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It’s no secret that the cost of higher education has soared to unprecedented figures in the last several decades, and especially in the last decade. According to the State Higher Education Executive Officers Association, tuition at two- and four-year public colleges rose an astounding 45 percent between 2000-2001 and 2010-2011, while state subsidies for these same colleges fell 21 percent.

Since our inception, American Sentinel University has worked diligently to contain our costs. Our strategy is to invest in quality programs, hire experienced faculty and offer students the best possible return on their educational investment. Our tuition cost is among the lowest of our peers, and we also strive to provide superior services—because we believe our role is not just to provide an education, but to also help students graduate. One example of the support we provide is our student success advisors, who serve as students’ cheerleaders, mentors and first stops whenever they need help.

Of course, quality is top of mind in all that we do. American Sentinel offers academic programs in high-growth industries—and we constantly adjust our programs to changes in the marketplace. For example, the implementation of the Affordable Care Act will create a shortage of primary care physicians, and Registered Nurses will soon be expected to provide some of the primary care services that doctors provide today. Our programs, as always, will adapt as needed.

The recent economic downturn has resulted in a surge of people going back to school, and American Sentinel has certainly experienced this as well. We believe that online education is critical to preparing the workforce of the future—and it appears that we are not the only ones. According to the 2011 survey by the Babson Survey Research Group and the College Board, 66 percent of academic leaders at some 2,600 higher education institutions say that learning outcomes in online programs are the same or superior to face-to-face education and that online learning is a critical part of their long-term educational strategy.

In 2012, American Sentinel has continually worked to strengthen our programs by staying focused on learning outcomes, enhancing the student experience and of course, offering a high-quality education for an affordable price. It is part of the fiber of who we are to make education accessible, and we take great pride in doing so while maintaining our commitment to excellent and innovative academics.
From the CEO
Richard W. Oliver, Ph.D.

High-quality academics has always been our primary focus at American Sentinel University. In all that we do, we strive to provide our students the education they need to succeed in their chosen fields and we deliver this promise by designing and teaching relevant curriculum that meets the evolving needs of the marketplace. We also know that the individuals who make this possible are our faculty.

In 2012, American Sentinel University put a great deal of energy toward bolstering our faculty team, hiring five new faculty members in health care and two in technology. We also hired several new leaders, including a dean of nursing, dean of technology, associate deans for our graduate and undergraduate nursing programs, and chairs for GIS and health care informatics. These professionals add considerable bench strength to our university leadership and bring to their positions deep experience at leading universities and organizations across the country. We are excited to welcome them to American Sentinel and know that their talent and skills will help us achieve our goals in the years to come.

This year, we also began using the Quality Scorecard for the Administration of Online Programs, promoted by the Sloan Consortium. The Sloan Consortium is an institutional and professional leadership organization dedicated to integrating quality online education into the mainstream of higher education and was founded by our provost, Dr. John Bourne, with funding provided by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. The Scorecard framework emphasizes five pillars of excellence in online institutions: learning effectiveness, cost effectiveness/commitment, access, faculty satisfaction and student satisfaction. As we strive for quality in all we do, the Scorecard will be an invaluable tool to guide our efforts.

Throughout the pages that follow, you will learn more about our efforts and initiatives to strengthen academics at American Sentinel in 2012. I am very proud of the team we have built and know that our work this year—and our new faculty and leadership team members—will help us continue to enhance our nursing, business and technology programs. Our goal is to help our students secure their best future, and we are better able to do so by bolstering our own as well.
As one of the early online institutions, American Sentinel University has always taken pride in being an early adopter of innovations in distance education. Since our beginning in the 1990s, we have strived to be different than other online programs and universities by focusing not only on delivery approach and solid course instructional design, but also program outcomes and the student experience. In 2012, our leadership took an important step in these efforts.

This year, we were among the first universities in the nation to adopt the Lumina Foundation for Education’s Degree Qualifications Profile (DQP), which illustrates what students should be expected to know and able to do when they graduate—detailed benchmarks for student learning, no matter which degree a student chooses. This tool helps us identify and define the knowledge and skills that American Sentinel students need to be successful. The DQP also helps us answer important questions, such as:

- What are the goals of an American Sentinel University education?
- What should an American Sentinel University graduate (for our various associate, bachelor’s and master’s programs) know and be capable of?
- What is unique about the American Sentinel University learning experience?

Our use of the DQP aligns well with our mission to provide high-quality, innovative degree and certificate programs that enable students to enhance their professional and civic lives. It also supports our continued movement toward active learning: giving students a multitude of opportunities to apply what they learn in their degree programs to their jobs and personal lives. The DQP is guiding us in our outcomes assessment activities so we can ensure American Sentinel graduates have the skills they need in today’s marketplace.

Today, the role of higher education is changing dramatically. Colleges everywhere are more focused on learning outcomes and accountability than ever before, as students seek high-quality educational experiences that will prepare them for their industries of choice—and give them the aptitudes needed by today’s workforce. At American Sentinel, we are excited to embrace this transparent approach to teaching and learning. With our initial steps toward implementation of the DQP, we are headed in the right direction.
In early 2012, I joined American Sentinel University as provost. In this school I saw a commendable commitment to leadership in distance education, and as a longtime champion of technology and online learning during my roles as executive director of the Sloan Consortium, founding faculty of the Franklin W. Olin College of Engineering and professor at Vanderbilt University, I was honored to help lead the university toward new achievements in online educational methods.

This year, we have been hard at work creating new pedagogies and technological infrastructures that improve our teaching—and of course, the student experience at American Sentinel. One example is our MBA’s one-of-a-kind active-learning paradigm, or “challenge-based” curriculum. Students are immersed in the learning process from the beginning of the program, applying what they learn to a self-selected project that spans their entire curriculum. We are continuing to identify appropriate ways to incorporate active learning throughout all American Sentinel programs.

On the technology front, we are striving to improve our teaching methodologies. Our goal is to make the online learning experience as high quality as possible—as good as or better than traditional on-the-ground learning. An exciting development is that of our virtual campus, in which students will be able to interact with each other and access a variety of immersive simulations that replicate learning experiences they might find in the real world—for example, caring for a patient in a clinic setting. In the near future, American Sentinel nursing students will be able to complete a portion of their practicum experiences through virtual simulations. We believe that such simulations integrated into nursing curriculum will become part of the next generation of online learning methods, and we are excited to be at the forefront.

We launched several new programs in 2012, and we are eager to share more about them within this annual report. Not only do these programs meet the evolving needs of today’s health care, technology and business professionals, they embrace learning by doing. American Sentinel has always believed that our role is to help our students enhance their careers and lives. While we are proud of our work this year to more deeply engage students in the classroom and provide ample opportunity for them to apply their insights to their careers, it is only the beginning.
American Sentinel University’s mission is to provide high-quality, innovative degree and certificate programs that enable students to enhance their professional and civic lives.

**AMERICAN SENTINEL UNIVERSITY VALUES**

**Continued Improvements in Quality Outcomes**
- Place the creation of value for the learner at the center of all that we do.
- Embrace the change necessary to continually improve standards and processes to create “best in class” educational content and learning assessments.

**Community of Scholars**
- Keep our students, faculty, staff, communities and other constituents fully informed and engaged in a free exchange of ideas in an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect.
- Seek to identify the special service needs of our students and work diligently to meet or exceed them.

**Connected and Inclusive**
- Act with integrity and behave ethically and transparently.
- Value diversity among the Board, administrators, students, faculty and all other constituents and stakeholders.
- Maintain a workplace characterized by safety, openness, creativity, challenge, and innovation.
TO BE RECOGNIZED AS A WORLD LEADER...

...for providing accessible, quality, advanced education for the motivated, non-traditional learner/professional who seeks to lead in emerging industries or growing market sectors of the global economy...

...for providing new levels of access to motivated, non-traditional students who here-to-fore have not had the opportunity for advanced professional degrees for reasons of time, money or geography...

...for innovative use of technology that creates new standards in assessment and achievement of academic excellence...

...for understanding and meeting the changing needs of its students, communities and other constituents...

...for creating excellence in student and constituent services.

LEARNING TO SUCCEED
At American Sentinel, nurturing students’ talent is our primary responsibility. We believe the only true measure of our success is our students’ success in their chosen fields.

To achieve our goals, American Sentinel pledges to our students that we will, to the best of our ability:

- Offer high-quality educational programs.
- Provide a response to student requests within 24 hours.
- Create a variety of innovative courses and programs that equip students with the latest and most desired knowledge in the marketplace.
- Employ the most innovative educational technologies.
- Provide world-class student services and support.
- Operate in a fiscally responsible manner to ensure students receive the best value in tuition.
- Provide students annual reports on our progress toward meeting our goals.
As American Sentinel University continues to grow and expand our program offerings to best serve students, we know we need the right leaders to carry us forward. In 2012, American Sentinel strengthened our leadership team with several new additions. We are excited to welcome the following people to our university, who bring a great deal of experience and talent to their areas.

**Provost John Bourne, Ph.D.**

Dr. Bourne joined American Sentinel in March 2012. Previously he was executive director of the Sloan Consortium, professor of electrical and computer engineering at the Franklin W. Olin College of Engineering, and professor of technology entrepreneurship at Babson College. He was also professor of electrical and computer engineering and professor of biomedical engineering at Vanderbilt University for 31 years. Dr. Bourne was editor-in-chief of Critical Reviews in Biomedical Engineering for 27 years and founder and editor-in-chief of the Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks. He was a founding faculty member of the Franklin W. Olin College of Engineering and founder of the Sloan Consortium, and has authored numerous articles and books.

Dr. Bourne guides curriculum development, mentors faculty members and ensures that American Sentinel University meets the evolving needs of students by delivering high-quality, innovative programs that support their professional and personal goals.

**Director of Academic Computing R.T. Brown**

Mr. Brown joined American Sentinel in September 2012 from the Sloan Consortium, where he was the director of information technology services. He is a seasoned technology leader and practitioner with more than 20 years of experience. Mr. Brown’s innovative approaches to virtual conferences and online community building led him to be featured in a 2012 case study in Connect Meetings Intelligence Magazine. Throughout his career, Mr. Brown has worked as a technology consultant, director of IT, technology coordinator and teacher.

Mr. Brown oversees all academic computing areas at American Sentinel and is carrying out the university’s goals to offer students next-generation online delivery of education.
Leadership Additions

Dean of Nursing Programs
Judy Burckhardt, Ph.D.,
MAEd, MSN, RN

Dr. Burckhardt joined American Sentinel in October 2012 from Kaplan Higher Education Campuses, where she was dean of nursing and health programs. She led the nursing division at Kaplan Test Preparation and spearheaded the development and growth of the company’s nursing programs. Dr. Burckhardt has many years of experience as an educator and administrator in BSN, ADN and diploma nursing programs. She is the coauthor of a top-selling book of strategies to prepare for the NCLEX-RN exam and has published articles in many nursing publications.

Dr. Burckhardt provides leadership for the planning, growth and improvement of American Sentinel’s nursing programs.

Chair of Geospatial Information Systems
Stephen McElroy, Ph.D.

Dr. McElroy joined American Sentinel in June 2012 from Statistical Research, Inc., where he was assistant director of the department of cartography and geospatial technologies. He has also worked for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service, Southwest Watershed Research Center, the Udall Center for Studies in Public Policy and the Department of Soil, Water, and Environmental Sciences at the University of Arizona.

Dr. McElroy enhances the university’s geospatial technology programs and leads the effort to integrate geospatial competencies into the curriculum.

Associate Dean of Undergraduate Nursing Programs
Gloria Ohmart, Ed.D., MN, APRN

Dr. Ohmart joined American Sentinel in September 2012 from the Chamberlain College of Nursing, where she was the dean of academic affairs. Dr. Ohmart was the founding nursing dean at College America, where she developed and launched the college’s first ADN program. She has also been the nursing chair at the University of Phoenix, College of Nursing, in Colorado, and guided her campus to achieve accreditation by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education. In 1981, Dr. Ohmart established one of the first nurse midwifery private practices in Denver.

Dr. Ohmart is focused on the planning and organizing of all undergraduate nursing programs and guiding those programs toward success.
Chair of Health Information Management
Suzanne Richins DHA, MBA, FACHE, RN

Dr. Richins joined American Sentinel in January 2012. With a doctoral degree, health care executive experience, and certification as a health care administrator, she has more than three decades of health care leadership in a variety of settings including surgical centers, clinics, cancer centers and hospitals. She was the chief operating officer at Kadlec Medical Center and spent 26 years at Intermountain Health Care in nursing leadership. Since 1989, Dr. Richins has taught bachelor’s- and master’s-level nursing students as well as doctoral students in health administration for several universities.

Dr. Richins enhances the health care informatics program using the latest techniques and competencies to ensure graduates can meet the needs of this ever expanding field.

Dean of Technology Juan Vargas, Ph.D.

Dr. Vargas joined American Sentinel in November 2012 from Microsoft, where he was the principal research manager, managing academic relations between the company and the University of California, Berkeley, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and 28 other U.S. universities for the National Science Foundation Cloud Infrastructure program. Dr. Vargas has held various leadership positions at Microsoft and Google. 1988 to 2006, Dr. Vargas was a faculty member at the University of South Carolina, teaching computer science and electrical and computer engineering.

Dr. Vargas provides leadership for the planning, growth and improvement of American Sentinel’s technology programs.

Associate Dean of Graduate Nursing Programs, Cheryl Wagner, Ph.D., MSN/MBA, RN

Dr. Wagner joined American Sentinel in September 2012 from the College of Nursing at South University, where she was program director and an associate professor.

Dr. Wagner has held several clinical and nursing administration positions and has served as assistant dean and acting dean of various nursing programs. Dr. Wagner is an editor of Nursing Interventions Classifications and a member of the organization’s nursing classification and clinical effectiveness research team. She has published numerous book chapters, articles and academic papers and presents frequently at conferences.

Dr. Wagner is focused on the planning and organizing of all graduate nursing programs.
Faculty Additions

Last year also brought many new hires to our faculty team. The following individuals joined American Sentinel as full-time faculty members in 2012:

**NURSING**

**MSN**
- Joanne Grunow, Ph.D., MSN, NP, RN
- Faisal Aboul-Enein, Ph.D., MSN, RN

**BSN**
- Sheri Byrnes, MSN, RN
- Jean Chronis-Kuhn, DNP, MSN, RN
- Kelly Witter, Ed.D., MSN, RN

**TECHNOLOGY**
- Margaret Czart, DrPH, MPH
- Paul Capicik, M.A.

We also hired many new adjunct faculty members:

**BUSINESS**
- Kathleen Ives, D.M.

**NURSING**

**BSN**
- Jodie Baumtrog, MSN, BSN, NP-C
- Ami Bhatt, DNP, MBA/HCM, RN, CHPN, CHCI
- Kris Boivin, MSN, RN, Abd
- Rose Brault, Ed.D, ARNP-C, FAANP
- Michelle Burns, MSN, RN
- Vanessa DePuente, MN, RN
- Mary Drobnak, MSN, BSN, RN
- Karen Egenes, MSN, RN
- Emily Keyes, Ph.D., APRN

**MSN**
- Susan Layton, Ed.D., RN, CNS
- Katie Lemke, MSN, RN
- Debra Luisi, MSN, RN
- Sheila Marquart, Ed.S., MSN, RN, CHPN
- Patricia Natale, MSN, RN, NEA-BC
- Cynthia Newell, Ph.D., RN, CNOR, NE-BC
- Mary Olson, DNP, ANP
- Tracy Riddle, MSN, BSN, RN, FNP-BC
- Tonya Sawyer-McGee, DNP, MSN, RN, ACNP-BC
- Joyce Van Natta, MSN, RN-BC
- Cara Wallace, Ph.Dc., MSN, RN
- Elise Webb, MSN, RN
- Lakeisha Wheless, MSN, BSN, RN
- Cheryl Williams, D.H.Ed., RN

**DNP**
- Michael Landry, DNS, RN
Adjunct Spotlight
American Sentinel University

American Sentinel University is committed to providing our students a transformative experience that enables them to succeed in their chosen fields—and we know that our faculty play an important role in helping us reach that goal. In addition to our first-rate full-time faculty, we are also incredibly proud of our adjunct faculty members and the rich experiences they bring to the classroom. Meet just three of American Sentinel’s standout adjuncts:

**TECHNOLOGY Dan Randall, MSCS**

Mr. Randall is a 2003 alumnus of American Sentinel University (B.S. Computer Science) and has since earned a master's in computer science from Capitol College and began a Ph.D. program at Nova Southeastern University. He has had an extensive career in software engineering and IT and is currently a software engineer at Daegis, an information management software company.

“I think the best way to have a positive impact on students is to be interested in the courses,” says Mr. Randall, who started teaching at American Sentinel in 2010. “I love my field and the courses I teach, and I let students know that.” As one of American Sentinel’s most respected technology professors, Mr. Randall says he enjoys the curriculum and his interactions with students. “When I discuss challenging material with students, I can see them excel. I’ve had many positive moments with our students and those interactions mean a lot to me.”

**BUSINESS Gigi Smith, DM, MBA, PMP**

Dr. Smith has more than two decades of experience in the analysis, development and management of complex data systems. Currently, she is deputy director and chief information officer at the Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs, planning and directing all data collection and processing activities associated with alcohol and drug programs in California. Since 1995, she has taught both undergraduate and graduate courses at American Sentinel and is the chair of the business faculty advisory committee.

“I believe higher education must encompass a holistic approach to educational delivery that views the student as central to the learning process,” says Dr. Smith. “My goal is to remove the barriers that can encumber that process for a student and restrict their education.” Dr. Smith appreciates teaching at American Sentinel because she believes in the mission. “I believe college should be a stepping stone and lead adults into the next phase in their careers.”

**NURSING Ami Bhatt, DNP, MBA, MSN, BSN**

Dr. Bhatt has an 18-year nursing background in the emergency room, the intensive care unit, telemetry, case management, hospice, home care, administration, consulting and teaching. In 2013, she was elected as an ambassador to the national Hospice and Palliative Nurses Association from the state of Michigan and selected as one of just 10 people to attend the National League for Nursing’s writing retreat in Phoenix.

Dr. Bhatt started teaching at American Sentinel in 2012 and says she strives to offer compassion, support and, of course, knowledge to her students. “I believe in self-empowerment and leading by example,” she says. “If I advise my students to strive for excellence, then I must also do just that. I love working at American Sentinel among supportive professionals.”
In the fall of 2012 we engaged in a complete refresh of the MBA program curriculum and focus.
Program Improvements and Additions

MBA

In 2012, American Sentinel University completed an in-depth assessment of our Master of Business Administration program and a market analysis of the MBA market in the United States. Our findings led us to conclude that the time was right to improve our MBA in order to elevate the program’s national reputation—and become competitive in the MBA marketplace.

In our research we found that of the nearly 3,800 colleges and universities in the U.S., 833 institutions, or 22 percent, offer an MBA program. For this reason, we understood the importance of differentiating our program and thus, we engaged in a complete refresh of the curriculum and program focus. In the fall of 2012, we unveiled our revamped MBA program, which now has a number of distinctions:

- **An applied program** – The MBA program provides students the knowledge and critical thinking skills to immediately add value to their organizations.

- **Action-based learning** – At the outset, every student identifies a business challenge or opportunity, applying what he or she learns throughout the MBA program, and addresses that self-selected challenge in the final capstone course.

- **Valuable program takeaways** – Graduates gain two tangible assets upon completion of the MBA program: an evidence-based e-portfolio showcasing their business knowledge and a business plan or proposal that addresses the business challenge they selected.

With these changes and a renovated set of courses that includes an innovative and engaging new business simulation course—which enables students to practice strategy-based decision making in a risk-free environment—we believe our MBA program has great potential to become a leading program at American Sentinel and a strong offering among peer MBA programs.

Master of Geospatial Information Systems

American Sentinel embraces the idea that geospatial competencies are becoming important for all of our students. While we have long offered two geographic information systems programs (the Associate of Science and the Bachelor of Science), in 2012, we decided to launch a master’s program as well: the Master of Geospatial Information Systems.*

*In 2012, we also launched a Geospatial Information Systems Graduate Certificate, which you can read more about on page 21.
In September, the Master of Geospatial Information Systems (MGIS) was approved by our accrediting agency, the Distance Education and Training Council. We welcomed our first cohort of students in November.

This new master’s program has a few unique features as compared to similar programs at other institutions:

- **Course track and project track** – Students can choose from two tracks: a course track and a project track. Both tracks include five core courses, several elective courses, and a GIS project, but the project track allows students to design and delve into a more comprehensive geospatial project that can be applied to a tangible workplace issue.

- **Application across industries** – The MGIS explores GIS applications across five different industry segments: health care, business, government, defense and public safety, and environment and natural resources.

- **Four start dates** – Students can begin the program in January, April, July or October. The MGIS is a cohorted program, but is also flexible.

The MGIS had a solid start before the end of the year and will be a program of focus for our technology team in 2013.

**DNP Educational Leadership**

In July 2012, American Sentinel University launched the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) Educational Leadership program—two years after the launch of the DNP Executive Leadership, our first doctoral program. The program’s initial cohort of seven students includes deans and directors of nursing schools and programs, but based on market response, program leadership made the decision in late 2012 to open up the program to any senior nursing faculty who are aspiring to become deans and directors in their careers.

Why a doctoral program focused on education? The health care environment is unique and complex, and our nation’s hospitals and nursing schools are certainly feeling the pressure to prepare today’s and tomorrow’s workforce. Skills such as management, leadership and resource planning as well as deep knowledge of the changing health care regulations are more important than ever. Unlike traditional research-based Ph.D. programs and general education Ed.D. programs, American Sentinel’s DNP Educational Leadership is a practice-based, leadership-focused program that gives nursing education leaders the skills they need in today’s health care landscape.

Although the DNP Educational Leadership program is still new, we are experiencing a very positive response to the program and expect it to grow significantly in 2013 and beyond. Anecdotally, the program is already regarded as one of a few such DNP programs in the country to have an educational focus. We believe we are trendsetters with our new DNP program and we are excited to welcome this new group of students to American Sentinel in the years to come.
Skills such as management, leadership and resource planning as well as deep knowledge of the changing health care regulations are more important than ever.
Focusing on Instructional Design

At American Sentinel University, we take great pride in designing an effective learning environment that engages and excites our students and also guides them toward learning outcomes. As an online institution, we recognize the particular importance of instructional design in our course development—given that the online environment presents unique challenges around student interaction, content delivery and learning assessment.

In 2012, we hired our first director of instructional design, Kristen Bourgault, who brings to American Sentinel over a decade of experience developing online programs and courses at colleges and universities in the eastern U.S., including Quinnipiac University, Lesley University, Simmons College and the University of Maine at Farmington.

Ms. Bourgault immediately set to work constructing a plan to assess the design and implementation of all 300 courses at American Sentinel. Through interviews with faculty and administration, student evaluations, data collection from external auditing groups and more, Ms. Bourgault identified areas of improvement within each course and created best practices around course development and delivery. In addition, she began exploring various tools that could improve the delivery of our online content and increase student engagement. At the end of 2012, Ms. Bourgault was interviewing candidates for two open positions: instructional designer and instructional technology specialist.

Though we made great progress in 2012, there is much work to be done. In 2013, an expanded instructional design team will help develop a streamlined process for delivering clear, concise and easy-to-navigate content—in all current course offerings and with any new courses that the university develops. We will focus on introducing new tools and technologies as well as creative pedagogical approaches that enhance the learning experience—including simulated learning environments, ePortfolios and an interactive presentation tool called VoiceThread. The instructional design team will also help American Sentinel refresh and revamp several existing programs to better meet the evolving needs of our students.
We are among the first universities to adopt Lumina’s Degree Qualifications Profile, and one of the few online institutions employing this tool.
Since our inception, American Sentinel University has frequently looked to the Lumina Foundation for Education for guidance on the best ways to enroll and graduate more students. We admire their mission to increase the number of Americans with high-quality degrees and credentials, and thus, were eager to adopt Lumina’s Degree Qualifications Profile (DQP). We were among the first universities in the nation to do so and are currently among the few online institutions employing this tool.

The DQP defines learning outcomes that graduates of associate, bachelor’s and master’s degree programs need to succeed in the 21st century work environment, regardless of their field of specialization. The profile provides a framework of five areas of learning (and the specific degree benchmarks within each). Those five areas are:

- **Specialized knowledge** – Knowledge acquired in a specialized field of study.
- **Broad, integrative knowledge** – Knowledge acquired in general education fields.
- **Intellectual skills** – Includes analytic inquiry, use of information resources, engaging diverse perspectives, quantitative fluency and communication fluency.
- **Applied learning** – Actually doing what students know is the critical outcome of their education.
- **Civic learning** – Applying skills to representative questions and problems in the wider society.

In addition, Lumina suggests adding a sixth area: institution-specific learning.

Our goal at American Sentinel is to use the DQP framework to create learning outcomes for each and every course and program we offer. This process of dissecting our courses and mapping their learning activities and objectives to the DQP is a comprehensive and time-consuming endeavor that may take us several years to complete, but we believe it is worthwhile. In addition, moving forward, we are adhering to the DQP framework when we develop any new courses or degree programs. We hope to identify an assessment tool that will assist us with this process in 2013.

Many individuals have helped carry forward this initiative, including Provost Dr. John Bourne, who is leading the effort, Dr. Devon Cancilla, dean of business and information technology, and Dr. Gene Ziegler, chair of general education. We are in the early stages of adopting the DQP, but it is a bold step forward for our university. Without a doubt, our commitment to utilizing this framework to assess and advance our students’ learning sets us apart from our peers.
We are continually exploring tools that could improve the delivery of our online content and increase student engagement.
Like many higher education institutions across the country in recent years, American Sentinel University has seen increased demand for shorter certificate programs. In today’s world, many pursue certificate programs to gain new knowledge to keep them current in rapidly changing fields, while others are attracted to certificates as an affordable, faster academic alternative to bachelor’s or master’s programs. Quite simply, certificates are an excellent way for professionals to equip themselves with new skills for their current field—or a field or industry that they are interested in pursuing now or in the future.

In response to the growth of GIS and health care demand in 2012, American Sentinel introduced two five-course, 15-credit-hour certificate programs:

- The Geospatial Information Systems Graduate Certificate teaches students to apply geospatial information to address organizational challenges using tools that enable the integration of visual, spatial, temporal, social and contextual information into the working environment. All five courses can be directly applied to the Master of Geospatial Information Systems.

- The Infection Prevention and Control Certificate is one of the few academic certificate programs available in the field of infection prevention and control. The program is designed to give clinicians, nurses, physicians, managers, non-nurse practitioners, infection control team members and other health care professionals the academic credentials they need to develop best practices for infection prevention and control. It also helps prepare students who intend to pursue the Certification in Infection Control credential. All five courses can be directly applied to the MSN, infection prevention and control specialization.

Toward the end of 2012, our curriculum development team began to research other certificate programs. We are excited to develop and launch these programs in the years to come. As always, American Sentinel is in tune to the needs of our students and the trends in the professions we serve. We will continue to explore certificate programs that could benefit our students in their various career stages.
Quite simply, certificates are an excellent way for professionals to equip themselves with new skills for their current field.
Bolstering Student Support

American Sentinel University is committed to helping students succeed. One of the most important ways we do this is by assigning each and every student a new-student success advisor for their first few months at the university, and later, a student success advisor (SSA) to guide them through the remainder of their time as students. The student support team helps students acclimate to American Sentinel and is on call to answer questions, address students’ concerns, connect students with resources and services they need, and much more. High-touch, personalized support through every step of the academic journey is an integral part of the American Sentinel experience.

In 2012, we strengthened the student support team by creating two new positions: lead SSA and lead new-student SSA. We also hired a project lead to manage our student support webinar series, which covers a wide range of common student issues—including everything from time management to planning for success to conducting effective research.

Our continued efforts to support and encourage American Sentinel students are yielding positive results, many of which we measure on a regular basis. Here are a few encouraging trends:

- **New enrollment non-start rate** – Our non-start rate—newly enrolled students who never start their first course—is 7.5 percent, down from 7.9 percent in 2010.
- **Active student course registration** – Between 2010 and 2012, average registration increased from 5.6 to 6.2 courses taken per 12-month period.

In 2012, the student support team also developed a number of action plans that will even further enhance the new student experience and offer graduation-focused, career-concentrated support for all students. We are excited about our 2012 progress and look forward to continuous improvement in 2013.
High-touch, personalized support through every step of the academic journey is an integral part of the American Sentinel experience.
University News

Campus Labs
One of the greatest challenges of higher education institutions is finding the most effective ways to assess programs, outcomes and services. Certainly, accreditation plays a significant role in helping us maintain certain standards and prove that our university does what it claims to do, but we must also carefully track those accrediting agency requirements in an effective and efficient way so that we can report pertinent data to our stakeholders.

In August 2012, American Sentinel University licensed several modules within Campus Labs’ product suite. Campus Labs has become the leading platform for assessment, and today has more than 650 colleges and universities as member institutions. We have implemented and started using their accreditation compliance and planning, student involvement and course evaluation platforms and will soon employ the student and learning assessment module.

Already, we are finding the Campus Labs program to be a comprehensive and useful tool to help us better plan and evaluate American Sentinel’s programs, learning outcomes and more, and create a centralized approach to our assessment activities. This was an exciting strategic investment for us and will help us gain new insights about ourselves, identify opportunities for institutional improvement and stay on track for all accreditation requirements.

Higher Learning Commission
In 2012, American Sentinel University began the process of seeking affiliation with the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association. More than 1,000 institutions are currently affiliated with the commission. We are several years away from achieving status with the Higher Learning Commission, but are in the midst of the pre-application process to determine our eligibility, and thus far have completed our preliminary evidence review and pre-application interview and received a post-interview commission letter with suggestions to prepare ourselves for the next phase of their process.

As of the end of the year, our next step was to submit our intent to complete the eligibility filing. Doing so will move us toward the application process and eventually, toward a four-year candidacy period. We have just set foot on the road to Higher Learning Commission affiliation, but are excited about one day joining this group of institutions across the country. As we progress through this extensive process in the years to come, we will continue to update our stakeholders and community members.
Our exciting investment in Campus Labs has proven it to be a useful tool for planning and evaluating programs and outcomes as well as identifying opportunities for improvement.
National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission (NLNAC) and Collegiate Commission on Nursing Education (CCNE)
The NLNAC visited American Sentinel in 2012 to evaluate all of our nursing degree programs for accreditation. As a result of the visit, the university decided to maintain accreditation with the CCNE for our bachelor's and master's programs and move forward with NLNAC for the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) programs. The DNP Executive Leadership and DNP Educational Leadership programs remain in candidacy for NLNAC accreditation and a site visit is scheduled for fall 2013. Throughout 2012 and in the year to come, we will be preparing for this visit and for the CCNE visit for re-accreditation that will take place early in 2014.

Accreditation standards encourage us to look with a critical eye at the work we do, continually document our progress and findings and—just as important—engage our faculty in improving our curriculum, teaching methods and more. In all accreditation activities, American Sentinel strives to create a framework for continuous improvement.
In 2012, American Sentinel University joined the Transparency by Design initiative, a collaborative collection of regionally accredited, distance education institutions whose mission was to help adult learners become informed consumers. In our 2011 annual report, we shared that we were one of just 20 online universities in the world to voluntarily adhere to the guidelines of this initiative, which called for us to report in-depth data about our university and our programs.

In early 2013, the Transparency by Design initiative was disbanded, as stated on their website:

*At the beginning of 2013, the College Choices for Adults website was shut down, after a unanimous decision of the Transparency by Design Executive Committee. Though a worthwhile project, the College Choices for Adults website was ahead of its time in accountability measures and thus was unable to reach self-sustaining membership levels.*

American Sentinel has long embraced transparency as a core value of our university. While we no longer have this initiative to guide us, we will continue to communicate to our students, alumni, friends and greater community all of the necessary information they may need to measure our performance and compare us to other institutions.

**Demographics**

Total enrollment – **2,921**

Average age: **44**

Age distribution:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20–29</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30–39</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40–49</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50–59</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 and Above</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 20 or over 65</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unreported</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Race/ethnicity of students:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian/Alaska Native</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Declined to answer</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part-time/full-time enrollment: **86% PT, 14% FT**

Percent of students employed at time of admission: **95%**
Percent of Total Students Enrolled by Program as of December 2012:

- RN to BSN: 51.8%
- MSN: 26.1%
- Doctor of Nursing Practice Executive Leadership: 4.0%
- B.S. Geographic Information Systems: 3.3%
- B.S. Computer Science: 2.7%
- B.S. Business Administration: 2.1%
- MBA Health Care: 1.5%
- Master of Business Administration: 1.3%
- A.S. Geographic Information Systems: 0.75%
- B.S. Information Technology: 0.72%
- M.S. Information Systems: 0.69%
- M.S. Business Intelligence: 0.62%
- M.S. Computer Science, Computer Programming: 0.45%
- B.S. Information Systems Security: 0.41%
- B.S. Management Information Systems: 0.41%
- Doctor of Nursing Practice Educational Leadership: 0.41%
- M.S. Computer Science: 0.38%
- Master of Geospatial Information Systems: 0.24%
- Single Course Study: 0.24%
- B.S. Web Design and Development: 0.14%
- M.S. Computer Science, Information Systems Security: 0.14%
- M.S. Health Systems Management: 0.10%
- A.S. Information Systems: 0.07%
- B.S. Technology Management: 0.07%
- Infection Prevention and Control Certificate: 0.07%
- A.S. Computer Science: 0.03%
Learner Progress

Learner completion rates:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree Program</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health Care</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RN to B.S. Nursing</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.S. Nursing</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor of Nursing Practice Executive Leadership</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.S. Business Administration</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master of Business Administration</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master of Business Administration Health Care</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.S. Business Intelligence</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.S. Geographic Information Systems</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>B.S. Computer Science</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.S. Information Systems</td>
<td>38.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>M.S. Computer Science</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.S. Information Systems</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

% of all students that are active or have graduated after one year: 73%*

*In the 2011 annual report, the wording of this metric was slightly different; however, we are reporting the same figure. Last year’s learner progress language: Learner retention rate for part-time students attending American Sentinel for the first time.

2012 course completion rates:

- American Sentinel students complete 95% of their courses.
- As reported to the Distance Education and Training Council, completion rates for the 10 most popular courses (those with the highest enrollments) were greater than 90%.
- Of the remaining American Sentinel courses, 57% have a completion rate greater than 90%, 23% have a completion rate between 80 and 89%, and 19% have a completion rate of less than 80%.
- All courses with a completion rate of less than 90% are being reviewed to determine if changes can be made to improve the completion rate.

2012 student satisfaction rates: 95% for the 10 most popular courses at American Sentinel
### 2012 graduates by program:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree Program</th>
<th>#</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Technology</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.S. Computer Science</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.S. Geographic Information Systems</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.S. Information Systems</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.S. Computer Science, Software Development</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.S. Geographic Information Systems</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.S. Information Systems</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.S. Information Technology, Networking</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.S. Technology Management</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.S. Web Design and Development</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.S. Computer Science</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.S. Information Systems</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Business</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.S. Business Administration</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.S. Business Administration</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.S. Management Information Systems</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master of Business Administration</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.S. Business Intelligence</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health Care</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.S. Health Informatics</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RN to B.S. Nursing</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.S. Health Systems Management</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.S. Nursing</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor of Nursing Practice Executive Leadership</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>