Making the Planning and Accreditation Connection
Reordering Standards Based on Campus Priorities

2014 MSCHE Conference
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Agenda

• SUNY Cortland and Our Strategic Plan
• Our Approach to Reaccreditation
• Decision to Reorder the Standards
• Coordinating the Work of the Report
• Creation of the Document Roadmap
• Lessons Learned and Discussion
SUNY Cortland

- State University of New York System
- Master’s Degree granting with enrollment of 7000
- Three Schools
- High percent of students in programs with external professional accreditations from teaching to athletic training
- All degrees based on liberal arts foundation with over 45 credits of general education
- Residential, traditional age, engaged population

- 2009 Review of institutional mission/strategic priorities
- 2010 NCATE Teacher Education Reaccreditation
- 2012 Middle States Accreditation
Mission Review and Planning

• Campus committee to review mission and clarify vision, values and priorities
• Appreciative inquiry process
• Goal of identifying priorities to which campus entities align work
• Four rounds of surveys and 10 open meetings
• Outcomes
  • Revised mission statement from several hundred words to:
    
    SUNY Cortland is an academic community dedicated to diverse learning experiences. Students grow as engaged citizens with a strong social conscience fostered by outstanding teaching, scholarship, and service.

  • Revised Vision Statement
  • Institutional Values
  • Institutional Priorities
  • www2.cortland.edu/about/strategic-plan/
Shared Values

- **Focus on the Students**
  - All decisions, plans, and actions revolve around students’ academic, personal, social, and cultural development and wellness.

- **Integrity**
  - Dedication to honesty, hard work, high personal and professional standards, and respect for people, perspectives and the environment.

- **Intellectual Life**
  - Commitment to inquiry, academic rigor, creativity, lifelong learning, and contribution to discipline, profession, and the greater good.
Strategic Priorities

• **Academic Excellence**
  - Cultivate programs of academic excellence that are recognized for integrity of curriculum, outstanding student learning outcomes, and contributions to the discipline.

• **Transformational Education**
  - Ensure every student will have engaging and transformational educational experiences.

• **Well-being**
  - Become a national leader in the promotion of the physical, emotional, cultural, and social well-being of all community members.

• **Maximize Resources**
  - Maximize resources so that structures, decision-making, and processes all work toward institutional vision, responsiveness, and sustainability.
Reaccreditation Approach

• 28 Person Committee

• Co-Chairs
  • Dr. Virginia Levine, Executive Assistant to the President
  • Dr. Lynn Anderson, Professor of Recreation, Parks & Leisure Studies

• Goals
  • Engage campus in self-study
  • Utilize what we learned through NCATE
  • Building upon work of strategic planning
  • Keep our accreditation 😊

• Reviewing Self-Study Design Options
You Want to Do What?
Initial Interest in Reordering

• Continue dialogue about campus priorities
• Use conversations to clarify meaning of priorities
• Identify indicators and benchmarks for the priorities
• Design the self-study from our campus perspective
• Submit self-study and see if it flies
Initial Concerns

• Never done this before
• Few precedents with new self-study options
• Work to align standards with campus priorities
• Assessment standards being covered in enough depth
• Clarity for the people writing the report
• Reviewer’s experience trying to navigate and find standards
Aligning Standards

• Steering committee draft alignments
• Five working groups form around mission and 4 priorities
  • Each group had 2-3 steering committee members
  • 3-5 more campus representatives
• Groups discuss draft to assess and clarify alignment
  • Extensive discussion on what the academic priorities really meant
  • Would the entire standard be addressed if aligned solely to that group/area?
  • Are there standards that relate to more than one group?
• Develop research questions
• Negotiations at steering committee
• Submission of self-study
First Shot at Alignment

1. Mission, Vision, Values and Planning
   1. Academic Excellence
   2. Transformational Education
   3. Well-being
   4. Maximizing Resources
The final alignment

Mission
Vision
Values
Planning

1
2
6

Academic Excellence

8
10
11
12
13
14

Transformational Education

9
11
13
14

Well-being

3
8
9
13

Maximizing Resources

2
3
4
5
7
Final Report

PART TWO: MEETING THE MIDDLE STATES STANDARDS

• Chapter 4 Mission, Vision, Values and Planning Processes
  Standards 1, 2, 6

• Chapters 5-7: Academic Excellence
  Standards 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14
  • Chapter 5 Academic Excellence - Students
  • Chapter 6 Academic Excellence—Faculty
  • Chapter 7 Academic Excellence – Educational Offerings

• Chapter 8 Transformational Education
  Standards 9, 11, 13, 14

• Chapter 9 Well-Being
  Standards 3, 8, 9, 13

• Chapter 10 Maximize Resources
  Standards 2, 3, 4, 5, 7
Document Roadmap

• Purpose
  • Ensure that all elements of standards are met
  • Critical to reviewer’s experience with our self-study
  • Ensure that exhibits are accessible

• Design
  • Template provided by MSCHE
  • Organized by each of the 14 standards’ fundamental elements
  • Provide links to sections of the report and support materials
  • Shows where, in the report, the standard is addressed
  • Table format
  • Roadmap architect to check overall
  • Each area committee reviewed

• Roadmap is provided in the conference materials and at www2.cortland.edu/about/accreditations/middle-states/documents.dot
Sample from Roadmap

= targets/anchors within the self-study
= external links

Internal links are those that are within the self-study, where the standard/fundamental is addressed. External links are to documents that further substantiate the standard/fundamental elements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard 14 Fundamental Elements</th>
<th>If This Fundamental Element IS Applicable to This Institution, Indicate Those Document(s) Listed Above That Demonstrate Compliance With This Fundamental Element</th>
<th>Chapter, Research Question, and Page Number Index for the SUNY Cortland Self-Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| a. Clearly articulated statements of expected student learning outcomes (see Standard 11: Educational Offerings), at all levels (institution, degree/program, course) and for all programs that aim to foster student learning and development, that are:  
  • appropriately integrated with one another;  
  • consonant with the institution’s mission; and  
  • consonant with the standards of higher education and of the relevant disciplines | Internal links:  
  ● Student Learning Outcomes  
  ● Teacher Education Candidate Assessment System (TECAS)  
  ● Course Teacher Evaluations (CTE)  
  ● Faculty and Staff Support Academic Excellence  
  ● Class Surveys | Chapter 7  
Research Questions 7.1, 7.2, and 7.4  
Chapter 8  
Research Question 8.2  
Chapter 9  
Research Question 9.2  
Chapter 10  
Research Questions 10.8 and 10.9 |
Results

- Roadmap was critical to reviewers’ ability to access information and fully review their standards

- Positive feedback from self-study review, campus visit, and final report on integration of standards with strategic priorities

- Expanded shared understanding of mission, priorities, etc.

- Broad based campus involvement with the process and design was evident in report and in campus visit meetings

- Information and data collected for the self-study lay the groundwork for institutional indicators to measure progress on campus strategic plan

- Future MSCHE reports will also serve as evaluation on strategic plan

- Positive team visit and reaccreditation
Lessons Learned

A campus considering this should assess campus commitment and ability to:

• Build strong consensus and commit to direction at start
• Identify leadership and tour guides who know the report and roadmap
• Fully utilize liaisons at MSCHE
• Be comfortable with ambiguity and divergent views as you work through the alignment
• Be vigilant in understanding and meeting all requirements of report and visit
• Prepare for significant amount of work
  • Make time for extensive, inclusive dialogue about self-study design
  • Creation of the roadmap is a project unto itself
• Assess if/how the design will engage and/or confuse the work of:
  • Your campus as it completes the self-study
  • The reviewers in completing their responsibilities
Discussion

For more information:

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