



ST. JOHN'S UNIVERSITY

MIDDLE STATES REACCREDITATION 2013-2016



MIDDLE STATES COMMISSION
ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Steering Committee Inaugural Meeting July 15, 2014



BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

- What is Middle States accreditation?
- What is its purpose?
- What is the process?
- www.msche.org

What is it?

“Accreditation is the means of self-regulation and peer review adopted by the educational community. The accrediting process is intended to strengthen and sustain the quality and integrity of higher education, making it worthy of public confidence and minimizing the scope of external control.”
(*Characteristics of Excellence*. 12th Edition, p. iv.)

<http://www.msche.org/publications/CHX-2011-WEB.pdf>

Accountability, quality control, external quality review

Validation process through which institutions are measured against established standards to ensure quality.

What is the purpose?

1. Quality assurance – assures that institutions meet basic standards and work toward continuous institutional improvement
2. Provides access to federal (and, by extension, state) funds for student financial aid
3. Eases transfer of students from one institution to another



What is the process?

1. Self-study – characterized by broad-based participation, documenting how the institution meets accreditation standards. Shared internally and with members of a visiting team
2. Visit by a team of peers from other institutions, who validate the accuracy of the self-study through meetings with significant constituencies of the institution
3. Production of a team report, with a recommendation regarding accreditation (which is not shared with the institution); report contains “suggestions,” “recommendations” or “requirements”
4. Review of the team report by the institution
5. Response to the report by the institution, with a focus on correction of factual errors
6. Discussion of the self-study and team report by the agency at a meeting of its governing body
7. Decision regarding accreditation

What are the guides?

- ***Characteristics of Excellence*** - articulates the fourteen standards by which institutions are judged and sets expectations for documenting adherence to each
 - Seven standards address Institutional Context
 - Seven standards address Educational Effectiveness
- ***Self Study: Creating a Useful Process and Report***
- ***Verification of Compliance with Accreditation-Relevant Federal Regulations*** - implemented in Spring 2014

Verification of Compliance

- MSCHE, as a federally recognized accreditor, is obligated to ensure that its candidate and member institutions comply with accreditation-relevant federal regulations:
 - Student identity verification in distance and correspondence education
 - Transfer of credit policies and articulation agreements
 - Title IV program responsibilities
 - Assignment of credit hours.

Progress to Date

- Attendance at Self-Study Institute, November 2013 by Provost Bob Mangione and Dr. Julie Upton
- Self-study model selected: Comprehensive - i.e. examination of the institution within the context of all fourteen standards
 - **Rationale:**
 - **St. John's has not done a comprehensive self-study since 1985; the self-studies done in both 1995 and 2005 were on selected topics;**
 - **The arrival of a new President provides a unique opportunity for assessing the "state of the University" and will inform development of the next strategic plan.**
- Steering Committee co-chairs chosen: Dr. Clover Hall, Dr. Vijaya Korlipara, and Dr. Julie Upton
- Standards grouped to facilitate study
- Steering Committee named; work groups identified; members invited
 - Co-chairs of each work group – 14
 - Institutional members – 13
 - Students – 2 UG; 1 Graduate
 - Board of Trustees representative

STANDARDS OF ACCREDITATION

Working Group 1: Mission, Goals and Institutional Effectiveness

- Standard 1: Mission and Goals
- Standard 6: Integrity
- Standard 7: Institutional Assessment

Working Group 2: Planning and Institutional Resources

- Standard 2: Planning, Resource Allocation, and Institutional Renewal
- Standard 3: Institutional Resources



Working Group 3: Leadership and Governance

- Standard 4: Leadership and Governance
- Standard 5: Administration

Working Group 4: Student Success

- Standard 8: Student Admissions and Retention
- Standard 9: Student Support Services



Working Group 5: Faculty and Educational Offerings

- Standard 10: Faculty
- Standard 11: Educational Offerings
- Standard 12: General Education
- Standard 13: Related Educational Activities

Working Group 6: Assessment of Student Learning

- Standard 14: Assessment of Student Learning



Responsibilities

Providing leadership to the entire self-study process including:

- Voting on the self-study timetable
- Developing a self-study design
- Establishing and charging working groups and coordinating their work on various issues to be studied
- Ensuring that the timetable is implemented as planned
- Assuring communication within the University 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 visit.

Spring / Summer 2014

- Executive Planning Committee and Dean's Council determine grouping of standards for comprehensive self-study
- Steering committee members appointed
- Working groups/task forces established
- Draft self-study design finalized, including charges/questions for working groups – **due to Middle States by August 28**

Fall 2014

- **September 11, 2014:**
 - *Dr. Debra Klinman visits St. John's campus*
- **September - December:**
 - *Commission approves self-study design*
 - Working Groups conduct their research, involving the University community
 - Working Groups and steering committee meet
 - Communication of progress to University community via *Web Digest* and website

Note: Commission and team actions are italicized

*To be reviewed and finalized by Steering Committee

Spring and Summer 2015

- **January – March:**
 - Working Groups finalize reports
 - *Team chair selected by MSCHE, SJU approves selection, dates set for team visit and for preliminary visit by Chair*
 - *Self-study design sent to team chair*
- **April:**
 - Steering committee reviews drafts
 - Draft reports posted on website
 - Town meetings/discussion boards on all campuses to discuss document
- **Summer 2015:**
 - Draft of self-study prepared

Note: Commission and team actions are italicized

*To be reviewed and finalized by Steering Committee

Fall 2015

- **September :**
 - Public comments on self-study
 - Draft posted on University website
 - Town meetings/discussions on all campuses
- **October :**
 - *Preliminary visit of chair*
 - Steering committee revises draft to reflect public comments
- **November- December:**
 - Final review of self-study document

Note: Commission and team actions are italicized

*To be reviewed and finalized by Steering Committee

Spring 2016

- **January/February:**
 - Final version of self-study document mailed to team and CHE
 - Final preparations for visit
- **March/April:**
 - *Team visit*
 - Team report and institutional response
- **June**
 - *MSCHE takes action*

Note: Commission and team actions are italicized

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Preparing the Self-Study Design

- Developing draft charges and self-study research questions for the working groups. Include:
 - Questions that link the accreditation standards to the University's mission and strategic planning
 - Questions that emphasize the role of planning and assessment in achieving the University's mission and advancing itself
 - Questions that focus on changes since the 2006 Self-Study and the 2011 Periodic Review Report
 - Questions that stimulate thinking about important topics affecting the University
 - Questions that require evaluation and judgment
 - Questions that are worth the effort it will take to answer them
 - Questions that connect standards and different dimensions of the University
- Due date for research questions from Working Groups - Aug 12, 2014

Resource List and Communication with Steering Committee Members

- Online group on Blackboard will be used for:
 - File sharing (including an inventory of support documents)
 - Announcements
 - Posting draft self-study questions
 - Posting draft reports

<https://bbprod.stjohns.edu>