

# Susquehanna UNIVERSITY

## Self-Study Design

Middle States Commission on Higher Education

June 2022

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## I. Institutional Overview

Susquehanna University is a selective national liberal arts college committed to excellence in educating undergraduate students for productive, creative and reflective lives of achievement, leadership and service in a diverse and interconnected world. The university is located in Selinsgrove, a small town situated on the banks of the Susquehanna River in central Pennsylvania. Founded in 1858 by Lutherans, Susquehanna welcomes individuals of all backgrounds and beliefs.

The university's 2,202 undergraduates come from 30 states and 29 countries as of fall 2021, 84% of whom live in residence halls owned by the university. Ninety-five percent of our students attend the university full-time. Over half (56%) are women. Susquehanna's minority student population has grown since the 2014 self-study and currently stands at 17.3% of the student body. Twenty-six international students were enrolled at the University in fall 2021. The average regular class size is 19 students and our student-faculty ratio is 13.8 to 1, allowing for extensive mentoring and student-faculty collaboration.

A Susquehanna education is distinguished by a strong liberal arts curriculum and equally strong professional programs in areas such as business and education. Degrees are offered for the Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Music and Bachelor of Science. Within the School of Arts, the School of Humanities, the School of Natural and Social Sciences, and the Sigmund Weis School of Business the university offers more than 50 major emphases, 53 minors and 850 courses. In the required capstone course, seniors engage in projects that integrate information from previous coursework. These projects result in a synthesis of learning that leads to products such as an art exhibit, a solo recital or a research project or thesis. Susquehanna also offers a challenging Honors Program that has steadily increased in enrollment over the past several years.

In fall 2009, the university launched its new Central Curriculum, a set of general education requirements that includes an innovative cross-cultural/Global Opportunities (GO) program. This requirement includes an off-campus cross-cultural experience plus a credit-bearing critical reflection on the experience once students return to campus. The Central Curriculum requires students to complete courses that fall within essential knowledge domains, such as Analytic Thought, Artistic Expression, Diversity, and Writing Intensive. The faculty recently completed a three-year review of that Central Curriculum, in which the learning goals in many of these areas were updated to reflect current pedagogical practices.

Susquehanna has invested significant resources in supporting the academic success and retention of all enrolled students. The Center for Academic Success works with faculty and staff to monitor the ongoing academic progress of each student, offers tutoring services, organizes workshops to foster study skills and personal behaviors that promote success, meets with at-risk students to develop action plans that ensure success, and provides for all disability accommodations for students on campus. Additionally, the newly formed Hawk Hub serves as a one-stop shop with staff trained to provide information and support in addressing any academic, co-curricular, and residential needs. The Blough-Weis Library support faculty in instructional design and students in accessing the information and resources necessary to conduct research and meet learning objectives.

As a reflection of the entire institution's efforts to support student success, the five-year average (2017-2022) first year-to-sophomore retention rate is 86.7 percent. The average four-year graduation rate is 70.4 percent and the six-year graduation rate averages 72.4 percent. Figure 1 below documents changes in the retention and graduation rates over the last five years.

	Cohort	2 <sup>nd</sup> Year Persistence		3 <sup>rd</sup> Year Persistence		4 <sup>th</sup> Year Persistence		4 <sup>th</sup> Year Graduates		5 <sup>th</sup> Year Persistence		5 <sup>th</sup> Year Graduates		6 <sup>th</sup> Year Persistence		6 <sup>th</sup> Year Graduates	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Class of 2011 (First Years '07)	61	45	73.8%	38	62.3%	36	59.0%	29	47.5%	6	57.4%	5	55.7%	0	55.7%	0	55.7%
Class of 2012 (First Years '08)	52	44	84.6%	39	75.0%	39	75.0%	32	61.5%	3	67.3%	2	65.4%	1	67.3%	1	67.3%
Class of 2013 (First Years '09)	62	45	72.6%	38	61.3%	34	54.8%	33	53.2%	2	56.5%	1	54.8%	1	56.5%	1	56.5%
Class of 2014 (First Years '10)	72	58	80.6%	49	68.1%	48	66.7%	44	61.1%	2	63.9%	3	65.3%	0	65.3%	0	65.3%
Class of 2015 (First Years '11)	84	73	86.9%	64	76.2%	55	65.5%	49	58.3%	1	59.5%	1	59.5%	0	59.5%	0	59.5%
Class of 2016 (First Years '12)	106	90	84.9%	77	72.6%	75	70.8%	66	62.3%	8	69.8%	5	67.0%	0	67.0%	1	67.9%
Class of 2017 (First Years '13)	112	87	77.7%	79	70.5%	74	66.1%	64	57.1%	7	63.4%	6	62.5%	1	63.4%	1	63.4%
Class of 2018 (First Years '14)	95	73	76.8%	60	63.2%	61	64.2%	54	56.8%	4	61.1%	3	60.0%	2	62.1%	0	60.0%
Class of 2019 (First Years '15)	137	116	84.7%	108	78.8%	102	74.5%	93	67.9%	7	73.0%	7	73.0%	2	74.5%	1	73.7%
Class of 2020 (First Years '16)	124	104	83.9%	95	76.6%	90	72.6%	85	68.5%	2	70.2%	4	71.8%	3	74.2%		
Class of 2021 (First Years '17)	119	91	76.5%	84	70.6%	78	65.5%	72	60.5%	7	66.4%						
Class of 2022 (First Years '18)	124	101	81.5%	88	71.0%	78	62.9%										
Class of 2023 (First Years '19)	113	101	89.4%	82	72.6%												
Class of 2024 (First Years '20)	119	99	83.2%														
Class of 2025 (First Years '21)	112																

Note: All percentages are based on original freshman enrollment and persistence percentages indicate the percentage of students remaining  
Source: Institutional Effectiveness

Figure 1. Persistence and Graduation Rates for Full-Time, Bachelor Degree-Seeking Minority Students

Susquehanna's strong academic and career advising programs have led to outstanding post-graduation outcomes. Typically, 15-20 percent of each graduating class enters graduate or professional school, 75-80 percent enter the workforce, and a small percentage (3-6 percent) participate in post-graduate fellowships (e.g., Fulbright) or internships/practicums. Each class of graduates launches into more than 30 states and 3-5 countries for their first destination.

Approximately 90 percent of our full-time students live in 50 residence halls and university-owned houses on campus. Susquehanna's student life division offers counseling and health services, a first-year orientation program, various intercollegiate and club sports athletic and wellness programs, and extensive programming in the residence halls and beyond. Students also have many opportunities for involvement and leadership in university life.

Susquehanna has 152.7 full-time faculty members, of which 92 percent have earned a terminal degree in their field. Approximately 49 percent of the university's full-time faculty are women and 25 percent are members of U.S. minority groups. Susquehanna's faculty are relatively young; more than a third are still working toward tenure and only 20 percent hold the rank of professor. The university employs 312 full-time and part-time staff and administrators. Of these, 8.5 percent of full-time staff and administrators are U.S. minorities.

The institution has engaged in several strategic planning and institutional review processes in recent years. In 2018-2019, a series of working groups produced the SU 2026: Strategic Plan, a document which identifies institutional priorities and areas for investment to better support the institutional mission. In

2020, the CenSUs Task Force assessed the extent to which existing policies, procedures, and processes support a diverse, inclusive, and equitable environment and make a series of recommendations for improving the institutional climate for all members of the Susquehanna community. In 2020-2021, the SU 2.0 Task Force evaluated existing structures for organizing academic and administrative departments and policies governing the functioning of these departments and recommended changes intended to produce a more productive environment for supporting student success. Altogether, these initiatives have established a vision for positioning Susquehanna to succeed in recruiting, educating, and supporting students over the next decade.

Susquehanna has received national recognition for supporting low-income and first-generation students in pursuing a college education, having been selected to participate in the American Talent Initiative (ATI) supported by Bloomberg Philanthropies. The ATI is a collaboration with the Aspen Institute and several colleges and universities dedicated to expanding opportunity and access for moderate- and low-income students with the aim to enroll and graduate 50,000 such students by 2025. SU has an established memorandum of understanding with Milton Hershey School to collaborate on improving the national college graduation rate for low-income students and has signed more than 14 articulation and cooperative agreements establishing with community colleges in the region to establish pathways for two-year students to receive a four-year degree. SU was also recently awarded a TRiO Student Support Services funding to better retain and prepare low-income and first-generation students.

## ***Susquehanna University Mission Statement and Strategic Plan***

### Mission Statement

We educate students for productive, creative and reflective lives of achievement, leadership and service in a diverse, dynamic and interdependent world.

### Strategic Plan: Susquehanna 2026

(Approved by the Board of Trustees October 28, 2019)

At Susquehanna University, ***we educate students for productive, creative, and reflective lives of achievement, leadership, and service in a diverse, dynamic, and interdependent world.***

Academic excellence is the lifeblood of Susquehanna University and the driving force that leads to life-changing experiences for our students. Our students benefit from a global education, student-faculty research, internships and practicums, creative work, service learning, and volunteer work. A Susquehanna education comprises the experiences students need to determine the lives they wish to lead, and the knowledge, skills, values, and networks to achieve their full potential.

Our faculty members are dedicated scholars and teachers who make close connections with students as they inspire them intellectually and creatively, expanding their knowledge, skills, and understanding of their place in the world. Staff members serve as caring mentors whose work bolsters our academic mission. These collective experiences help students to thrive personally and professionally.

This strategic plan reaffirms our core academic principles, our ethics, our commitment to each other, and the importance of engaging all voices in pursuit of new, equitable ways to creatively solve the challenges of our world.

### **OUR STRENGTHS**

Susquehanna University is distinguished by rich and varied academic programs that develop distinctive liberal-arts skills and experiences and yield tangible results. We are committed to diversity and to serving students from all socioeconomic backgrounds with an emphasis on global education, project-based learning, service learning, and other applied learning experiences.

Our GO program provides a singular advantage to all our students as they consider the intercultural and international ramifications of their lives and work. Our practical application of the liberal arts is an integrative model of learning. We directly tie our curriculum to our co-curriculum and link campus-based research, off-campus study, internships, and community-based learning to our learning goals. These experiences support students as they develop into engaged citizen leaders who will fulfill a promise to “Achieve, Lead, and Serve.”

We are a national leader in independent undergraduate student research and creative work, one of only three higher-education institutions to require a study-away experience, one of only ten private undergraduate colleges with an AACSB International-accredited School of Business; and an emerging leader in environmental studies and river and stream ecology. Susquehanna has capitalized on the the institution’s proximity to the Susquehanna River, having launched the Freshwater Research Institute (FRI) in 2014 with generous backing from the Mellon Foundation. Susquehanna has partnered with the Chesapeake Conservancy, providing them space on campus, to investigate the efficacy of local stream restoration projects.

Important assets include committed faculty and staff, enviable facilities, and a dedicated alumni base. Alumni speak with passion about how their lives were changed at Susquehanna by a faculty and staff who helped them realize their future success. Graduation rates exceed national averages, and employment rates and median earnings of our alumni are well above the averages for four-year graduates nationwide.

Susquehanna is resilient and adaptable. We have built a strong foundation through a combination of enrollment management, fundraising, astute fiscal oversight, and thoughtful innovation. Our optimism is buoyed by the fact that we are delivering the top-quality education we promise our students, and our graduates build careers and lives of meaning because of Susquehanna’s superb teaching and mentoring.

### **THE EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT**

This is an especially challenging time in American higher education. We face declining public support for and confidence in higher education; intense scrutiny of tuition increases; and an increasing focus on affordability, access, and student debt.

Susquehanna is in a hyper-competitive market. This situation is exacerbated by a geographic redistribution of potential students and an impending national decline in traditional-aged students. The market share for residential liberal-arts colleges is also threatened by a public that is increasingly questioning the nature and value of what we offer our students.

To guarantee sustained prosperity, Susquehanna must execute a bold, mission-driven plan that is student-centered, builds on institutional strengths, improves operational vitality, and expands our market share. The implementation of this plan will be coordinated with the current capital campaign and a focused campus masterplan. These efforts will be supported by a significant branding and reputation building campaign.

### **OUR GUIDING VALUES**

#### **Susquehanna University is:**

- A selective, residential, national liberal-arts college focused on deliberate preparation for professions, careers, and engaged citizenship;
- A learning community that supports excellence in scholarship, research, creative activity, and collaboration in and out of the classroom among faculty, staff, and students;
- A diverse community that cultivates inclusive excellence, intercultural competence, and global citizenship;
- An innovative community whose faculty and staff are its greatest resource;
- A collaborative community that expects ethical behavior and mutual respect from all its members;

- A responsible community committed to financial and environmental sustainability;
- An engaged community that inspires and empowers alumni to be perpetual stewards of their alma mater;
- A welcoming community that honors its Lutheran heritage through a commitment to service in the region and the world and the free and open exploration of ideas; and
- A beautiful campus that fosters a holistic living and learning experience.

### THE PLAN

To live our mission most fully, we will need to integrate and focus our efforts to develop Susquehanna's greatest assets: its students, faculty, staff, and alumni.

**Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship** are the first principles of the University, which we must sustain at the highest levels. To accomplish this goal, we will:

- Support and reward teaching innovation.
- Support and reward faculty scholarship and creative work and faculty-student collaboration.
- Develop new academic programs and explore alternate forms of instruction.
- Build on the successes of existing programs.
- Capitalize on the strength of the GO program and further develop the internationalization of the campus and curriculum.
- Persistence is a hallmark of institutional success. The University's historic commitment to access and transformation is made manifest when students earn degrees and contribute to society and their professions. Susquehanna will increase student retention and graduation rates to their historic highs, contributing to the growth of the student body and fulfilling our mission. To accomplish this goal, we will:
  - Conduct a comprehensive review of the academic advising process and policies that affect students' academic progress.
  - Continue collaboration between faculty and staff, including formal and informal assessment of curricular and co-curricular activities.
  - Continue to develop institutional infrastructure to enhance students' academic progress to graduation and post-baccalaureate success.
  - Support the mental, physical, financial, and environmental wellness of students.
  - Implement scholarship programs that better meet the needs of low-income students.
  - Strengthen academic-athletic integration efforts using the NCAA DIII model.

**Recruiting** success is a key source of Susquehanna's financial stability. The University will maintain a vital student population through a combination of improved retention and new-data-driven recruiting tactics. To accomplish this goal, we will:

- Leverage Susquehanna's distinctive assets and strategically use them to elevate our name recognition and reputation.
- Focus messaging around a cohesive brand that reflects our core values and strengths.
- Review transfer credit evaluation and internal processes for transfer students.
- Initiate and maintain articulation agreements with community colleges.
- Use the Central Curriculum review to calibrate and streamline our programs to best serve our students.
- Expand selected existing programs and develop new programs focused on mission and market that include rubrics to identify the conditions for sustaining or discontinuing each initiative.
- Develop and expand meaningful work study that provides valuable experiential learning and advances the work of the university.
- Consider new extracurricular activities, expanding existing programs, and elevating certain club sports to varsity or elite club status.

- Develop new international enrollments by diversifying recruitment regions.
- Develop a robust system to effectively communicate and promote faculty and student scholarship to internal and external audiences.
- Expand and improve internal and external institutional use of digital and social media.
- Measure current internal and external perceptions of the University and identify alignments and disconnects.

**Practices** that are effective and student-focused are central to Susquehanna’s continued success. We will develop programs and initiatives that respond to our dynamic environment, improve the educational experience of our students, encourage persistence, and enhance the working experience of our colleagues. To achieve this, we must acknowledge that failure is a necessary part of experimentation and celebrate the lessons learned. To accomplish these goals, we will:

### **Community**

- Update our statements on *Diversity and Inclusion* and *Ethical Living*.
- Improve institutional and community support of the mental, physical, financial, and environmental wellness of employees and their families.
- Assess the university’s climate regarding inclusion and diversity to develop meaningful, rigorous, and ongoing intercultural competence training for all employees and student workers.
- Address diversity and inclusion goals in all annual evaluations.
- Eliminate inclusion barriers that are hidden by traditional cultural practice.
- Implement inclusive campus practices and policies that recognize the unique characteristics and needs of all members of our community.
- Build on the strength of the GO program to develop intercultural competencies.
- Strive to have students, faculty, staff, senior administration, and trustees reflect the diversity of the population of the recruitment area.
- Incorporate universal design into campus planning, building design, and classroom and work practices.
- Cultivate town/gown relationships and collaborate with regional organizations to strengthen diversity and inclusion efforts in the surrounding community.
- Develop effective internal communication systems and practices.

### **Sustainability**

- Achieve a Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System™ (STARS) gold rating by 2026.
- Document and assess campus energy use and waste generation to create short- and long-term reduction targets.
- Cultivate campus property and natural resources to support our sustainability efforts.
- Support regional cooperation in improving the health of the Susquehanna River watershed and the economic vitality of the region.

### **Processes**

- Allow for the time and latitude necessary to support increased innovation and collaboration.
- Provide a more integrated, personalized, and efficient student experience using journey mapping, process mapping, and prioritization matrices.
- Shift resources to our highest priorities through positive incentives.
- Eliminate redundant and unnecessary activities that compete with institutional priorities.
- Develop institutional and sector disruption scenarios and response plans.
- Develop a sustainable pricing strategy and revised higher-education business model in collaboration with selected non-competitor peer institutions and other non-profit experts.



- Establish new funding to support and promote innovation, experimentation, and resilience among faculty and staff.
- Increase fundraising and alumni participation in philanthropy.
- Increase efforts to support faculty and student scholarship, and reexamine how student-faculty collaboration is evaluated in the promotion and tenure process.
- Review alternate workloads for scholarship, teaching, and service for tenured faculty aligned to career stage, emphasis, and university needs.
- Review, streamline, and reduce the number of committees, and establish procedures for assigning new tasks to existing bodies.
- Build on our strengths-based professional development and other initiatives to increase individual and institutional effectiveness and enhance employee morale.
- Survey previously admitted transfer students to design more effective services and onboarding processes.
- Make merit-based compensation calculations transparent for all employees.
- Integrate master-planning with curricular and fundraising planning.
- Expand support from the Grants and Foundation Relations Office including reviewing the possibility of financial incentives and credit toward promotion and tenure for faculty who write grant proposals.

## II. Institutional Priorities to Be Addressed in the Self-Study

The articulation of the institutional priorities began in the Self-Study Steering Committee. In the fall of 2021, the Steering Committee began preliminary discussions around the core values and institutional objectives that should be captured in those priorities. The Self-Study Co-Chairs also consulted with the Provost and President and brought their suggestions back to the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee then produced a first draft of those priorities and continued discussing and reworking the phrasing of those priorities. The Co-Chairs then presented a draft of the institutional priorities to the Senior Leadership Team, comprised of over a dozen Susquehanna campus executives. That group similarly discussed and offered feedback that was incorporated into the phrasing of those priorities. At the start of the spring of 2022, the Co-Chairs presented about the Self-Study process and the institutional priorities in different settings, including a full meeting of the faculty, a staff Town Hall, the Student Government Association, the Staff Council, and the Academic Leadership Committee. The Co-Chairs welcomed feedback on the priorities in each of those meetings. The Steering Committee also prepared a survey in which any member of the community could anonymously submit feedback on the institutional priorities. These processes have resulted in the following priorities.

### *Institutional Priorities*

1. SU seeks to develop and strengthen policies and initiatives that promote higher rates of **student retention and persistence** to graduation.
2. SU seeks to cultivate a more **equitable and inclusive climate** and to recruit, retain, and support a more diverse student body, faculty and staff population.
3. SU seeks to promote curricular innovation that **prepares students for personal and professional success** and is rooted in our core liberal arts mission.
4. SU seeks to identify and pursue programs and initiatives that promote the institution's educational mission within the broader local, regional, national, and international communities that **secure the institution's long-term financial outlook**.

To examine the extent to which SU meets these priorities and consider recommendations for improving performance in each priority, SU will primarily focus on the areas identified under each priority.

### *Areas of Focus within Institutional Priorities*

1. SU seeks to develop and strengthen policies and initiatives that promote higher rates of **student retention and persistence** to graduation.
  - Academic policies that influence retention and graduation rates.
  - The quality of academic, social, psychological, and financial supports available on campus.
  - The quality of academic programs.
2. SU seeks to cultivate a more **equitable and inclusive climate** and to recruit, retain, and support a more diverse student body, faculty and staff population.
  - The strategies and resources leveraged to recruit a more diverse student body, faculty, administration, and staff.
  - The consistency and application of policies designed to cultivate an equitable and inclusive climate.
  - The extent to which the curriculum reflects a diversity of experiences and worldviews.

3. SU seeks to promote curricular innovation that **prepares students for personal and professional success** and is rooted in our core liberal arts mission.
  - The policies governing the creation of new programs and review of existing programs.
  - The resources dedicated toward curricular innovation.
  - The processes for identifying elements of personal and professional success and ensuring these are integrated into the curriculum and teaching of the institution.
4. SU seeks to identify and pursue programs and initiatives that promote the institution’s educational mission within the broader local, regional, national, and international communities while **securing the institution’s long-term financial outlook**.
  - The processes and policies for managing the financial resources of the institution.
  - The efforts to engage with the local, regional, national, and international communities.
  - The strategies for identifying investment opportunities that might support the institution’s financial outlook.

### ***Alignment of Institutional Priorities***

*Table 1. Alignment of Strategic Plan and Institutional Priorities*

		<b>Institutional Priorities</b>			
		1. Retention and persistence	2. Equitable and inclusive climate	3. Prepares students for personal and professional success	4. Secure the institution’s long-term financial outlook
<b>Strategic Plan</b>	Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship			<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
	Retention and Persistence	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
	Recruiting		<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>
	Community	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	
	Sustainability				<b>X</b>
	Processes	<b>X</b>			<b>X</b>

Table 2. Alignment of MSCHE Standards for Accreditation and Institutional Priorities

		Institutional Priorities			
		1. Retention and persistence	2. Equitable and inclusive climate	3. Prepares students for personal and professional success	4. Secure the institution's long-term financial outlook
MSCHE Standards for Accreditation	Standard I: Mission and Goals			X	X
	Standard II: Ethics and Integrity	X	X		
	Standard III: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience			X	X
	Standard IV: Support of the Student Experience	X	X		
	Standard V: Educational Effectiveness Assessment			X	
	Standard VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement		X		X
	Standard VII: Governance, Leadership, and Administration				

### III. Intended Outcomes of the Self-Study

SU has engaged in a continuous process of self-study and review over the last five years, including the Strategic Planning Process, the CenSUs efforts focused on diversity, inclusion, and equity on campus, and SU 2.0 focused on the academic and administrative structures. These efforts have identified several strategic initiatives and goals that will structure the self-study process. Based on this work and the overarching objectives of the self-study process, the Steering Committee has identified the following intended outcomes.

1. Engage the institutional community in an inclusive and transparent self-appraisal process that actively and deliberately seeks to involve members from all areas of the institutional community.
2. Identify, collect, and analyze data related to the self-study, identify strengths and gaps in SU's ability to meet the institutional mission, and provide actionable recommendations across the seven standards.
3. Articulate overarching institutional objectives based on the different strategic planning initiatives that have taken place over the last few years.
4. Demonstrate how the institution currently meets the Commission's Standards for Accreditation and Requirements of Affiliation.

## IV. Self-Study Approach

- Standards-Based Approach
- Priorities-Based Approach

The steering committee with guidance from university leadership chose the standards-based approach to self-study. This approach allows for a comprehensive examination of strengths and opportunities for improvement and lends itself to a clearly organized analysis of the extent to which SU meets the MSCHE standards.

## V. Organizational Structure of the Steering Committee and Working Groups

The structure of the 2023 self-study team included a steering committee that reported to the University's senior leadership team (e.g., president, provost). Figure 2 shows that working groups report to the steering committee. Working groups are responsible for completing one chapter of the final self-study report. Furthermore, steering committee members are co-chairs of each working group. A liaison of the evidence inventory team will be assigned in each of the standards working group.

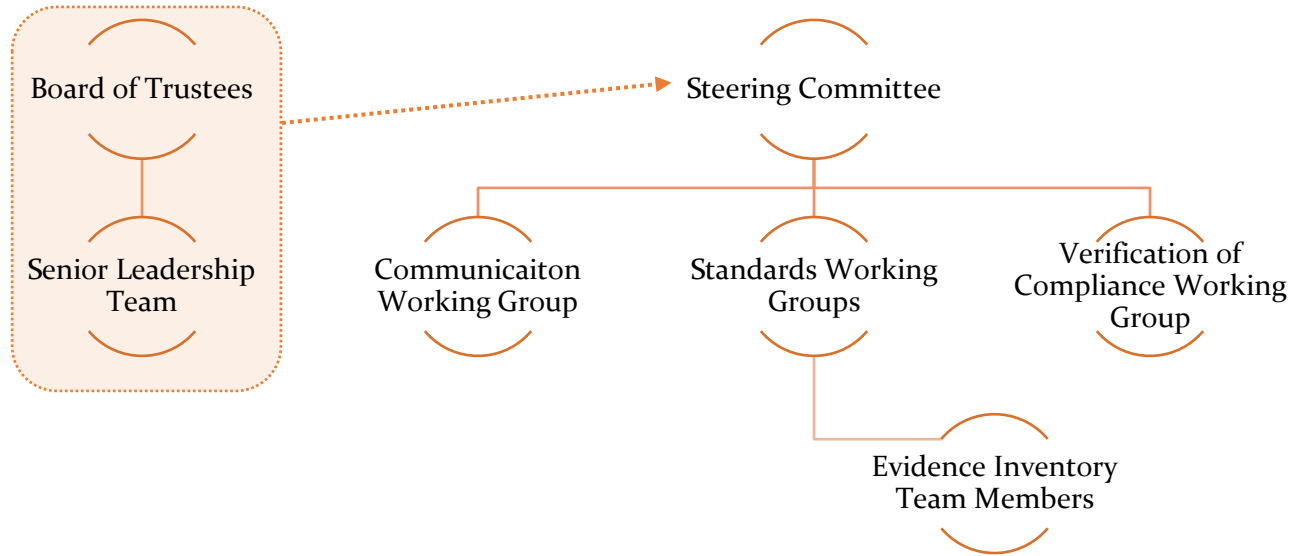


Figure 2. Organizational structure of the Self-Study Steering Committee and Working Groups

### ***Steering Committee***

#### Charge and Members

The Steering Committee includes six faculty members and four senior administrators, including the Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO). The Steering Committee provides overall leadership for the self-study process and coordinates the efforts of the seven working groups.

The charges of the Steering Committee include:

- Review and approve the self-study design and the lines of inquiry for each of the seven standards and requirements of affiliation
- Generate institution-wide interest in the self-study process through a robust communication strategy
- Recruit a large and diverse cadre of students, faculty, and staff to participate in the self-study process
- Develop a timeline of activities for performing the work of the self-study
- Lead the efforts of the working groups, including setting the agenda for each working group, coordinating the efforts of the working group members, and monitoring the progress of each working group toward meeting deadlines
- Ensure that data and evidence collected supports the specific standard being assessed
- Lead a transparent process that includes periodic reports about the progress of each working group

- Review and approve all final reports of the working groups to be included in the self-study final report
- Assist as needed in preparing for the MSCHE team visit in fall 2023
- Distribute the self-study report, including findings, to relevant constituencies on campus

Members of the steering committee include:

- Brown, Danielle – Accreditation Liaison Officer, Assistant Provost of Institutional Effectiveness and Strategic Initiatives
- Clark, Nick - Committee Chair, Associate Professor of Political Science, Department Head of Political Science
- Dennen, Barbara – Director of Finance
- Hastings, Kate - Associate Professor of Communications
- Hinton, Eric - Associate Professor of Music
- Lopez, Andrea - Associate Professor of Political Science
- Martin, Aaron - Vice President for Marketing & Communications
- Pomykalski, James - Associate Professor of Analytics, Sigmund Weis School of Business
- Rhinehart, Erin - Associate Professor of Biology
- Rummel, Justin - Assistant Vice President for Student Financial Services

The Steering Committee has implemented several strategies to ensure that the Working Groups interact with one another. First, each working group will be co-chaired by one member of the Steering Committee together with a faculty or staff leader not on the Steering Committee. The regular Steering Committee meetings will include time for regular updates in order to realize and develop potential areas for collaboration. Second, each working group will have a liaison to the evidence inventory team. These liaisons will be convened at least once a month by the Steering Committee Co-Chairs to discuss the ongoing process of gathering and analyzing evidence and to ensure duplication of efforts has not taken place. Third, the Steering Committee Co-Chairs have assessed the lines of inquiry to ensure against potential duplication across the Working Groups. Finally, in the fall of 2022, the Steering Committee Co-Chairs will convene joint meetings of Working Groups who may have areas of overlap to discuss how the individual assessment efforts can and will complement one another.

The Steering Committee will meet at least once a week in the fall of 2022 to ensure that each Working Group is receiving all the necessary support to conduct a full evaluation and assessment of Commission Standards and the institutional priorities. The Steering Committee was selected to ensure the review process would have the necessary expertise and access to data to support evaluation and assessment. Dr. Danielle Brown, the Steering Committee Co-Chair and ALO also serves as the Assistant Provost for Institutional Effectiveness and Strategic Initiatives and leads Susquehanna's data governance efforts. Justin Rummel, Assistant Vice President for Student Financial Services, also sits on the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee and the Working Groups also include several faculty members involved in the Curriculum Committee and the Committee on the Central Curriculum (the faculty assessment committee). The monthly meetings held between the Co-Chairs and the evidence inventory team will include the Registrar, library staff, and information technology staff to ensure that all parts of the administration are working to support the reaccreditation process.

The institutional mission motivated and structured the discussion of the institutional priorities. The mission and institutional priorities both structured the working group discussions about each line of inquiry. Each line of inquiry has been plotted in relation to both the institutional priorities and the Commission's Standards. The Co-Chairs will monitor the ongoing development of each chapter in the self-study report to ensure that the data analysis and discussion of findings links back to the core institutional mission, the institutional priorities, and the Commission's Standards.



## Working Groups

Working groups will work under the common charge outlined below:

The working group will oversee and conduct the work necessary to assess SU in relation to the criteria of the expressed standard, reviews the extent to which SU has implemented suggestions from the last self-study, and offers recommendations for improvements in relation to the standard. In these efforts, the working group will 1) follow the established self-study timetable, 2) identify sources of data and evidence related to the topic/area of focus, 3) gather and analyze relevant evidence, 4) assess institutional strengths and challenges in relation to the standard, 5) develop and articulate ideas for addressing any challenges, 6) provide regular reports to the Steering Committee, and 7) prepare draft reports for the 2023 self-study. The working group will include a member of the Steering Committee as chair and another SU employee as co-chair. Beginning work in spring 2022 and ending in fall 2023, each working group will include 6 to 8 members from the SU community.

Both working group co-chairs will share responsibility for 1) developing agendas for working group meetings, 2) chairing scheduled meetings, 3) communicating on behalf of the working group to the Steering Committee and other SU stakeholders, 4) assigning responsibilities to working group members, 5) assisting the collection and compilation data and evidence as needed, and 6) supervising the drafting of all reports.

Each working group will consist of a steering committee co-chair and another employee co-chair. Evidence inventory team members will meet once a month with the steering committee chair and accreditation liaison officer beginning in summer/fall 2022.

Table 3. Working Group Members and Organizational Structure

Working Group (Requirements of Affiliation)	Members
Communication Plan (#4)	*Aaron Martin, VP for Marketing & Communications *Linda Burkley, Lecturer of Communications Anna Andes, Assoc. Professor & Dept. Head of Theatre Dave Kaszuba, Assoc. Professor of Communications Grace Lowry, Senior Director of Human Resources Tess Marsh, Employer Relations Coordinator, Career Development Center Aisha Upton, Asst. Professor of Sociology
Standard I: Mission and Goals (#7)	*Justin Rummel, Asst. VP for Student Financial Services *Michael Dixon, Chief Inclusion & Diversity Officer Nickala Hagarty, Asst. Director of Admission David Imhoof, Professor & Dept. Head of History †Dominic Mannello, Systems Administrator, Information Technology Michele Welliver, Asst. Professor of Communications Faith Garasich, student
Standard II: Ethics and Integrity (#1, 5, 6)	*Andrea Lopez, Assoc. Professor of Political Science *Jim Briggs, Assoc. Professor & Dept. Head of Psychology †Nici Baer, Circulation & Interlibrary Loan Assistant Malcolm Derk, Chief of Staff Christine Grace, Assoc. Professor of Management and Marketing Jeff Mann, Professor & Dept. Head of Religious Studies Anna Rickrode, Student Support Specialist I, Hawk Hub Cameron Chalk, student
Standard III: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience (#2, 15)	*Kate Hastings, Assoc. Professor of Communications *Rob Siczekwicz, Director of Blough-Weis Library & Assoc. Professor Janice Clark, Asst. Professor of Political Science, S-STEM Telementoring Coordinator †Matt Duperon, Assoc. Professor of Religious Studies Drew Hubbell, Assoc. Professor of English

Working Group (Requirements of Affiliation)	Members
	Amanda Lenig, Asst. Professor of Graphic Design, Dept. Head of Art and Design Jennifer Sacher Wiley, Assoc. Professor of Music Christine Tiday, Director of Teacher Interns and Auxiliary Programs Christopher Cole, student
Standard IV: Support of the Student Experience	*James Pomykalski, Assoc. Professor of Analytics *Samantha Proffitt, Senior Director of Student Engagement John Bodinger, Professor of Sociology †Amir El-Chidiac, Research & Instruction Librarian, Respondent Services Coordinator, Asst. Professor Lucia Garabo, Admission Counselor Jordain Moore, Coordinator, Johnson Center for Civic Engagement Ed Slavishak, Professor of History Sarah Marino, student
Standard V: Educational Effectiveness Assessment (#8, 9)	*Erin Rhinehart, Assoc. Professor of Biology *Marcos Krieger, Assoc. Professor of Music †Amanda Boyer, First Year Experience Librarian, Asst. Professor Jie hao, Asst. Professor of Accounting Monica Leitzel, Student Support Supervisor, Hawk Hub Tom Martin, Professor of Psychology, Co-Director of Neuroscience David McLaughlin, Assoc. & Dept. Head of Education Karol Weaver, Professor of History
Standard VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement (#10, 11)	*Barbara Dennen, Director of Finance *Bill Dougherty, Assoc. Professor of Chemistry Lyudmyla Ardan, Asst. Professor Economics †Brienne Dort, Systems Librarian, Asst. Professor Michelle Harman, Director of Event Management Tom Perkovich, Head Football Coach David Steinau, Assoc. Professor & Dept. Head of Music Robert Neubert, student
Standard VII: Governance, Leadership, and Administration (#12, 13, 14)	*Eric Hinton, Assoc. Professor of Music *Erica Stephenson, Institutional Research Analyst †Ryan Ake, Asst. Director of Blough-Weis Library, Asst. Professor Adam Hansell, Asst. Professor of Physics Alissa Packer, Assoc. Professor of Biology Karla D. Procopio, Student Support Specialist I, Hawk Hub Erik Viker, Professor of Theatre Hannah Mackey, student (Class of 2023, BA, Creative Writing)
Verification of Compliance	*Danielle D. Brown, Asst. Provost for Institutional Effectiveness & Strategic Initiatives *Nick Clark, Assoc. Professor & Dept. Head of Political Science Andrew Felo, Assoc. Professor of Accounting Ann Marie Rompolski, Acquisitions & Cataloging Coordinator, Library †Jeannette Rork, Registrar

\*Working group co-chairs

† Liaison to evidence inventory team.

In addition to their primary roles, the faculty and staff serving on the Steering Committee and the Working Groups also fill the following positions on campus.

- Speaker of the Faculty – Alissa Packer, Member of Working Group VII
- Faculty Representative to the Board of Trustees – Eric Hinton, Steering Committee Member and Co-Chair of Working Group VII
- President of the Staff Council – Erica Stephenson, Co-Chair of Working Group VII
- Director of the Center for Teaching and Learning – Matt Duperon, Member of Working Group III
- Director of the First Year Seminar – Matt Duperon, Member of Working Group III

- Director of the Summer and Winter Session (online academic programs) - Nick Clark, Steering Committee Co-Chair
- TRiO Project Manager in the Office of the Provost – Nick Clark, Steering Committee Co-Chair
- Members of the Senior Leadership Team – Michael Dixon, Co-Chair of Working Group I; Aaron Martin, Steering Committee Member
- Members of the Faculty Affairs Committee – Nick Clark, Steering Committee Co-Chair; William Dougherty, Co-Chair of Working Group XI
- Members of the Curriculum Committee – Nick Clark, Steering Committee Co-Chair; Erin Kline-Rhinehart, Steering Committee Member and Co-Chair of Working Group V; Marcos Kreager, Co-Chair of Working Group V
- Members of the Ad Hoc Committee on Student Persistence – James Pomykalski, Steering Committee Member and Co-Chair of Working Group IV
- Members of the Ad Hoc Committee on Student Advising – Andrea Lopez, Steering Committee Member and Co-Chair of Working Group II
- Members of the Ad Hoc Committee on First Generation Students - James Pomykalski, Steering Committee Member and Co-Chair of Working Group IV; Samantha Proffitt, Co-Chair of Working Group IV

This breadth of experience will ensure that different constituencies on campus will be represented in and remain up to date on the reaccreditation process.

#### Example Working Group Tasks

- Working groups will meet at least twice monthly, beginning April 2022 to complete the requirements of its charge.
- Each working group will keep minutes of all meetings that will be stored on Microsoft Teams.
- Working group members will read and develop familiarity with the *Middle States Requirements of Affiliation and Standards for Accreditation*.
- Align lines of inquiries with mission, strategic plan, priorities, and outcomes.
- Outline chapter for the final self-study report.
- Requesting and locating evidence that supports compliance of the standards
- Articulating up to three recommendations relevant to the standard.

#### Lines of Inquiry

##### *Standard I: Mission and Goals*

1. How are resources aligned to the mission and academic strategies to ensure success of key programs?
2. How does Susquehanna's curriculum reflect the university's mission and goals as a liberal arts institution?
3. What has the institution done to create communities that reflect and support student diversity?
4. How does Susquehanna promote continuous improvement in the attainment of our mission and institutional priorities?

##### *Standard II: Ethics and Integrity*

1. How does the institution demonstrate a commitment to academic and intellectual freedom, freedom of expression, intellectual property rights, and avoidance of conflict of interest?
2. What progress has Susquehanna made toward achieving an inclusive and equitable climate for students, faculty, staff, and administration?
3. How effective are current procedures for ensuring the consistency, integrity, and application of institutional policies, processes, and practices?

- a. To what extent do personnel practices and policies allow for prompt, impartial and equitable action?
4. To what extent are Susquehanna's internal and external communications transparent, honest, and a reflection of the institutional mission?

*Standard III: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience*

1. Demonstrate that Susquehanna has the faculty expertise and resources necessary to offer the programs advertised to prospective students?
2. Are faculty provided with and do they utilize sufficient opportunities for professional growth and innovation focused on instructional design, delivery, and assessment?
3. Are all current academic programs generating sufficient interest to sustain the institution?
4. What new programs (baccalaureate, certificate, or graduate programs) might improve the institution's long-term success and growth while holding true to the core mission of the liberal arts?
  - a. Are the processes for proposing and reviewing new programs sufficient to ensure a high-quality educational experience for students?
5. How is the institution supporting instructional design and delivery of rigorous learning experiences to ensure the personal and professional success of students and faculty?

*Standard IV: Support of the Student Experience*

1. Demonstrate that the policies governing enrollment management and student conduct support the inclusion, well-being, intellectual growth, health, and safety of each student.
2. Demonstrate that the services and programs in residence life, leadership and engagement, first year experience, religious life, counseling and psychological services, and campus safety support the inclusion, well-being, intellectual growth, health, and safety of each student.
3. Provide evidence that current co-curricular, extra-curricular, and athletic (varsity, intramural, or club sports) programs contribute to the positive experience of each student and to higher retention and graduation rates.
4. What new policies, services, or programs might better serve student needs?

*Standard V: Educational Effectiveness Assessment*

5. Demonstrate that existing assessment practices effectively measure learning outcomes of both the Central Curriculum and academic programs (i.e., majors and minors).
  1. Does the institution dedicate sufficient resources to support student learning assessment on campus?
  2. How well does the institution ensure the relevance and rigor of courses, programs, and assessments?
  3. How important is educational effectiveness to the job expectations and performance evaluations of faculty and student-facing staff?
  4. To what extent has assessment data been used to improve educational effectiveness?

*Standard VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement*

1. Provide evidence that the financial planning and budgeting process is evidence-based, assessed appropriately, guided by the strategic plan, and clearly communicated to all university constituents.
2. Describe how the university plans for improvements to the facilities, infrastructure, and technology to achieve greater fiscal sustainability while addressing deferred maintenance.
3. Demonstrate that non-academic units meet the current operational, co-curricular, and functional needs of the institution.
4. Analyze policies and procedures that result in the successful recruitment, development, and retention of administrative personnel needed to support its operations.

*Standard VII: Governance, Leadership, and Administration*

1. Provide evidence that the institution is governed by a clearly articulated and transparent governance structure that outlines roles, responsibilities, and accountability for decision making by each constituency.
2. Demonstrate that the President has the authority and autonomy required to fulfill their role including developing and implementing institutional plans, staffing the organization, identifying and allocating resources, and directing the institution.
3. Provide evidence that the faculty's role in shared governance is sufficient to execute its responsibilities.
4. Provide evidence of a clearly defined organizational structure for the University's administration with clearly defined and appropriate reporting relationships.
  - a. Describe the extent to which the administration has engaged with faculty, staff and students in the advancement of institutional priorities.
  - b. Demonstrate that mechanisms for communication among the faculty, administration, and governing board are in place.
5. Demonstrate that staff and students are empowered to play a formal role in university governance.
6. Review systematic procedures in place for the ongoing evaluation of leadership and administrative units as well as assessment of shared governance support the Mission and Goals and Institutional Priorities of the University.

## VI. Guidelines for Reporting

Each working group will be responsible for completing one chapter of the final self-study report. Steering Committee co-chairs will write the introduction and the conclusion and will submit drafts to the entire Steering Committee for approval.

Working groups are given a detailed timeline of the self-study during the orientation conducted by group co-chairs. Each Working Group is expected to meet twice a month and to create their own timeline to meet the deadlines listed below. Steering committee co-chairs of each working group will report back to the steering committee on at least a monthly basis during a face-to-face meeting. These reports will include a summary of the updates, a general evaluation of the group's progress, and a list of goals to be accomplished every month.

### Working Group Reports

Working group reports will focus on how well the institution meets expectations defined by the specific Standard for Accreditation and Requirement(s) of Affiliation assigned to the working group as well as institutional priorities. The report should include analysis of the institution's strengths, weaknesses, challenges, and opportunities in regard to the standard, requirement(s), and institutional priorities and plans (e.g., strategic plan). The report should identify any relevant documents used by the working group in compiling the report and include specific evidence in Microsoft Teams. The report should also include no more than three recommendations that the working group would like to make on areas for improvement identified during this process.

The draft and final reports will follow the chapter outline approved by the steering committee. The timeline (see Table 4) provides

exact dates for submitting drafts and revisions. All final drafts submitted to the steering committee will be used to compile the final self-study document. These reports may be edited, paraphrased, revised, or amended in a single voice by one main author.

Table 4. Working Group Reports Deadlines

Deliverable	Deadline
Lines of inquiry	April 8, 2022
Detailed chapter outline	July 15, 2022
Chapter outline approval	August 8, 2022
First report draft	September 5, 2022
Second report draft	November 21, 2022
Complete evidence submission	December 21, 2022
Final report draft	April 1, 2023

### Editorial Style Guide

Adapted from University Marketing and Communications editorial style guide (<https://mysu.susqu.edu/HRPR/Policies/Documents/Susquehanna%20Style%20Guide%205.1-FINAL.pdf#search=style%20guide>) and the visual identity standards manual ([https://mysu.susqu.edu/OFCM/Lists/GraphicDesign%20Resources/Attachments/2/VisualStyleGuide\\_0720.pdf](https://mysu.susqu.edu/OFCM/Lists/GraphicDesign%20Resources/Attachments/2/VisualStyleGuide_0720.pdf)).

Table 5. Editorial Style Guide Specifications

Category	Specifications
Software	Microsoft Office Word
File type	.doc or .docx
Margins	1 inch

Category	Specifications
Font	Constantia 11; Constantia 9 for tables
Justification	Left
Line Spacing	Single
Paragraph	No indentation; 6.0 pt. to separate different paragraphs; No space to separate bulleted points; No indentation
Numerals	Spell out zero through nine and use numerals for 10 and over.
Contractions	Do not use contractions.
Capitalization	Capitalize position titles (e.g., Provost), “University”, “Steering Committee”, and “Self-Study”
Commas	Use the Oxford comma
Abbreviation	The first time a word, phrase, or internal name (e.g., an office or program name) is used in a section, use the full word, phrase, or internal name followed by the abbreviation may then be used in the following sentences. Include acronyms in the glossary.
Terminology	Self-Study,
University name	Use Susquehanna University, Susquehanna, or the University. Do not use SU.
Heading (level 1)	Left justified, upper and lower case, 16 font size, RGB 223,103,42 font color,
Heading (level 2)	Left justified, upper and lower case, 14 font size, black font color, bold, italics
Heading (level 3)	Left justified, upper and lower case, 11 font size, black font color, underlined
Tables	9 font size
Page numbers	Right justified, footer
Length	15 pages maximum
Other	Avoid gender language and bias.

## ***Evidence of Compliance***

Each working group will assign a liaison to the Evidence Inventory Team. Members of this team are encouraged to consist of staff/faculty from the Library, Registrar’s Office, and Information Technology. In order to produce a coherent final draft of the Self-Study, different groups drafted a chapter addressing the research questions related to their Standards. The Steering Committee created a dedicated Microsoft Teams site for working groups to communicate, store minutes and drafts, save evidence, find out pertinent information, and access helpful resources. The site also provides space for collaboration among different groups. The site is private and is accessible to the membership of the Working Groups only. Note that a separate public website was created to provide the University community with pertinent updates about the self-study. This approach reflects our transparent and inclusive process.

## VII. Organization of the Final Self-Study Report

The final report will adhere to the below guidelines.

- I. Table of Contents
- II. Executive Summary
- III. Introduction
  - A. Institutional Overview
    1. Abridged History and Review of Mission
    2. Description of Student Population
  - B. Strategic Plans
    1. 2026 Strategic Plan
    2. CenSUs
    3. SU 2.0
- IV. Standard I: Mission and Goals
- V. Standard II: Ethics and Integrity
- VI. Standard III: Design and Delivery of Student Learning Experience
- VII. Standard IV: Support of the Student Experience
- VIII. Standard V: Educational Effectiveness Assessment
- IX. Standard VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement
- X. Standard VII: Governance, Leadership, and Administration
- XI. Conclusion
  - A. Synthesis and discussion of institutional strengths as related to MSCHE standards and requirements of affiliation
  - B. Synthesis and discussion of opportunities for improvement
- XII. Appendices



# VIII. Strategy for Verification of Compliance with Applicable Federal Regulatory Requirements

The Verification of Compliance working group will be charged with evaluating Susquehanna’s compliance with federal and state regulations concerning higher education. The working group consists of the two steering committee leads (ALO and chair), the University Registrar, an associate professor of accounting, and the library’s acquisitions and cataloging coordinator (see Table 3). The group co-chairs will communicate with the other working groups’ co-chairs via steering committee meetings and Teams as necessary.

Table 6. Verification of Compliance Working Group Members

Members	Federal Regulatory Requirements
*Danielle D. Brown, Asst. Provost for Institutional Effectiveness & Strategic Initiatives	#6, #7
*Nick Clark, Assoc. Professor & Dept. Head of Political Science	
Andrew Felo, Assoc. Professor of Accounting	#1, #3
Ann Marie Rompolski, Acquisitions & Cataloging Coordinator, Library	#4, #5
†Jeannette Rork, Registrar	#2, #8

\*Working group co-chairs

† Liaison to evidence inventory team.

This working groups tasks include:

- Read the MSCHE Verification of Compliance with Accreditation-Relevant Federal Regulations;
- Collect documentation for the eight areas MSCHE requires verification of institutional compliance as developed by the United States Department of Education;
- Work with the evidence inventory team to ensure documentation of compliance with MSCHE Requirements of Affiliation
- Review the institution’s Compliance Review Report from MSCHE to fulfill any request for additional information if needed.
- Conduct and attend 30-minute biweekly meetings to discuss updates, progress, and challenges.
- Regularly update the Microsoft Teams group for the 2023 MSCHE self-study.

## IX. Self-Study Timetable

### ***Summer 2021: Steering Committee and Chair Identified***

- Consider human, institutional, and fiscal resources required
- Identify steering committee chair
- Along with the accreditation liaison officer, begin meeting with the University president about institutional priorities by considering the strategic plan and progress

### ***Fall 2021: Attend Self Study Institute***

- October 5 – November 16: Attend Self-Study Institute
- November: Identify members of the steering committee – include faculty across schools and staff
- December: Develop self-study budget, self-study communication plan, and site-visit budget
- December – January: Conference with MSCHE vice president liaison, Idna Corbett, to refine institutional priorities

### ***Spring 2022: Begin Self-Study***

- February – March: Draft and submit self-study design for MSCHE approval
- March: Assemble self-study work groups
- March – April: Meetings and campus visits with MSCHE staff
- \*April – May: Revisions and acceptance of self-study design
- May 4 – Campus visit by MSCHE vice president liaison, Dr. Idna Corbett

### ***Summer 2022: Continue Self-Study***

- May – July: Work groups gather and analyze data and submit progress reports to steering Committee
- July – August: Chair revises and plans university-wide communication

### ***Fall 2022: Continue Self-Study and Collect Evidence***

- August – November: Continue writing self-study and collecting evidence
- October – November: Chose self-study evaluation team chair and site-visit dates
- November: Send accepted self-study design to self-study evaluation chair

### ***Spring 2023: Complete Self-Study***

- January – February: Work groups complete self-study draft
- March – April: Self-study draft reviewed by team chair and revised
- May: Self-study draft shared with campus community

### ***Summer 2023***

- May: Self-study draft sent to evaluation team Chair (two weeks before visit)
- June: Site visit team chair's preliminary visit
- August: Self-study finalized based on evaluation team chair feedback and shared with campus

### ***Fall 2023: Plan and Conduct MSCHE Site Visit***

- August – September: Final self-study report, verification of compliance, and evidence inventory uploaded to MSCHE portal (six weeks before visit)
- October – November: Self-study evaluation team visit (aka site visit)
- November – December: Team report and institutional response

### ***Spring 2024: Commission Determines Action***

## X. Communication Plan: Reaccreditation Roadmap for SU

This plan serves as a framework for implementing communication tactics and related activities during Susquehanna University's Self-Study and reaccreditation process. As activities evolve, this plan will be reviewed and updated as appropriate.

### ***Purpose***

The purpose of this plan is to maintain two-way symmetrical communication between the Self-Study Steering Committee and the members of the Susquehanna campus community regarding the process of reaccreditation as outlined by the guidelines set forth by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE). The objectives of the plan are to update institutional stakeholders about the progress of the process, gather input and feedback, and ensure inclusive opportunities for participation and transparency.

The Steering Committee aims to ensure collaboration from the SU community as it collects data, documents, policies, procedures and other materials to inform the Self-Study analyses. Furthermore, SU community members should see the Self-Study process as an opportunity to examine and assess ongoing progress toward achieving the goals of the institution's Strategic Plan, and to identify opportunities and challenges associated with our mission and guiding values.

### ***Audiences***

The plan is designed to reach institutional stakeholders

- Current faculty
- Current staff
- Current students
- Trustees of the board

Secondary audiences to notify of reaffirmation

- Alumni
- Parents
- State and federal funding agencies
- Program accreditors (e.g., AACSB)

### ***Methods***

The Steering Committee will announce the selected institutional priorities and Self-Study approach to institutional constituents through February 2022. Due to the pandemic, in lieu of one large campus-wide kick-off, a series of campus kick-off events will be held with

- Senior Leadership Team
- Academic Leadership
- Staff Council
- University Council
- Staff Town Hall
- SGA meeting

Followed by a formal email of institutional priorities to a campus-wide audience.

- Dissemination of draft reports
- Emails to faculty and staff for updates on progress, concerns, issues
- Progress reports

- Regular updates in Faculty/Staff Weekly
- Series of articles to students through The Quill
- Prepare regular information reports for the Board of Trustees
- Coordinate presentations to Board of Trustees in spring 2022
- Speaking Engagements – Hold open forums or participate in Town Halls for progress updates and to answer questions relative to accreditation. Review comments and feedback from the forums and delegate appropriate follow up as needed.
- Individual and Group Meetings – Coordinate meetings with academic and administrative departments as appropriate
- “Coffee and Conversations”

## Resources

Table 7. Website Update Activities

Action Item	Responsible Lead	Due date / progress
Update the <a href="#">accreditation web page</a>	Aaron Martin	Completed November 2021
Create a self-study web page	Aaron Martin	Completed March 2022
Working groups submit updates (agendas, minutes, schedule of meetings)	Working Group Chairs	ongoing
Add campus-wide communications to website	Aaron Martin	ongoing
Update resources and document inventory	Working Group Chairs	ongoing

Table 8. Other Communication Activities

Action Item	Responsible Lead	Due date / progress
Create Campus Comments form in Qualtrics for input and feedback	Nick Clark	Completed March 2022
Create Talking Points/Fact Sheet for consistent messaging and distribution to audiences	Nick Clark/Danielle Brown	Early March 2022
Create Style Guide for consistency of Self-Study messaging	Aaron Martin	March 2022
Develop PowerPoint for presentations following process to accreditation	Nick Clark/Danielle Brown	February 2022
Create Poster before Evaluation Team visit	Aaron Martin, Steering Committee	Fall 2022

## Responsibility

Respond to feedback to confirm that it has been received and how it was used.

Table 9. Communication Timing

January 2022	University bodies are informed about the fall 2023 Middle States Commission on Higher Education visit and briefed on the new Standards and the requirement to conduct a comprehensive review (groups briefed included the Senior Leadership Team, University Council, and Academic/Administrative Leadership Teams, and SGA)
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January 2022	SU MSCHE Self-Study website created; will be accessible to all Susquehanna community members
February 2022	General communication to the University community informing them of the 2023 MSCHE accreditation visit and describing the process of review
Spring 2022– Spring 2023	University leadership periodically updated on the Self-Study review process by Steering Committee Co-Chair (SVPAA)
Spring 2022– Summer 2023	Board of Trustees periodically updated on the Self-Study review process by Steering Committee Co-Chair
Spring 2022	Steering Committee Co-Chairs and/or Provost brief the faculty, and other leadership groups about the accreditation process in general and the specifics of our review process
Spring 2022	Student members of the Steering Committee and Student Life administrators will advise about outreach to students, as well as student leadership groups; in-person and digital communications will be considered
Spring 2022	Steering Committee identifies Susquehanna electronic newsletters and other communication outlets where written updates about the Self-Study process and reports could appear
Spring 2022	The Steering Committee develops a distribution and feedback plan for seeking input from the university leadership and broader community on Working Group reports and Self-Study draft reports
xxx	Formal feedback on the Self-Study draft solicited from all members of the University community; avenues for both electronically-submitted comments and in-person town halls or other meetings will be provided
May 2023	Self-study draft shared with campus community and feedback solicited; including University leadership and Board of Trustees
August 2023	Self-study finalized based on evaluation team chair feedback and shared with campus, posted on SU Self-Study website
Fall 2023	Community will be informed about the Evaluation Team visit and given information about their role in the process
December 2023	Outcomes of the Evaluation Team visit and the Middle States Commission meeting will be communicated to the University community

## XI. Evaluation Team Profile

Ideally, the external peer evaluation group should be comprised of reviewers from private baccalaureate colleges with a liberal arts focus. The team chair specifically, should have a combination of most of the following criteria.

- Experience in small (less than 3,500 students), highly residential institutions.
- Current chief academic officer, provost, dean of faculty, or president.
- Obvious liberal arts influence in work history.

The evaluation team should meet the following criteria:

- At least one team member should have direct experience with a rurally located institution.
- All team members should have direct experience with small, highly residential institutions.
- At least one team member with familiarity with NCAA division III athletic requirements and culture.
- At least one team member should have understanding of accreditation for schools of business.
- Faculty and staff from institutions with a strong study abroad program.

Specific peer and aspirational institutions from which team members might be drawn include:

- Albright College
- Allegheny College
- Arcadia University
- Chatham University
- Gettysburg College
- Hobart and William Smith College
- McDaniel College
- Muhlenberg College
- St. Lawrence University
- Sarah Lawrence
- Skidmore College
- Union College
- Ursinus College
- Washington College
- Washington and Jefferson College

Competitors include:

- Dickinson College
- Elizabethtown College
- Juniata College
- Lebanon Valley College
- Lycoming College
- Moravian University
- Pennsylvania State University
- St. Joseph's University
- University of Scranton

## XII. Evidence Inventory Strategy

To manage the 2023 self-study evidence inventory, each working group will have a designated liaison responsible for their assigned standard's supporting documentation. Liaisons generally included staff from the library, registrar's office, and information technology.

Evidence inventory liaisons will work together as the evidence inventory team and will meet as group with the steering committee co-chairs every two weeks beginning in summer/fall 2022. Team members will annotate evidence by describing it and indicating which claims and standards it supports. Along with cataloging the evidence, the team is also tasked with identifying gaps and needs within the documentation.