



## Self-Study Design

Submitted to  
Middle States Commission on Higher Education

September 2021

## Table of Contents

I.	Institutional Overview .....	1
	Institutional Overview .....	1
	Brief History .....	1
	Identity Statement .....	2
	Mission Statement.....	2
	Institutional Goals.....	2
	Distinctive Teaching and Learning .....	3
	See Messiah Anew.....	3
	Sustainable Future.....	3
	Transformative Connections .....	3
	Key Environmental Factors .....	4
	Main Programs of Study .....	4
	Student Populations .....	4
II.	Institutional Priorities to be Addressed in the Self-Study.....	5
III.	Intended Outcomes of the Self-Study .....	6
IV.	Self-Study Approach.....	7
V.	Organizational Structure of the Steering Committee and Working Groups .....	7
	Steering Committee .....	7
	Working Groups. ....	8
	Standard I: Mission and Goals & Standard II: Ethics and Integrity .....	8
	Standard III: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience .....	8
	Standard VI: Support of the Student Experience .....	9
	Standard V: Educational Effectiveness Assessment.....	9
	Standard VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement.....	9
	Standard VII: Governance, Leadership, and Administration.....	9
VI.	Guidelines for Reporting.....	10
VII.	Organization for the Final Self-Study Report .....	10
VIII.	Verification of Compliance Strategy .....	11
IX.	Self-Study Timetable .....	11
X.	Communication Plan.....	13
XI.	Evaluation Team Profile .....	15
XII.	Evidence Inventory .....	17
	Appendix A Charge for the Working Groups 2022-2023 Middle States Self-Study for Messiah University.....	18

## I. Institutional Overview

**Institutional Overview** A university of the liberal and applied arts and sciences, Messiah University is a nationally ranked, private Christian university with a student body of 3,370 undergraduate and graduate students. Our scenic 471-acre suburban campus is located in central Pennsylvania, just 12 miles from the state capital of Harrisburg.

Integral to the institutional character is our identity as a Christian university of the liberal and applied arts and sciences. Messiah University is committed to an embracing evangelical spirit rooted in the Anabaptist, Pietist and Wesleyan traditions of the Christian church and the opening commitment of our mission statement—to develop students’ “maturity of intellect, character and Christian faith”—reflects the integration of our community’s shared faith across the Messiah University experience.

Messiah University’s community of educators is comprised of outstanding teachers, scholars, researchers, and co-curricular educators who mentor and advise students as they see the world in new ways and expand their scope of possibilities. Messiah offers bachelor’s degrees in 80+ majors, twelve master’s degrees, two doctoral degrees, and numerous undergraduate, graduate and post-master’s certificates. Specialized programs include [off-campus study](#), [research](#), [service-learning](#), [internships](#), [experiential learning](#), [partner programs with other institutions](#), [three-year degree options](#) and a flourishing [University Honors Program](#).

Messiah University is a private not-for-profit institution classified as a Master’s College & University with Medium Programs in the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education by Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research. [Messiah is nationally recognized for its outstanding academics and value](#). Messiah was named a Top 20 “Best Regional University” and a Top 20 “Best Value Schools” in the northern United States by U.S. News and World Report rankings in 2021. In the past decade Messiah graduates have distinguished themselves as Rhodes, Fulbright, Carnegie, Turman, and Boren Scholars. Messiah has 22 NCAA Division III sports and is part of the Middle Atlantic Conference (MAC). Messiah has 31 NCAA Division III Championships, 163 Conference team champions, 339 NCAA Division III All-Americans, and 20 NCAA Division III National Players of the Year.

Our alumni consistently provide feedback that their experience at Messiah was transforming—that it helped them see themselves, their academic discipline, their faith, their vocation, and the world in new ways. They also share that a Messiah education equipped them to navigate life’s tensions and build bridges between seemingly incompatible people and ideas. This is characteristic of a Messiah education: the ability to serve, to lead, and ultimately to bring reconciliation grounded in faith and in service of the common good.

**Brief History** Messiah University received its charter in 1909. Founded by the Brethren in Christ Church, its orientation to Christian service is reflected in its first name—Messiah Bible School and Missionary Training Home. Originally located in Harrisburg, the school was moved to Grantham in 1911 following the construction of Old Main. This building is on land donated by the College’s first president, Samuel Rogers Smith, whose house and various business interests were in the village of Grantham.

In the early years, the school offered a high school curriculum and several Bible programs. By 1921, it had also become a junior college, making it the second junior college in Pennsylvania. To reflect this development, the school’s name was changed to Messiah Bible School. By the early 1950s the school had developed four-year college programs in religious education and theology. Another change of name—to

Messiah College—again intentionally reflected this academic advance of the College. During the 1950s, the College added degree programs in the liberal arts and in 1959 discontinued the secondary school program. Following accreditation in 1963, the College significantly increased the number of majors offered in the liberal arts & sciences and introduced undergraduate programs in professional studies.

In 1964, Messiah College took over the operations of Upland College in Upland, California, a Brethren in Christ Church College that had been operating since the 1920s. The Upland campus was closed the same year and all operations were consolidated to Pennsylvania.

Even though it is no longer owned by the Brethren in Christ Church, Messiah maintains a covenant relationship and continues to be influenced by its traditions, primarily in the Anabaptist, but also the Pietist and Wesleyan holiness movements. Today, it is a nondenominational Christian college, with a faith base that includes students and employees from a variety of denominations and Christian faith traditions.

The university has a number of distinct centers and facilities. In 1999, Messiah College opened the Oakes Museum, a 40,000-square foot museum with Smithsonian-quality collections of North American and African wildlife, seashells, bird eggs, insects, minerals, and fossils. The Collaboratory for Strategic Partnerships and Applied Research was created in 2000. This began as an effort to organize co-curricular projects in the engineering department and is an organization focused on education, collaboration, innovation, and service. Additionally, the university is home to the [Center for Public Humanities](#), [Ernest L. Boyer Center](#), and [The Sider Institute for Anabaptist, Pietist, and Wesleyan Studies](#).

Messiah's first graduate program, a master's degree in counseling, launched in 2009. This was also the year Messiah celebrated its centennial year. In 2019, Messiah celebrated 10 successful years of graduate programs now offers a range of master's degrees as well as doctoral degrees in allied health fields.

Messiah officially became Messiah University on July 1, 2020, and expanded its educational mission to another emerging student population by adding its first online undergraduate adult degree programs to its curriculum.

**Identity Statement** Messiah University is a Christian university of the liberal and applied arts and sciences. The University is committed to an embracing evangelical spirit rooted in the Anabaptist, Pietist and Wesleyan traditions of the Christian Church.

**Mission Statement** Our mission is to educate men and women toward maturity of intellect, character and Christian faith in preparation for lives of service, leadership and reconciliation in church and society.

**Institutional Goals** The University Rising strategic plan was developed and will be implemented during a challenging and intense time of global and national change. Together, the Messiah community is working to fulfill our institutional mission in the midst of a worldwide pandemic. The past academic year (2020-2021) taught our community many important lessons about resilience, relevancy, and adaptive change. With courage, confidence, and creativity we plan to move the University forward, united by our common Christian faith, commitment to excellence in all our endeavors, and our desire to serve and mentor students.

As an institution, we believe that the world, both locally and globally, benefits from Messiah graduates who incarnate the University values and model our communication tagline of sharpening intellect,

deepening Christian faith and inspiring action. We are committed to educating and inspiring our students to be a faithful, gracious, reconciling presence in a society that is increasingly divided and polarized.

Messiah University values and embraces innovation. Throughout our 111-year history, Messiah has consistently progressed and adapted to meet the needs of its students and the community, first as a Bible school, then a junior college, a four-year liberal arts college which later added strong programs in the applied arts and sciences, and in 2010 the addition of graduate programs leading to the current status as a university. Messiah University has earned a well-deserved reputation for quality academics, athletics, the arts, and co-curricular programming, which combine to produce graduates who are critical thinkers, ethical decision makers and servant leaders. The University Rising strategic plan is designed to enable us to build upon our history and expresses our shared **institutional vision**:

*Messiah University will expand its influence as an institution of educational excellence committed to Christ-centered learning for life where students are mentored toward deeper intellect, professional competence, personal integrity, and mature faith expressed in love of God and neighbor.*

The strategic plan highlights **three key distinctives and ongoing goals** of a Messiah education:

1. A commitment to educational excellence for all programs across all levels
2. A commitment to inclusive excellence rooted in the intersection of our missional outcomes of service, leadership and reconciliation.
3. A commitment to a gracious Christian approach to faith formation expressed in love of God and neighbor.

To build upon our distinctives and fulfill the university vision, the strategic plan highlights four key themes, or areas for focused growth and future action.

*Distinctive Teaching and Learning* With teaching and learning at the heart of our educational mission, we seek to leverage the distinctives of a Messiah education to reinvent or revitalize compelling teaching and learning practices for learners from high school age to elder years. In particular, we seek to attract, enroll and retain new students from outside of our current student demographic.

*See Messiah Anew* It is vital to leverage our historic transition to Messiah University, and its related educational program expansion, to communicate our brand in new ways, using emerging technology and strategies, and to strengthen our ability to recruit and retain a diverse student population and engage other stakeholders across the full learning-for-life spectrum.

*Sustainable Future* Thriving institutions have a dynamic mission accompanied by financial vitality. Without an adequate financial foundation, our mission cannot be effectively fulfilled. A sustainable future requires increasing new enrollment revenue through creative, innovative and timely program development that addresses learning for life as well as careful stewardship of institutional assets.

*Transformative Connections* Transformative Connections are strategic partnerships and formal relationships with organizations that have the potential for “game-changing” benefit to the University while simultaneously assisting the partner organization in meeting their goals. While these transformative connections may result in opportunities for new student internships, experiential education, and donor relations, they are not simply community engagement as currently defined. Transformative connections

must be mission driven, market sensitive and net revenue positive for the University; generating significant new tuition and non-tuition revenues that support the mission and goals of Messiah University.

**Key Environmental Factors** In in the 2019-2020 academic year, Messiah University began a process to strategically align our resources to ensure that we continue as a relevant, effective and fiscally healthy institution. Meeting financial/revenue goals is certainly a key factor in this process—but the most important driver was our need to create and sustain a university model that will continue to fulfill Messiah’s distinct Christian educational mission and ensure we are nimble, ready and successful in meeting the 21st educational needs of our students and our society. The board of trustees authorized the President and President’s Cabinet to lead an ad hoc task force to conduct a prioritization process resulting in a reduction of operating expenses by \$5 million as of June 30, 2024. The board of trustees increased the savings target to \$7.5 million, given increased concerns about potential downturns in undergraduate enrollment and cash investment returns. The vital work of prioritization in 2019-2020 resulted in \$6.3 million of savings toward this new target. We are continuing to prioritize to meet this revised target by FY24.

The COVID-19 crisis added overwhelming uncertainty. Alongside the FY21-24 prioritization efforts, we had to pivot and quickly implement decisions to reduce FY20 expenses by \$7 million due to an unplanned projected deficit directly resulting from COVID-19 related costs. The COVID-19 challenge was separate and distinct from the prioritization efforts and targets we had already been engaging as a campus community. We achieved a surplus in both FY20 and FY21 through campus collaboration on timely decisions and actions.

**Main Programs of Study** Messiah University has over 80 undergraduate programs, 2 adult degree programs and 9 graduate programs with over 20 graduate degrees and certificates and undergraduate certificates. Across all undergraduate class levels, the top five majors in terms of enrollment are Nursing, Applied Health Science, Engineering, Business Administration, and Psychology. The largest non-residential graduate programs in terms of enrollment are Counseling and Music Conducting. The largest residential graduate programs are Occupational and Physical Therapy.

**Student Populations** Fall 2020 enrollment totaled 3,370 students (2,614 undergraduate and 756 graduate students). Undergraduate students declined 6.8% in the last 10 years while graduate students increased by 189%. There were 2,992 full-time students (2,424 undergraduate and 568 graduate) and 378 part-time students (190 undergraduate and 188 graduate). The gender diversity breakdown of full-time undergraduate students was 40% male and 60% female. The gender diversity breakdown of full-time graduate students was 28% male and 72% female. Typically 80% or more of undergraduates are resident students. The percentage of Pennsylvania undergraduate students was 65% of the undergraduate student body. The top three out-of-state enrollments for the undergraduate student body were Maryland (9%), New York (5%), and New Jersey (4%). Sixty-two percent of graduate students reside in Pennsylvania followed by Maryland (5%), New Jersey (5%), and New York (3%). The largest reported denominational affiliation by undergraduate students is Non-denominational/Interdenominational (19%), followed by Other Christian (13%), Other Evangelical (11%), and Baptist (8%). Students of under-represented ethnic and cultural groups comprise 15.4% of all undergraduates. There were 81 international undergraduate students (3.1%) representing 27 countries.

The retention rate for the undergraduate class entering fall 2019 was 86.5%. The three-year mean of the first-year to sophomore retention rate is 87.4%. Transfer retention for the undergraduate class that entered in fall 2019 was higher than the previous year at 88.8% (increase of 3.4%). The three-year mean of the

transfer retention to second fall is 83.5%. The second fiscal year retention rate for the graduate class entering last fiscal year is 88.9% for those seeking a graduate degree. The four-year graduation rate for undergraduate students was 74.3%, increasing 1.4% from the prior year. The six-year graduation rate was 78.6%, down 0.6% from the previous year. The class entering in the fall of 2015 has a five-year graduation rate of 76.0%, decreasing 2.2% from the fall 2014 class.

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

The most recent institutional strategic plan was developed during the 2020-2021 academic year with a Strategic Plan Leadership Team comprised of 28 members of Messiah’s faculty, staff, and administration. At the beginning of the plan development, all employees were invited to participate in open brainstorming discussions related to the broad themes of the plan. Theme Teams, consisting of Messiah community members, analyzed the data from the employee forums as well as other pertinent data for their theme to ultimately recommend various action steps for the plan. The President received community affirmation and board approval of the plan through various presentations in the spring of 2021.

Through the process of developing the new institutional strategic plan, the following institutional priorities are evident: inclusive excellence; student success; academic excellence & learning for life; and innovation, partnerships & financial vitality.

In the table below, we note the connection between our mission and these institutional priorities:

<b>Elements of our Mission Statement</b>	<b><i>Priority 1: Inclusive Excellence</i></b>	<b><i>Priority 2: Student Success</i></b>	<b><i>Priority 3: Academic Excellence &amp; Learning for Life</i></b>	<b><i>Priority 4: Innovation, Partnerships &amp; Financial Vitality</i></b>
Intellect	x	x	x	Necessary support for effective delivery of the institutional mission
Character	x	x	x	
Christian faith	x	x	x	
Service, Leadership, & Reconciliation	x	x	x	

In the table below, we demonstrate the connection between the institutional priorities and the seven standards. We indicate our initial thoughts regarding how the four University priorities will be addressed across the seven standards with a “1” indicating strong emphasis on the priority and a “2” indicating some coverage of the priority. Working Groups will have discretion in determining which of the priorities will be emphasized in each respective Chapter.

Standards of Accreditation	Priorities			
	<i>Priority 1: Inclusive Excellence</i>	<i>Priority 2: Student Success</i>	<i>Priority 3: Academic Excellence &amp; Learning for Life</i>	<i>Priority 4: Innovation, Partnerships &amp; Financial Vitality</i>
I. Mission and Goals	1	1	1	1
II. Ethics and Integrity	1	2	1	2
III. Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience	1	1	1	1
IV. Support of the Student Experience	1	1	1	
V. Educational Effectiveness Assessment	1	1	1	
VI. Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement	2	2	2	1
VII. Governance, Leadership, and Administration	1	2	2	2

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

1. Demonstrate how the institution currently meets the Commission’s Standards for Accreditation and Requirements of Affiliations.
2. Focus on the continuous improvement in the attainment of the institution’s mission and its institutional priorities.
3. 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.
4. Demonstrate we are adapting the structures and processes/systems of the institution to support increased financial sustainability.



## IV. Self-Study Approach

<u>    X    </u>	Standards-Based Approach
<u>          </u>	Priorities-Based Approach

Our self-study will be organized around the seven MSCHE standards, where each standard will be contextualized to institutional mission, history, and aligned with current institutional priorities. In this way, the self-study is inexorably linked to institutional strategic planning – it is key that standards are linked to institutional priorities and that the priorities in the strategic plan and in the self-study are aligned where appropriate. Given that we are launching our new strategic plan in 2021-2022, we are able to leverage the work and effort of each toward a coherent self-study process and plan for the future. In addition, we will provide evidence via the Evidence Inventory to demonstrate how Messiah fulfills each of the seven standards. We anticipate that this too will include synergy between the strategic planning process and self-study, both of which rely on data and metrics for demonstrating that the institution is achieving its stated goals and aligned with its mission.

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

**Steering Committee** Messiah University has established a Self-Study Steering committee to oversee and coordinate the University’s Self-Study process. In thinking through the steering committee membership, we looked for perspectives and expertise from across the university. We identified various institutional constituencies familiar with the institution’s mission and goals, have a sense of commitment to the self-study process and to the priorities of the institution, and have a broad institutional perspective that transcends that of their own.

The Self-Study Steering Committee includes:

- Alison Noble, Associate Provost (co-chair)
- Laura Miller, Director of Institutional Research (co-chair)
- Susan Donat, Director of Curriculum and Assistant Director of Assessment (ALO)
- Randy Basinger, Provost
- Pete Powers, Dean of the School of Arts, Culture and Society
- Jeff Moshier, Special Assistant to the President and Provost for Program Development
- Kris Hansen-Kieffer, Vice Provost for Student Success and Engagement
- Roseann Sachs, Professor of Chemistry
- Henry Danso, Professor of Psychology
- Kate Oswald Wilkins, Asst. Dean of General Education and Common Learning
- Linda Poston, Director of the Murray Library
- Carla Gross Executive Director of Marketing & Communications/Special Assistant to the President
- Dan Custer, Research Analyst

In the fall of 2020, co-chairs Laura Miller and Alison Noble, along with Messiah’s ALO, Susan Donat, completed the Self-Study Institute.

The charge for the Steering Committee includes:

1. Assist to identify the Self-Study priorities
2. Ensure a transparent and collaborative self-study process
3. Lead Self-Study Design development
4. Establish and charge Working Groups
5. Co-chair a Working Group
6. Assist with gathering documentation for the Evidence Inventory
7. Oversee, support, and manage information requests from Working Groups
8. Oversee the completion of the final Self-Study Report
9. Host the Self-Study visits

The steering committee is comprised of individuals co-chairing the other working groups outlined below and those leading verification of compliance, evidence inventory and communication. Bringing the co-chairs of the working groups together at the steering committee level will enable interaction between working groups that are analyzing similar areas of inquiry, allow co-chairs to request assistance in evaluating and assessing their standard and lines of inquiry, as well as ensure working groups are meeting deadlines to complete the process on-time. Each working group will be provided a spreadsheet in which they can evaluate the criteria associated with their standard, log the supporting evidence, how their standard connects back to the institutional mission as well as answering their line of inquiry related to the institutional priorities.

**Working Groups.** Messiah University has established six working groups to address Standards I through VII with the first working group addressing both Standards I and II. The Steering Committee identified individuals for each working group based on the criteria associated with the evaluation of the standard, the individual's job role and expertise, as well as representation among employee groups. The charge for the Working Groups can be found in Appendix A.

*Standard I: Mission and Goals & Standard II: Ethics and Integrity*

- Pete Powers, Dean of the School of Arts, Culture and Society (co-chair)
- Jeff Moshier, Special Assistant to the President and Provost for Program Development (co-chair)
- Todd Allen, Vice President for Diversity Affairs
- Inger Blount, Director of Human Resources
- Dana Britton, Director of Admissions
- Tina Keller, Associate Professor of TESOL Education
- Jesse Kleingardner, Assistant Professor of Biochemistry
- Rob Pepper, Assistant Provost/Dean of the School of Graduate Studies
- Shelly Skinner, Associate Professor of Christian Ministries
- Doug Wood, Associate Dean of Students

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

- Roseann Sachs, Professor of Chemistry (co-chair)
- Dottie Weigel, Director, Graduate Program in Higher Education (co-chair)
- Kim Fenstermacher, Assistant Dean of Nursing
- Jenn Fisler, Director of Graduate Program in Education, Assistant Dean of Teacher Education
- Christy Hanson, Dean of Experiential Learning
- Emerson Powery, Professor of Biblical Studies

- Katie Rousopoulos, Director of Agape Center for Local and Global Engagement
- Beth Transue, Information Literacy Librarian
- Tim Van Dyke, Associate Professor of Engineering

*Standard VI: Support of the Student Experience*

- Kris Hansen-Kieffer, Vice Provost for Student Success and Engagement (co-chair)
- John Chopka, Vice President for Enrollment Management (co-chair)
- Jocelyn Clippinger, Director of Student Success
- Julie Gomboc-Hellam, Director of Graduate and Adult Student Services & Compliance/Assistant Professor of Education
- JR Harris, Director of Student Financial Services
- Jodi Noble, Senior Lecturer in Chemistry
- Gladys Robalino, Associate Professor of Spanish, Director of Advising, Director of the Center for Public Humanities
- Kevin Villegas, Dean of Students & Christian Spiritual Formation
- Carrie Widdowson, Registrar

*Standard V: Educational Effectiveness Assessment*

- Kate Oswald Wilkins, Asst. Dean of General Education and Common Learning (co-chair), Director of Assessment
- Henry Danso, Professor of Psychology (co-chair)
- Kathee Clark, Associate Registrar
- Leah Clarke, Associate Professor of Counseling, Assistant Director of Faculty Development for Teaching and Learning
- Jocelyn Clippinger, Director of Student Success
- David Hazen, Associate Professor of Education
- George Pickens, Professor of Theology and Mission
- Devi Suberi, Assistant Professor of Computing, Mathematics and Physics
- Jennifer Thomson, Associate Professor of Biopsychology
- Travis Weller, Assistant Professor of Music

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

- Laura Miller, Director of Institutional Research (co-chair)
- David Walker, Vice President for Finance and Planning (co-chair)
- Amanda Coffey, Vice President for Human Resources and Compliance
- Angela Hare, Dean of the School of Science, Engineering and Health
- Obed Mfum-Mensah, Professor of Education
- Dwayne Safer, Assistant Professor of Finance
- Kathie Shafer, Vice President for Operations
- Susan Shannon, Director, Educational Technology Services
- Tony Wyland, Executive Director of Administrative Technology Services

*Standard VII: Governance, Leadership, and Administration*

- Randy Basinger, Provost (co-chair)
- Alison Noble, Associate Provost, Professor of Chemistry (co-chair)
- JP Edmunds, Assistant Director of Student Engagement

- Gina Hale, Coordinator of Agape Center
- Valerie Lemmon, Professor of Psychology
- Kristin Thomas, Director of Admissions Hospitality
- David Weaver-Zercher, Professor of American Religious History
- Tovah Wilson, Human Resources Coordinator

## VI. Guidelines for Reporting

Deadlines will be provided for the following products from each Working Group:

- *Completed Table* outlining various aspects of the Standard(s) to assess and completed with final evidence specified – *October 29, 2021*
- *Working Group Reports* shared with the Steering Committee from note takers after each meeting – *rolling basis September 2021 - August 2022*
- *Chapter Outline* including the following – *November 30, 2021*
  - Institutional priority(ies) selected for study (written in the form of a question that connects each priority to the Working Group Standard)
  - Link each criterion of the Working Group Standard to existing evidence/data
  - Evaluate the Working Group Requirement(s) of Affiliation
  - Analysis of the evidence in light of the criteria for the Working Group Standard and Requirement(s) of Affiliation
  - Highlight the specific programs, processes, and achievements that help communicate the Messiah story in the context of the Working Group Standard
- *1st Chapter Draft* – *January 7, 2022 (Steering Committee review)*
  - *List of Evidence* for each aspect of the Evidence Inventory (prepared by Evidence Inventory Working Group)
- *2nd Chapter Draft* – *March 18, 2022 (findings presented to campus and BOT for comment)*
  - *Draft Evidence Inventory* (prepared by Evidence Inventory Working Group)
- *Final Chapter* including the following – *August 26, 2022*
  - A heading indicating Standard/priority under consideration
  - Cross-references to relevant materials in other parts of the report and within the Evidence Inventory
  - Analytically-based inquiry and reflection
  - Conclusions, including strengths and challenges, with references to appropriate Criteria
  - Opportunities for ongoing institutional improvement and innovation
  - *Final Evidence Inventory* (prepared by Evidence Inventory Working Group)

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

Our self-study will be using the standards-based approach, so we will organize the final Self-Study Report by Standard. The final report will begin with an executive summary, followed by a table of contents and index of tables and figures. Each chapter will address one Standard, related Requirements of Affiliation and Lines of Inquiry based on institutional priorities:

1. Executive Summary: Institutional overview, introduction of institutional priorities, summary of findings, summary of self-recommendations

2. Table of Contents
3. Index of Tables
4. Index of Figures
5. Introduction: Brief institutional history, statement of institutional mission and goals, institutional priorities, key environmental factors, self-study process including communication and transparency
6. Standard I: Mission and Goals, Requirements of Affiliation #7
7. Standard II: Ethics and Integrity
8. Standard III: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience, Requirements of Affiliation #10 and 15
9. Standard IV: Support of the Student Experience, Requirements of Affiliation #9
10. Standard V: Educational Effectiveness Assessment, Requirements of Affiliation #8
11. Standard VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement, Requirements of Affiliation #11
12. Standard VII: Governance, Leadership, and Administration, Requirements of Affiliation #12-13
13. Requirements of Affiliation not addressed within a Chapter above (#1-6 and 14)
14. Verification of Compliance report
15. Conclusions: Summary of findings, summary of self-recommendations
16. Appendix with Steering and Working Group members

## VIII. Verification of Compliance Strategy

Susan Donat the Director of Curriculum, Assistant Director of Assessment, and the Middle State's Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO) will lead a working group focused on the Verification of Compliance. As ALO and chair of this working group she is also on the Steering Committee, which consists of the chairs from the other working groups associated with the Standards. Thus, the Steering Committee meeting will serve as a conduit for communication.

This working group is charged with working with the various offices across campus and the Steering Committee to complete the Institutional Federal Compliance Report as well as all supporting evidence for the verification of compliance.

The Verification of Compliance working group members include:

- Susan Donat, Director of Curriculum and Assistant Director of Assessment (ALO) (chair)
- Amanda Coffey, Vice President for Human Resources and Compliance
- Hannah McBride, Coordinator for Interpersonal Violence Prevention and Education
- Jeff Moshier, Special Assistant to the President and Provost for Program Development
- Carrie Widdowson, Registrar

## IX. Self-Study Timetable

The table below outlines the major milestones and expected timeframes of completion for a spring 2023 self-study visit.

Major Milestone Dates	Major Milestones
September – November 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-Study Institute</li> </ul>
January – February 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assemble Steering Committee</li> <li>• Remote meeting with Commission staff liaison</li> <li>• Begin to draft Self-Study Design (SSD)</li> </ul>
February – April 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assemble Working Groups</li> </ul>
September 13, 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submit draft SSD (two weeks before visit)</li> </ul>
September 27, 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commission staff liaison Self-Study Prep Visit to campus</li> </ul>
September – October 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revisions and acceptance of SSD</li> </ul>
September – December 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working Groups gather and analyze data and submit progress reports to Steering Committee</li> </ul>
October 29, 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completed Table outlining various aspects of the Standards to assess with final evidence specified submitted by Working Groups for review by Steering committee</li> </ul>
November 30, 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter Outlines submitted by Working Groups for review by Steering Committee</li> </ul>
January – May 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-Study Evaluation Team Chair chosen</li> <li>• Visit dates chosen</li> <li>• Accepted SSD sent to Chair</li> </ul>
January 7, 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First Draft of Self-Study prepared for review by Steering Committee</li> <li>• List of Evidence for each aspect of the Evidence Inventory</li> </ul>
March 18, 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Second Draft of Self-Study Chapters submitted by Working Groups to be compiled to share with campus</li> <li>• Draft Evidence Inventory</li> </ul>
March 31, 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-Study drafted and posted to share with campus community</li> </ul>
April – May 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-Study findings presented to campus community and Board of Trustees for comment</li> </ul>
May – August 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-Study revisions</li> </ul>

Major Milestone Dates	Major Milestones
August 26, 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Final Chapter submitted by Working Groups to be compiled for Team Chair</li> <li>Final Evidence Inventory</li> </ul>
September – December 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Self-Study Report draft sent to Team Chair (two weeks before visit)</li> <li>Team Chair’s Preliminary Visit</li> </ul>
December 2022 – January 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Self-Study Report finalized based on Team Chair feedback and shared with campus</li> </ul>
January 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Final Self-Study Report/Verification of Compliance/Evidence Inventory uploaded to MSCHE portal (six weeks before team visit)</li> </ul>
February – May 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Self-Study Evaluation Team Visit</li> <li>Team Report</li> <li>Institutional Response</li> </ul>
June 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commission meets to determine action</li> </ul>

## X. Communication Plan

The Communication Plan will be used to regularly update institutional stakeholders about progress made during the self-study process, gather input and feedback and ensure an inclusive process. The Communication Plan to be included in the Design identifies the purpose of the communication (e.g. gather input, update on progress, request feedback, etc.), the audiences with whom the Steering Committee will communicate, the methods to be used to communicate to these audiences, and the time(s) when information will be conveyed.

The table below is the communication plan for the self-study process.

Purpose	Audience(s)	Methods	Timing	Person/Group Responsible
Share data, documents, and research results while managing self-study process	Steering committee and Working Group Members	Middle States Self-Study (AEFIS, Canvas, etc.)	Spring 2021 – Spring 2023	Co-chairs of working groups

<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Audience(s)</b>	<b>Methods</b>	<b>Timing</b>	<b>Person/Group Responsible</b>
Educate about the standards, gather relevant information	Employees, student leaders	Survey for examples of evidence for each standard	Spring 2021	Steering Committee
Disseminate information to ensure a transparent process	Educators	Middle States Self-Study Webpage, COE Senate updates, President's Campus Updates	Periodic updates Fall 2021 – Spring 2023	Steering Committee
	Staff & Admin	Middle States Self-Study Webpage, President's Campus Updates	Periodic updates Fall 2021 – Spring 2023	Steering Committee
	Student	Middle States Self-Study Webpage, Student Government Association (SGA) Presentation, Multicultural Council (MCC) Presentation	Periodic updates Fall 2021 – Spring 2023	Steering Committee
	Alumni Council & Program – specific advisory councils	Middle States Self-Study Webpage, Presentation at meeting(s)	Periodic updates Fall 2021 – Spring 2023	Steering Committee, VP of Advancement, Program/Department Chairs for specific advisory councils (clinical leaders and administrators, as well as faculty reps, current students and alumni)
	Board of Trustees	Middle States Self-Study Webpage, Presentation at BOT meeting(s)	Periodic updates Fall 2021 – Spring 2023	Steering Committee, President's Office
	Parent Council	Middle States Self-Study Webpage, Presentation at meeting(s)	Periodic updates Fall 2021 – Spring 2023	Steering Committee, VP of Advancement



## XI. Evaluation Team Profile

Messiah University is a comprehensive institution composed of liberal arts, sciences, and professional programs. It has been primarily a residential undergraduate experience with the recent addition of online Adult Degree Programs (ADP) in Business Administration and Nursing in fall 2020. The graduate experience is primarily online, except for our Dietetics, Occupational and Physical Therapy programs.

*Team Chair* President or Provost from a peer institution with experience in residential undergraduate and online graduate programs would be ideal. It would be helpful if this individual is familiar with church or faith-related institutions and has experience leading an institution through changing demographic and enrollment trends.

*Team Members* Evaluators should be from peer institutions and include the following representatives:

- A Vice President for Finance or similar position
- A Vice President/Vice Provost for Student Affairs or Student Success and Engagement or similar position
- A Director/Head of Institutional Effectiveness
- If the Team Chair is not a Provost, a Vice President of Academic Affairs or similar position

*Peer institutions within the Middle States region:*

- Eastern University
- Elizabethtown College
- Geneva College
- Grove City College
- Houghton College
- Lebanon Valley College
- Roberts Wesleyan College
- Susquehanna University
- York College of Pennsylvania

*Aspirational peer institutions within the Middle States region:*

- Arcadia University
- Loyola University
- University of Scranton

*Primary competitor institutions with common student recruitment areas:*

- Calvin University
- Cedarville University
- Eastern Mennonite University
- Eastern University
- Elizabethtown College
- Geneva College
- Gordon College
- Grove City College
- Houghton College
- Lebanon Valley College
- Liberty University

- Roberts Wesleyan College
- Susquehanna University
- Wheaton College
- York College of Pennsylvania

*Potential Conflicts of Interest:* None identified.

*Top programs at Messiah University by enrollment:* The table below provides the top 20 undergraduate programs based on primary and secondary enrollment within the major.

<b>Undergraduate Major</b>	<b>Enrollment</b>
Engineering (incl. Biomedical, Civil, Electrical, Mechanical)	234
Nursing	182
Applied Health Science	161
Psychology	124
Business Administration	113
Biology	99
Education Teaching Certification in Grades PreK-4	86
Studio Art	65
Human Development & Family Science	63
Undeclared	62
Accounting	53
Education with Dual Teaching Certification in Grades PreK-4 and Special Education	51
Finance	51
Computer & Information Science	50
Music Education with K-12 Teaching Certification	50
Social Work	41
Biopsychology	39
Cybersecurity	39
Marketing	39
Digital Media	37

The table below provides the top 8 graduate programs by size of enrollment.

<b>Graduate Program</b>	<b>Enrollment</b>
Counseling	312
Conducting	146
Occupational Therapy	95
Education	85
Nursing	72
Physical Therapy	72
Business Administration	56
Higher Education	35

## XII. Evidence Inventory

We have designated an Evidence Inventory Working Group with the following responsibilities:

- Review Module Six, “Developing and Using the Evidence Inventory,” in the Middle States Self-Study Guide as well as the evidence inventory set-up in the Middle States Institutional Portal
- Select platform to use for evidence inventory based on an assessment of the platform’s organizational capability, flexibility, and security
- Develop naming conventions for working groups to follow to aide in the organization of evidence
- Develop a submission protocol and demo platform for working group co-chairs
- Assist working groups with managing the evidence for their particular standard(s)
- Identify potential evidence inventory gaps
- Meet regularly and stay on the timeline defined by the Steering Committee

Deadlines for the following products from this Working Group are as follows:

1. *Selection of Platform* to use for Evidence Inventory - *Spring 2021*
2. *List of Evidence* we have for each aspect of the Evidence Inventory while identifying evidence that may be missing - *January 7, 2022*
3. *Draft Evidence Inventory* for upload to Middle States portal - *March 18, 2022*
4. *Final Evidence Inventory* for upload to Middle States portal - *August 26, 2022*
5. *Upload approved Final Evidence Inventory* to the Middle States portal - *January 2023*

This Evidence Inventory working group includes the following members:

- Linda Poston, Director of the Murray Library (co-chair)
- Dan Custer, Research Analyst (co-chair)
- Sarah Myers, Public Services Librarian
- Kate Oswald Wilkins, Asst. Dean of General Education and Common Learning

In spring 2021, the Evidence Inventory Working Group co-chairs reviewed various platforms to use in maintaining the evidence inventory during the process of review, drafting, and writing of the final report. They recommended and the Steering Committee approved the use of AEFIS to store documents for the evidence inventory prior to uploading to the Middle State’s portal. AEFIS is already structured to include the organizational system of Middle States Standards and corresponding criteria for each standard. AEFIS also provides a centralized location for institutional assessment-related documents. The naming convention we will be using is: [Primary Standard Roman Numeral].[Primary Criterion Number].[Short Document Title]. AEFIS allows for evidence linked across multiple standards and criteria. This naming convention will establish an initial or primary assignment for each document uploaded. Once uploaded to AEFIS, evidence can then be linked to all relevant areas.

## Appendix A

### Charge for the Working Groups

### 2022-2023 Middle States Self-Study for Messiah University

Each working group has the following responsibilities while thoroughly examining their specific Middle States Standard(s):

- Designate a note taker/working group project manager (this person will also organize and maintain all materials and evidence)
- As a group, review the Standard(s) as defined by the Commission
- As a group, review the relevant Requirement(s) of Affiliation (assignment by working group is found in Appendix A)
- Determine which (one or more) of the four institutional priorities to incorporate into the discussion of the Working Group's Standard (each of these is considered a line of inquiry\*). See Appendix B for an initial recommendation from the Steering Committee of the emphasis of each priority relative to each standard.
- Request information from a variety of campus stakeholders that is relevant to the Standard(s)
- Identify institutional strengths and conduct a gap analysis to identify opportunities and areas for improvement
- Identify Messiah community group(s) that would provide relevant and pertinent feedback on the Standard
- Develop a chapter outline (as outlined below)
- Build a draft chapter and final chapter for the Self-Study that summarizes and details your findings (as outlined below)
- Meet regularly and stay on the timeline defined by the Steering Committee

\*Lines of Inquiry are intended to link a particular standard to a particular priority and frame them together in a way that prompts each working group to address the priorities in light of the standards. Example of lines of inquiry might include such prompts as the following:

- *Standard III*: To what degree are we leveraging technology and innovation in the design and delivery of the student experience? What areas are strongest/weakest?
- *Standard IV*: Evaluate policies across student populations (i.e., traditional undergraduate, ADP, graduate) to ensure diverse populations are being served.
- *Standard V*: Evaluate strengths and weaknesses in how programs deliver the undergraduate and graduate learning outcomes.

Deadlines are as follows:

1. *Completed Table* outlining various aspects of the Standard(s) to assess and completed with final evidence specified – *October 29, 2021*
2. *Working Group Reports* shared with the Steering Committee from note takers after each meeting – *rolling basis September 2021 - August 2022*
3. *Chapter Outline* including the following – *November 30, 2021*
  - a. Institutional priority(ies) selected for study (written in the form of a question that connects each priority to the Working Group Standard)
  - b. Link each criterion of the Working Group Standard to existing evidence/data
  - c. Evaluate the Working Group Requirement(s) of Affiliation

- d. Analysis of the evidence in light of the criteria for the Working Group Standard and Requirement(s) of Affiliation
  - e. Highlight the specific programs, processes, and achievements that help communicate the Messiah story in the context of the Working Group Standard
4. *1st Chapter Draft – January 7, 2022 (Steering Committee review)*
  5. *2<sup>nd</sup> Chapter Draft – March 18, 2022 (findings presented to campus and BOT for comment)*
  6. *Final Chapter* including the following – *August 26, 2022*
    - A heading indicating Standard/priority under consideration
    - Cross-references to relevant materials in other parts of the report and within the Evidence Inventory
    - Analytically-based inquiry and reflection
    - Conclusions, including strengths and challenges, with references to appropriate Criteria
    - Opportunities for ongoing institutional improvement and innovation

Appendix A  
 Charge for the Working Groups  
 2022-2023 Middle States Self-Study for Messiah University

In the table below, we identify which Requirement(s) of Affiliation each Working Group should evaluate within their Chapter. Note: Requirements of Affiliation #1-6 and 14 will be addressed in a stand-alone Chapter of the Self-Study and, therefore, are not assigned to a specific Working Group.

Requirements of Affiliation		Chapter/ Working Group
1	The institution is authorized or licensed to operate as a postsecondary educational institution and to award postsecondary degrees; it provides written documentation demonstrating both. Authorization or licensure is from an appropriate governmental organization or agency within the Middle States region (Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands), as well as by other agencies as required by each of the jurisdictions, regions, or countries in which the institution operates.	Requirements of Affiliation
2	The institution is operational, with students actively enrolled in its degree programs.	Requirements of Affiliation
3	For institutions pursuing Candidacy or Initial Accreditation, the institution will graduate at least one class before the evaluation team visit for initial accreditation takes place, unless the institution can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Commission that the lack of graduates does not compromise its ability to demonstrate that students have achieved appropriate learning outcomes.	Requirements of Affiliation
4	The institution's representatives communicate with the Commission in English, both orally and in writing.	Requirements of Affiliation
5	The institution complies with all applicable government (usually Federal and state) laws and regulations.	Requirements of Affiliation
6	The institution complies with applicable Commission, interregional, and interinstitutional policies. These policies can be viewed on the Commission website, <a href="http://www.msche.org">www.msche.org</a> .	Requirements of Affiliation
7	The institution has a mission statement and related goals, approved by its governing board, that defines its purposes within the context of higher education.	Standard I

Requirements of Affiliation		Chapter/ Working Group
8	The institution systematically evaluates its educational and other programs and makes public how well and in what ways it is accomplishing its purposes.	Standard V
9	The institution's student learning programs and opportunities are characterized by rigor, coherence, and appropriate assessment of student achievement throughout the educational offerings, regardless of certificate or degree level or delivery and instructional modality.	Standard IV
10	Institutional planning integrates goals for academic and institutional effectiveness and improvement, student achievement of educational goals, student learning, and the results of academic and institutional assessments.	Standard III
11	The institution has documented financial resources, funding base, and plans for financial development, including those from any related entities (including without limitation systems, religious sponsorship, and corporate ownership) adequate to support its educational purposes and programs and to ensure financial stability. The institution demonstrates a record of responsible fiscal management, has a prepared budget for the current year, and undergoes an external financial audit on an annual basis.	Standard VI
12	The institution fully discloses its legally constituted governance structure(s) including any related entities (including without limitation systems, religious sponsorship, and corporate ownership). The institution's governing body is responsible for the quality and integrity of the institution and for ensuring that the institution's mission is being accomplished.	Standard VII
13	A majority of the institution's governing body's members have no employment, family, ownership, or other personal financial interest in the institution. The governing body adheres to a conflict of interest policy that assures that those interests are disclosed and that they do not interfere with the impartiality of governing body members or outweigh the greater duty to secure and ensure the academic and fiscal integrity of the institution. The institution's district/system or other chief executive officer shall not serve as the chair of the governing body.	Standard VII

Requirements of Affiliation		Chapter/ Working Group
14	The institution and its governing body/bodies make freely available to the Commission accurate, fair, and complete information on all aspects of the institution and its operations. The governing body/bodies ensure that the institution describes itself in comparable and consistent terms to all of its accrediting and regulatory agencies, communicates any changes in accredited status, and agrees to disclose information (including levels of governing body compensation, if any) required by the Commission to carry out its accrediting responsibilities.	Requirements of Affiliation
15	The institution has a core of faculty (fulltime or part-time) and/or other appropriate professionals with sufficient responsibility to the institution to assure the continuity and coherence of the institution's educational programs.	Standard III



Appendix B  
 Charge for the Working Groups  
 2022-2023 Middle States Self-Study for Messiah University

In the table below, we demonstrate the connection between the institutional priorities and the seven standards. We indicate our initial thoughts how the four University priorities will be addressed across the seven standards with a “1” indicating strong emphasis on the priority and a “2” indicating some coverage of the priority. Working Groups will have discretion in determining which of the priorities will be emphasized in their Chapter.

Standards of Accreditation	Priorities			
	Priority 1: Inclusive Excellence	Priority 2: Student Success	Priority 3: Academic Excellence & Learning for Life	Priority 4: Innovation, Partnerships & Financial Vitality
I. Mission and Goals	1	1	1	1
II. Ethics and Integrity	1	2	1	2
III. Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience	1	1	1	1
IV. Support of the Student Experience	1	1	1	
V. Educational Effectiveness Assessment	1	1	1	
VI. Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement	2	2	2	1
VII. Governance, Leadership, and Administration	1	2	2	2