

# Archived Information

## Interim Evaluation of the Southeastern Regional Vision for Education

### I. Brief Overview of Laboratory

SERVE has been in operation for just 10 years, making it the third youngest REL in the system, with only the Labs that were first funded in this current cycle (1995) newer. SERVE is in its second contract period, having first been supported by OERI in the funding period that began in 1990. It replaced an entity that had been the Lab for the region for several cycles previously. SERVE is unique among the Labs in several ways, having attempted a decentralized, aka “distributed” organizational structure, with offices in multiple locations—currently Greensboro, Atlanta, and Tallahassee. While this concept has had to undergo modification over the course of the last nine years, SERVE retains the decentralized organization principle in an effort to keep close to the stakeholders that it serves throughout this five state region of the southeastern U.S. Not only are certain programs housed in different locations, e.g., the Office of Comprehensive School Reform and the Office of Technology being in Atlanta, but some members of these program staffs are physically located in one or both of the other two sites.

Decentralization is manifested in still another way. SERVE pioneered the idea of having a policy analyst linked to each of the state education agencies, an idea that has been adapted/adopted by other Labs. In this funding cycle, SERVE carried this concept to its logical conclusion by physically locating the policy analyst at each SEA and having that office participate in the selection and hiring of the analyst through a Memorandum of Understanding.

The Laboratory has experienced management difficulties since the beginning, partly or perhaps *largely* owing to its decentralized structure, I’m not sure. Almost two years ago and as a consequence of these difficulties, its (first) executive director retired. The interim director, who

recently had been hired as Director of Technology, established a new management structure designed to relieve pressure on the position of executive director. A permanent executive director was hired nine months ago. He retained the structure put in place by his immediate (acting) predecessor and has filled most key vacancies. Signs are hopeful that the Laboratory has entered a period of administrative stability, where gains can be solidified, remaining problems addressed, and new challenges met from a position of strength.

## **II. Implementation and Management**

### **A. To what extent is the REL doing what they were approved to do during their first three contract years?**

#### **1. Strengths**

Except for certain modifications, SERVE has followed the vision and the programmatic plan put forth to OERI in its original technical proposal for the current contract period. It has done so in the face of sometimes extreme management difficulties and turnover of key personnel, including the loss of its executive director, as already noted. These barriers sometimes impeded progress (as was evident in the 1996 and 1997 quarterly reports) and may have harmed the organization in other ways, but from my perspective, activities seem currently on track. Even more to the point, the REL made extraordinary strides in carrying out its mission despite the handicap of weakened leadership (weakened by being absent or being spread too thin). This success in the face of adversity is a testament to the strength and dedication to an ethos of service by SERVE staff on board, to the commitment of its Governing Board, which is active and proactive in the affairs of the REL, and to the unwavering support of the University of North Carolina on whose Greensboro campus the Lab operates and whose provost was one of the

founding fathers of SERVE. Lastly, in some indefinable way, the survival of SERVE in difficult times probably owes much to the adherence by all of these parties to the original vision of its founders to "...apply the knowledge of research and the wisdom of practice to the continuous improvement of learning in the schools" in its region.

Another strength of the Lab is its evident capacity to "establish networks, strategic alliances, and partnerships with other RELS, other institutions, and key individuals and other organizations in the region" (DIR Indicator). Indeed, collaboration seems to be a hallmark of SERVE; there are few activities that the Lab seems to carry out solo. This is the mark of a strong institution seeking to maximize its effectiveness and stretch its dollars. A few examples, however, must suffice:

- The SERVE/University of Southern Florida Dropout Prevention Collaborative yielded a report of successful dropout prevention programs.
- SERVE organized a consortium of superintendents and school leadership teams to share ideas on how to build school cultures for long-term research-based school improvement efforts (SERVE-Leads).
- With the North Carolina Public School Forum, SERVE seeks to extend the concept of school/business partnerships to more and more communities.
- Class size emerged as hot issue on both coasts last year. Both the WestEd REL and SERVE responded to the need manifesting regionally--the former with an issue paper for the California legislature and the latter with a publication for general audiences, *Does Class Size Make a Difference? -- Recent Findings from State and District Initiatives*. It proved very popular and is still very much in demand. Cross-Lab collaboration and information exchanged (as documented in the panel's briefing materials) undoubtedly contributed to the quality and usefulness of both documents.
- The *LNP Toolkit for Professional Developers* is a major example of cross-Lab collaboration nationally. Initiated in the last contract period by the NCREL Lab, this instrument is used to train trainers of teachers in developing assessments pegged to standards. A mature product and part of SERVE's Signature Work #1, it is employed by the Laboratory in a number of venues.
- Placement of a SERVE policy analyst at the SEA (mentioned above) is still another kind of collaboration. The analyst, whose hiring by SERVE is approved by the SEA,

is the REL's presence at the state level, enabling the Lab to be aware of emerging developments on the policy and political fronts (communicated through each analyst's "Monday memo" to SERVE program directors). But his/her obligation on site is to provide the Chief State School Officer with current research and policy information on urgent and emerging issues, e.g., charter schools, school finance, and class size. (Satisfaction with this arrangement across the five states appears to be uniform, though political changes at the state level usually requires that a new policy analyst come on board when a new Chief State School Officer takes over.)

- Finally, each school/teacher/principal/district official involved with the REL can come to regard SERVE as a partner in its endeavors (if those interviewed on site or those quoted in REL publications are representative). It is commendable that SERVE manages to bring its considerable expertise to a given site and yet consistently not impose its views, but gain the trust of those it seeks to help. That is probably why the Lab has attracted so many loyal friends, and is permitted to stay on a given project for extended periods, enabling an intervention to take hold and mature, thus increasing the likelihood of effectiveness and sustainability.

## **2. Areas of needed improvement**

More specific concerns will appear in the sections below. At this point, I just would like to point out the following. Internal communication is a challenge for any organization, all the more so for an organization that chooses to operate in multiple sites, thus making face to face meetings a rarity. The evaluation panel was concerned if meetings, including conference calls, took place across programs on a regular and sustained basis. Because of the focus on customer service, insufficient internal communication in the REL could pose a serious problem. One program's manager might "reinvent the wheel" or even just be uninformed about an aspect of an initiative being run just "down the hall" (or out of another Lab site for that matter), a knowledge gap that could limit assistance to a client he/she is serving. In another example, each program is continuously evolving and maturing. In, say, the area of accountability, not only should its several programs mutually inform one another, but managers in the area of school improvement should be at all times cognizant of activities in the assessment arena. I am confident that the effectiveness of the individual strands could be considerably enhanced if systems could be put in

place to keep staff mutually informed—and advised by management to consider ways to build upon one another’s work in related endeavors.

In a Q&A session mid-week, the panel aired this issue openly and frankly with the Executive Management Team and to my satisfaction we received very positive assurances. We were advised that communication was long recognized as a challenge to Laboratory effectiveness, but that key measures had been undertaken to address it, starting with the reorganization and the naming of an executive director and that regular meetings were being institutionalized using technology. These are important first steps.

### **3. Recommendations for improvement**

The Lab has just experienced a reorganization, including renaming of certain units to be more reflective of what their operations actually address, e.g., Field Services became the Office of School Improvement. My suggestion is not organizational in that sense. But I do propose that through seminars, monthly luncheons, or other low-key mechanisms the Executive Management Team institute information exchange of a programmatic and substantive nature. Technology advances—improved conference call connections and video conferencing should permit staff in Atlanta and Tallahassee to participate fully as well. I would consider this a very important issue to address.

## **B. To what extent is the REL using a self-monitoring process to plan and adapt activities in response to feedback and customer needs?**

### **1. Strengths**

(Note: The needs assessment aspect of this issue is dealt with below in Question IV. B.)

The Lab is strongly conscious of customer needs and feedback. It incorporates evaluation in its customer service projects on a regular and ongoing basis with the help of the REL’s evaluation

unit. Indeed, responsiveness to customers is one of the major overall strengths of this Laboratory. Intense and intimate involvement with customer reaction characterizes every program we became acquainted with. That is probably why the Laboratory's work is so well received and why in its short life it has won the praise and support of state department officials, its Board, and its clients. Data from the evaluation unit provided to us ahead of time, as well as data exhibited at the briefing on site illustrates a uniformly high level of overall customer satisfaction across all programs.

The most highly evolved system for quality assurance for products prior to completion and dissemination was evidenced in the publishing unit. Here quality assurance flowcharts and stepwise summaries for the publications process illustrated the close attention paid to the issue of quality for publications issued by the REL. This is evidenced in the products: REL publications and the two videos we saw on teacher assessment and on the use of technology in assessment were generally thoughtful and well written/scripted and reflected the effort invested on the front end. The dissemination data also revealed that most products were in demand and had received wide distribution. Reflective of the quality standard SERVE strives for is that its publication, *Achieving Your Vision of Professional Development* was just named "NSDC Book of the Year."

## **2. Areas of needed improvement**

While as just noted, REL publications receive close and formal scrutiny, the panel was not sure if the QA process similarly affected its services or intervention strategies. The true depth of this process and great care that was taken through numerous iterations of a product came clear during the last day of interviews. Our concern was that a given intervention/initiative/strategy be based on the most robust research possible and that it be examined most thoroughly internally before it goes forth. I am satisfied that that high bar is in

place, involving internal and external parties so that quality is assured. However, there is the issue of whether the research-based choices made are the best ones.

And as for the publications, I just had two outstanding substantive concerns. Use of outside content experts, not necessarily from the region (depending on the issue), is critical to ensure accuracy and timeliness of information being imparted. Panel members with certain content expertise had voiced concern that some pubs did not have citations using the most current relevant research. Also, there could be more work done in determining dissemination strategies.

### **3. Recommendations for improvement**

For planned interventions, reach beyond the region to test ideas to ensure these interventions reflect the most current thinking and research in the field. For publications, add to an already robust system the best content experts in a given field to ensure the validity of information in all documents, videos, etc. bearing SERVE's name. I might note that I was happy to see two changes in the REL's pubs regarding appearance. Newer pubs are more interesting, dynamic, and eye-catching. In a second change for the better, information about the Lab has been moved to the back of the publication. Previously, one had to turn a lot of pages before getting to the substance of a document. Finally, I personally find it distracting to have text printed over a faint background design. It is acceptable for a flyer or for the cover of a book—like the notebook on last year's Forum—but not for an entire document. It is just not reader-friendly, but I realize that is a matter of personal preference. . Most publications are very good but should receive wider, more systematic dissemination. The audiences and how to reach them should receive reflective attention.

### **III. Quality**

#### **To what extent is the REL developing high quality products and services?**

##### **1. Strengths**

The SERVE Laboratory deserves high marks for carrying out a “coherent and sustained program of work.” (DIR indicator). With a comparatively small staff, augmented as needed by consultants, SERVE has generated many useful products, conducted pilots, held conferences of critical importance to the region, and gone into schools who needed, and agreed to be part of, a sustained intervention effort. This is evidenced by the range of quality products and services that make up its two Signature Works, the one relating to the topical areas of assessments, accountability, and standards, and the second to the broader comprehensive school improvement thrusts. The panel had the opportunity to examine a large sample of the publications and to read about the services as well as listen to a dozen or so satisfied “customers”. (SERVE prefers the appellation, “clients.”) The Lab does not necessarily “invent” an approach, but rather takes research findings and applies them in a coherent fashion to generate school change in response to current need. This approach is evident in both “signature works”.

For example, all states in the region in recent years have focused on developing content standards and requiring students to meet these standards or suffer certain consequences, often “high stake.” This is a major political change across the education landscape of the south—indeed across the country. Yet insufficient attention has been paid by the legislatures to preparing teachers to align assessments to the standards or generally to use assessments properly. Too much “teaching to the test” has been reported, at the expense of curriculum richness and depth of learning. SERVE seeks to counter this trend by instructing teachers how to design and carry out true assessments linked to standards, and by changing the culture of a school from one

of testing at the end of a cycle, to using assessments as a teaching device to help a child learn and equally to help a teacher teach better. The strategy is spelled out in terms of application to the real world of schools in the SERVE publication, *Using Accountability as a Lever for Changing the Culture of Schools*, done in collaboration with one of its R&D school sites.

Signature Work #1 addresses these concerns on a number of fronts. First, the *Assessment Toolkit* presented at conferences and in sessions for trainers shows how assessments may be constructed. Its popularity reflects the high need for such a “cookbook.” Using other materials developed in-house, SERVE trained 3,500 teachers in a four-day session on how to develop an assessment aligned with a standard. For a much more in depth, R&D effort, SERVE has partnered with nine “intensive site” school districts to demonstrate how assessment can be an instrument for reform. While focused on professional development, the whole-school approach also features the essential corollaries of developing local leadership, principal training, and school-based assessment teams. (In this case, the assessment effort is integrated into the school’s improvement effort.)

The panel met several clients representative of those participating as partners in this effort, all of whom felt that this approach, though challenging, was transforming their teaching and the way they even thought about teaching. A mature collaboration with the Bay County Schools of Panama City, Florida was invited by the ASCD to be part of its Assessment Consortium, a singular honor. In yet another example, SERVE has promoted the use of Senior Projects, a kind of hands-on culminating assessment developed and proven elsewhere. Here, too, the panel interviewed teachers and students who were part of this effort at pilot sites. In yet one more variant, the panel received a video, *Technology as a Tool for Student Assessment*, which portrayed three dramatically different and innovative ways in which schools in the region used

assessment as a learning device. It is an excellent strategy for SERVE to make these regional innovations more widely known.

Signature Work 2, Supporting the School Improvement Process, addresses whole school reform and operates out of the Office of School Development and Reform. Here, too, several strands make up the whole of the effort: short-term training programs, publications, e.g., *Resources for School Improvement*, conferences, and work with low-performing schools. Major SERVE resources have gone into its three annual School Improvement Forums, its Southern States Seminar on Low-Performing Schools, its assistance to Title I schools needing to design a “whole school” approach, and its programmatic assistance to schools seeking to become demonstrations under the new Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration legislation. Again, the panel got the opportunity to meet enthusiastic school staff who had been assisted in one way or another by this unit.

## **2. Areas of needed improvement**

While it is clear that the Lab has met the terms of the contract, there are some concerns. There is no “one way” to approach assessment or school reform, and the Lab has rightfully, I think, adopted a multi-prong strategy. But the demands placed on Lab resources by the Title I requirements and by the CSRD contract augmentation suggests to me that these efforts may be understaffed. Secondly, it was not clear the extent to which activities in Signature Work #1 and #2 were in harmony. Significantly, in our briefing materials, #2 included a #1 product (*Using Accountability....mentioned above.*) But otherwise, the extent to which SERVE-assisted school reform efforts (#2) reflected awareness of standards, assessment, and accountability (#1) was absent in what we heard or read. It may be a “given,” but then the connection between the two strands needs to be spelled out.

### **3. Recommendations for improvement**

Add staff to ensure the Lab can continue to meet its obligations under the contract, particularly in the area of Title I and CSRD activities. Clarify internally, the programmatic connection between the two signature works, particularly in so far as assessment is/should be a part of whole school reform. This clarification should lead to an enhanced collaboration between these initiatives, greatly enriching service to school reform clients.

## **IV. Utility**

### **A. To what extent are the products and services provided by the Laboratory useful to and used by customers?**

#### **1. Strengths**

The evidence abundantly points to Lab products and services that are “useful to and used by customers in appropriate settings” (DIR indicator). There is no lack of examples from the materials sent for panel review, for this REL is not only prolific, but evidently knows its audience (see B., below). The Lab regularly seeks the reactions of its customers and clients in post-intervention surveys and questionnaires. Reactions are uniformly positive to both publications and services. Written feedback from Signature Work 1 and 2 users and partners are glowing—as were the testimonials from representative clients invited for the panel’s on-site visit. Utilization statistics (materials disseminated, web-site “hits,” conference/training attendance) testify to a high degree of awareness of the Laboratory and the popularity of the full range of its products in all their variety and scope. Speaking of the latter, one should note that in addition to abundant print material, we were given examples of CD-ROM and of videos that were very informative.

## **2. Areas of needed improvement**

My concerns about style and appearance of print materials are noted above. Regarding the videos, while the script was good, it could have been enhanced with “bullets” of major points made. Also, the camerawork left something to be desired. These deficiencies are unfortunate because the message being conveyed is so important in each case and the text was excellent. (The flyers accompanying the video were also excellent, giving an accurate preview of the video’s contents.)

## **3. Recommendations for improvement**

First of all, do more videos like the ones sent the panel! In this visual age, videos deliver the message quickly and graphically. But SERVE should think “outside the box” in this regard. The videos could be used not only in workshops and other professional venues, but for a wider purpose. For example, aim to have them (or at least clips) aired on public and or local television as part of education human interest stories. While SERVE videos are “not yet read for prime time,” higher, more professional quality is attainable from where the Lab now stands.

### **B. To what extent is the REL focused on customer needs?**

#### **1. Strengths**

The Lab is very conscientious about determining what its customers need. It does this through a variety of planned strategies, drawing upon its state policy analysts, its Board, and Forum attendees, and using Delphi techniques and focus groups. It has taken steps to augment these approaches with the use of a Teacher Advisory Board. Replacement of a higher education presence on the Board of Directors with representatives from the world of education research made for a more appropriate connection given SERVE’s clients and mission. The REL has documented a close match between what the Lab thus determines its actual and potential clients

need and want and what it does programmatically. On site, one panel member wondered if perhaps the Lab was “too responsive,” being reactive and insufficiently proactive. I did not see this as an issue. First, the problems that need addressing are numerous and the Lab often fills a vacuum in addressing them. Second, I see evidence of SERVE being proactive—its work in accountability being just the largest effort. The Lab determined the need was there to be addressed before any clients did.

## **2. Areas of needed improvement**

Although the Technical Proposal discussed the demographics of the SERVE region, actual products and descriptions of activities are generally silent on the nature of the target audience or clients served. This is unfortunate given the population’s relative poverty and the presence of a large number and proportion of minorities and isolated rural residents. To be sure, “small, rural” does receive mention and several programs are prima facie addressing the needs of minorities (Title I, CSRD, and the Delta project). Still, I was troubled that the Lab does not highlight service to those most in need, a criterion dictated by demographics and spoken to in the proposal as I just noted. The need to clearly articulate this focus was underscored by the fact that few minorities were among those selected to meet with the panel during our visit. If minorities are indeed well served by the range of programs, then perhaps a greater effort could have been made to have them appear before the panel.

## **3. Recommendations for improvement**

The Lab should carefully examine the extent to which there is minority representation in all its programs, and quickly correct any observed deficiencies if they exist. In any case, data should be collected to disaggregate this information. So for example, “teachers trained,” and “students impacted,” should be displayed by race, and for that matter, gender. While this

disaggregation need not appear in every data display everywhere, there are settings in which its absence is a glaring omission. Hopefully, the data bases can be redesigned, for example, to show the numbers of minorities involved/impacted/served and the proportion of e.g., schools/students/teachers in a given site that are minority. For me, this is a key concern.

## **V. Outcomes and Impact**

### **A. To what extent is the REL's work contributing to improved student success, particularly in intensive implementation sites?**

#### **1. Strengths**

Hard data is largely absent on this issue. We must rely on anecdotal information or inferences from small samples. For example, in the school improvement effort, schools reported that where they had incorporated the strategies taught by SERVE, reading scores went up. This is encouraging and laudable even though no strong connection can be made between cause and effect. What appears to have been changed is the culture of the school and thus a myriad of elements. Still, the consequences are positive and teachers and administrators credit the SERVE intervention. Likewise, the Senior Project is credited with revitalizing the senior year for many students and for bringing out the best in many participants. An additional benefit is that, since judges for the projects are local business leaders and other outside people, the school becomes better known and its reputation and the reputation of its students are enhanced. Likewise in the assessment interventions, the SERVE data report student improvement, but the numbers are too few to be able to draw firm conclusions.

#### **2. Areas of needed improvement**

The panel did not find sufficient demonstration of impact across the programs. I believe

this is because “outcomes” did not receive a high enough priority in the program design stage. This is unfortunate because results are the proverbial “bottom line.” And this is what will surely be examined at the time of reauthorization, not that that should be the sole reason to have it. Anecdotal information suggests the programs are uniformly doing good things and accomplishing much for children.

### **3. Recommendations for improvement**

SERVE needs to have program effectiveness demonstrated in terms of student impact, including academic outcomes. More pre-post testing needs to be done to document outcomes that can be clearly linked to the program being implemented. This would best be achieved by having this incorporated in the design of the program so that training would be consciously directed toward achieving the best possible outcome. This is a critical change that needs to take place.

## **B. To what extent does the Laboratory assist states and localities to implement comprehensive school improvement strategies?**

### **1. Strengths**

School improvement is one of the signature works of SERVE and it has fulfilled this mission admirably. Since 1996, training for school improvement teams has involved over 2,000 participants in 4-day sessions. A number of publications have been produced to assist these teams in research and decision making. Its annual School Improvement Forum features SERVE programs and numerous other ideas from practitioners and others about ways to improve schools. SERVE’s work with Title I schools and with the CSRD moved the Lab even more forcefully into that arena. Its earlier work positioned it to serve its constituency well in this regard.

### **2. Areas of needed improvement**

There is some concern on the panel that there is insufficient uniformity of Lab effort

among the SERVE states. Right now, certain efforts are concentrated in one or a few states, while other efforts are concentrated elsewhere. There is insufficient coherence of programs across the region.

### **3. Recommendations for improvement**

I am not advocating a formula approach to the allocation of resources, but do suggest that the Lab think about how its programs and resources are distributed among the several states. Its programs should receive more visibility throughout the region, and corollaries of effectiveness need to be determined by having a program be implemented in sites across several states.

#### **C. To what extent has the REL made progress in establishing a regional and national reputation in its specialty area?**

##### **1. Strengths**

The Lab wisely undertook a needs assessment before commencing a program in the new contract period, organized a cross-organizational Task force, and held a policy conference with suitable representation. And it has contributed several important publications to the field, notably *Terrific Transitions* and its companion training manual, and *Families and Schools: an Essential Partnership*, carried out in conjunction with Florida State University.

##### **2. Areas of needed improvement**

It strikes me that the program is not sufficiently strong to be a true specialty area yet of the Lab, though the foundation is being laid. I sense it is still searching for its identity and direction—probably because of staff turnover and vacancies. Hopefully, with new hires and a full-time director, the Lab will be able to better articulate a mission for its specialty and aggressively pursue it.

### **3. Recommendations for improvement**

Above all, the Lab should take care not to duplicate work being done by others, though it is of course suitable to popularize and extend knowledge developed by others. Rather, among those entities nation-wide that are working in this field and making contributions, SERVE should seek to find a voice of its own. In particular, the REL needs to determine if its focus should be on knowledge generation, knowledge popularization, policy, or practice. I think its budget is too small to be able to be all things to all people.

## **VI. Overall Evaluation of Total Laboratory Programs, Products and Services**

Starting from the proverbial “square one” just nine years ago, the SERVE Laboratory has grown into a full-fledged, contributing member of the Lab fraternity. Its programs are consistent with the broad education focus of the states of its region and of the nation as a whole—school improvement and assessment--as attested to by legislation, both state and federal. Its able and experienced staff has brought training and materials to hundreds of teachers and school staff who otherwise would not have known about new ways to teach and assess, or about strategies to turn around failing schools. Its products and publications have similarly reached, in some cases, thousands who undoubtedly benefit from the information transmitted concerning, e.g., assessment, student motivation, and school leadership to cite just three examples.

While even in the beginning some of the information produced was strong, in recent years the quality has definitely improved, witness the awards and other recognition the Lab has received. The SERVE Laboratory is beginning to be what its founders envisioned, a source of valuable educational expertise in the region and a voice that others respect and want to listen to.

It has achieved this through a combination of vision, staff expertise, and policy

sensitivity. SERVE has the potential to be a leader in education for the region.

## **VII. Broad Summary of Strengths, Areas for Improvement, and Strategies for Improvement**

SERVE's primary strength is the quality and commitment of its staff. This includes the staff of its publication and evaluation units. It has focused its programmatic efforts on areas of great need in the region—assessment, school improvement, and early childhood education, among others, and held conferences to reach many educators with information on cutting edge programs. It has been prolific in the generation of high quality publications and wise in positioning policy analysts to mutually serve the state education agencies and the REL. Its needs sensing and evaluative capabilities are strong and these tasks are carried out conscientiously.

Improvement is needed in facilitating communication so that the individual components can be strengthened programmatically by the other components. A dissemination strategy needs to be developed for REL products—right now it does not seem well thought through—and this is the purview of the program personnel more than the publications unit. Much more mileage needs to be gotten out of the publications. Stemming from them should be presentations in schools, workshops, regional and national conferences, and use of the media to heighten public and professional awareness. Much work goes into the pubs (and videos, etc.) and they should be taken to the widest variety and largest number of venues possible to be sure the information reaches the maximum audience in the region. That should be a paramount mission of the Lab.

Evaluation parameters need to be far more finely tuned to get at program impact. For example, the Lab should be able to report programmatically by state, impact by SES, race, and gender. And in this regard, probably the greatest need for improvement lies in determining

desirable student outcomes before programs are launched and gearing program strategies to obtain these outcomes accordingly.

SERVE has made tremendous strides since its founding. It has overcome serious obstacles and produced valuable work despite these obstacles. It is in a position now to grow from a solid foundation.