PLANNING AND PREPARING FOR SELF-STUDY

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CHARACTERISTICS OF EXCELLENCE

REVISED 2013

DRAFT: November 21, 2013
Statement Regarding the Purpose of and Commitment to Accreditation by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education

- An institution of higher education is a community dedicated to students, to the pursuit and dissemination of knowledge, to the study and clarification of values, and to the advancement of the society it serves. The Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE), through accreditation, mandates that its member institutions meet rigorous and comprehensive standards, which are addressed in the context of the mission of each institution and the culture of ethical practices and institutional integrity expected of accredited institutions. In meeting the quality standards of MSCHE accreditation, institutions earn accredited status, and this permits them to profess unequivocally: “Our students are well-served; society is well-served.”
The institution’s mission defines its purpose within the context of higher education, whom it serves, and what it intends to accomplish. The institution’s stated goals are clearly linked to its mission and specify how the institution fulfills its mission.
Standard II: Ethics and Integrity

- Ethics and Integrity are central, indispensable, and defining hallmarks of effective higher education institutions. In all activities, whether internal or external, an institution must be faithful to its mission, honor its contracts and commitments, adhere to its policies, and represent itself truthfully.
Standard III: Student Learning Opportunities

- An institution provides students with learning opportunities characterized by rigor and coherence appropriate to program, certificate or degree level, and institutional mission. All learning opportunities, regardless of modality, program pace/schedule, level, and setting, are consistent with higher education and societal expectations.
Standard IV: Support of the Student Experience

Across all educational experiences, settings, levels, and modalities, the institution recruits and admits students whose interests, abilities, experiences, and goals are congruent with its mission and educational offerings. The institution commits to student retention, persistence, and completion through a coherent and effective support system sustained by qualified professionals, which enhances the quality of the learning environment, contributes to the educational experience, and fosters student success.
Standard V: Educational Effectiveness Assessment

Assessment of student learning demonstrates that, across all levels and modalities of the learning experience, at graduation and at other appropriate points, the institution’s students have achieved knowledge, skills, and competencies consistent with their degree level, institutional goals, and appropriate higher education and societal expectations.
Standard VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement

- The institution’s planning processes, resources, and structure are aligned with each other and sufficient to fulfill its mission and goals, continuously assess and improve its programs and services, and respond effectively to opportunities and challenges.
Standard VII: Governance, Leadership, and Administration

- The institution is governed and administered in a manner that allows it to realize its stated mission and goals in a way that effectively and efficiently benefits the institution, its students, and the communities it serves.
The Self-Study

Creating a Useful Process and Report
Overview of the Decennial Self-Study Process and Result

What is the Decennial Evaluation?

Extensive institutional self-study process

• Produces a written self-study report
• This report and the Commission’s accreditation standards serve as the basis for on-site evaluation by a team of peer evaluators
The Self-Study

- Considers our educational programs and services, with particular attention to student learning and achievement
- Determines how well these programs and services accomplish Montclair State’s goals (Strategic Plan) and fulfill its mission
- Determines how well Montclair State meets the Commission’s standards
Self-Study Audiences/Purposes

- **Two sets of audiences:**
  - **Primary audience** is the Montclair State University community
  - Secondary audience includes external (or public) constituencies including Middle States

- **Two major purposes:**
  - **Primary purpose** of the self-study report is to advance institutional self-understanding and self-improvement.
  - It is most useful when:
    - It is analytical and forward-looking rather than descriptive or defensive
    - It is used both to identify problems and to develop solutions to them
    - It identifies opportunities for growth and development.
Self-Study Audiences/Purposes (cont.)

- **Secondary purpose**
  - Demonstrate to external audiences, such as the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, government regulatory agencies, and the public, that Montclair State University meets the Commission’s standards for accreditation.
  - Both the self-study report and the evaluation team report should be shared by the Montclair State with its community.
The Evolving Self-Study Report

Institution’s Steering Committee organizes the Self-Study process.

Working Groups study the programs and services included in the self-study design, existing or new data, and evaluative reports.

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<th>Group #1</th>
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<th>Group #3</th>
<th>Group #4</th>
<th>Group etc.</th>
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Steering Committee develops draft Self-Study from reports by working groups.
The Evolving Self-Study Report (cont.)

Campus-wide discussion by various constituencies

Steering Committee prepares the final self-study report

Institution disseminates the final report
The Steering Committee

The steering committee has a vital leadership role throughout the self-study process. Careful attention should be given to identifying and appointing competent, well-respected, and committed individuals to this committee.
Steering Committee Overview

Steering Committee provides leadership for working groups to

- Examine existing data and evaluative reports
- Gather new information
- Prepare analytical reports on their assigned topics
Steering Committee Overview (cont.)

Steering Committee

- Edits the reports of the various working groups
- Produces a draft for discussion
- Disseminates the final self-study report
Steering Committee Leadership

- All members of the institutional community should feel ownership in the self-study report. For example, the steering committee will be led by co-Chairs and will be appointed by the institution’s chief executive officer.
- Important that there be adequate faculty involvement in the self-study process, and appointment of a faculty co-Chair will encourage such participation.
Steering Committee Leadership (cont.)

- Involvement of key administrators also is important, and appointment of an administrator as a co-Chair will also be important.
- The use of co-Chairs allows representation from several groups, can be helpful in assuring a balance of the skills and attributes necessary for successful leadership of the self-study effort.
Steering Committee Responsibilities

The steering committee is responsible for providing leadership to the entire self-study process. This includes:

- Determining the key issues for self-study
- Recommending, in consultation with campus administrative leadership, a self-study model that would best reflect those issues
- Developing a self-study design
- Establishing and charging working groups and coordinating their work on the various issues to be studied
Steering Committee Responsibilities (cont.)

- Ensuring that the timetable is implemented as planned
- Assuring communication within the institution about the self-study process
- Arranging for institution-wide review of and responses to a draft of the self-study
- Overseeing the completion of the final self-study report and any other documents relevant to the self-study process and team visit
Self-Study Timetable

Approximate and Flexible Dates for a Spring Visit (Total: 2 ½ years)

- **Summer before Academic Year 1 (2014)**
  - MSCHE reminds institution of the pending evaluation and invites it to the Self-Study Institute

- **Fall, Academic Year 1 (2014)**
  - Self-Study Institute held to orient institutions beginning self-study
  - Steering Committee Chair(s) and members chosen
  - MSCHE staff liaison schedules self-study preparation visit to the institution

- **Spring, Academic Year 1 (2015)**
  - Institution chooses its self-study model
  - Institution determines types of working groups that will be needed
  - Draft self-study design finalized, including charge questions for working groups
Self-Study Timetable (cont.)

• **Spring, Academic Year 1 (2015)**
  - OR **Fall, Academic Year 2 (2015)**
    - MSCHE staff liaison conducts self-study preparation visit
    - Staff liaison approves Montclair State’s self-study design

• **Fall–Spring, Academic Year 2 (2015-2016)**
  - Steering Committee oversees research and reporting by working groups
  - Working groups involve the University community
  - Working groups submit reports

• **Winter, Academic Year 2 (2016)**
  - MSCHE selects the evaluation team Chair, and the Montclair State approves the selection
  - Chair and Montclair State select dates for team visit and for the Chair’s preliminary visit
  - Montclair State sends a copy of the self-study design to the team Chair
Self-Study Timetable (cont.)

- **Spring-Summer, Academic Year 2 (2016)**
  - MSCHE selects evaluation team members, and the institution approves the selection
  - Steering Committee receives drafts text from working groups and develops a draft self-study report

- **Fall, Academic Year 3 (2016)**
  - Campus community reviews draft self-study report
  - Evaluation team Chair reviews draft self-study report
  - Montclair State’s governing board reviews draft self-study report
  - Montclair State sends draft self-study report to evaluation team Chair, prior to Chair’s preliminary visit
  - Team Chair makes preliminary visit at least four months prior to team visit
  - Montclair State prepares final version of the self-study report

- **Winter or Spring, Academic Year 3 (2017)**
  - Montclair State sends final report to evaluation team and to MSCHE at least six weeks prior to team visit
“The Visit”

Spring, Academic Year 3 (2017)
- Team Visit
- Team Report
- Institutional Response

Summer or Fall after Academic Year 3 (2017)
- Committee on Evaluation Reports meets
- Commission Action