

Frequently Asked Questions

So, briefly, what is Middle States?

The Middle States Commission on Higher Education consists of 27 members who are elected by the colleges and universities that are members. These elected members decide whether or not a college or university receives accreditation.

Institutions are evaluated by a team of evaluators from similar colleges and universities. The accreditation process begins with an institutional self study which then leads to a visit by the accreditation team the following year.

What if a college is not accredited?

If a college does not have regional accreditation, then students usually cannot transfer their credits to other colleges and students are not eligible for Federal financial aid. The quality of the institution is certainly questioned.

What is a self-study?

A self-study is a report that is written before the accreditation visiting team members come to the College. It is a self-examination of areas of strength and areas that need improvement within the College based on criteria established by the Middle States Commission. It takes many people to write a self-study, and it's important that the self-study is reflective of all the excellent work we do as well as areas that might need more attention.

I was not asked to be on one of the teams. How can I participate?

There are plenty of opportunities for everyone in the MC community to be a part of the Middle States Self Study and the Accreditation Visit. Here are a few ideas:

Browse the "Standards" on our website and find an area of interest to you. Contact the Chair of that Standard to let him or her know you are interested. There's plenty of help that is needed, from editing to reading documents or gathering information.

Participate in the community conversations on the self-study that will be occurring throughout the year. Feedback on the self study drafts will be extremely important to the development of a final report that reflects many areas of the college and multiple points of view.

Contact [Sharon Fechter](#) and/or [Karen Roseberry](#) (co-chairs of the Self-Study Steering Committee) and let them know that you would like to participate. They will find out the best way to get you involved!

Could I be interviewed by the visiting team?

The visiting team members will give the College a list of people they wish to interview, so you would be told ahead of time.

In addition, they like to browse through the College and meet folks informally so that they can get to know the many aspects of the institution.

There will also be open meetings where they will take comments from various groups at the college, including students.

Does the self-study and accreditation team look at all aspects of the college? What if they don't notice some of the excellent work we are doing or don't see some of the areas of concern?

The self-study and accreditation team have a set of "standards" that guide their review. You can become familiar with these standards by going to our Standards webpage. You will see that they are fairly comprehensive, from academics to administration, from buildings to people.

The self-study team has formulated research questions that address each of the standards, to see how MC is doing with each standard. That is our opportunity to "brag" about the excellent work we are doing, or bring to their attention areas that need improvement.

Why would we want to say something negative about ourselves? Does the self-study really mention areas that need improving?

A good self-study is a comprehensive look at the areas of the institution that relate to the standards. It is an opportunity to talk about the strengths of the institution, but it is also an opportunity to bring attention to areas that could use extra attention or resources. That often actually helps an institution to refocus energy and resources to areas that might have been over looked or need it most.

When is all this work taking place?

The self study teams will be the busiest during the fall of 2006. That is when they will be investigating their area and formulating a first draft of their response to the research questions.

During the spring of 2007 there will be many opportunities for the community to read and respond to their initial findings so that a second draft is reflective of the input of the greater community. A lot of steps are in-between (see Timetable), but the next big event is the accrediting team visit in the spring of 2008.

My working group's response to one of the questions changed. What happened?

There are numerous editing stages that take place after a section leaves the committee member. The chairs have page limits and may need to re-work the narrative for formatting purposes. Then, the Steering Group may see areas that are duplicated among Standards, or the information may not be representative of a broader viewpoint. And finally, an editor will review the document.

If you see omissions or feel that the meaning of what you said has been changed, contact the Workgroup Chair for clarification.

What if I feel strongly that something should be included?

Attend the community conversations during the spring of 07, contact the appropriate working group chair, or contact the self study chairs [Sharon Fechter](#) and/or [Karen Roseberry](#) (co-chairs of the Self-Study Steering Committee) .