

# **Self-Study Design**

for the

Middle States Commission on Higher Education

from

**URSINUS COLLEGE**

Collegeville, PA 19426

Dr. Brock Blomberg, President

May 23, 2017

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## Institutional overview

### Brief description of the institution

Ursinus is an independent, non-sectarian national liberal arts college educating undergraduates since 1869. Long a leader in espousing the value of a liberal arts education through curricular programs that change lives, Ursinus remains fully committed to the liberal arts mission. Its flagship program is the Common Intellectual Experience (CIE), a course for first-year students that has garnered national attention. CIE, taken by all first-years, is a two-semester seminar that emphasizes development of critical thinking and writing skills through analysis of primary texts studied in common but discussed in smaller groups. Full-time faculty from all disciplines teach in the CIE program, encouraging a culture of interdisciplinarity in faculty and students alike. This interdisciplinarity extends into the overall student program, with an average of 20% of students completing double majors, while many others adopt interdisciplinary minors. It also extends beyond the classroom, for instance in the engagement of science with other disciplines through the Center for Science and the Common Good. Currently Ursinus is in the process of crafting a new core curriculum that will go even farther in stressing connections among disciplines.

Ursinus has a traditional strength in the sciences and strong programs across all academic disciplines. Among enrolled students as of Fall 2016, its four largest majors are biology, applied economics, health and exercise physiology, and psychology. The Ursinus academic program consists of a liberal studies core, an academic major, elective courses, and an independent learning experience (ILE). The ILE requires all students to participate in an internship, study abroad program, student teaching or independent research. Of those in the class of 2016, the two ILEs with the highest participation were internships, with over 60% participating, and Summer Fellows and other research, with 56% participating.

Located 25 miles northwest of Philadelphia, Ursinus is home to approximately 1,550 undergraduates. Almost all students are of traditional age and 96% live on our suburban campus. Over half of our students are from Pennsylvania, but other students hail from 33 states and 23 nations. The college has a historic commitment to admitting students regardless of economic circumstance who have demonstrated they can succeed in our rigorous academic environment. In each of the past two years, Ursinus was included in the New York *Times* listing of “The Most Economically Diverse Top Colleges,” which examines the 100 top colleges and universities from across the nation that have a four-year graduation rate of 75 percent or higher. Of the Ursinus Class of 2020, 27% are first generation students, 20% are Pell grant eligible, and 18% are U.S. students of color. An intensive advising system helps new students transition to college. On average, 75% percent of students graduate within four years.

The College offers students classes within three academic divisions: Humanities (including the arts); Sciences; and Social Sciences. Ursinus employs 168 instructional faculty and 270 staff to support students and to further institutional goals. The current student to faculty ratio is 11:1 with over 70% of class sections with fewer than 20 students. All faculty come together every two to four weeks for a meeting run by a faculty committee, and a faculty governance committee facilitates election or appointment to the college’s many committees and working

groups. In the last five years a staff assembly has also been formed, and members of staff have been incorporated into additional committees and working groups. Students too have a governing body, the USGA, which places students on many faculty or college-wide committees. The college administration is headed by the president and a cabinet of senior leadership, including the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the College, Vice President and Dean for Enrollment Management, Vice President for Finance and Administration, Senior Vice President for Advancement, Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students, Director of Athletics, Chief Communication Officer, Chief Information Officer, College Adviser on Diversity/Director of Diversity and Inclusion, and Special Assistant to the President and General Counsel. The Board of Trustees has 25 members. Committees of the board include academic affairs, advancement, athletics, audit, enrollment, executive, finance and facilities, human capital, investment, student affairs and trusteeship.

### Mission

The mission of the College is to enable students to become independent, responsible, and thoughtful individuals through a program of liberal education. That education prepares them to live creatively and usefully, and to provide leadership for their society in an interdependent world.

### Important recent developments and anticipated directions

A number of different initiatives and changes are in progress or are anticipated on our campus. Where appropriate, these have been informed through results of assessment and planning efforts.

**Strategic Plan:** The College began a strategic planning process in Spring 2016. This process was guided by the Campus Planning and Priorities Committee (CPPC), which advises the President on strategic initiatives. Faculty, staff, students, alumni, and parents were included in the design process of the pillars and strategic objectives for the plans. The Board of Trustees voted to approve the plan in May 2017. The plan will be in place in Fall 2017 and continue through the Ursinus College sesquicentennial, 2019-2020. As the new strategic plan coincides with the sesquicentennial, it is referred to as the Ursinus 150 Plan.

Specific campus-wide tactics will be aligned with strategic objectives each year of the strategic plan. Ideas for tactics were provided by students, faculty members, and staff members. CPPC will prioritize tactics and make recommendations to the President about campus-wide tactics each year. The President, in conjunction with the cabinet and the Board of Trustees, will choose several tactics for the campus to use to address strategic objectives each year of the plan. In addition, to further ground the significance of the contributions of the campus community in achieving the strategic objectives, academic and administrative departments will develop department-specific or interdepartmental tactics aligned with the strategic objectives. Progress towards strategic objectives will be measured using institutional data, information collected through programs addressing the campus-wide tactics, and annual reports from academic departments and student support and administrative departments.

## **Strategic Objectives of the Ursinus 150 Strategic Plan**

- Strengthen our program in liberal education, cultivating the habit of lifelong learning.
- Promote a vibrant and inviting campus environment.
- Intensify our commitment to diversity and inclusion.
- Champion risk taking.
- Celebrate Ursinus: past, present, and future.
- Invest in the people of the college as our most important asset.
- Ensure long-term financial sustainability.

**General Education Curriculum:** Ursinus College spent two years actively revising the general education curriculum, called the Core Curriculum, based on assessment of the current curriculum. The revised model and structure was endorsed by the faculty in May, 2016. This inquiry driven curriculum extends throughout students' general education and into the major. Students have multiple options as they determine how they would like to complete their general education curriculum, which will require support for academic advisers as they guide students through the process. We are currently in the process of refining descriptions of some of the components of the curricular structure, aligning courses with the curriculum, integrating assessment mechanisms, and developing an advising program. Once this phase of implementation is complete, students entering Ursinus College in the 2018 cohort will be fully immersed in the new curriculum.

**Student Success:** A Retention Advisory Group set parameters for evidence-based approaches for identifying at-risk students and assessing effectiveness of support programs. This project was transitioned to the newly formed Ursinus Institute for Student Success, a comprehensive unit to advance the College's retention and persistence efforts, oversee student support programs, and continue the research on effective approaches for retention. The College's first-year academic advising program is coordinated through the Institute and will be integrated with the implementation of the Core Curriculum.

**Facilities:** Improving campus facilities and effective use of space are current focuses of the college. We are in the process of building an addition called the Innovation and Discovery Center (IDC), which connects the two main science buildings on campus. Once completed, the IDC will bridge scientific research and teaching with entrepreneurship and public policy. In addition to including research laboratories and interactive teaching spaces, it will house two of our interdisciplinary centers, the Parlee Center for Science and the Common Good (CSCG) and the U-Imagine Center for Integrative and Entrepreneurial Studies. A new Student Commons is planned to be located near one of the main campus entrances and will provide accessible and visible space for Admissions and the bookstore. It will also provide meeting and classroom space for students, staff members, and faculty members. The newly formed Institute for Diversity and Inclusion will be located in the former bookstore space in the Wismer Student Center, greatly enhancing and expanding space for student engagement and programming. Summer programming is in development to utilize our space more effectively year round. The summer programs include academic courses and hosting of events. Attention is also being paid to improving and maintaining our existing facilities as well as enhancing campus safety.

Classrooms, dormitories, and infrastructure require input of resources for necessary updates to maintain the quality of our campus.

**Leadership:** In July 2015, Dr. Brock Blomberg began his presidency at Ursinus College. Before beginning his position at Ursinus he was Dean of the Robert Day School of Economics and Finance at Claremont McKenna College. This change establishes a direction for recent initiatives at the college, including a new strategic plan and transitions within the senior leadership of the college. A new Vice President and Dean for Enrollment joined the College in February, 2016, and a new Vice President for Finance and Administration in December, 2016. A new Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the College, Dr. Mark Schneider, will begin his position in July, 2017. Dr. Schneider was previously an Associate Dean at Grinnell College. There has also been a transition in our Board of Trustees, with the appointment of Robert Wonderling, CEO of the Chamber of Commerce of Philadelphia, as the new Chair.

**Response to Current Macro-environment in Higher Education:** As a small liberal arts college, Ursinus is impacted by the nationwide changes in higher education and the resulting effect on enrollment and finances. In response, the College is shifting admission and financial aid strategies, redesigning operating budget processes, and focusing on five year financial modeling practices. The overarching goal of these process changes is the long term financial sustainability of the College and they bring methods to maximize efficient use of resources, create an evidence-based process for resource allocation, and increase transparency in the decision making process.

**Capital Campaign:** The College is pursuing a \$100 million comprehensive campaign that culminates in the sesquicentennial anniversary during fiscal year 2019-2020. Funds are being raised that align with the College's mission and strategic priorities and that will advance academic innovation, enrich the student experience, and provide enhanced access through scholarships. Examples of projects and initiatives that will benefit from the campaign include investing in the college's three interdisciplinary centers, building a new Innovation and Discovery Center, building a Student Commons, and growing endowed scholarships, faculty development funds, and funds to support immersive student experiences.

#### [Steps taken to date to prepare for the self-study](#)

The campus has been working towards the Self-Study since preparing a monitoring report, beginning in January 2015. All of the work done for that report was designed to contribute to the current Self-Study process. Formal work on the Self-Study began in October, 2016, at the Self-Study Institute.

#### **Spring 2015 – Spring 2016**

- Preparation for and writing of a Monitoring Report addressing how the College was meeting Standard 7, Institutional Assessment, and Standard 14, Assessment of Student Learning.
- The Monitoring Report was submitted in April 2016 and it was accepted in June, 2016.

## Fall 2016

- Steering Committee co-chairs attended the MSCHE Self-Study Institute.
- Core Steering Committee was formed in December, 2016.
- Co-chairs presented information about the Self-Study process to Staff Assembly, the full Faculty, and Academic Department Chairs.
- Nominations for members of Working Groups were solicited from the Faculty Governance Committee and Staff Assembly.
- Core Steering committee prepared charges for Working Groups.
- Core Steering Committee began work on Documentation Roadmap.

## Spring 2017

- Core Steering Committee began weekly meetings.
- Co-chairs presented information about the Self-Study process to Administrative Department Heads and the President's cabinet.
- Core Steering Committee facilitated a workshop on the Documentation Roadmap for faculty and staff members.
- A shared online workspace was developed for the Self-Study process.
- Co-chairs discussed Intended Outcomes of the Self-Study and reviewed Self-Study process with the President's cabinet.
- Working Groups were finalized.
- Information about the Self-Study process was updated on the College's Accreditation webpage.
- Core Steering Committee facilitated a workshop for Chairs of Working Groups.
- Core Steering Committee expanded Documentation Roadmap.
- Core Steering Committee completed the Self-Study Design.
- Working Group chairs meet with Working Groups.
- MSCHE Vice President liaison visit planned for April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

## Intended outcomes of the self-study

There are several outcomes the College will work towards as it undergoes the process of completing the Self-Study. These outcomes were developed in collaboration with the President's cabinet, which serves as a strategic body for the campus. Each of these goals is integrated with initiatives the college is undertaking, listed above in the section "Important recent developments and anticipated directions."

### **Demonstrate how the institution is currently meeting MSCHE Standards for Accreditation:**

Gathering and analyzing information about initiatives, processes, and procedures from across the campus will contribute to identification of strengths and areas for improvement. This information directly contributes to our work on Ursinus 150 Strategic Plan objectives, retention initiatives, allocation of resources through our budgeting process, and improvement of our facilities. Each of these initiatives is designed to strengthen our institution by improving programming, campus climate, and campus infrastructure.

**Assess the quality and effectiveness of academic programs and administrative services in all departments to identify challenges and opportunities and make recommendations for improvement:** Assessment of academic programs and administrative services will provide specific information that can be used to enhance these areas. It will also contribute to Strategic Plan Objectives, specifically, “Strengthen our program in liberal education, cultivating the habit of lifelong learning” and “Invest in the people of the college as our most important asset.” In addition, this information informs the process of finalizing our new general education curriculum, identifying opportunities for improvement of facilities, and making decisions about resources based on assessment findings.

**Identify challenges and specific opportunities related to enhancing diversity and inclusivity of the campus community:** This outcome connects to important issues that colleges are facing nationwide. Our analysis of issues in our own community related to diversity and inclusion will inform progress towards our Ursinus 150 Strategic Plan objective, “Intensify our commitment to diversity and inclusion.” Findings will also contribute to our work on retention, specifically of underserved groups.

**Inform investment priorities by demonstrating alignment between the Ursinus 150 Plan strategic objectives and resource needs:** Through the self-analysis we undergo for the Self-Study, we will gather information about campus resource needs relevant to strategic objectives in the Ursinus 150 Strategic Plan. Connecting these findings to resource allocation for the Ursinus 150 Strategic Plan, including time, individuals’ talents, space, pedagogical decisions, and funding, will support the campus as we move forward with the strategic objectives.

### Organizational structure of the steering committee and working groups

**Structure:** A core Steering Committee of five members provides the primary leadership for the College’s Self-Study process. The Steering Committee membership composition is designed to leverage the knowledge, experience, and expertise of faculty and staff on existing campus decision-making bodies in addition to providing an institution-wide perspective. The background of the members include those with extensive history and knowledge of the institution, previous experience with Middle States accreditation and self-study processes, and project management experience, as well as members with positions within the College that facilitate communication with senior leadership and access to institutional information. The College’s commitment to the use of assessment to inform institutional improvement is further reflected in having the two primary individuals responsible for college-wide assessment participate as the co-chairs of the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee meets weekly and the roles and representation of the committee members are outlined in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Core Steering Committee.** The names and titles of Core Steering Committee members are shown. Additional campus roles relevant to work on the Steering Committee are included.

Name	Title	Additional Roles
Rebecca Kohn, Ph.D.	Senior Associate Dean of the College and Professor of Biology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-Study Co-chair</li> <li>• Accreditation Liaison Officer</li> <li>• Convener of Campus Priorities and Planning Committee</li> <li>• Co-coordinator of College Assessment</li> </ul>
Annemarie Bartlett, M.S.	Director of Institutional Research and Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-Study Co-chair</li> <li>• MSCHE IP Key User</li> <li>• Staff to Campus Planning and Priorities Committee</li> <li>• Co-coordinator of College Assessment</li> </ul>
Carol Dole, Ph.D.	Professor of English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Member Campus Priorities and Planning Committee</li> </ul>
Andrew Economopoulos, Ph.D.	Professor and Chair of the Business and Economics Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Member Faculty Affairs Committee</li> <li>• Past Outcomes Assessment Committee member</li> </ul>
Will Caverly, M.A.	Associate Director for Corporate, Foundation, and Government Relations in the Advancement Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vice President of Staff Assembly</li> </ul>

The Steering Committee selected to align Working Groups with each of the seven Standards for Accreditation and one Task Force dedicated to Verification of Compliance. Each Working Group is comprised of 4-6 faculty and staff members with one member appointed as the working group chairperson. Names, titles, and departments of Working Group members are included in the section of the Self-Study design titled, “Charges to the Working Groups and Guidelines for Reporting.” Faculty representation was garnered through the College’s governance process inviting faculty to volunteer for service on one of the working groups. Staff representation was first solicited through the College’s Staff Assembly, a formal body representing the staff of the College, and then direct recruitment of staff members. In order to create an inclusive, transparent, and accountable process, the Steering Committee and Working Groups have made strides to attract a number of different stakeholders from across the campus. In addition to faculty and staff members, students will be recruited for each Working Group. At least one members of the Presidents’ Cabinet will serve as a liaison for each Standard. The diverse nature of these committees is intended to engender broad perspectives, study credibility, and an institution-wide commitment to examination of each Standard for Accreditation.

The Working Groups are an essential component of our Self-Study effort. They provide valuable perspectives on our strengths and challenges as they engage in the evidence-based process of demonstrating how the College addresses the Standards of Accreditation. The Working Groups will have opportunities to address the College’s fundamental academic and administrative operations through thoughtful inquiry and study. They will engage with campus members as

they address aspects of Standards relative to individuals' areas of expertise. The text that the Working Groups write as they develop drafts of a Self-Study chapter for each of the Standards of Accreditation will be made available to the Steering Committee. They will also provide the Steering Committee with a list of "areas for improvement" related to their findings. The Steering Committee will forward items from this list as appropriate to individuals in the college who will be able to address them. Some of these items may be incorporated into specific recommendations within the Self-Study. The chapters drafted by the Working Groups will be compiled and refined by the Steering Committee into a full Self-Study draft and shared with the campus for feedback. Following revision, the Self-Study report will be distributed to the visiting team and to MSCHE. Working Group members provide a valuable service to the College by participating in the Self-Study process and their work is appreciated.

**How the Steering Committee and Working Groups relate:** The core Steering Committee and the Working Group chairpersons form the larger Steering Committee that will meet on a monthly basis. In its leadership role, the Steering Committee provides information and advice to the chairpersons of the Working Groups during monthly meetings. Throughout the Self Study process, Steering Committee members will make regular visits to Working Group meetings to provide support. Working Groups will send draft documents to the Steering Committee as part of an ongoing conversation about their findings for inclusion into the final document. The core Steering Committee will also serve as the clearinghouse for the information and data needs of the working groups.

**How the Steering Committee and Working Groups fit into the organization of the institution:** Charged with leading the Self-Study, the Steering Committee, in consultation with the President and the President's cabinet, will facilitate the coordination of resources and personnel to undertake a thoughtful and thorough examination of the College's functions. Steering Committee co-chairs will discuss progress in the Self-Study monthly with the President's cabinet. Members of the Steering Committee and Working Groups include faculty members representing all academic divisions and staff members from multiple administrative units. Members of the President's Cabinet will serve as liaisons to specific Working Groups, based on their areas of responsibility within the college. As liaisons, they will facilitate acquisition of data and documentation needed by the Working Groups.

## Charges to the working groups and guidelines for reporting

The initial section of the charge is the same for each Working Group. Following this section, specific text for each of the seven Working Groups is included.

### **Initial common section:**

Each Working Group will draft a chapter of the Self-Study illustrating how the college meets one of the MSCHE Standards for Accreditation. They will "engage in a process of active and open inquiry, to identify institutional strengths and challenges" (MSCHE, 2014). They will also provide the Steering Committee with a list of "areas for improvement" related to their findings. The Steering Committee will forward items from this list as appropriate to individuals in the

college who will be able to address them. Some of these items may be incorporated into specific recommendations within the Self-Study.

The Self-Study chapters are analytical evidence-based texts that reference college documents, policies, and procedures. Working Groups will work together to draft the chapters in consultation with the Steering Committee. The documentation that will be referenced in the chapters is listed in the Documentation Roadmap and will be available for the Working Groups. Drafts of chapters will be reviewed and revised by the Steering Committee. The full Self-Study report will be shared with the college community for feedback. The Working Groups will revise their chapters of the full Self-Study report based on this information.

The Working Groups will form in the Spring 2017 semester and their work will continue into the early Fall 2018 semester. Chairs of Working Groups may continue working through the Spring 2019 semester when we have our site visit. Responsibilities for the Working Groups will vary as we move through the Self-Study process.

**Institutional Priorities:** Each Working Group will consider which of the Strategic Objectives in the Ursinus 150 Strategic Plan connect to their Standard. In the chapter they draft, they will explore how pursuit of the Strategic Objective enhances fulfillment of the Standard for Accreditation.

**Intended Outcomes of the Self-Study:**

- Demonstrate how the institution is currently meeting MSCHE Standards for Accreditation and Requirements for Affiliation.
- Assess the quality and effectiveness of academic programs and administrative services in all departments to identify challenges and opportunities and make recommendations for improvement.
- Identify challenges and specific opportunities related to enhancing diversity and inclusivity of the campus community.
- Inform investment priorities by demonstrating alignment between the Ursinus 150 Plan strategic objectives and resource needs.

<b>Timeline for development of chapters by Working Groups</b>
<b>Spring 2017:</b> Working Group Chairs will participate in a training workshop run by the Steering Committee. The Working Groups will meet once or twice to <b>gain an understanding of their role</b> through Spring 2019.
<b>Summer 2017:</b> Some working groups may meet, but most of their work begins in the fall.
<b>Fall 2017:</b> Working groups will meet once or twice a month to <b>gather information, develop an outline, and draft the chapter</b> they are writing for the self-study. Chairs will bring questions and early drafts to the Steering Committee. There will be some work outside of the meetings.
<b>Spring 2018:</b> Working groups will meet once or twice a month to <b>gather information and work on drafts</b> of the chapter they are writing for the self-study. Chairs will consult with the

Steering Committee on progress with drafts and incorporation of supporting evidence. There will be some work outside of the meetings.

**Summer 2018:** Working groups will meet once or twice a month to **revise drafts of the chapter** they are writing for the self-study. Chairs will work with the Steering Committee on the revision process. There will be some work outside of the meetings.

**Fall 2018:** Working groups will complete **revisions of drafts of their chapters** early in the fall semester. There will be some work outside of the meetings. Working Group chairs may continue their work through the fall semester. The Steering Committee will compile all chapters into a full Self-Study report that will be shared with the college community. The Steering Committee will finalize revisions. **A complete Self-Study report will be sent to the chair of the review team.**

**Spring 2019: The Working Groups have completed their tasks!** The Steering Committee in collaboration with Working Group chairs will finalize revisions after receiving feedback from the chair of the review team. **A complete Self-Study report will be sent to the review team several weeks before their visit.**

#### Individual sections for each Working Group:

#### WORKING GROUP FOR STANDARD I: Mission and Goals

**Chair:** Christian Rice, Th.D., Assistant Dean for Civic Engagement, Visiting Assistant Professor of Philosophy and Religious Studies

**Members:**

Wendy Greenberg, B.S., Director of Communications

Matt Kozusko, Ph.D., Associate Professor of English, CIE co-Coordinator

Cory Straub, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Biology

James Tiggett, B.S., Telecommunications Technologies Administrator, member of Diversity Committee

**President's Cabinet liaisons:**

April Edwards, Ph.D., Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the College, Professor of Computer Science

Mark Schneider, Ph.D., Incoming Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the College

*"The institution's mission defines its purpose within the context of higher education, the students 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."*(MSCHE, 2014)

#### Criteria to demonstrate for Standard I: (adapted directly from MSCHE, 2014)

- The college has clearly defined mission and goals that were developed collaboratively, address all college constituencies, were approved and are supported, guide campus

decision making, support scholarly and creative activity, are widely known in the institution.

- The institutional goals are realistic, appropriate to higher education, and consistent with our mission.
- The college's goals focus on student learning, related student outcomes and institutional improvement. They are supported by administrative, educational, and student support programs and services.
- There is periodic assessment of mission and goals to ensure they are relevant and achievable.

### **WORKING GROUP FOR STANDARD II: Ethics and Integrity**

**Chair:** Kelly Sorensen, Ph.D., Associate Dean of the College and Professor of Philosophy and Religious Studies

**Members:**

Shammah Bermudez, M.Ed., Director of Disability Services

Deborah Fearheller, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Health and Exercise Physiology

Domenick Scudera, M.F.A., Professor of Theater and Dance

**President's Cabinet liaisons:**

Robert Clothier, J.D., Special Assistant to the President and General Counsel

April Edwards, Ph.D., Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the College,  
Professor of Computer Science

Mark Schneider, Ph.D., Incoming Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the College

*"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." (MSCHE, 2014)*

**Criteria to demonstrate for Standard II:** (adapted directly from MSCHE, 2014)

- The college exhibits a commitment to academic freedom, intellectual freedom, freedom of expression, and respect for intellectual property rights.
- The college climate fosters respect across campus from a range of diverse backgrounds, ideas, and perspectives.
- A grievance policy for students, faculty, and staff is documented and disseminated. The policies and procedures are fair and impartial, and grievances are addressed promptly, appropriately, and equitably.
- There is an avoidance of conflict of interest or the appearance of such conflict.
- The college has fair and impartial practices in the hiring, evaluation, promotion, discipline, and separation of employees.
- There is honesty and truthfulness in public relations announcements, advertisements, recruiting and admissions materials and practices, and internal communications.

- Services or programs are in place to promote affordability and accessibility, and to enable students to understand funding sources and options, value received for cost, and methods to make informed decisions about incurring debt.
- There is evidence for compliance with all applicable federal, state, and Commission reporting policies, regulations, and requirements.
- There is periodic assessment of ethics and integrity in institutional policies, processes, practices, and the manner in which these are implemented.

**WORKING GROUP FOR STANDARD III:  
Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience**

**Chair:** Dale Cameron, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Biology

**Members:**

Scott Deacle, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Business and Economics

Del Engstrom, Ed.D., Professor of Health and Exercise Physiology

Beverly Gaydos, B.S., Information Manager for Career and Professional Development

Christine Iannicelli, M.S., Instructional Technology Librarian

**President's Cabinet liaisons:**

April Edwards, Ph.D., Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the College,  
Professor of Computer Science

Mark Schneider, Ph.D., Incoming Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the College

*"An institution provides students with learning experiences that are characterized by rigor and coherence at all program, certificate, and degree levels, regardless of instructional modality. All learning experiences, regardless of modality, program pace/schedule, level and setting are consistent with higher education expectations." (MSCHE, 2014)*

**Criteria to demonstrate for Standard III:** (adapted directly from MSCHE, 2014)

- Programs leading to a degree are of an appropriate length and are designed to foster a coherent student learning experience and promote synthesis of learning.
- Student learning experiences are designed, delivered, and assessed by faculty who are rigorous and effective in teaching, assessment of student learning, and scholarly inquiry. These faculty members are qualified for their positions, are provided with support for professional development, and are reviewed regularly.
- Academic programs of study are described in official publications so that students are able to understand and follow degree requirements.
- There are sufficient learning opportunities and resources to support programs of study and students' academic progress.
- There is a general education program (core curriculum) that draws students into new areas of intellectual experience, expands cultural and global awareness and cultural sensitivity, and prepares them to make well-reasoned judgments. Students acquire and demonstrate essential skills including at least oral and written communication, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis and reasoning, technological competency, and information literacy.
- There is periodic assessment of student learning opportunities.

**WORKING GROUP FOR STANDARD IV:  
Support of the Student Experience**

**Chair:** Katie Turek, M.S.Ed., Assistant Director of Ursinus Center for Advocacy, Responsibility, and Engagement (UCARE)

**Members:**

Joel Bish, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Psychology

Kneia DaCosta, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Psychology

Lisa Grossbauer, M.S., Instructor of Mathematics

Barbara Tyson, B.A., Accounts Receivable Associate, Student Billing Office

Alyssa WorriLOW, B.A., Senior Assistant Director of Admission

**President's Cabinet liaisons:**

Debbie Nolan, M.A., Vice President of Student Affairs/Dean of Students

David Tobias, M.S.Ed., Vice President and Dean of Enrollment Management

Laura Moliken, M.S., Director of Athletics

*“Across all educational experiences, settings, levels, and instructional 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, completion, and success 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.” (MSCHE, 2014)*

**Criteria to demonstrate for Standard IV:** (adapted directly from MSCHE, 2014)

- The college has clearly stated ethical policies and processes to admit, retain, and facilitate the success of students. There is adequate information regarding expenses, financial aid, scholarships, grants, loans, repayment, and refund. A process is in place for support of students who are not adequately prepared for study at the level for which they have been admitted. Orientation, advising, and counseling programs are in place to enhance retention and guide students through their educational experience. There are processes for enhancing successful achievement of students' educational goals including degree completion, transfer to other institutions, and post-completion placement.
- There are policies and procedures regarding evaluation and acceptance of transfer credits, and credits awarded through experiential learning, prior non-academic learning, competency-based assessment, and other alternative learning approaches.
- The college maintains policies and procedures for maintenance and release of student information and records.
- Athletic, student life, and other extracurricular activities are regulated by the same principles and procedures that govern all other programs.
- There is periodic assessment of the effectiveness of programs supporting the student experience.

**WORKING GROUP FOR STANDARD V:  
Educational Effectiveness Assessment**

**Chair:** Diane Skorina, M.L.S., Director of Research, Teaching & Learning Services in the Library and Information Technology department, and Co-Director of the Teaching and Learning Institute

**Members:**

Juan-Ramon de Arana, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Modern Languages, Helen Roganlinski Clarke Chair of Modern Languages, former member of the Outcomes Assessment Committee

Talia Argondezzi, Ph.D., Director, Writing and Speaking Program, Chair of Outcomes Assessment Committee

Kerry Gibson, M.S., Collection Management Librarian

**President's Cabinet liaisons:**

April Edwards, Ph.D., Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the College, Professor of Computer Science

Mark Schneider, Ph.D., Incoming Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the College

*“Assessment of student learning and achievement demonstrates that the institution's students have accomplished educational goals consistent with their programs of study, degree level, the institution's mission, and appropriate expectations for institutions of higher education.”*  
(MSCHE, 2014)

**Criteria to demonstrate for Standard V:** (adapted directly from MSCHE, 2014)

- There are clearly stated educational goals at the institution and degree levels, which are interrelated with one another and with the institution's mission.
- There is evidence that organized and systematic assessments are conducted that evaluate student achievement of institutional and degree goals.
- There is consideration and use of assessment results for the improvement of educational effectiveness.
- There is evidence of periodic assessment of the effectiveness of assessment processes.

**WORKING GROUP FOR STANDARD VI:  
Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement**

**Chair:** Jennifer VanGilder, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Business and Economics

**Members:**

Beth Bailey, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Biology, member Campus Planning and Priorities Committee (CPPC)

Ellen Curcio, M.S., Associate Controller, Receivables

Betsy Witt, Administrative Assistant to the Phillip and Muriel Berman Museum of Art

**President's Cabinet liaisons:**

Jill Marsteller, M.A., Senior Vice President for Advancement

*“The institution’s planning processes, resources, and structures are aligned with each other and are sufficient to fulfill its mission and goals, to continuously assess and improve its programs and services, and to respond effectively to opportunities and challenges.” (MSCHE, 2014)*

**Criteria to demonstrate for Standard VI:** (adapted directly from MSCHE, 2014)

- The college has institutional objectives that are clearly stated, assessed appropriately, linked to mission and goal achievement, reflect conclusions drawn from assessment results, and are used for planning and resource allocation.
- There are clearly documented and communicated planning and improvement processes.
- A financial planning and budgeting process is evident that is aligned with the institution’s mission and goals, evidence-based, and clearly linked to the institution’s and units’ strategic plans/objectives.
- Fiscal and human resources as well as the physical and technical infrastructure are adequate to support the college’s operations.
- There are well-defined decision-making processes and clear assignment of responsibility and accountability.
- There is comprehensive planning for facilities, infrastructure, and technology.
- There is an annual independent audit confirming financial viability.
- Strategies are in place to measure and assess the adequacy and efficient utilization of institutional resources required to support the institution’s mission and goals.
- There is periodic assessment of the effectiveness of planning, resource allocation, institutional renewal processes, and availability of resources.

**WORKING GROUP FOR STANDARD VII:  
Governance, Leadership, and Administration**

**Chair:** Meredith Goldsmith, Ph.D., Professor of English, Assistant to the President for Strategic Initiatives

**Members:**

Lisa Bogdanski, M.S., Senior Associate Director of Alumni Relations

Ed Clarke, M.A., Executive Director of External Relations and Assistant Dean

Maureen Cumpstone, M.B.A., Entrepreneur-in-Residence for the U-Imagine Center for Integrative and Entrepreneurial Studies

Rosemary Pall, J.D., Executive Director of Annual Fund Programs

Amanda Reig, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Chemistry, Chair of Faculty Governance Committee

**President’s Cabinet liaison:**

Annette Parker, M.B.A., Vice President for Finance and Administration

Robert Clothier, J.D., Special Assistant to the President and General Counsel

*“The institution is governed and administered in a manner that allows it to realize its stated mission and goals in a way that effectively benefits the institution, its students, and the other*

*constituencies it serves. Even when supported by or affiliated with governmental, corporate, religious, educational system, or other unaccredited organizations, the institution has education as its primary purpose, and it operates as an academic institution with appropriate autonomy.”* (MSCHE, 2014)

**Criteria to demonstrate for Standard VII:** (adapted directly from MSCHE, 2014)

- The college demonstrates a clearly articulated and transparent governance structure.
- There is a legally constituted governing body that is fulfilling its roles.
- There is a Chief Executive Officer who is fulfilling assigned roles.
- The administration is organized in an effective way to support the Chief Executive Officer and the mission of the college.
- There is periodic assessment of the effectiveness of governance, leadership, and administration.

## Organization of the final Self-Study report

The Self-Study report will be structured around chapters for each of the seven Standards. There will also be introductory and concluding material, including recommendations for future improvements.

**Introduction:** This section will include an executive summary of the major findings and recommendations, a brief institutional overview, and a description of the Self-Study process.

**A chapter for each of the seven MSCHE Standards for Accreditation:** Each chapter will explain how the college addresses the Standards using supporting evidence, such as data or references to specific processes or procedures. Cross references to related materials found in other sections of the Self-Study report will be included. An analysis of strengths and weaknesses will explore areas in which the College addresses the Standard for Accreditation particularly well and areas where there can be improvement.

**Conclusion:** This section of the Self-Study report will include a summary of the major conclusions from the chapters for each Standard of Accreditation. The conclusion will also articulate three or four enduring and institution-wide recommendations that emerged in the report. These recommendations will be based on ideas that are overarching for multiple Standards of Accreditation.

**Appendix:** Documentation Roadmap

## Editorial style and format

Specific instructions for writing style and format are included so that Working Groups develop chapters with a consistent style that can be integrated together into the final Self-Study report.

**Components to include in each chapter:**

- Overview of Standard of Accreditation and criteria to address.

- Explanation of how the College addresses the Standard.
- Data, processes, or procedures that support descriptions of how the College addresses the Standard.
- Description of the College’s strengths and challenges in meeting the Standard.
- Recommendations for how the College can improve its ability to meet the Standard.

**Voice:** When possible write in active voice and in third person.

**Software:** All documents will be in Microsoft Word format.

**Supporting documentation:** Hyper link to the Document Roadmap. Make accessible on our webpage and/or in our learning management system, Canvas.

**Length of chapters:** Each chapter on one of the Standards for Accreditation is likely to range from 20-30 pages double spaced. The final Self-Study report is limited to 200 pages, double spaced.

**Formatting instructions:**

- Margins: 1 inch
- Spacing: Double spaced
- Font: Calibri 12
- Tables: Number tables. Can indicate in the text, “insert table here, showing...” if you are not certain how to generate the table.

**Acronyms:** Spell out acronym during its first use with the affiliated acronym in parentheses, and use it in subsequent use. Acronyms from all chapters will be included after the Table of Contents in the Self-Study report. Below are some commonly used examples:

- Ursinus College (UC)
- MSCHE: Middle States Council on Higher Education (MSCHE)
- CIE: Common Intellectual Experience (CIE)
- CPPC: Campus Priorities and Planning Committee (CPPC)
- Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA)
- Vice President for Finance and Administration (VPFA)
- Senior Vice President for Advancement (SVPA)

**Multi-phase activity of writing and editing the chapters in the Self-Study report:** Working Groups will develop an outline for the draft of their chapters that will be reviewed with the Working Group Chairs and the Core Steering Committee. They will then write drafts of chapters and the Working Group Chairs will confer with the Core Steering Committee. The Core Steering Committee will review drafts and suggest revisions. Working Groups will make changes and return drafts to the Core Steering Committee. The Core Steering Committee will merge drafts for all chapters into the full Self-Study report. They will adjust the language so that there is a consistent voice across the entire report. Working Groups may be asked to respond to

suggestions from the campus community after the full draft of the Self-Study report is shared with the campus. The Core Steering Committee will then make final edits and compile the final version of the full report.

### Timetable for the Self-Study process

Initial work contributing to the Self-Study began in Spring 2015 while working on a Monitoring Report addressing Assessment of Standard 7, Institutional Assessment, and Standard 14, Assessment of Student Learning. The campus is now focused on the Self-Study and will work steadily on this process through the Spring 2019 semester. The timetable shown in Table 2 begins after the MSCHE liaison’s visit in Spring 2017 as preceding steps were described above in the section, “Steps taken to date to prepare for the Self-Study.” Throughout the process, the Steering Committee will facilitate communication with campus constituencies using a communication plan (Table 2). As specific dates become available they will be added to the timetable.

**Table 2. Timetable and communication plan.** Specific action items will be completed each semester as part of the Self-Study process. Information pertaining to the process will be communicated with groups across the campus.

Academic semester	Action item	Communication plan
Spring 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MSCHE Vice President liaison provides feedback and approval of the Self-Study Design.</li> </ul>	
Summer 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Steering Committee responds to MSCHE feedback on the Self-Study Design.</li> <li>• Steering Committee shares design with Working Groups in preparation for fall term.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Steering committee co-chairs continue monthly updates for the President’s cabinet.</li> </ul>
Fall 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working Groups review existing data and documentation for their chapter, discuss additional information and data needs with Steering Committee.</li> <li>• Working Groups write drafts of a chapter for their Standard and submit to Steering Committee.</li> <li>• Steering Committee sends recommendations for revisions to Working Groups.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Steering committee updates campus on progress with Self-Study at Staff Assembly, Faculty Meeting, Administrative Department Heads Meeting, and President’s cabinet meetings.</li> <li>• A summary of progress is sent the Board of Trustees for their December board meeting.</li> <li>• Information about Self-Study process is updated on Accreditation webpage.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Steering Committee writes drafts of introductory material for the Self-Study report.</li> <li>• Work begins on the Verification of Compliance Report.</li> </ul>	
Spring 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MSCHE select the Evaluation Team Chair and College reviews the selection</li> <li>• Team Chair and College select dates for Team Chair preliminary visit and Team visit.</li> <li>• College sends copy of Self-Study Design to Team Chair.</li> <li>• Working Groups revise chapters and submit to Steering Committee.</li> <li>• Steering Committee sends recommendations for revisions to Working Groups.</li> <li>• Drafts are completed for all chapters in the Self-Study report.</li> <li>• Work continues on the Verification of Compliance Report.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Steering committee updates campus on progress with Self-Study at Staff Assembly, Faculty Meeting, Administrative and Student Support Department Heads Meeting, and President’s cabinet meetings.</li> <li>• Information about Self-Study process is updated on Accreditation webpage.</li> <li>• A summary of progress is sent to the Board of Trustees for their May board meeting.</li> </ul>
Summer 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commission selects Evaluation Team members and College reviews for conflict of interest.</li> <li>• Drafts of all chapters are revised.</li> <li>• The Steering Committee compiles the drafts onto one document.</li> <li>• Initial full draft is shared with the campus community in late summer.</li> <li>• Initial full draft is shared with the Board of Trustees.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information about Self-Study process is updated on Accreditation webpage.</li> <li>• The campus community is asked to respond to the draft of the Self-Study report via a webform that poses specific questions about the content of the report.</li> </ul>
Fall 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Steering Committee revises the full report based on feedback from the campus community.</li> <li>• At least two weeks before the visit, the team chair should receive, at a minimum, the college catalog, the Self-Study Design, and the latest drafts of the Self-Study Report and Documentation Roadmap.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information about Self-Study process is updated on Accreditation webpage.</li> <li>• A community-wide discussion is held about the Self-Study report.</li> <li>• The Board of Trustees is asked to submit feedback about the full draft of the Self-Study at their October board meeting.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preliminary visit from the visiting team chair.</li> <li>• Verification of Compliance Report is submitted.</li> <li>• Steering committee revises the Self-Study report based on feedback from the team chair.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A summary of progress is sent to the Board of Trustees for their December Board meeting.</li> </ul>
Spring 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In January 2019, Steering Committee makes final revisions to the Self-Study report.</li> <li>• Steering Committee submits final report to President's Office for the Board of Trustees to express their support at the January/February BOT meeting.</li> <li>• Board of Trustees express support for the Self-Study report at January/February meeting.</li> <li>• Travel arrangements are made for visiting team.</li> <li>• Schedule for site visit is arranged and campus constituencies are invited to sessions.</li> <li>• Approved Self-Study report is submitted to visiting team at least six weeks prior to their visit.</li> <li>• Visiting team comes to campus and writes an exit report.</li> <li>• College responds to exit report.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The full Self-Study report is sent to the Board of Trustees for their January or February meeting with a request for them to express their support.</li> <li>• Information about Self-Study process is updated on Accreditation webpage.</li> <li>• Steering committee prepares campus for site visit at Staff Assembly, Faculty Meeting, Administrative and Student Support Department Heads Meeting, and President's cabinet meetings.</li> <li>• Opportunities to meet with the visiting team are made available to campus constituents.</li> </ul>
Summer 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MSCHE Committee on Evaluation Reports meets.</li> <li>• MSCHE meets to determine accreditation action.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outcome of MSCHE accreditation action is shared and celebrated with the campus community.</li> </ul>

### Profile of the evaluation team

It would be beneficial for the evaluation team to represent several types of institutions as well as specific areas of expertise. There are also institutions that directly compete with the College for students that would be preferable not to include. In addition, a team chair with specific experiences would provide valuable insight into the institution.

**Specific areas of expertise in team members:**

- Recent completion of development and implementation of a strategic plan.
- Experience in strengthening enrollment and in maximizing resources based on enrollment. An individual with enrollment management experience would be valuable.
- Background in enhancing diversity and inclusivity.
- Experience in using evidence-based approaches for prioritizing investment of resources. These resources include human, financial, facilities, etc.

**Types of institutions to include:**

- Tuition and enrollment-driven institutions.
- Institutions with small endowments, approximately \$129M.
- Highly residential institutions.
- Institutions included in Loren Pope's publication, *Colleges that Change Lives* (2012).

**Types of institutions to avoid:**

- Centennial Conference institutions should be avoided due to competition for the same pool of students.
- State institutions should be avoided as they would have a different perspective on finances.

**Characteristics in the Team Chair:**

- A broad institutional perspective with experience considering multiple different aspects of the academic and administrative components of higher education.
- Recently worked through major transitions at an institution, including those related to leadership and finances, and has experience managing organizational change.
- Senior leadership experience, preferably at the level of a President.

## Documentation Roadmap

See attachment.

## References

MSCHE (2014). *Standards for Accreditation and Requirements for Affiliation*. Thirteenth edition.

Pope, L. (2012). *Colleges that Change Lives: 40 Schools That Will Change the Way you Think About Colleges*. Fourth revised edition.