

# A+ for Wagner College

## A glowing evaluation from accreditation agency

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A team of educators representing the prestigious Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools has given Wagner College a glowing evaluation, a prelude to renewal of the school's accreditation.

The report, based in part on a three day visit to the Grymes Hill campus earlier this month, gives the college the highest marks in the areas of governance, organization and administration, and the quality of its faculty, students and curriculum.

The committee credits the leadership of Wagner President Dr. Norman Smith for turning the college around, financially and academically, over a three year period.

Although the results of Middle States evaluations are not generally released, a copy of the report was obtained by the Advance, and copies were reportedly being circulated among Wagner faculty and staff on Friday.

The eight-member evaluation team was chaired by Robert J. Wickenheiser, president of Mount Saint Mary's College, Emmitsburg, Md.

In its introduction, the Middle States report notes that Wagner "has experienced dramatic changes in the past three years which have affected most areas of campus life."

The report identifies as "first and foremost," the appointment three years ago "of a dynamic and talented new president, who, together with a very supportive board of trustees, made strong, necessary, and extremely gutsy decisions, which have resulted not only in Wagner College being alive today, but in the college being the vibrant institution we find it be, and one positioned for a very promising future."

The committee lauded the college for undertaking a comprehensive and balanced self-study, and concurred with many of the study's findings. It also praised the college for defining the role of the faculty in a newly written and unanimously approved faculty handbook, and favorably noted the appointment of Dr. Mordechai Rozanski as college vice president for academic affairs.

It commended the commitment of the board of trustees in appointing and standing behind the president and administration, and for "improving communication between the board and the faculty between the faculty and administration, between students and the administration, and between students and the board."

It also lauded the trustees for "avoiding overinvolvement in the management of the college during its crisis" and recommended the board stick to its role of setting policy.

Among the strengths of the college pinpointed in the report are "the faculty, administration and staff who are not only by and large a talented and very dedicated group of individuals, but who exhibit unusual and very strong commitment to the college and its mission."

The committee also made two key recommendations concerning future finances and faculty.

It recommended the college become less dependent upon tuition and focus its attention on major fund-raising, and suggested the faculty broaden its scope, noting evidence of a "measure of parochialism" in some departments.

The Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association is the accrediting body for all colleges and universities in the Middle Atlantic states. There are six such organizations nationwide that collectively represent all colleges and universities in the United States.

Every college and university is evaluated periodically. The evaluation begins with a self-study report submitted by the college that reviews, from the college's perspective, the state of the institution's fiscal health, enrollment and academic quality.

After the self-study is completed and submitted in report form, the Commission on Higher Education appoints a team of veteran college educators and administrators to visit the school for a three-day period. The purpose of the visit is to review the results of the colleges self-study and provide an assessment of the college to the commission, which then votes on whether to accredit the college.

The evaluation team visited Wagner April 7 through 10, and submitted its report last week.

The Commission on Higher Education will review the report and is expected to vote on renewal of accreditation in June.