What is MSCHE? Why does it matter?

- Seven regional accreditors in the United States. UAlbany is accredited by MSCHE.
- MSCHE serves higher education institutions in Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands.
- MSCHE accredits 525 degree-granting, postsecondary institutions of all Carnegie Classification types.

- Quality assurance; Ensure continuous improvement; Accountability; and Participation in Federal Title IV aid programs
University Self-Study Steering Committee

- Co-Chairs: Jeanette Altarriba / Jason Lane
- Lead Staff: Jack Mahoney / Bruce Szelest
- Co-Chairs/Staff of Each Work Group (see included list)
Key Lingo

- Self-Study
- Standards
- Requirements of Affiliation
- Verification of Compliance (Jack will lead and involve you as needed)
Four Principles

- Mission-Centric
- Focus on Student-Learning Experience
- Assessment
- Innovation imbedded through Continuous Improvement
Potential Pitfalls – Underestimate the Importance of the Self-Study Process

- Pitfall: Viewing Self-Study as peripheral to the institution’s work
- Pointer: “…intention to use the process to discover areas of strength and weakness, to make appropriate recommendations, and to implement those recommendations to enable an institution to achieve its mission and goals…”
- Evaluation Team members are peers who have experience in similar institutions and who understand the challenges and opportunities inherent in the institution's mission and goals. The work they do, as well as the work that institutional constituents devote to the process, should have a long-term impact on an institution's overall effectiveness and on student learning.
Potential Pitfalls – Writing a Self-Study Document that is Overly Descriptive

Pitfall: Describing what the institution does without analyzing the information gleaned from ongoing assessment processes.

Pointer: The Self-Study should not focus merely on describing what an institution does or what it hopes to achieve. The Self-Study should be a time for reflection about institutional mission through analysis of how institutional operations affect students, and how well operations relate to mission and goals. Using information from institutional, unit, and program assessments should help the institution engage in meaningful analysis.
Potential Pitfalls – Making Assertions or Recommendations without Sufficient Evidence

- Pitfall: Making unsupported assertions about student learning and achievement, and/or programs and their effectiveness.

- Pointer: Provide data, explain the methods used to gather them. Demonstrate how the evidence is being considered and used by key institutional stakeholders to achieve mission and key goals and to promote institutional change and improvement.
Potential Pitfalls – Presenting Data that are Unduly Complex

- **Pitfall:** Using confusing or conflicting data and statistical jargon.

- **Pointer:** Provide clear and concise analyses to explain what was learned about students and their achievements, programs and their effectiveness, and whether the institution's mission and goals are being achieved in classrooms and co-curricular programs. Always confirm data sources and accuracy.
Potential Pitfalls – Conducting Self-Study with Little or No Reference to Mission or Strategic Goals and Priorities

▸ Pitfall: Developing and writing a Self-Study that focuses on non-specific aspirations without referring to why specific issues are important to the institution, or how they relate to mission, key strategic goals, objectives, or priorities.

▸ Pointer: The Commission expects the Self-Study process to be framed by mission as well as an institution's key goals, objectives, and priorities. Strategic planning typically articulates measurable goals that are based on the institution's mission. Institutional plans should be consistent, so that goals, curricula, services and assessments are all aligned. The Self-Study should reference such plans. Through the evaluation of institutional strengths and weaknesses, the Self-Study's recommendations should focus on ways the institution can further ensure continuous improvement.
Potential Pitfalls – Avoiding the Use of Benchmarks

Pitfall: Assuming that the institution is too "special" to establish and use benchmarks.

Pointer: Use benchmarks to set specific goals for strategic planning and use those goals for valid and useful assessment. If published and widely available benchmarks do not provide meaningful institutional cohort comparisons, construct more useful cohorts from a variety of sources. If suitable benchmarks for appropriate cohorts are not available, develop other frames of reference such as comparisons over time and comparisons among relevant sub-populations within an institution.
Potential Pitfalls – Allowing One Group to Dominate the Self-Study Process

- Pitfall: Allowing a subgroup or individual to stand in the way of the whole.

- Pointer: Establish early in the process how the recommendations of the Self-Study Report will be determined. Constituencies should hold each other accountable for constructive participation in the Self-Study.
Potential Pitfalls – Not Using Existing Assessment Information

**Pitfall:** After developing research strategies for each section of the Self-Study, Working Groups focus only on creating new methods of analysis or collecting new data.

**Pointer:** Take an inventory of current assessment methods, both qualitative and quantitative, and use existing information to evaluate and assess the achievement of institutional goals and priorities. While there is no doubt that some areas of interest may require collecting and analyzing information in new ways, it is usually worthwhile to rely on already-existing information to conduct analysis and then to see what can be learned from such evaluations.
Potential Pitfalls – Believing "More is Better"

Pitfall: Writing a final Self-Study Report that is lengthy, significantly exceeds the Commission's page limit for self-studies, and/or providing supporting documentation that is voluminous and generally disorganized.

Pointer: The final Self-Study Report should not exceed 100 single-spaced pages or 200 double-spaced pages and supporting documentation should be well-organized and directly relate to assertions, specific compliance review requirements, or to the Standards for Accreditation and Requirements of Affiliation. Steering Committees and their Working Groups should collaborate to meet these page-limit expectations and should use the Commission's Documentation Roadmap to streamline the documents and process descriptions they will use as part of the Self-Study.
Charge to Each Group

- Mission
- List of Key Points for the Standard
- Cross-Walk with Requirements of Affiliation to be addressed in your standard
- Suggested outline for your portion of the chapter (can be revised)
- An accompanying brief (approx. 1-2 pages) summary, in bullet-point format, indicating how UAlbany has met the Requirements of Affiliation pertinent to your group (include references to specific documentary evidence).
Guidelines for Your Chapter Section

- Primary audience is the self-study review team
- Use subheadings to clearly identify where we are addressing the expectations of the standard
- Narrative based; not check list (but be sure to address the list)
- Use data/evidence to support all arguments/claims/descriptions
- Need to focus on successes and opportunities for growth (weaknesses)
- Highlight significant accomplishments
- Not a platform for airing grievances
Everything should be backed up by evidence.
The expectation is that there is assessment built into all standards (from institutional policies to student success).
Need to identify how we collect data, how we analyze it, and how we use it for continuous improvement.
Staff can help identify sources of data.
Work Group Charges

1. Mission and Goals
2. Ethics and Integrity
3. Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience
4. Support of the Student Experience
5. Educational Effectiveness Assessment
6. Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement
7. Governance, Leadership, and Administration
Introduction & Executive summary

- **Chapter 1:** A new vision for the University at Albany: Stability and Strategy. This chapter provides an overview of the self-study process, documents the transition in leadership, and provides information on new and relevant initiatives that affect the University’s current and future opportunities.

- **Chapter 2:** Advancing UAlbany’s Mission: This chapter describes the university’s strategic planning process and implementation and documents how UAlbany is in compliance with Standards 1 and 2.
Chapter 3: UAlbany Students: Forever Great; Forever Great Danes: This chapter documents compliance with Standards 3 and 4. The chapter provides an overview of the characteristics of the University’s student body and the current efforts by the university to enhance the student learning experience by more effectively using data analytics and providing new opportunities for students to engage in experiential learning opportunities that complement their coursework.

Chapter 4: Fostering an Environment of Continuous Improvement: This chapter documents compliance with Standards 5 and 6. It describes the ways in which the institution engages in assessment of learning outcomes and ensures that its planning, resources, and structures are aligned to achieve the mission and goals of the institution.
Chapter 5: Governing the University at Albany: This chapter documents compliance with **Standard 7** by describing the structure of the governance and administrative structure within the institution.

Closing Summary
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workgroup</th>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Co-Chairs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Steven Messner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>James Mower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>James Acker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Kevin Wilcox</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Richard Fogarty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Linda Krzykowski</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Martha Asselin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ekow King</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Virginia Goatley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ryan Torn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Susannah Fessler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Todd Foreman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Clarence McNeill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Christine Wagner</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Work Group Composition

- 2 Co-Chairs
- 1 Staff (supported by IR Team and 1 GA)
- 1 Representative from Faculty Governance
- 3-5 Additional Faculty Staff
- 1 Undergrad (from Student Government)
- 1 Graduate Student (from Graduate Student Association)
- 1 Graduate Assistant (from Student Affairs) to help staff
Support Documentation (Mahoney/Szeleste)

- Appendices -
  - data that support an analysis or interpretation
  - something created to specifically support an assertion

- Document Inventory –
  - source documents for references or citations
  - something that already exists
Currently updating to the 2020 effort, but will have same basic design

Home

Created by Wiki Admin1, last modified on Jun 08, 2018

UAbern Midlde States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) Wiki Page

Below are important Middle States-related documents

2015 MSCHIE Statement of Reaffirmation of Accreditation regarding UAbern ***official Commission action ***

UAbern 2015 Periodic Review Report (PRR) and Appendices
UAbern Response to the 2015 PRR External Review Team Reports
External Review Team's 2015 Reports
Overall Review Report
Finance Review Report
Compliance Review Report

2010 MSCHIE Statement of Reaffirmation of Accreditation regarding UAbern ***official Commission action ***

UAbern 2010 MSCHE Self-Study
UAbern Response to the 2010 External Review Team Report
External Review Team's 2010 Report

Please direct any questions regarding the University at Albany's Middle States Accreditation to Dr. Bruce Szelest bszelest@albany.edu, Associate Vice Provost for Academic and Resource Planning.

2010 Self-Study Communications & News

- Campus-wide updates on process
- Campus-wide call for community participation
- Self-study Timeline

2010 Self-Study Committees

- Self-Study Steering Committee
- Mission and Goals, Planning, Resource Allocation...
- Institutional Resources-
- Leadership and Governance, Administration-
- Institutional and Student Learning Assessment-
- Student Admissions and Retention-
- Student Support Services-
- Faculty-
- Educational Offerings, General Education-
- Related Educational Activities-

2010 Self-Study Resource Center

Inventory of Primary Support Documents
(login required for many, but not all, of the documents listed)

The Self-Study Document Itself:
UAbern Self-Study design
Middle States self-study guidelines
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Frame</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>November (2017)</td>
<td>Self-Study Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May (2018)</td>
<td>Assemble Steering Committee and hold inaugural meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Visit from MSCHE Liaison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July-August (2018)</td>
<td>Complete Self-Study Design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assemble Working Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September (2018)</td>
<td>Revisions and final approval of Self-Study Design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Support team gathers data &amp; populate wiki; Construct document library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October-November (2018)</td>
<td>Hold campus-wide town hall meetings on all three campuses to discuss Self-Study process, Self-Study Design, gather input on major issues and challenges as related to the standards and requirements of affiliation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September-December (2018)</td>
<td>Working groups gather and analyze data and submit progress reports to Steering Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Begin holding monthly steering committee and working group meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Begin constructing federal compliance report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Frame</td>
<td>Activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| February-June (2019)    | Team Chair chosen; Visit dates chosen; Self-Study Design sent to Chair  
                          | Self-Study drafted and shared with campus community in writing, and discussed in town hall meetings with faculty and staff as well as with University faculty/staff and student governance organizations |
| June-October (2019)     | Self-Study revisions and campus review  
                          | Completion of federal compliance report for final review                                                                                   |
| October-December (2019) | Self-Study Draft sent to Team Chair (two weeks before visit)  
                          | Team Chair Preliminary Visit                                                                                                                |
| December-February (2020)| Verification of Compliance submitted  
                          | Self-Study finalized based on Chair feedback and shared with campus                                                                       |
| February-April (2020)   | Final Self-Study/Evidence Inventory uploaded to MSCHE portal (Six weeks before visit)  
                          | Visiting Team on Campus; Team Report; Institutional Response                                                                            |
| June/November (2020)    | Commission meets to determine action                                                                                                         |
Workgroup Operations/Expectations

- Coordinate with your Co-Chair (and chapter authors)
- September 6 (9-10 am) Fall Kickoff – Steering Committee
- 2018-2019 Monthly Meetings of Steering Committee
  - Zoom Calls
  - Kristen can assist you with setting up your monthly meetings.
- 10-12 Pages per standard (not including appendices)
- Document how we have worked to meet standards (e.g., Student learning outcomes)
What to expect from Steering Committee Meetings

- Update from Steering Committee Co-Chairs
- Brief update from workgroups
- Identification of problems/questions/concerns
- Timeline recap
Next Steps

- Revisit the outline
- Schedule meetings of your group
- Make assignments
- Prepare for open forum with campus community (prior to Thanksgiving)
- Should we provide an overview for all workgroup members? (Maybe a webinar)
- Interest in attending the upcoming MSCHE meeting in DC? (Nov. 28-30)
Thank you for your participation and involvement!