**Introduction:**
With all other elements aside, the academic success of the merger was inevitably due to unwavering faculty dedication to students and their academic achievements. Today’s reorganized faculty functions more like a unit now than at any other period since the merger but this was not easily achieved.

Faculties from both campuses were brought together in departments such as Business, Humanities, Math, and Science through academic reorganization in 1994. This paralleled the creation of a single Dean’s staff that included directors and department chairs from technical and non-technical programs. The physical separation of the Mohegan and Thames campuses and the existence of differing union representation impeded initial efforts to unify faculty. Continued integration of faculty was at times difficult but crucial. Numerous committees, subcommittees, task forces and meetings often dealt with merger issues, challenging faculty endurance but all the while serving as a forum where two different faculty cultures broke down barriers and began to note their likeness.

As the complexion of the community changes, the faculty continues to put teaching and students first, assessing and refining courses and developing new programs. The faculty actively engages in professional development, publishes books and articles, and earns professional distinction and recognition in a wide array of disciplines, reflecting the diverse and accomplished faculty of Three Rivers.

**DESCRIPTION**
Three Rivers’ faculty are well qualified for their teaching responsibilities by appropriate education, training, and experience to support its diverse programs and services. Faculty members meet or exceed the qualifications listed below.

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<th>Classification</th>
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<td>Professor</td>
<td>Master’s and 10 years</td>
<td>6th and 9 years</td>
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<td>Associate Professor</td>
<td>Master’s and 7 years</td>
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<td>Master’s and 4-6 years</td>
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This table of Minimum Qualifications and Standard Equivalencies is established by the Connecticut Community-Technical College (CCTC) Board of Trustees and ensures that faculty members are qualified in the fields and levels of their assignments, and foster accomplishment of the institution’s mission. The table does not delineate equivalencies for professional licenses and certifications, as they are evaluated for specifically situations an on an individual basis. The following information for Three Rivers’ faculty is contained in appendices spreadsheets:

- Faculty Profile – number, age, gender and years at this institution.
- Number of faculty in tenured Positions, departing and retiring.
- Teaching Load – range/median in credit hours, base salary for academic year, fringe benefits and number of faculty appointed.
- Number of faculty by department or comparable academic unit.
- Highest degree earned.
Of the full time faculty, 7 percent have achieved doctorates; 89 percent have achieved master’s degrees; and 4 percent have achieved bachelor degrees. Those in career and technical education maintain professional licenses in their fields, i.e. accountants, architects, engineers, nurses, etc., and have attained a wide range of additional certifications and other professional achievements. This faculty works with active advisory boards and accrediting agencies to maintain currency in their curriculums. Many faculties attend conferences, participate in a range of professional development opportunities, and present at conferences.

Section X of the Board of Trustees Unclassified Personnel Policies Manual guides the recruitment and appointment of faculty. The selection process involves a search committee comprised of faculty and staff. The role of the committee is advisory to the President who is responsible for the hiring decision. In addition to procedural guidelines, the search committee is advised of the Affirmative Action Hiring goals for the position. The hiring goals derive from the college’s annual Affirmative Action plan, which continues to receive the approval of the Connecticut Commission on Human Rights (CCHRO).

The appointment and re-appointment of full-time faculty members is consistent with Board policies and in compliance with the two collective bargaining agreements which represent faculty: Connecticut Congress of Community Colleges (4C’s) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT). Faculty members when hired, receive a copy of the union contract which delineates the terms and conditions of their employment. Copies of the current union contracts are located in the Human Resources office. Department chairs and program coordinators evaluate faculty members in order to measure performance and assess areas for development. The 4C’s faculty are evaluated as follows: (1) in each of their first two appointment periods; (2) once in every two years thereafter for those on standard appointments and (3) once in every three years thereafter for those holding tenured appointments. Faculty members belonging to the AFT union are evaluated annually. The process for evaluating both AFT and 4C’s faculty includes: student ratings of instructor performance; faculty self-assessment; classroom observation; dialogue about future professional and teaching goals, and an overall assessment of faculty performance.

Contractual security for faculty is outlined in Article XII of the AFT contract and Article IX of the 4C’s contract. At the commencement of the member’s sixth standard appointment, the member may apply for tenure consideration. Compensation benefits and professional development opportunities are also provided for in the contracts. These items are considered competitive values when compared to other public higher education systems. The loss of faculty due to retirement and the College’s successful efforts to re-fill those vacancies attest to the college’s ability to consistently attract and maintain qualified faculty. Faculty assignments and workload are consistent with the institution’s mission and purposes. They are equitably determined to allow faculty members adequate time to provide effective instruction, advise and evaluate students, continue professional growth, and participate in scholarship, research, and service.

Faculty workloads, which are reappraised periodically and adjusted as institutional conditions change, are detailed in the union contracts. At the present time, both the 4C’s and AFT faculty members teach 24 credits per year with a 20% additional responsibilities assignment. Faculty in both unions are permitted an option to teach an additional 3 credits instead of performing their additional responsibilities.
The institution provides the faculty with substantial and equitable opportunities for continued professional development throughout their careers. Such opportunities are consistent with and enhance the achievement of the institution’s mission and purpose. Faculty members accept the obligation to take advantage of these opportunities and take the initiative in ensuring their continued competence and growth as teachers, scholars, and practitioners. The union contracts provide funding for faculty to attend conferences, courses and workshops that pertain to their chosen field. Additionally, the 4C’s contract funds a Center for Teaching, which is a system-wide effort to improve instruction. Locally, the Center has funded teaching partners, classroom research activities, curriculum development meetings, and instructional improvement programs.

The institution has mechanisms in place to ensure that faculty act responsibly and ethically, observe the established conditions of their employment, and otherwise function in a manner consistent with the mission and purposes of the institution. The college develops and disseminates to each newly hired staff and faculty, policies that address the following:

- Ethical Conduct Policy
- Drug-Free Workplace Information
- Sexual Harassment
- Workplace Violence

Periodic updates of policies are provided to the college community as they are revised. Effective with the fall 2001 semester, offerings of a three-hour diversity awareness training session were conducted for all full time faculties. Three Rivers Community College fosters academic freedom for each member of the faculty regardless of rank or term of appointment by allowing faculty members to determine the content, design, instructional methods, and mechanisms of delivery of instruction for their courses.

**APPRAISAL**

Three Rivers is proud of the quality, competence, and diversity represented by its faculty, whose variety and breadth of expertise reflects and accommodates the complexities of the community and underpins classroom instruction. The uneven distribution of student workload among the diverse programs within the college has been driven somewhat by the community’s ongoing evolution from a defense industry power-base to a diversified-base. It should also be noted that there is still a heavy reliance on adjunct faculty, especially in the areas of English and Mathematics. The ratio of full-time to part-time instructors is approximately 1/3 to 2/3 which, although consistent with national trends creates program coordination and scheduling difficulties. Often, financial considerations driven by the State budget lead to the appointment of adjunct faculty instead of permanent full-time staff to meet enrollment demands and matters related to adjunct turnover result in workload concerns for full-time faculty members.

Three Rivers recognizes the importance of recruiting and appointing full and part-time faculty members from a diversity of backgrounds as a response to changes in student demographics in the region. The College struggles to meet this challenge. Currently, diversity of cultural and ethnic background among the faculty exceeds that of the local labor pool, though progress has been made in hiring minority candidates in support, administrative, clerical, and maintenance positions. The College advertises positions in local, regional, and national publications and believes that increased staff diversity will benefit students’ experience at the institution. Although overall faculty salaries are competitive with other community college starting salaries, the technical programs present greater challenges due to unfavorable salary competition between industry and education. The College has experienced difficulty in attracting quality candidates in searches for the area of mechanical engineering technology for instance, as an illustration of this problem. The College has maintained compliance with the college’s annual Affirmative Action
plan, which is approved by the Connecticut Commission on Human Rights. Three Rivers has developed and issues an Adjunct Faculty Handbook, administers an orientation process, and welcomes new employees to the College on Professional Day at the commencement of each new semester.

The College’s ability to satisfy its mission is reinforced by the quality of its faculty, which along with staff members in other areas of the College, strain to cover all required tasks. Faculty obligations for course and curricular development, academic planning, student advising, participation in policymaking, and institutional governance, often compete with faculty concentration on the fundamental elements of teaching and learning. The College often seeks to consolidate its committees and work groups but a greater number of faculty members now serve on more committees. The CCTC system has placed an emphasis on faculty members’ additional responsibilities, intensifying labor workloads. While committing to an extraordinary amount of non-teaching work, Three Rivers' faculty members accomplish a great deal but grow concerned as these obligations increase with each new initiative. Recently, some of the long-standing workload differences between the two unions approached resolution as evening classes with lab offerings on the Thames Campus scheduled completion times of 10:00 o’clock PM, moved up from 11:00 o’clock PM, and compensation issues relating to credit hours vs. contact hours were negotiated.

Faculty evaluation and promotion remains a key difference between the 4C’s and AFT unions but differences aside, many faculty members feel the promotion system does not adequately meet the College’s needs. Although evaluation and promotion criteria established by both Agreements places a primary emphasis on teaching effectiveness, and both support the College’s mission, faculty often believe that the process is too political within the 4C’s structure and a matter of “time put in” within the AFT structure. Frequently, Three Rivers has more faculty members eligible for promotion than the allotted expenditures will cover. Instruments for evaluation are more straightforward. Students complete a written evaluation of instructors at the end of each semester and department chairs and program coordinators perform periodic faculty reviews. Results of these reviews are kept in the individual’s professional file.

Faculty members take advantage of opportunities for continued professional development and are excited by their development projects that sometimes include sabbatical activities and publishing. Such opportunities address a variety of teaching and learning issues such as curriculum development, distance learning, instructional technology, cultural diversity, sexual harassment education, supervising work teams, etc. Computer training in-service has greatly improved computer literacy among the faculty. Faculty participation, administration, union contracts, and the Center for Teaching, all contribute to a system-wide effort to improve instruction.

Faculty members are pleased with the high level of academic freedom at Three Rivers, which affords faculty the confidence to design syllabi and classes best suited to advancing student knowledge, without concerns for restrictions. This also includes development of course content, text selection, and implementation a variety of teaching styles. College newsletters and student publications are free to print objective and candid material.

Faculty offices, though recently renovated on the Thames Campus, cluster faculty together in spaces to promote cross-disciplinary activity. Interactions among the faculty include for example, an ongoing lecture series coordination among related disciplines, which includes Architectural Design, Civil, and Environmental Engineering Technology. Faculty members sometimes team teach courses and enthusiastically and regularly collaborate when planning events and recruiting audiences for guest speakers.
The College faculty follows the policies and procedures described herein for matters related to Ethical Conduct, Sexual Harassment, Drug-Free Workplace, and Workplace Violence. Almost the entire college community has attended a three-hour diversity awareness training session.

**PROJECTION**
The College works towards reducing the dependency on adjunct instructors. In recent years, new full time hires have both replaced retiring full time faculty and have added to total full time faculty with four hires just this past year alone. Efforts are made to continue the progress attained in developing a more diverse faculty. Concerns of separate faculty union representation as cited in the 1998 fifth year report to NEASC, still exists. The Human Resources Dept. works to make the union contracts readily available to faculty, delineating key factors of their content, and ongoing efforts to attain parity between the agreements. Equity in the working conditions, as noted in the report has been achieved. Negotiations will continue for parity in all areas across the 4C’s and AFT bargaining agreements.

In addition, the institution will continue to focus on the following areas:

- Three Rivers will continue to pursue its objective to hire more full time faculty, as this will strengthen academic programs, promote curriculum development, and reinforce effective student advising with proper student-to-teacher ratios.

- The institution will continue its efforts to establish long-term affiliations between adjunct faculty and the College and will develop quality office space for adjunct staff and improve communications between adjuncts and the college community. Effective fall of 2002, PTL’s who have taught twenty four hours in the system with at least eighteen at one college will be eligible to be part of a job security pool which provides for course assignment on a seniority basis.

- The quality of and standards for faculty will remain high. The Board of Trustees, administrators, department chairs, program coordinators, and faculty will maintain their commitment to hiring the best-qualified and most effective faculty.

- The College will continue its efforts to attract diverse candidates, advertise broadly, and recruit and hire for all positions in ways that respond to and reflect the region’s diversity.

- Policies generated by the CCTC Board of Trustees, 4C’s and AFT contract agreements negotiated through the collective bargaining process, and internal policies will continue to guide faculty activities and associated review processes.

- The College will continue its programs for faculty development. The institution will continue to work with faculty to allow adequate time for their duties, curriculum development, advising, and college governance.

- Three Rivers should lead efforts to identify other funding sources to supplement currently available professional development money.

- Faculty will continue participation on boards and committees so that the College’s interests and needs are represented in the formulation of policies and procedures.