Introduction:
Planning for and managing its physical resources has been one of the most pressing, ongoing issues for Three Rivers Community College during the last ten years. At the time the self-study for the last accreditation visit was being written, Mohegan Community College was planning for a long overdue major expansion of its facilities, which had finally been approved by the State. By the time of the actual accreditation visit, however, a State mandated merger with Thames Valley State Technical College forced these expansion plans to be placed on hold indefinitely. In their place a new comprehensive master plan was contracted to determine the overall facility needs for the new, combined community-technical college, which would eventually be named “Three Rivers”.

Developing this master plan proved to be a valuable exercise for our newly merged institution, and the plan’s recommendations to greatly expand college facilities and collocate them at the Mohegan Campus site, were generally well received by the faculty, staff, students, and community. Again, funding was authorized for this project, but before design work could be completed, the college was requested by a number of its State Legislators to consider an alternate location. The Norwich State Hospital (NSH), a five hundred acre mental care facility, was being taken out of service and was potentially available to Three Rivers on a no-cost transfer between State agencies.

When a feasibility study of the NSH site indicated the potentially lower construction costs and other advantages at this location, Three Rivers sought permission to move the college to that site. Again Three Rivers was successful in obtaining support for the move from the Board of Trustees, Community-Technical Colleges, and was included in the Governor’s Capital Budget for $61 million to accomplish this project. Unfortunately, this turned out to be the beginning of a seven-year political battle over the best use of the 500-acre NSH property and the best location for the college. Now, after numerous additional public hearings and studies on this and related subjects, a decision to select the existing Mohegan Campus site for the college was made in the spring of 2002. (This entire process is described in detail in the paper, “Three Rivers Community College ...A Very Long Road to New Facilities – A History” which is available in the reference room.)

Throughout this ten-year period, Three Rivers has thus been faced with the constant dilemma of how best to manage and maintain existing facilities while awaiting eminent new physical resources. Repair or Renovate? Replace or Maintain? Upgrade or make-do? In most cases these decisions have not been easy ones, but have hopefully been made with the best interests of the students and the learning process in mind. The results are summarized below:

DESCRIPTION
Three Rivers offers the majority of its programs at two main campuses approximately four miles apart on opposite sides of the city of Norwich, Connecticut.

Thames Valley Campus is located on New London Turnpike about 2 miles southwest of the downtown area. It has 22.7 acres of land of which approximately 7.4 acres is wetlands. There is also an Indian burial ground on this property and the site has been identified as the historical location of a famous Indian battle. The physical plant consists of a single, multi-winged building
of over 110,000 gross square feet of space and parking which serves approximately 577 vehicles. The original South Wing of the building was built in 1962 with the remaining additions in 1967 and 1969. It was occupied for the first time as Norwich State Technical Institute in September 1963 and was renamed as a Technical College the following year. While the Thames Valley labs were “state-of-the-art” at the time of their construction, over 50% have not been upgraded significantly over the years and are greatly in need of the renovations and modernizations planned when Three Rivers’ campuses are finally consolidated.

Mohegan Campus is located on Mahan Drive about 2 miles north of the downtown area. It has 40.7 acres of land in a rural, hilly setting of which wetlands account for about 6 acres and steep slopes another 2.5 acres. The physical plant consists of three interconnected buildings providing over 130,000 gross square feet of space and parking which accommodates approximately 670 vehicles. It was constructed in 1966 as girls’ high school and convent and was converted to a community college in 1972. Although many of the Mohegan spaces have been upgraded over the years, many parts of the school still retain the unmistakable feel of a high school.

Off Campus Courses are also currently offered at the U.S. Naval Submarine Base and Ella Grasso Vocational-Technical High School in Groton, CT and at Waterford High School in Waterford, CT. Continuing Education and Business and Industry Training Programs, both credit and credit free, are also offered at numerous on-site locations throughout Southeastern Connecticut including several of the State prisons in this area. Depending on the location, use of these facilities may be arranged by lease, memorandum of understanding, or specific contract with the user organization.

Collectively these facilities on and off campus provide academic spaces supporting approximately 3,600 credit students and 2,500 credit free students each semester. These spaces include libraries and tutoring centers, twelve computer labs, 25 science and technology labs, and 41 general-purpose classrooms, lecture halls and meeting facilities. They also provide office and administrative spaces supporting approximately 165 full time and 172 part-time faculty and staff.

In addition, Three Rivers strives to make its facilities available for community service related programs to the fullest extent possible and supports upwards of 50,000 visits by members of the community each year. Particularly popular are the 350 seat auditorium at the Mohegan Campus; the gymnasium / multipurpose facilities at the Thames Valley Campus; the Motorcycle Rider Training Course laid out on the Mohegan Campus lower parking area; Catering Services offered by the Three Rivers cafeteria and hospitality management program; and the new art display gallery recently opened in the Mohegan Campus main entrance hall.

Equipment: Three Rivers is generally well equipped to meet its responsibilities with the exception of many of its science and technology labs. Some of these labs have not been changed substantially since their original construction, and most have had only the necessary equipment upgrades to support academic programs and maintain TAC/ABET and other accreditation standards. Most general-purpose classroom furnishings, while still in very good shape, are also greatly in need of modernization. All of these needed improvements are included in Three Rivers Master Plans to expand and co-locate its facilities and have clearly suffered from the delays that have plagued this project for the last seven years.

While these equipment upgrades have been delayed however, upgrades in college information technology resources have not had that same problem. Over the last ten years, several million
dollars have been invested in IT systems, equipment, and services to the end that virtually every faculty, staff, and student has access to state-of-the-art equipment and programs. Because of the importance of these changes on the entire college community, a separate assessment of Information Technology Resources is provided as a later part of the Standard Eight Summary.

For maintenance and transportation purposes, the College leases five vehicles from the State motor pool – two passenger vehicles, one 15-person van, one delivery van, and one pickup truck. Since other vehicles can be obtained on a short-term basis from the motor pool whenever needed, this five-vehicle inventory is more than adequate to meet most all college transportation needs. As an added advantage, the motor pool automatically replaces all vehicles when they reach a prescribed age or mileage. Since the college contracts out for snow removal and trash services, the only other vehicles required for institutional support are mowers and general purposed tractors, which are located at each campus.

**Maintenance:** Both of Three Rivers main campuses are clean, well maintained and generally present a friendly, welcoming image to everyone coming to the College. They clearly reflect the pride and hard work of the small but very capable Three Rivers maintenance staff.

A Building Maintenance Supervisor, who is assisted by a Building Superintendent at each main campus, heads the maintenance staff of the College. In addition to these supervisors, the Mohegan campus has authorizations for four maintainers / custodians and one General Worker and the Thames Valley Campus has three maintainers / custodians and one part-time maintainer to cover shifts from 7:00 AM until midnight Monday through Friday. One General Trades Worker and one Skilled Maintainer are also available daily for all types of maintenance, repairs, and renovations as necessary. Training for all members of the maintenance staff includes a wide range of mandatory programs on safety, security, code compliance, and maintenance skills issues as well as optional in-service programs for career and personal development on virtually all subjects provided within the Connecticut State System. Specialty training to advance technical and administrative compliance skills is also provided whenever necessary.

To supplement the capable efforts of its small maintenance staff, the college uses continuing service contracts for repairs, equipment inspection and maintenance, and minor renovations with local area contractors. At various times, these contracts include electrical, plumbing, boiler and other HVAC services, trash removal and recycling, snow removal, pest control, elevator inspection and service, refrigeration units, fire alarms and extinguishers, and various carpentry services. The college also has the authority to bid, award, and administer deferred maintenance contracts up to $50,000. For more complex construction and repair requirements and major contracts over this amount, the college receives assistance from the Board of Trustees of Community-Technical College System Office, and from the State of Connecticut Department of Public Works.

While the Three Rivers Maintenance Staff does an exceptional job of caring for all facilities and supporting all college programs, they are clearly understaffed by any measure. For example, our general system standard calls for a maintenance force of one custodian/maintainer for each 15,000 square feet of buildings maintained. By this standard, the Three Rivers maintenance staff would need another six members, an increase of 60% to do the job correctly, not to mention the care of over 60 acres of grounds and parking. These staffing shortages are made worse by the duplicate maintenance efforts required to operate and maintain two separate campuses and numerous dual systems. Hopefully, the forthcoming consolidation of Three Rivers at a single
location with new, more efficient equipment and systems will alleviate many of these problems. With expansion of college facilities, authorizations and funding for additional maintenance staffing should also help correct this situation.

**Health, Safety, and Regulatory Compliance:** Three Rivers has always attempted to be very sensitive and responsive to the health and safety needs of all the College Community. Health and Safety programs are coordinated by the Office of the Dean of Administration assisted by an Environmental Health and Safety Committee. This committee is composed of representatives of all areas of the College as well as representatives of local fire and police departments when such individuals happen to be adjunct faculty members at the college. The EHS Committee serves as an advisory board on all college policies and procedures regarding EHS or Security and on all code compliance issues involving OSHA, EPA, Fire Marshal, ADA, etc. Committee members also serve as “hands on” providers of EHS services such as EMT Services, training in various health and safety subjects, coordinating fire drills, or simply helping enforce college rules such as the No-Smoking Policy. Most importantly, all committee members serve as the “eyes and ears” of the College for their constituency to insure that any potential health or safety problem is reported and corrected immediately whenever noted.

Three Rivers does not have any permanent security staff, but rather employs contract security officers at both campuses during regular class hours and for special events. The college also has excellent working relationships with both the Connecticut State Police and the Norwich Police Department who provide rapid backup assistance in case of any emergency. Three Rivers is very fortunate to have experienced a negligible amount of crime and violence over its history as shown in our annual report on “Institutional Security Policies and Crime Statistics” provided in the reference room.

Three Rivers has also had very good working relationships with organizations such as OSHA, EPA, State Fire Marshal, etc. and has made every effort to promptly correct deficiencies noted on any inspections. In fact, an ongoing $400,000 project is just beginning to correct a number of pending ADA and Fire Safety code deficiencies. Another ongoing contract recognizes the increasing complexity of environmental code compliance. Under this contract, all twelve Connecticut Community Colleges are undergoing a comprehensive environmental audit and risk analysis to identify any potential deficiencies in all environmental areas. In anticipation of the increasing workload and demand for expertise in these areas, Three Rivers is also considering the assignment and training of a professional Environmental Health and Safety Officer to meet this critical need.

**Facilities Planning:** Planning and managing college facilities at Three Rivers, particularly since the merger, have been among the most demanding tasks faced by the college during this period. As can be noted in the Three Rivers Master Plan and the numerous feasibility studies which have been completed regarding the future location of the College, extensive thought and planning has been given to the long range needs of the institution and its programs. However, the more difficult aspect of facilities planning has been the day-to-day management of existing facilities and the attempt to stretch these limited resources to meet continually changing program demands. In the last few years there has been a constant competition by all divisions for more space, particularly for space at the right campus and at the right time to meet particular needs. In many instances, ownership of space has become the most prized type of resource, even preferable to “equipment”, “funding” or “staffing”.
In recognition of this sensitive subject, all space allocation issues have been raised to the President’s Cabinet level where the Deans and Management Directors discuss, negotiate, and recommend any space changes for Presidential approval. In virtually all cases in recent years, these decisions have involved only mutually beneficial trades of space agreed to between divisions, or reprogramming of space within the same division to accommodate a changing program need. These space decisions are also communicated to the college Governance Council for information and comment. In unusual instances where the Governance Council feels that there are existing priority space needs at the college which are not being met, the Council may recommend that the Cabinet review and attempt to correct these problems if possible. One such recommendation was made in late 2001 by a Governance Task Force on this subject that Cabinet should examine space deficiencies in three areas: (a) Open computer lab space at the Mohegan Campus, (b) Adjunct Faculty Office Space, and (c) Student Services Office Spaces. Corrective action on items (a) and (b) is already in progress.

Capital Improvements: While awaiting the advent of new facilities, Three Rivers has made a concerted effort to continually maintain and improve existing facilities in order to provide the best possible services within these limits. In the last few years, millions of dollars have been invested in capital and deferred maintenance projects at both campuses including (a) Fuel Tank Replacements, (b) Heating Boiler Upgrades, (c) Thermal Window Replacements, (d) Child Care Center Renovations, (e) Roof Replacement and Repair (f) Creation of Holography and Photonics Laboratories, (g) New Rest Room Facilities, (h) New Faculty Office Spaces at Thames Campus, (i) Expansion / Renovations of Library Spaces, (j) Upgraded Conference / Meeting Rooms at Both Campuses, (k) Mohegan Campus Auditorium / Theater Renovation, (l) New and Upgraded Computer Labs College-wide, (m) New Hall Art Gallery, (n) Student Senate Office(s) and Conference Room Upgrade, (o) Addition of Kitchen / Serving Facilities at Thames Campus, (p) New Integrated College Telephone System, (q) Upgraded Computer and Telecommunications Infrastructure, (r) Student Services Center Renovations at Thames Campus, (s) Mohegan Lobby Renovation, (t) Upgrade of General Purpose Classrooms / Installation of Smart Board Technology (u) Cafeteria Renovations, (v) Gymnasium Locker Renovations, (w) Creation of Continuing Education / BISN Training Lab, (x) Continuing Ceiling, Lighting, and Flooring Replacements at Both Campuses, (y), Upgrade of College Security and Lock Systems and (z) Ongoing ADA and Fire Safety Upgrades College-wide. More significant than the monies invested in these projects, however, has been the personal initiative and leadership by numerous staff and faculty which have made many of these “self-help” programs possible!

Additional Reference Information: Numerous additional documents regarding Three Rivers Physical Resources will be provided in the reference room. These documents include: (1) TRCC Master Plan dated April 1995; (2) TRCC Personal Guide to College Safety and Emergency Response; (3) History of Three Rivers Planning for New Facilities; (4) Institutional Security Policies and Crime Statistics; (5) Feasibility Study – Reuse of the Norwich State Hospital as the Main Campus for Three Rivers CTC; (6) Feasibility Study – Three Rivers CTC at Three Additional Locations at Norwich State Hospital dated January 1998; (7) Three Rivers Community College Feasibility Study Update dated July 3, 2001 Regarding Consolidation at (a) Mohegan Campus, Norwich, (b) Thames Valley Campus, Norwich, and (c) Brewster Point Campus, Preston; (8) City of Norwich Proposal for TRCC Consolidation in the Chelsea District of Downtown Norwich; (9) Vocational Technical School System (VTSS) Feasibility Study to Exchange TRCC Mohegan Campus for Norwich Regional Vocational Technical High School; (10) State of Conn. Dept. of Public Works Review of City of Norwich Proposal Regarding Consolidation in the Chelsea District of Downtown, Norwich, CT and; (11) Feasibility Study for
the Consolidation of the College at the Thames Valley and Regional Vocational Technical School Campus on New London Turnpike dated November 30, 2001. Additional information and documents regarding the ongoing Environmental Audits now being conducted at TRCC and the pending update of the TRCC Academic Master Plan will also be provided in the reference room as available. Other valuable information regarding the history of TRCC’s quest for new facilities will also be available on the TRCC Website at http://www.trctc.commnet.edu/ and at www.state.ct.us/ecd/threerivers.

APPRAISAL
Having gone through extensive Master Planning exercises, facility reviews, and frequent publicity over the last ten years, it is common knowledge at the college and in the community that Three Rivers’ facilities are deficient in a number of key areas. Current plans identify the need to increase TRCC facilities by over 48% to 312,000 gross square feet (GSF) (190,000 ASF) just to meet existing facility shortcomings. Furthermore, an additional 44% increase to 273,700 ASF is recommended to meet the optimal projected needs of the Southeastern Connecticut community served by the College. As noted in current master plans, there are major shortages of facilities in all areas but particularly the following:

- Sufficient, modern classrooms and laboratories to meet the educational needs of a diverse Southeastern Connecticut population, both for credit programs and continuing education / BISN / Community Service programs as well. Greatly expanded library and tutoring facilities to provide a strong foundation for all college learning programs.
- Attractive office and administrative space to effectively run the college and interact personally and professionally with students and community - particularly office and counseling space for the over 130 adjunct faculty who play such a vital role in Three Rivers educational programs.
- Dramatically increased student space – for study, recreation, interaction and involvement with all aspects of college life.
- Efficiently placed and expanded support facilities to insure that all college services are able to enhance rather than compete with all other college programs.

In spite of these shortcomings, Three Rivers’ facilities continue to serve faculty, staff, students, and the community very well. While everyone anxiously awaits the time when our main campuses will be co-located and expanded new facilities will be provided for all programs, the delays the College has encountered en-route to this goal have only been a frustration and not an impediment to ongoing programs and services to students and community. Faculty and staff continue to keep their educational goals and standards high; and demonstrate the enthusiasm, creativity, initiative, cooperation and organizational loyalty necessary to make the best use of existing college facilities for as long as necessary.

PROJECTION
Three Rivers appears to be moving toward a final decision on the site for co-location of its campuses and a timeline for construction of its new facilities. In April of this year, the Governors’ Office of Policy and Management (OPM) conducted an extensive analysis of all studies and proposals regarding the location of Three Rivers. This analysis ruled out several proposed sites and concluded that of the remaining locations, the two existing TRCC campuses would be the preferable choices for the college. Of the two, the analysis suggested that the current Mohegan Campus would have the best potential for expansion to meet all future college needs and would likely be the most cost effective considering all inflationary factors associated with construction timing. Based on this information, the Board of Trustees of Community and
Technical Colleges has authorized the System Office and the Department of Public Works (DPW) to move forward with plans to co-locate the college at the Mohegan Campus subject to the completion of a full environmental impact study regarding this move. These environmental studies are now in process; the College is working with a consultant to update its Academic Master Plan; DPW has begun the selection process for an architect firm and a construction administration firm to design and manage the project; and bonding for the project is being scheduled for FY 2004. Hooray!!!

Unfortunately, although the path to the eventual location of the College on Mahan Drive now appears to be fairly certain: the dream of new, combined, expanded facilities for Three Rivers is still a few years away. Also, it would be unrealistic not to recognize that a number of political bumps and delays probably still exists en-route to this goal. Foremost among these are current State funding difficulties and neighborhood concerns about increased traffic and hydrology problems in the area from overbuilding. Nevertheless, just having an approved goal and the ability to work toward that end will be a great morale builder for the College and a great motivator for all members of the College Community.