This is the first Annual Report for American Sentinel University. As the first such report to our constituents, it is emblematic of a new beginning, for an entirely new school that emerged from the joining of three existing schools.

The three schools (American College of Computer & Information Sciences; American Graduate School of Management; and Sentinel University) each brought unique attributes to American Sentinel University. One school had more than fifteen years of educational operating experience; another, a rich academic tradition from its founders; and the last, a promising future of educating professionals in health care. The schools joined officially in late 2005, but it wasn’t until February 2006 that we announced the formation of American Sentinel University.

Although the University has operated as a single entity for just short of a year, it has been a period of significant evolution, transition, and change.
“One of the most important positions that the American Sentinel University Board of Trust has taken is to be increasingly transparent to our stakeholders. So the theme of this year’s Annual Report is simply Transparency. In these pages, you find detailed data that provide information on how we are doing serving the needs of our students.

Mary Adams will describe our goals and progress toward graduation.

Jeff Caplan shares his thoughts on new social media or “user-generated content” that allows students, faculty and others to transparently become part of our social fabric at ASU.

And finally, Brian Carlisle, our vice president of information systems, takes you inside our internal systems network, CASPER™, a name that evokes transparency itself!”

Dr. Kenneth McLennan
Chair, Board of Trust
American Sentinel University
We Nurture Talent

We believe nurturing the talent of American Sentinel University students and alumni is our most important responsibility.

We further believe the only true measure of our success is our students’ success in their chosen fields of endeavor.

To achieve our goals, we pledge to our students that we will, to the best of our ability:

• Offer the highest quality educational content available anywhere in the world;
• Provide a response to student requests in no longer than 24 hours;
• Create a constant variety of innovative courses and programs that provide students with real choice in the latest and most desired best practice knowledge demanded in the marketplace;
• Employ the most innovative educational technologies;
• Provide world class student services; and
• Operate in a fiscally responsible manner to ensure students receive the best value tuition.

Finally, we pledge to annually provide students with the facts that demonstrate our progress in meeting our goals.
MISSION, VISION AND VALUES

Mission Statement

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.

Vision Statement

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.

Values

Continued Improvements in Quality Outcomes

We place the creation of value for the learner at the center of all that we do.

We embrace the change necessary to continually improve our standards and processes to create “best in class” educational content and learning assessments.
At ASU, Outcomes = Graduation

Mary Adams (3rd from left) assists ASU Chair Dr. Kenneth McLennan (2nd from left) and Dr. Germain Böer, Board of Trust (1st from left) in her most important function, awarding degrees to graduating students.

In education circles today, the number one watchword is outcomes.

The word “outcomes” means many things to many people. At ASU, we think that the most important outcome of education is graduation. We are dedicated to helping students graduate. We believe graduation is the reason students choose to study at American Sentinel. And, for the administration, faculty and staff, graduation is our number one goal. Everything else we do pales by comparison.

Already ASU (and its predecessor schools) have graduated more than 750 students. In 2008 we made great strides toward moving more students closer and closer to graduation and more students to graduate. In 2009 we hope to do even better.

Since we formed American Sentinel University in February of 2006, we have made steady progress in helping more and more students move faster toward graduation.

Until the end of June 2006, students were registered in what we called “open-ended” or “non-term” courses. Under that program structure enrollments did not include a time frame for course completion. A shift to Annual Terms – with enrollment requirements of 18-20 credit hours for undergraduate students and 12 credit hours for graduate students -- took effect for students who enrolled after September 1, 2004, but students were not subject to specific course completion requirements. A fixed-length term structure for all courses was introduced on July 1st of 2006.

ASU’s current graduation data applies to students enrolled under our “legacy” program, completing their programs under the open-term structure and new students who enrolled after July 1, 2006, completing their programs in a “structured” program with fixed-length term course and registration requirements.

We believe the change to structured terms in July of 2006, along with the introduction of a core curriculum for all technology majors, will take some time to impact graduation rates in the undergraduate programs (the first full-year, 8-year graduation rate reported for these students will not be available until 2014). However, we can infer the impact of these changes and their potential effects on graduation rates from current completion, dropout, and persistence rates.
Credit Hours Earned as an Indicator of Student Progress

The rate of credit-hour completion for term students continues to show improvement when compared to students who enrolled under the non-term format, and with those who originally enrolled in the annual term format (Figure 1). Further, students enrolled since July 2006 (the newer, term era) have shown progression in credit hours earned per eight-week period for undergraduate students, and per 12-week period for graduate students, indicating an increased pace of course completion that will, if maintained, result in increased graduation rates (Figure 2). The current rate of credit hours earned for all active students enrolled in the term structure is now comparable to that of the historic average credit hour completion rate of successful (graduating) students (Figure 3).

FIGURE 1.

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FIGURE 2.

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Maintaining this rise in credit hours earned is expected to translate into an improvement in overall graduation rates at a point where sufficient time has elapsed to properly represent these rates for students who completed their program under the term structure.

Overall Dropout Rates as an Indicator of Student Persistence

Dropout rates for both graduate and undergraduate students have also decreased sharply under the new structure. Student non-completion rates in the non-term structure decreased to 24.5% under the annual term format, and stands at 8% for students enrolled in the most recently implemented structure. For graduate students, these rates are 20.8%, 15.5%, and 5% respectively. Taken together, the dropout and credit hour completion figures indicate a significant increase in student persistence at both the graduate and undergraduate level.

While changes in graduations occur at a much slower pace, we believe that student acceleration in credit hours earned (measured in credit hours earned per 3-month period of enrollment) and increased student persistence are reasonable predictors for improved future graduation rates. We are determined to improve our graduation rates and trust that students will show equal determination to reach their individual graduation!

Mary A. Adams

FIGURE 3.
Social Media: The Rise of New Education Services

Jeff Caplan
Dean, Strategic Enrollment Management

One of the most amazing transformations in media use has occurred in the last several years. Digital media of all kinds is inexorably replacing older, analog forms of media that have dominated for years (see Chart 1).

![Chart 1: Dramatic Changes in Media Consumption](image)

Often, when you are right in the middle of such a huge transformation, it is easy to just take it for granted! Or, to dismiss some part of it as a passing fad (which it sometimes is).

For most of us, if we pick up on something that is a passing fad, we just end up with another piece of electronic equipment in the back of the closet (can someone say video disk or PDA?), or, simply quit doing something that becomes boring or of little value, or, quickly convert to the new ‘latest thing’!

Equally important, we have to be aware of what technologies are passing out of use. Newspaper readership, for example has been declining over the last several years (see Chart 2).
For many, these changes, subtle or dramatic, are merely part of the everyday evolution of life. As educators, however, it is important that we sort out what is real and what is a passing fad and try to stay abreast of what students want and need. So, for example, we have been studying closely the change to e-books and hope to make these increasingly available to students as “readers” as the availability of electronic text books improves. We also need to know what is becoming less useful to our students – that’s why we constantly survey students on their satisfaction and media habits.

Obviously, American Sentinel University wouldn’t exist if it weren’t for the Internet. Our belief is that distance learning via the Internet will become one of the most popular forms of learning, particularly for the adult learner and will grow as the Internet continues to grow. (see Chart 3)

Clearly, there is an array of new technologies and services that are here to stay (and, as noted, some that are fading). American Sentinel University has been watching them closely and noted the dramatic rise in usage in a lot of fields in everyday life, not only in education.

Several of our newest degree programs, in fact, reflect our strong belief that these dramatic changes are here to stay: game programming, geographic information systems and business intelligence.
One area of important growth that American Sentinel believes is also here to stay is social media, or what some might call “user-generated content.” ASU is and will continue to add such media into our courses and services. For example, we now have our own site on Facebook Linked In and MySpace, you can follow us on twitter and you can find videos from us on YouTube (see Chart 4).

**CHART 4. User Generated Content (A New Educational Service?)**

Our pledge to you - we will add such media when we clearly see it is here to stay! We started a Blog to keep everyone up to date.

We also launched several new online communities. These social sites were created to enable current and potential students, alumni, faculty and others to stay better connected and participate in online discussions, information sharing and networking.

Receive the latest school news, announcements, relevant articles and other information by joining the following groups today!

- Facebook
- LinkedIn
- MySpace
- Twitter

We hope you’ll find it useful, and educational.

Jeff Caplan
Dean, Strategic Enrollment Management
Since the formation of American Sentinel University the goal of our information systems has never changed: provide students, faculty and administrators with systems and technology that support the school’s mission to constantly improve and enhance educational outcomes.

ASU uses the acronym CASPER to represent the fundamental philosophical and technological directions for ASU information systems.

CASPER is the name for the popular friendly, but nearly invisible, ghost. In this context, CASPER represents two of the fundamental beliefs of ASU: that our information systems should be user-friendly and transparent, or largely invisible to the user.

ASU believes technology that is hard to use and visibly intrudes on the learning situation, works to slow or lessen learning. That’s why we work so hard to keep it friendly and transparent.

All technology and information services we adopt at ASU must meet the following criteria:

1. It must significantly enhance or improve the ASU goal to constantly improve educational outcomes.
2. It must be easy to use and transparent for ASU stakeholders.

While the name CASPER captures our fundamental approach to technology, it is also an acronym that stands for Confucius, Aristotle, Socrates, Plato, Einstein and Rumi. These historic educator/philosophers are the names we use for various databases and services. We adopted the use of these names because they remind us constantly of our most important mission: student learning.
The following schematic captures the principal elements of the CASPER:

Here is a brief explanation of each of the databases or services and the historical educator for whom it is named:

**Confucius Student Interfaces & Services:** ASU calls its bundle of student interfaces and services Confucius to remind us what the famous Chinese philosopher and teacher believed that the highest attainment of learning is wisdom. Confucius was born in 551 BC. in China, argued for the importance of study. He is called the Greatest Master by Chinese. He proposed that his students think deeply for themselves and understand world around them. His teachings emphasize self-understanding and skilled judgment. His most popular posthumous names are “the Greatest Sage,” “first teacher” or “the Teacher who assists the wise to their attainment.” His most famous teaching is the Golden Rule:

> Adept Kung asked: “Is there any one word that could guide a person throughout life?”
> The Master replied: “How about ‘shu’: never impose on others what you would not choose for yourself?”

**Aristotle Knowledge Database:** ASU maintains a database that keeps track of all important information about our school including such things as student policies. ASU uses the name of Aristotle because some believe that Aristotle was likely the last person to know everything there was to be known in his own time. Aristotle (384 BC – 322 BC) was a Greek philosopher, was a student of Plato and teacher of Alexander the Great, and wrote widely on an endless number of subjects from astronomy, to theology, poetry, ethics, biology and zoology and made significant contributions to them.
**Socrates Faculty Database:** ASU keeps all its information about faculty in this database. We chose the name Socrates because he is often thought to be the most important teacher of all time. Socrates (470 BC–399 BC), was a Classical Greek philosopher, best known for the creation of the Socratic Method. He is renowned for developing the practice of the teacher asking questions of the student to elicit the best answer. Socrates is credited with exerting a powerful influence upon the founders of Western philosophy, most particularly Plato and Aristotle.

** Plato Course Database:** We keep all the information of our nearly 300 online courses in this database. We used this name because Plato founded the first institution of higher learning in the western world organized in an area of Athens called Academus, (named for a local citizen, Academus). Plato helped create much of the educational thought that underlies Western education. Plato was a mathematician and philosopher, and his works are still used to teach philosophy, logic, rhetoric, mathematics among others.

**Einstein Student Website:** Although we haven’t changed the name of Moodle yet, we intend to this year. Why? Because Einstein is one of the most creative and dynamic thinkers of the last Century. Creative and original thought is what we hope we inspire in our students. Just to remind you, Albert Einstein (1879 –1955) was a German-born theoretical physicist. He is best known for his theory of relativity and specifically mass-energy equivalence, E = mc². Einstein received the 1921 Nobel Prize in Physics. Einstein’s many contributions to physics include his special theory of relativity, and his general theory of relativity, creating a new theory of gravitation. His peers said he was the greatest physicist of all time.

**Rumi ePortfolio:** Here is another one on the list for introduction in 2009, an ePortfolio. An electronic portfolio, or ePortfolio, provided by ASU, is a collection of electronic material assembled and managed by students, usually including course work, papers, projects, electronic files, images, multimedia, blog entries, and hyperlinks. E-portfolios are both demonstrations of the student’s abilities and platforms for self-expression, and, can be maintained dynamically over time. Mawlānā Jalāl-ad-Dīn Muhammad Rūmī (1207 - 1273), is known to the English-speaking world simply as Rumi, a 13th century Persian poet, jurist, and theologian. Rumi was born in present-day Afghanistan, and died in Turkey. Rumi’s importance is considered to transcend national and ethnic borders. He has been described as the “most popular poet in America”. Rumi believed that the knowledge seeker symbolically makes a journey, then returns from this journey with greater maturity, to be of service to the whole of creation without discrimination against beliefs, races, classes and nations. ASU thought Rumi was a truly appropriate name for our ePortfolio service.
Level of Satisfaction

Student Satisfaction Response in the 10 most popular courses (highest number of enrollments):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did you achieve or will you achieve upon completing your studies the goals you had when you started the course or program?</td>
<td>96.10%</td>
<td>96.40%</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would you recommend these studies to a friend?</td>
<td>93.70%</td>
<td>94.20%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All things considered were you satisfied with your studies with us?</td>
<td>97.60%</td>
<td>97.60%</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(2006 n = 463; 2007 n = 384; 2008 n = 389)

Program Data

The following data is drawn from representative courses from American Sentinel programs

**Course Category: Computer Science**

1. Did you achieve or will you achieve upon completing your studies the goals you had when you started the course or program?
2. Would you recommend these studies to a friend?
3. All things considered were you satisfied with your studies with us?

(2006 n = 46; 2007 n = 64; 2008 n = 97)
**Course Category: Information Systems**

1. Did you achieve or will you achieve upon completing your studies the goals you had when you started the course or program?
2. Would you recommend these studies to a friend?
3. All things considered were you satisfied with your studies with us?

(2006 n = 92; 2007 n = 138; 2008 n = 218)
The following charts course enrollment types for 2006 - 2008 as a percentage of total enrollment:
Enrollment Change by Course Category

The following chart illustrates 2007 course enrollments by program as a percentage change from 2006 enrollments in the same program:

* Undergraduate and graduate health and human services program enrollments grew by 604% and 327%, respectively, with relatively small base numbers in 2007.
## COURSE COMPLETION DATA (TERMS)

### Term Summary Statistics

Completion percentage [\(\#\) of Completions ÷ (Total course enrollments - \# of nonstarts)]:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Type</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
<td>92.90%</td>
<td>94.30%</td>
<td>92.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>90.70%</td>
<td>92.60%</td>
<td>93.90%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Course Nonstart Rates (\# of nonstarts ÷ Total course enrollments):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Type</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
<td>11.10%</td>
<td>6.40%</td>
<td>9.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>12.40%</td>
<td>8.30%</td>
<td>8.70%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Course Completion Efficiency Rates (\# of Completions ÷ Total course enrollments)

### Non-term Course Completion and Efficiency Rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Undergraduate Courses</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Completion Rate</td>
<td>85.9%</td>
<td>85.6%</td>
<td>86.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completion Efficiency</td>
<td>75.4%</td>
<td>72.4%</td>
<td>73.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduate Courses</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Completion Rate</td>
<td>84.7%</td>
<td>80.0%</td>
<td>94.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completion Efficiency</td>
<td>73.5%</td>
<td>60.7%</td>
<td>79.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The measurement period for non-term courses is 10/1/200x - 9/30/200x, allowing a minimum of three months for course completion.
Completion Efficiency

Completion efficiency is the percentage of total enrolled courses completed by students (i.e. total enrollments includes non-starts, which are not a component of the DETC's completion rate).