

Middle States Commission on Higher Education, 3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104-2680

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**MSCHE Institutions Vote on Process and Cycle Changes**

Voting began November 30 on a proposal to change the Commission's accreditation processes and accreditation cycle.

Once member institutions have approved the proposed changes, the Commission will appoint several task forces to fine-tune the procedures and finalize the data elements that will be included in the annual institutional update. The MSCHE staff will develop implementation plans that will be shared with member institutions.

To learn more about the proposed changes to the MSCHE accreditation processes and accreditation cycle, visit <http://www.msche.org/?Nav1=NEWS&Nav2=NEWSROOM&Nav3=PROCESSREVIEW>

**2015 Annual Conference a Success**

More than 1,200 people attended MSCHE's 2015 Annual Conference in Washington, DC, December 2 – 4. The conference featured plenary presentations by Dr. William "Brit" Kirwan, Chancellor-Emeritus of the University System of Maryland, who addressed *Higher Education: Entering a Brave (and Uncertain) New World*, and Dr. Terry Hartle, Senior Vice President of the American Council on Education, who discussed *Federal Policy and Higher Education*.



*Dr. William Kirwan*



*Dr. Terry Hartle*



*Panelists Address Proposed Process Changes*



*Dr. Robert A. Schneider*

Two other plenary sessions examined MSCHE accreditation processes and the revised accreditation standards. On Thursday afternoon, a panel discussion addressed *Refocusing MSCHE Accreditation Processes: An Overview*. Participating panelists included Dr. Robert Clark, MSCHE Commissioner and Professor in the STEM and Health Division, Cumberland County College; Dr. Joanne Cote-Bonanno, Associate Provost for Academic Programs and Assessment, Montclair State University; Ms. Debora Z. Stasolla, Associate Vice President for Planning, Rider University; and Dr. Robert A. Schneider, MSCHE Senior Vice President for Accreditation Relations. Following their presentations, the panelists fielded questions from the audience.

The Friday morning plenary session was devoted to *MSCHE Standards: An Implementation Update*. Dr. James Sunser, President, Genesee Community College, moderated a panel discussion that included representatives from three of the 15 institutions involved in the Commission's Collaborative Implementation Project, the first group to work with the revised accreditation standards. Panelists included Dr. Debra Klinman, MSCHE Vice President, who provided an overview of the changes; Dr. Vincent Rinaldo, Professor, Leadership and Policy, Department of Advanced Studies, Niagara University, who addressed new Standards I and II; Dr. Jacqueline Leblanc, Vice President for Planning and Assessment, LIM College, who addressed new Standards III, IV, and V; and Dr. Christine Licata, Senior Associate Provost, Rochester Institute of Technology, who addressed new Standards VI and VII.



*Opening Plenary Session*

*Exhibit Hall*

*Dr. Christine Licata discusses the new accreditation standards*

In addition, the conference offered the attendees the opportunity to choose from among 30 concurrent sessions focusing on a wide variety of accreditation-related topics, including assessment, strategic planning, Middle States expectations, student success, leadership development, and resource allocation. Attendees were also able to network in the Conference Exhibit Hall.

The Commission has posted the Power Point presentations and other materials used by the various presenters on the MSCHE website. These materials can be accessed by visiting <http://www.msche.org/?Nav1=EVENTS&Nav2=2015.01.01&Nav3=PresentationMaterial>

Mark your calendar now for the 2016 MSCHE Annual Conference, scheduled for December 7 – 9 at the Philadelphia Marriott Downtown Hotel in Philadelphia, PA. The Call for Proposals will become available in late Winter/early Spring 2016.

### **2015 Self-Study Institute Participants Guided by Revised Standards**

The Commission's annual Self-Study Institute (SSI) was held in Philadelphia, November 9 and 10. This was the first time that the two-day training event focused an entire cohort of institutions preparing for self-study on the Commission's revised accreditation standards. Beginning with self-studies due to the Commission during the 2017-18 academic year, all MSCHE institutions will be required to use the revised standards.

Sixty institutions participated in this year's Self-Study Institute. In addition, representatives of the 15 institutions involved in the Commission's Collaborative Implementation Project (CIP) served as co-facilitators throughout the two days, sharing their experiences of the past year as they have worked with the standards.

MSCHE Vice Presidents Debra Klinman and Sean McKittrick led the opening plenary session with a presentation on *Understanding the Standards and the Requirements of Affiliation*. MSCHE Vice Presidents and the CIP representatives then led breakout sessions that focused on the Documentation Roadmap that institutions use to prepare for the Self-Study.

The second day of the Self-Study Institute began with a panel discussion featuring representatives of five institutions that are participating in the CIP. They shared their experiences of developing their self-study designs, identifying materials and means of compiling their documentation roadmaps, and working closely with each other and with the MSCHE staff. Several CIP participants described how they have been able to blend their self-study efforts with parallel efforts to update institutional strategic plans.



*Scenes from the 2001 Self-Study Institute*

The remainder of the SSI's second morning was spent in breakout sessions, during which the groups focused on the self-study design process.

The SSI concluded with a presentation by Dr. Margaret McMenamin, a Middle States Commissioner since 2013 and President of Union County College. Dr. McMenamin reminded the audience that their institutions are a major component of what constitutes MSCHE, and she urged the participants to work collaboratively with each other and with the MSCHE team to make the self-study process a productive endeavor. She stressed that a major goal of the Commission is for institutions to be engaged in continuous improvement, and that self-study should not be viewed as simply a way to meet MSCHE requirements, but rather a means of helping the entire institution to grow and prosper.

### **Revision to Accreditation Actions Policy and Requirements of Affiliation**

During its November 19, 2015 meeting, the Commission voted unanimously to approve several minor editorial changes to its *Accreditation Actions* policy (formerly *Range of Commission Actions on Accreditation*). The policy was edited for clarity in its sections on monitoring and substantive change, clarifying both the timeframes for non-compliance and reasons that an extension for good cause might be granted. To view the revised policy, click on [www.msche.org/documents/P2.3-AccreditationActions.pdf](http://www.msche.org/documents/P2.3-AccreditationActions.pdf)

During the same meeting the Commission unanimously approved some minor editorial changes to the Requirements of Affiliation that had been approved by member institutions in 2014 as part of the approval of the revised Accreditation Standards. The changes made in the introductory paragraph for the Requirements of Affiliation and in Requirement #14 clarified the Commission's expectations. To view

the Requirements of Affiliation, including the recent changes, visit [www.msche.org/publications/RevisedStandardsFINAL.pdf](http://www.msche.org/publications/RevisedStandardsFINAL.pdf).

### **MSCHE Welcomes New Commissioners**

Two new members will join the Commission for three-year terms that begin on January 1, 2016. Member institutions elected Dr. Celeste Freytes, Professor of Education at the University of Puerto Rico – Rio Piedras, and Ms. Denise Mulkern, retired Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration for Rutgers University's Biomedical and Health Sciences. Ms. Mulkern will serve the Commission as a Public Member.

Dr. Carl Person, who spent 14 years at NASA, most recently as its Director of Aerospace Research and Career Development, was elected to his first full term on the Commission. Dr. Person joined the Commission earlier this year when he was appointed to an unexpired term.

Elected to second terms on the Commission were Dr. Meg Benke, Professor in the School of Graduate Studies at SUNY Empire State College; Mr. Joseph Connolly, Distinguished Visiting Fellow at Universite Paris 1 Pantheon-Sorbonne; Dr. Dario Cortes, former President and current Senior Vice President of Strategic Alliances at Berkeley College; Dr. John Johannes, Professor of Political Science at Villanova University; and Dr. Karen Kershenstein, Public Member.

Leaving the Commission at the end of December will be Dr. John Cavanaugh, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Consortium of Universities of the Washington, DC Metropolitan Area, and Dr. Nancy Malkiel, Professor of History at Princeton University. Dr. Cavanaugh's term will expire, while Dr. Malkiel did not seek reelection as she is planning to retire at the conclusion of the current academic year.

### **Professional Development Opportunities**

The Commission has scheduled five professional development workshops for member institutions throughout February, March, April, and May.

#### ***Registration Currently Open:***

***Involving Stakeholders in the Institutional Assessment Process*** will be offered February 23, 2016 at the Sheraton Puerto Rico Convention Center.

Recent analyses by the Commission reveal that full implementation of the assessment process continues to be a challenge for institutions, particularly when it comes to involving multiple members of the institutional community. This workshop will focus on both strategies for addressing the Commission's expectations for assessment and how to involve multiple members of the institutional community at both the institutional and unit levels.

Dr. Sean McKittrick, MSCHE Vice President, will facilitate.

To register or for additional information, visit <http://www.msche.org/?Nav1=EVENTS&Nav2=2016.05.01>

***Planning, Assessing, and Budgeting: A Hands-on Workshop*** is scheduled for March 4, 2016 at the Courtyard by Marriott Philadelphia Downtown.

This workshop will provide participants with hands-on practice integrating planning, budgeting, and assessment processes. The facilitator will review key structures, processes and approaches that include the composition and integration of empowered committees of faculty, staff, students and external stakeholders; the clarity and transparency of published planning, reporting, assessment and budget allocation procedures; and the importance of organization-wide participation in implementation as well as dissemination practices.

Dr. Claudia Keenan, Dean of Education, Stockton University, will facilitate.

To register for the March 4 workshop, please visit:  
<http://www.msche.org/?Nav1=EVENTS&Nav2=2016.05.02>.

***Institutional Follow-up Reports and Visits*** is scheduled for March 31, 2016 at the Sheraton University City Hotel in Philadelphia.

This workshop is designed for institutions that have Commission-required follow-up reports or visits stemming from their most recent MSCHE Self-Study or Periodic Review Report. Included will be sessions on best practices and Middle States expectations, as well as discussions focusing on particular standards.

MSCHE staff will facilitate.

To register for the March 31 workshop, please visit:  
<http://www.msche.org/?Nav1=EVENTS&Nav2=2016.05.04>.

### **Registration Opens Soon:**

***Developing Direct Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes in Student Services and the Student Experience*** is scheduled for April 15, 2016 at the Courtyard by Marriott Philadelphia Downtown in Philadelphia, PA.

***Creating and Selecting Assessment Tools*** is scheduled for May 20, 2016 at the DoubleTree by Hilton Philadelphia Center City in Philadelphia, PA.

In addition, MSCHE will continue its series of webinars on *Building the Electronic Report*, *Compliance Reviewer Training*, and *Verification of Compliance with Accreditation-Relevant Federal Regulations*.

For additional information or to register for any of the Commission's professional development workshops or webinars, visit [http://www.msche.org/events\\_calendar.asp](http://www.msche.org/events_calendar.asp)

### **Recent Commission Actions**

During the November 19, 2015 Commission meeting, one institution was placed on Show Cause status, one was placed on Probation, and one was placed on Warning. Thirty-seven institutions had their

accreditation reaffirmed following evaluation of their Periodic Review Report and four institutions had their accreditation reaffirmed following Self-Study. Warnings were removed and accreditation reaffirmed for three institutions, and Probation was removed and accreditation reaffirmed for one institution. In addition, the Commission approved the merger of Clarkson University and Union Graduate College. The Commission also took 60 other miscellaneous accreditation actions.

For details on actions from the November 19, 2015 Commission meeting, visit [http://www.msche.org/institutions\\_recentactions.asp](http://www.msche.org/institutions_recentactions.asp).