Commission
ROBERT C. FROH
E-Mail: rfroh@neasc.org

Associate Director of the Commission
PATRICIA M. O'BRIEN, SND
E-Mail: pobrien@neasc.org

October 28, 2004

Dr. Ronald D. Liebowitz
President
Middlebury College
Old Chapel
Middlebury, VT 05753

NOV 01 2004

Dear President Liebowitz:

It is my pleasure to inform you that at its meeting on September 23, 2004, the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education took the following action with regard to Middlebury College:

that the fifth-year interim report submitted by Middlebury College be accepted;

that the scheduling of the next comprehensive evaluation for Fall, 2009 be confirmed;

that the self-study prepared for the College's next comprehensive evaluation, in addition to addressing all the standards, give particular emphasis to the College's success in developing and implementing a plan for assessing student learning outcomes in general education and using the results to effect improvement.

The Commission gives the following reasons for its action.

We commend Middlebury College for the exemplary fifth-year report which responds in a comprehensive way to three of the four areas of concern evoked through the last comprehensive review and summarized in the Commission letter of March 28, 2000. We find particularly noteworthy the success of recent fundraising efforts, including the receipt of two of the largest gifts in the College's history.

The Commission is gratified to see how the College has evolved in making systematic use of information for the purposes of planning and evaluation. The report substantiates this by addressing how the College has laid out the foundation of the next strategic plan through retrospective analysis of progress since the 1992 strategic plan; board resolutions on growth from 1995 forward; and the continued development of the Commons system to enable education to take place at all times and in all settings. The Institutional Research

Office, relatively new at the time of the last comprehensive evaluation, has expanded and taken an active role in reporting on planning and evaluation efforts. The Banner computing system offers the ability to collect and analyze significant amounts of data related to budgeting, registration, student credit hours, and progress toward degrees, among other data. Together these efforts highlight how the College has improved significantly its systematic use of information.

The Commission finds praiseworthy the College's efforts in marshalling resources to meet its goals of faculty and staff diversity, particularly given the fact that the College's current demographic profile is more diverse than the population of Vermont. We note that the College has made some gains in increasing the diversity of the faculty through the recruitment of three minority faculty members (two tenure track appointments, and one continuing term appointment). To support diversity goals, the College has created the position of Dean for Institutional Diversity, changed the language used in recruiting advertisements to reflect a more proactive stance toward diversity, and participated in the Northeast Consortium for Faculty Diversity, Dissertation and Fellowship. In addition, a task force on increasing staff diversity began meeting in Spring, 2004.

We note with favor the College's continued development and review of the Commons system. Presently, the College has completed the physical infrastructure for two of the five Commons and is in the process of planning for completing the remaining three. Student satisfaction with the community, and student satisfaction overall, have increased since the institution of the Commons system. New institutional leadership recently established the position of Dean of the College with the responsibility for a comprehensive discussion of the Commons residential system and ways of building a stronger and richer campus community.

With regard to assessment of student learning, the report indicates continued reliance on self-reported student data from graduating seniors without other types of direct and indirect assessment. As a result, the Commission continues to conclude that assessment initiatives at the College are still at an early stage. As part of the next comprehensive review, we would appreciate learning how Middlebury has progressed in developing and implementing a plan for analyzing learning outcomes, and for using the results to effect improvements, particularly with learning outcomes for general education. We request that the College review and respond to our standard on *Programs and Instruction*:

Graduates successfully completing an undergraduate program demonstrate competence in written and oral communication in English; the ability for scientific and quantitative reasoning, for critical analysis and logical thinking; and the capability for continuing learning. They also demonstrate knowledge and understanding of scientific, historical, and social phenomena, and a knowledge and appreciation of the aesthetic and ethical dimensions of humankind. In addition, graduates demonstrate an in-depth understanding of an area of knowledge or practice and of its interrelatedness with other areas (4.19).

Our policy on Institutional Effectiveness also provides guidance regarding the assessment of student learning (enclosed for your convenience).

Finally, the scheduling of a comprehensive evaluation in Fall, 2009, is consistent with Commission policy requiring each accredited institution to undergo a comprehensive visit at least once every ten years.

You are encouraged to share this letter with all of the College's constituencies. It is Commission policy to inform the chairperson of the institution's governing board of action on its accreditation status. In a few days we will be sending a copy of this letter to Mr. Frederick Fritz. The institution is free to release information about the report and the Commission's action to others, in accordance with Commission policy.

Dr. Ronald D. Liebowitz
October 28, 2004
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The Commission hopes that the evaluation process has contributed to institutional improvement. It appreciates your cooperation in the effort to provide public assurance of the quality of higher education in New England.

If you have any questions about the Commission's action, please contact Charles M. Cook, Director of the Commission.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Terrence J. MacTaggart". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Terrence J. MacTaggart

TJM/jm

Enclosures

cc: Mr. Frederick Fritz

