

# **FINAL REPORT**

## **SACS CONSULTING TEAM**

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**February 17, 2003**

### **Purpose and Background**

This report provides recommendations regarding strategic planning of the institution for the benefit of Emory University's Research Commission.

Recommendations are based upon reading of report, as well as conversations with faculty and administrators during the site visit (February 2-5, 2003).

Recommendations can only represent a broad (not in-depth) sampling of issues and activities.

### **Guiding Principles**

#### **1. Emory's Historical Legacy**

- The team recognizes and appreciates the richness of Emory's history.
- The team believes that Emory University needs to pay homage to its roots while continuing to push itself forward as an institution of global repute.
- By carefully planning for the future, Emory could regain a sense of historical connectedness to the creativity and courage of its founders and the rich traditions of its region, while simultaneously demonstrating its emerging expertise.

#### **2. Need for Greater Risk-Taking**

- The last decade has witnessed an enormous period of growth (intellectual and programmatic, fiscal and physical) for Emory. In spite of this wealth and prosperity, the team perceives a tendency to err too much on the side of caution.
- The team recommends that an alternative strategy be employed by Emory leadership, one that allows the institution in this phase of its life cycle to assess its progress. After a period of expansive growth (i.e., letting a thousand flowers bloom) Emory should now turn to focusing

- on a sharper profile,
- making choices so that they can attract and deploy all the necessary resources especially human capital and ideas to sustain key programs and efforts, and
- on “owning” and announcing their distinctive profile to the world.

Having enjoyed stable leadership, it seems that the health sciences are at a more advanced position in the life cycle – having moved from growth to focused choices – and now other Schools and Colleges need a parallel strategic planning process for coordinated growth (e.g., 5 year plans).

- The consulting team recommends that three main changes occur:
  1. Emory needs a more sharply focused intellectual profile.
  2. Resources should be more definitively identified and supported.
  3. The institution’s governance and leadership structures need to catch up with the multitude of programs and innovative endeavors, and then push for focus and support.

### **3. Growth Begets a Need for Greater Structure and Focus**

- Despite its vast resources, Emory suffers from an identity crisis. Too much emphasis is placed on being “as good as” its peer institutions, instead of developing its own distinct identity.
- All of Emory’s constituencies are critical to this identity, as they are instrumental in dictating what the “new character” of Emory will be in the decade to come.
- The Research Commission Report documents Emory’s period of great expansion, but it is now time to take stock of these institutional opportunities and to make a clear plan of action for the future.
- The team imagines that the next generation of leadership will need to: (1) boldly announce to the world, the nation, and the region “who Emory is and aspires to be,” and (2) deploy sufficient resources to sustain this image of Emory.
- The impression of the team is that Emory is lacking a clear institutional focus, and that hard choices must be made in order for a distinct “Emory identity” to emerge.

### **Recommendations for Areas of Excellence to Model**

- Emory needs broad themes for its profile under which many smaller programs can be integrated. In fact, Emory already has several programs and areas of excellence that the team feels could form the basis for thematic integration to sharpen its profile such as
  - Ethics and policy
  - Neuroscience
  - Evolutionary behavior
  - Globalization
- In particular, the team acknowledges the success and potential of such existing programs and initiatives (and many more smaller programs and initiatives existing at Emory) as:

the ILA and NBB (interdisciplinary academic programs), the Halle Institute of Global Learning, the Center for Humanistic Inquiry, the MARIAL Institute (collaborative intellectual communities), the Walter H. Coulter Department of Biomedical Engineering with Georgia Tech, the Yerkes National Primate Research Center (scientific resources within Atlanta community), the Graduate Division of Biological and Biomedical Sciences, and the Center for Myth and Ritual in American Life.

- The team encourages the University to ask itself the question: “What connects these centers of excellence, and how might we strengthen our identity through these programs?”
- It is the belief of the team that bolder decision-making needs to occur, and that the University needs to “own” its identity by becoming more decisive about its future. Also, the connection to intellectual resources in the areas CDC, the Carter Center, CARE International, American Cancer Society, etc., should be part of the announced identity.
- Rather than trying to emulate the decisions or directions of peer institutions (like Duke or Johns Hopkins) the team would like to see Emory University take a more enterprising approach by developing a distinctive profile.
- More (and difficult) choices must be made, and these choices will determine the future of the University.
- The team feels that Emory cannot attain a global reputation without better connection between the highest levels of governance and the faculty who must carry out the mission. Central leadership, the board and the Research Commission need to better communicate their views and objectives. In implementing the Research at Emory Report the team recommends that the Research Commission should remain in being so as to provide advice on development of the intellectual profile of Emory to secure faculty buy-in and support faculty morale.
- In its drive for international preeminence in research Emory needs to take a fresh look at its commitment to graduate education and should think about restructuring the graduate school:
  - The team recommends investigating establishing a campus-wide Graduate School at Emory. This Graduate School would take its place alongside the strong health science schools and liberal arts and sciences college. At the same time, the Arts and Sciences College should be reaffirmed with strong leadership and autonomy to complement the health sciences schools.
  - Competitive funds for research should be located inside the Graduate School available for the Emory community.
- Fields for which extramural funding is especially meager (Humanities, Arts, etc.) often sustain excellent scholarly and creative effort with modest funding. Making peer reviewed competitive intramural funding available to them could significantly enhance their contribution to Emory’s intellectual preeminence.
- As Emory increases its research funding, there will be many more opportunities for technology transfer and business development. The team encourages the university to take advantage of this opportunity.

## Final Thoughts

- The team calls upon the University to develop a greater sense of distinctiveness.
- To achieve this, the team recommends that the University take stock of its historical origins and goals, while implementing a more modern structure of governance.
- Cross campus initiatives exist and should be strengthened, particularly those that facilitate community engagement connecting Emory's physical community and the rich resources within the greater Atlanta area.
- Furthermore, the University should be doing much more to engage the larger community in its mission. More effort should be expended to connect with existing public services, such as the Carter Center, CDC, Grady Hospital, and Georgia Tech.
- Finally, these re-focusing efforts need not be difficult. Emory already has vast amounts of resources. The next step is to focus on human and intellectual capital.
- To this end, the team suggests that the following points should be incorporated into its (fiscal) objectives to strengthen its research function:
  1. re-analyze the levels of faculty size;
  2. re-analyze the levels of faculty support;
    - e.g., hire in key areas;
    - e.g., release time (as occurs in the Center for Humanistic Inquiry);
  3. selectively increase the numbers of graduate student cohorts and reexamine fellowship support;
  4. developing a coherent program for undergraduate research opportunities.

## Concluding Remarks

In conclusion, the team recommends that Emory needs to move to the next, bolder and more focused identity in order to make sure that they can support the faculty and students who will sustain the critical intellectual work (both within disciplines and across campus) that gives focus and excellence to Emory. Having created many fascinating programs and collaborations, Emory now needs to make sure that people have the time and energy to sustain them.

The team wants to emphasize that focused themes (or a distinctive profile)

- can be broad and therefore include many people;
- can be relevant to disciplines/departments as well as to cross-campus initiatives;
- should come from faculty but be nurtured by strong leadership;
- need strong and stable leadership in the College and the Graduate School;
- need intellectual leaders who take risks by surveying the intellectual terrain (e.g., biological and biomedical graduate division has galvanized focused activity); making choices; nurturing people and ideas; announcing them to the world.