

**SUNY Cortland**  
**Middle States Self-Study Design Proposal**

*Submitted to*  
**Middle States Commission on Higher Education**

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*Submitted by*  
**Middle States Self-Study Steering Committee**



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# State University of New York College at Cortland

## Self-Study Design

### I. Institutional Overview

The State University of New York College at Cortland is one of thirteen comprehensive institutions in the State University of New York (SUNY) System. Founded in 1868 as the Cortland Normal School, SUNY Cortland became a State Teachers' College with four-year programs in 1941 and officially joined the SUNY System in 1948. In 1961, Cortland became the SUNY College at Cortland, providing arts and sciences programs as well as professional studies.

With an enrollment of 6834 full-time and part-time undergraduate and graduate students in the 2019-2020 academic year, the College is primarily an undergraduate, residential institution with a traditional college-age population. An organizational chart of the college is provided in the appendix. Academic programs are provided through the Schools of Arts and Sciences, Education, and Professional Studies, with nearly one-third of the student body enrolled in teacher preparation programs across the three schools. The top undergraduate majors by enrollment at SUNY Cortland are physical education (744), early childhood/childhood education (635), exercise science (501), business economics (429) and sport management (420). Our first-year student retention has increased from a recent low of 76% for the Fall 2015 cohort to a steady 80% for cohorts from Fall 2016 through Fall 2018.

SUNY Cortland has well established study abroad opportunities, and there are ongoing efforts to form relationships with international universities in the context of SUNY-wide initiatives. In addition to international education is the commitment to and reputation in outdoor and environmental education as enhanced by three field campuses, including the Huntington Outdoor Education Center which is registered as a national historic landmark. The College has been working diligently to increase diversity on campus. Diverse student population has increased from 13% in 2010 to 24% in 2019. In 2017, 15% of faculty identified as Hispanic (3%), Black (4%), or Asian (8%). An objective in the strategic plan is to increase our diversity of faculty to 20% or higher by 2023. Retention of first-year (Fall 2018 cohort) Hispanic/LatinX students was 77% and Black/African American students was 75%--lower than the overall rate of retention. Although there have improvements in these persistence indicators, our institutional objective includes closing the gaps between groups of student rates of retention. A Chief Diversity Officer was hired, and collaborations took place with the Human Resources Office and various campus constituencies to promote diversity among new faculty and staff hires. In addition, SUNY Cortland participates in the SUNY PRODI-G program to increase faculty diversity across the system.

Another important aspect of SUNY Cortland student learning is the increasing emphasis on civic engagement through the incorporation of service-learning within the curriculum and through participation in the American Democracy Project. In addition, the College was recently named to the President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll for the eighth consecutive year and achieved Carnegie Community Engagement Classification. Designated one of America's Greenest Colleges by the Association for the Education of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE), the College is a leader of sustainability initiatives within the SUNY System.

Co-curricular activities, along with academic programs, have expanded in order to serve students outside as well as inside the classroom. The Division of Student Affairs provides health and counseling services (ranked #1 by students within the SUNY System), schedules many presentations in the residence halls, offers leadership opportunities and supports dozens of clubs and organizations. Nationally prominent in

NCAA Division III athletics, the College counts over 700 student-athletes participating on twenty-five intercollegiate teams.

The high quality of SUNY Cortland's curricular and co-curricular experiences is not only acknowledged by programmatic and regional accreditation but also by public recognition. The College was recently named among the "Top 100 Best Value Public Institutions" in the country by Kiplinger's based on our strong student to faculty ratio (16:1), four-year graduation rate of 54%, and cost among other factors. The graduation rate is supported by numerous programs directed at student outreach while costs are kept manageable by carefully managed and vetted fee increases, weighing the potential benefits of the increase against the financial impact on students.

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

The institutional priorities for SUNY Cortland's self-study were developed in the strategic planning and assessment work of the campus over the past decade. In 2008, the campus developed a revised mission statement and vision statement, clarified our campus values, and identified four main campus priorities that were endorsed by the Faculty Senate and approved by the President's Cabinet. For our 2012 reaccreditation, we used the mission and priorities as a framework for our self-study, which was grounded in analysis of meaningful objectives relevant to the priorities and standards. In 2015, a new Institutional Planning and Assessment Committee (IPAC) was established to revisit the priorities and identify updated objectives and aspirational benchmarks related to revised priorities. The most recent plan includes objectives and plans extending to 2023.

Each cycle of development has been led by a team of colleagues representing all the divisions of the campus, including union members, and representation from the Faculty Senate and Student Government Association. In order to gain insight from all stakeholders, various methods have been used to provide opportunities for feedback, encourage dialogue, and send multiple drafts of working documents to the campus. For example, our most recent work on refining objectives for the campus included:

1. Creation of the email: [institutionalplanning@cortland.edu](mailto:institutionalplanning@cortland.edu) which allows any campus constituents to contact the Institutional Planning and Assessment Committee
2. Multiple open campus forums for discussion
3. Multiple interactive presentations to campus constituents at the President's Semester Opening Meetings and President's Retreat as well as President's Cabinet
4. Surveys to faculty, staff and students
5. Use of appreciative inquiry methods to encourage open dialogue
6. Use of qualitative content analysis to identify themes and directions for further exploration
7. Utilization of campus experts for refinement of objectives, indicators and aspirations

Our current mission, vision, values, and priorities are:

### **Mission**

SUNY Cortland is an academic community dedicated to diverse learning experiences. Students grow as engaged citizens with a strong social conscience fostered by outstanding teaching, scholarship and service.

### **Vision**

SUNY Cortland will be a college of opportunity, from which students graduate with the knowledge, integrity, skills and compassion to excel as leaders, citizens, scholars, teachers and champions of

excellence. Prospective students and employees will choose SUNY Cortland in response to its nationally recognized academic programs, innovation and experiential learning, and the rich intellectual, social and athletic life on the campus. SUNY Cortland will be a center for intellectual, cultural and economic growth, distinguished by successful partnerships with organizations, schools, agencies and businesses throughout the region, the nation and the world.

## **Values**

1. Focus on the Students: All decisions, plans and actions revolve around students' academic, personal, social, and cultural development and wellness.
2. Integrity: Dedication to honesty, hard work, high personal and professional standards, and respect for people, perspectives, and the environment.
3. Intellectual Life: Commitment to inquiry, academic rigor, creativity, lifelong learning, and contribution to discipline, profession, and the greater good.

## **Priorities**

### 1. Academic Excellence

We will cultivate academic programs that provide students with the best opportunities to develop their knowledge, skills, and dispositions. This means ensuring that we have relevant and engaging curriculum, effective and innovative delivery methods, appropriate facilities, and a culture of continual improvement. We will foster the highest levels of student and faculty engagement and support their contributions to their disciplines, the college, and communities locally and globally.

### 2. Transformational Education

We will provide intentionally designed, highly effective, educational opportunities that challenge how students see themselves and the world in profound new ways. Transformational education involves all of the opportunities that expose students to new environments, cultures, perspectives, and knowledge. It also challenges them to reflect, acknowledge their self-efficacy, and continually expand their understanding and skills to be more engaged agents in their lives and their communities.

### 3. Well-being

We will advocate for personal and community well-being through our academic disciplines and our campus programming and facilities. We actively promote the physical, emotional, cultural and social well-being of our students and employees, determine areas of greatest need, and respond with policies and programs that recognize the well-being of each individual is critical to our strength as a whole. This includes striving to be a campus community that enacts values of inclusivity, collaboration, respect, and care where contributions to the community are recognized and we hold ourselves accountable for supporting a positive campus climate.

### 4. Maximize Resources

We will sustain resources and carefully align our decision-making and allocation process with the mission-based functions of the college and our strategic vision for the campus. Maximizing resources includes being fiscally responsible, thinking about efficiency while maintaining excellence, and communicating clearly about resource allocation. It also means focusing on sustainability and ensuring that the campus maintains a dedication to responsible use of natural resources and consideration of our impact on our environment.

## Institutional Objectives

The following eleven outcomes are grounded in the strategic priorities and are further detailed including indicators, benchmarks and aspirational outcomes. They emerged from campus discussion on making the priorities more tangible, observable and measurable. There is additional detail on ongoing and new activities targeted to drive improvement on measures in the strategic plan. These objectives will be a part of the working group analysis. The table below presents: the eleven objectives; priority or priorities the objective is affiliated with; and abbreviations to help reference the objectives briefly and consistently.

**Table 1 SUNY Cortland Institutional Objectives**

	<b>Full Objective</b>	<b>Priority Affiliation(s)</b>	<b>Abbreviated</b>
1	Enhance the assessment of student learning and development and utilize evidence to strengthen programs.	Academic Excellence	Assessment of Student Learning
2	Improve student achievement in written and oral communication.	Academic Excellence	Student Achievement in Communication
3	Increase persistence and degree completion for first-year, transfer, and underrepresented students.	Academic Excellence Well-Being	Persistence and Degree Completion
4	Promote faculty engagement in the life of the college and in their respective disciplines.	Academic Excellence Well-Being	Faculty Engagement
5	Increase the percent of courses taught by full-time faculty.	Academic Excellence Maximizing Resources	Full Time Faculty
6	Expand the impact of applied learning by increasing opportunities and increasing quality of experiences.	Transformational Education	Applied Learning
7	Strengthen our community through a focus on inclusion, civility, and accountability.	Well-Being Transformational Education	Strengthen Community
8	Increase institutional financial support to students through scholarship fundraising.	Well-Being Maximizing Resources	Financial Support to Students
9	Increase revenue to campus from non-tuition sources.	Maximizing Resources	Non-tuition Revenue
10	Enhance the quality of spaces and facilities for academic programs and the overall student experience.	Academic Excellence Transformational Education Well-Being	Spaces and Facilities
11	Increase the environmental sustainability of the campus and community	Maximizing Resources	Environmental Sustainability

## **Alignment of Commission Standards to Campus Priorities**

In order to identify the alignment of the MSCHE Standards to SUNY Cortland's Campus Priorities, our Middle States Committee has examined criteria within each standard in relation to the campus priorities and related objectives. In addition, we used the spring President's Opening Meeting to hold a workshop on the standards. Over 180 campus members participated in group exercises including a mapping of standards to priorities. The group discussion and collected work of the groups has helped with our alignment process. The resulting alignment is a matrix of the Commission Standards and Requirements in relation to SUNY Cortland's Priorities and Institutional Objectives. Please see the following *MSCHE and SUNY Cortland Alignment Matrix* for the alignment matrix.

**Table 2 Alignment of MSCHE Standards and Requirements of Affiliation with SUNY Cortland Priorities and Objectives**

<b>SUNY Cortland Priorities and Objectives</b>							
<b>Standards</b>	<b>Requirements of Affiliation</b>	<b>College Mission, Vision and Values</b>	<b>Academic Excellence</b>	<b>Transformational Education</b>	<b>Well-Being</b>	<b>Maximize Resources</b>	<b>Institutional Objectives</b>
<b>1. Mission and Goals</b>	<b>1. Licensed to operate</b>  <b>7. Mission statement and goals</b>	Review alignment between College Mission/Vision and the Strategic Plan					
<b>2. Ethics and Integrity</b>	<b>14. Accessible institutional information</b>	Value: Integrity	Academic Policies and Procedures		To what degree are policies and processes built inclusively and applied equitably?		
<b>3. Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience</b>	<b>9. Student learning programs rigor and assessment</b>  <b>15. Faculty qualifications</b>	Value: Intellectual Life  Value: Focus on Students	Outcomes driven and relevant curriculum  Effective and innovative delivery for all students and at different levels	Opportunities for transformation through applied learning, study abroad and other designed experiences		Decision-making and allocations support student learning	2. Student Achievement in Communication 4. Faculty Engagement 5. Full Time Faculty 6. Applied Learning 10. Spaces and Facilities

<b>4. Support of Student Experience</b>	<b>8. Evaluate educational and other programs</b>	<b>Value: Focus on Students</b>		<p>Opportunities to engage with new cultures, environments, perspectives</p> <p>Personal development, efficacy and engagement</p>	<p>Promote physical, emotional, cultural, and social well-being of individuals and the community through programming and facilities</p>	<p>Programs, initiatives and allocations support the student experience</p>	<p>3. Persistence and Degree Completion</p> <p>6. Applied Learning</p> <p>7. Strengthen Community</p> <p>10. Spaces and Facilities</p>
<b>5. Educational Effectiveness Assessment</b>	<b>8. Evaluation education and other programs</b>  <b>9. Student learning programs rigor and assessment</b>	<p>Value: Focus on Students</p> <p>Value: Intellectual Life</p>	<p>Culture of continual improvement</p>				<p>1. Assessment of Student Learning</p>
	<b>8. Evaluation education and other programs</b>  <b>10. Institutional planning</b>  <b>11. Resources</b>	<p>Value: Focus on Students</p> <p>Value: Intellectual Life</p>				<p>Align processes with mission, vision and priorities</p> <p>Communicating clearly about resource allocation</p> <p>Focus on environmental sustainability</p>	<p>8. Financial Support to Students</p> <p>9. Non-tuition Revenue</p> <p>10. Spaces &amp; Facilities</p> <p>11. Environmental Sustainability</p>
<b>7. Governance, Leadership, &amp; Administration</b>	<b>12. Governance structure</b>  <b>13. Governing member affiliation</b>	<p>Value: Integrity</p>	<p>Faculty, staff and student engagement in academic development and assessment</p>			<p>Decisions and leadership support the student experience</p>	<p>4. Faculty Engagement</p>

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

1. Achieve reaccreditation by demonstrating compliance with the Middle States Standards, Requirements of Affiliation, and federal compliance.
2. Acknowledge and celebrate work of campus constituents.
3. Analyze and identify areas of strength and improvement within the strategic plan based on evidence.
4. Identify opportunities for innovation and directions for the future.
5. Articulate the relationship of Middle States Standards and Requirements of Affiliation, SUNY Chancellor's Four Strategic Pillars, and institutional mission, priorities and objectives.
6. Increase engagement and institutional knowledge among members of the campus community through a reflective, inclusive and transparent self-appraisal process.
7. Increase alignment between the institutional strategic plan, divisional plans, and major campus plans including the Diversity Plan and Facilities Master Plan.
8. Increase use of evidence-based decision-making and expand the culture of continuous improvement.
9. Standardize operating procedure for assessment.

### IV. Self-Study Approach

Identify one of the following self-study approaches to be used to organize the Self-Study Report (check one box):

- Standards-Based Approach**
- Priorities-Based Approach**

#### Rationale

The Middle States Self-Study Co-chairs and attendees at the Self-Study Institute debriefed following the discussion at the Middle States Self-Study Institute, weighing the benefits and disadvantages of both approaches. The standards-based approach was selected to provide greater understanding of the degree of compliance required by each standard and explanation of ways in which the institution complies. The four institutional priorities will be interwoven and reflected throughout the description of the College's compliance with each standard.

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

The Self-Study organization is based on a Steering Committee overseeing the entire process. There are two co-chairs for the steering committee. There are nine working groups: seven standard-based groups, a compliance group and an evidence inventory group. The following provides membership, strategies for communication and use of evaluation and other data, charge to each working groups and line of inquiry for each group as relevant to their group's standard and institutional priorities.

#### Middle States Self-Study Steering Committee Members

- Dr. Lynn MacDonald, Physical Education/Middle States Faculty Co-Chair
- Mr. Chester Bennett, President, Student Government Association
- Mr. Stephen Cunningham, Director, Institutional Research and Analysis
- Ms. Jaclyn Pittsley, English/Chair of UUP, Cortland Chapter (or Designee)
- Mr. Oscar Walters, Senior Grounds Worker, CSEA Designee
- Mr. Thomas Gallagher, Chair, Cortland College Council
- Dr. Jennifer McNamara, Art and Art History/Chair, General Education

- Dr. R. Bruce Mattingly, Dean, School of Arts and Sciences
- Ms. Anna Addonizio, Vice President, Finance and Management
- Dr. Mark Prus, Provost and Vice President, Academic Affairs
- Mr. C. Gregory Sharer, Vice President, Student Affairs
- Dr. Carol A. Van Der Karr, Associate Provost for Academic Affairs and Middle States Co-Chair
- Dr. Margaret DiVita, Health/Faculty Senate Chair
- Ms. Abby Thomas, Director, Advisement and Transition
- Mr. Peter Perkins, Vice President, Institutional Advancement
- Faculty Member, School of Education

### **Strategies for Interaction among Working Groups**

Each Working Group has two co-chairs, at least one of whom serves on the Middle States Self-Study Steering Committee. Each Working Group has been assigned a specific standard, requirement(s) for affiliation, and institutional priority/priorities to integrate. Deadlines for reporting back to the Steering Committee are set, with the individual co-chair sharing the report with the full Steering Committee. Any specific Working Group needs are articulated, and other members of the Steering Committee will provide feedback regarding similarities with other Working Groups. The co-chairs of the relevant Working Groups will convene joint meetings and email discussions with their committee members to discuss commonalities, needs and distribution of work. This information will be exchanged with the Steering Committee and Working Group members via a shared electronic drive. In this way, the Middle States Self-Study Steering Committee will be able to view all collective work, helping to prevent duplication of efforts and to provide oversight over the Working Groups. Document needs will be reported to the Evidence Inventory Working Group for identification and direction.

### **Use of Existing Evaluation and Assessment Information**

The Steering Committee will provide instruction to the co-chairs and members of working committees that will clarify the alignment of the standards to the campus priorities and objectives. Communication about the clarity of the alignment will be one of the first tasks for all working groups. To ensure that existing evaluation and assessment information is used, the Steering Committee will provide:

1. A recommended set of evidence (assessments, data, etc.) that all groups will be asked to review relevant to their working group charge.
2. A review of all data referenced in the campus strategic plan, divisional plans, and the campus diversity and facilities plans for further exploration.
3. All identified data will be organized and stored by the Evidence Inventory working group and all working co-chairs will be trained on accessing and requesting additional data be added to the inventory.
4. A recommended list of stakeholders that may know of additional evidence not already in the Evidence Repository.
5. A rubric for review of analysis, which includes the criteria of *Strength of Evidence* to ensure that all findings are connected evidence.

Nine working groups have been established. There are seven standards-based working groups (one assigned to each Standard and the related priorities), one group dedicated to the Evidence Inventory and one working group addressing Compliance.

## Working Group Membership

### 1. Mission and Goals

- Chair Bonni Hodges\*, Distinguished Service Professor, Health  
-Former Chair of Health Department
- Members Jose Feliciano, Associate Director of Admissions  
-SUNY Cortland Alumni
- Thomas Frank, Director, Research and Sponsored Programs
- Regina Grantham, Associate Professor, Communication Disorders and Sciences  
-Executive Committee, Faculty Senate  
-Former Chair of Communication Disorders and Sciences
- Kathleen Lawrence, Professor, Communication and Media Studies  
-Former Chair of Faculty Senate
- Frederic Pierce, Director, Communications

### 2. Ethics and Integrity

- Chairs Greg Sharer\*, Vice President, Student Affairs Co-chair  
Mark DePaull, University Police Chief, Co-Chair
- Members Gary Evans, Associate Vice President, Human Resources  
Andrew Fitz-Gibbon, Professor, Philosophy  
-Director, Center for Ethics, Peace and Social Justice  
-Chair, Faculty Affairs Committee of Faculty Senate
- Nanette Pasquarello, Director, Career Services  
-Former Title IX Coordinator
- Donna Videto, Professor, Health  
-Chair, Faculty Development Committee
- Susan Wilson, Associate Professor, Recreation, Parks and Leisure Studies

### 3. Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience

- Chair Lynn MacDonald\*, Professor, Physical Education, Co-Chair  
-Former Faculty Senate Chair
- Members Carol Costell Corbin, Associate Director, Transfer Credit and Degree Completion  
-General Education Committee
- Philip Gipson, Assistant Professor, Mathematics  
-College Curriculum Review Committee
- Christopher Ortega, Assistant Professor, Communication and Media Studies  
-College Curriculum Review Committee  
-Educational Policy Committee
- Jenn McNamara, Associate Professor, Art and Art History Department  
-General Education Committee Chair
- Kimberly Rombach, Associate Professor, Childhood/Early Childhood Department  
-Former Chair of Childhood/Early Childhood Department
- Mary Schlarb, Director, International Programs  
Student Government Association Representative

### 4. Support of Student Experience

- Co-Chairs Abby Thomas\*, Director, Advisement and Transition  
Anne Burns Thomas, Professor, Foundations and Social Advocacy  
-Coordinator of Cortland Urban Recruitment of Educators Program  
-Chair, President's Council on Inclusive Excellence
- Members Ronnie Casella, Associate Dean, School of Education

Tom Cranfield, Senior Associate Director of Athletics  
Esa Merson, Director, The Learning Center  
Wendy Miller, Associate Professor and Chair, Geography  
-Co-Director, SUNY Cortland Regional GIS Lab  
Mark Yacavone, Assistant Vice President, Enrollment Management  
Student Government Association Representative

## **5. Educational Effectiveness Assessment**

Co-Chairs        Andrea Lachance, Dean, School of Education  
                         -Unit Head for CAEP Teacher Education Accreditation  
Laura Davies, Associate Professor, English  
                         -Director of Campus Writing Program

Members        Rebecca Bryan, Associate Professor, Physical Education  
                         -Student Learning Outcomes Committee  
Vincent DeTuri, Associate Dean, School of Arts and Sciences,  
                         -College Curriculum Review Committee  
                         -Student Learning Outcome Committee  
Eileen Gravani, Associate Dean, School of Professional Studies  
                         -College Curriculum Review Committee  
Christopher Kuretich, Associate Vice President, Student Affairs  
                         -Student Learning Outcome Committee  
Jolie Roat, Assistant Professor, Mathematics  
                         -Student Learning Outcome Committee  
Carol Van Der Karr\*, Associate Provost for Academic Affairs  
                         -Student Learning Outcome Committee

## **6. Planning, Resources and Institutional Improvement**

Co-Chairs        Anna Addonisio\*, Vice President, Finance and Management  
Mark Prus\*, Provost and Vice President, Academic Affairs

Members        Erin Boylan, Executive Director, Alumni Engagement  
Kathleen Burke, Professor, Economics  
Anna Maria Cirrincione, Director, Multicultural Life and Diversity  
                         -Interim Chief Diversity Officer  
Bruce Mattingly, Dean, School of Arts and Sciences  
                         -Institutional Planning and Assessment Committee  
Zachariah Newswanger, Associate Vice President, Facilities Management  
                         -Chair, Facilities Master Plan Oversight Committee

## **7. Governance, Leadership and Administration**

Co-Chairs        Peter Perkins\*, Vice President, Institutional Advancement  
Thomas Gallagher, Chair, College Council

Members        John Cottone, Dean, School of Professional Studies  
Margaret DiVita, Associate Professor, Health  
                         -Chair, Faculty Senate

Jerome O'Callaghan, Associate Professor, Political Science  
Jaclyn Pittsley, Lecturer III, English  
-President, SUNY Cortland United University Professions (UUP)  
Oscar Walters, Senior Grounds Worker  
-Civil Service Employees Association (CSEA) Representative  
Student Government Association Representative

## **8. Evidence Inventory**

Co-Chairs        Stephen Cunningham\*, Director, Institutional Research and Analysis  
Chris Widdall, Associate Professor, Childhood/Early Childhood  
                      -Cortland Watermark Coordinator

Members         Tania Das, Associate Director, Institutional Research and Analysis  
Casey Hickey, Web and Digital Marketing Specialist  
Jennifer Kronenbitter, Director, Libraries  
Joshua Peluso, Director, Systems Administration and Web Services

## **9. Compliance**

Co-Chairs        Bruce Mattingly\*, Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences  
Karen Gallagher, Director, Financial Aid

Members         Mark Dodds, Professor, Sport Management  
                      -Graduate Faculty Executive Committee  
Thomas Hanford, Executive Director, Student Registration and Record Services  
Lisa Kahle, Director, Campus Technology Services  
Michelle LoGerfo, Assistant Director, Web and Digital Marketing  
Rebecca Nadzadi, Director, Student Conduct

## **Working Group and Institutional Priorities**

The working groups are organized around the Commission Standards. As noted in the alignment table in Section II, the groups will address the standard integrated with the institutional priorities and mission, vision and values as follows:

Working Group 1: Mission and Goals

College Mission, Vision and Values

Working Group 2: Ethics and Integrity

Institutional Priorities:

Academic Excellence

Well-Being

Working Group 3: Design and Delivery of Student Learning Experience

Institutional Priorities:

Academic Excellence

Transformational Education

Maximizing Resources

Working Group 4: Support of Student Experience

Institutional Priorities:

Transformational Education

Well-being

Maximizing Resources

Working Group 5: Educational Effectiveness Assessment

Institutional Priorities

Academic Excellence

Working Group 6: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement

Institutional Priorities:

Maximize Resources

Working Group 7: Governance, Leadership and Administration

Institutional Priorities:

Academic Excellence

Maximizing Resources

In addition to addressing the institutional priorities, the working groups will also address the related Requirements of Affiliation and institutional objectives as noted in the alignment table in Section II.

### **Charge to Working Groups**

The working groups are charged with leading the self-study within their specific areas. This will include:

1. Developing an in-depth understanding of their relevant Commission Standard, Requirements of Affiliation, SUNY Cortland Mission, Priorities and Objectives.
2. Utilizing existing data and information (e.g., assessment findings) to provide evidence-based analysis of the standards, priorities and objectives and lines of inquiry.
3. Contribute to the Evidence Inventory as needed when new evidence is identified.

4. Provide summary findings on the campus status and identify areas for continuous improvement relevant to the group's assigned priorities and objectives.
5. Identify areas of intersection with the other working groups to reduce redundancy and ensure that all criteria are addressed.
6. Identify roles for working group members,
7. Communicate progress and direct questions to the Steering Committee through meeting minutes and via the Co-Chair that serves on the Steering Committee.
8. Ensure engagement from campus constituents as needed to complete the analysis.

The foundational tasks for the working groups will be to:

1. Identify a writer/editor, minute recorder(s), skeptics, and evidence inventory archivist.
2. Review the working charge, specific lines of inquiry and relevant standard, institutional priorities and objectives to identify intersections and ask for clarification where needed.
3. Communicate with other standard working groups regarding overlap or redundancies in analysis.
4. Review the timeline for working groups.
5. Identify stakeholders and evidence and share with steering committee.
6. Review the working group rubric to understand framework for assessing compliance and identifying strengths and areas for improvement.
7. Identify the evidence from assessments and other information relevant to your analysis
8. Analyze evidence from step 7 to determine areas of strength and opportunities for improvement
9. Provide evidence-based recommendations to the steering committee.
10. Collaborate with Evidence Inventory Working Group to identify appropriate samples of evidence.
11. Develop a working outline of the content for your chapter.

### **Lines of Inquiry**

We have developed a common set of questions for each group and unique questions for some working groups. The inquiry questions are designed to help groups look at critical details and assess broader questions of institutional effectiveness and progress.

### **Common Questions for Standards-based Working Groups**

1. To what degree do we meet the standard, corresponding criteria, requirements of affiliation and what evidence supports these findings?
2. Based on evidence, what progress has been made on the institutional objectives aligned with the group standard?
3. What will ensure continuous improvement in this area?
4. How has the working group engaged the campus in its process/analysis?

In addition to the common questions, each standards-based working group also has questions that are specific to standard and institutional priorities and objectives.

**Table 3 Specific Questions for Standards-Based Working Groups**

<b>Working Group Standard</b>	<b>Group Specific Inquiry Questions</b> Answered in addition to four common questions
<b>1. Mission and Goals</b>	5. How is the mission reflected in the operations and culture of the college? 6. How do campus constituents align their work with the campus priorities and how could that be strengthened (e.g., processes and communication) 7. How are the priorities and objectives of the campus relevant to the current context of the institution and higher education (e.g., demographics, needs, and challenges)?
<b>2. Ethics and Integrity</b>	5. What policies promote equity and inclusion and where can improvements be made for the future? 6. What progress has been made in becoming a campus characterized by inclusive excellence? 7. What policies ensure academic freedom and where can improvements be made for the future?
<b>3. Student Learning Experience</b>	5. Where are student learning outcomes evident in the design and development of general education and academic programs for different degrees, levels (graduate/undergraduate) and online programs? 6. How are findings from student performance on SLOs discussed and applied to practice?
<b>4. Support of the Student Experience</b>	5. What are the factors that contribute to or serve as barriers to student persistence and how can we improve persistence? 6. What are our accommodations for students with disabilities and how can we improve? 7. How effectively is the campus adapting and coordinating strategies to ensure continued student achievement and development? 8. What steps does the college take to inform students and parents of the financial aspects of college attendance? 9. How is the campus value of <i>Focus on the Students</i> enacted on campus?
<b>5. Educational Effectiveness and Assessment</b>	5. How are assessment findings used in decision-making, innovation and resource allocation? 6. How have we ensured continued and expanded engagement in assessment and use of findings to inform programs and initiatives at all program levels?
<b>6. Planning, Resources and Institutional Improvement</b>	5. How is evidence on student achievement and development considered in planning and resource allocation? 6. What strategies have contributed to the fiscal health of the college and what plans are in effect to advance the college?
<b>7. Governance, Leadership and Administration</b>	5. How does the leadership of the college utilize the campus strategic plan and align work in the divisions to the campus plan? 6. What evidence informs campus leaders on the climate of the campus and how has leadership responded to this evidence?

## **Charge to the Evidence Inventory Working Group**

1. Assist Steering Committee and working groups in identifying evidence and verifying integrity of evidence.
2. Develop criteria for the selection of samples (e.g., which program SLOs, which office assessment plans).
3. Develop organizational framework for evidence including naming conventions and cross-referencing plan.
4. Create an accessible web repository of all working evidence.
5. Edit the repository down to only referenced information in the final self-study and manage upload of final Evidence Inventory with self-study.

## **Charge to the Compliance Working Group**

The compliance working group will ensure that accurate and complete information is presented for all compliance questions. This will include verifying information and data and working with campus constituents as needed to complete the compliance.

## **Utilization of Assessment**

As stated in Section V, there is a protocol identified to ensure that available assessments, data, and other evidence will be used as the basis of analysis for assessing compliance with standards and evaluation of progress and areas for growth around institutional priorities and objectives.

The Steering Committee will provide each working group with:

1. A recommended set of evidence (assessments, data, etc.) that all groups will be asked to review relevant to their working group charge.
2. A summary of all data referenced in the campus strategic plan, divisional plans, and the campus diversity and facilities plans for further exploration.
3. Access to, and training regarding, the evidence inventory repository managed by the Evidence Inventory Working Group.
4. Ability to submit additional evidence to the Evidence Inventory as relevant to research and analysis being conducted.
5. A recommended list of stakeholders that may know of additional evidence not already in the Evidence Repository. Working groups will be able to provide Steering Committee with additional stakeholders.
6. A rubric for review of analysis, which includes the criteria of *Strength of Evidence* to ensure that all findings are connected evidence.

## **VI. Guidelines for Reporting**

The following timeline outlines the activities and products for the working groups including review of standards and institutional priorities, communication with Steering Committee, dates for submission of outlines and other reporting. This section also includes the working group template and the template for working group minutes.

# MSCHE Self-Study Working Group Timeline

## February-March 2020

- Working Group Co-Chairs convene assigned Working Group
- Identify future meeting times
- Identify member roles: 1) Recorder (Note-Taker), 2) Archivist (Identify documents used, documents needed), 3) Analyst (Review data relevant to assigned standard) 4) Quality Assurance and on-time Draft Report Submission Member, 5) Writer/Proof-Reader (to work subsequently with Core Writing Group)

## March 31, 2020

Assignment #1 Due

1. Analyze assigned Standard, Requirement(s) of Affiliation and Institutional Priority/Priorities
2. Discuss assigned standard, Requirement(s) of Affiliation, Institutional Priority/Priorities
3. Discuss Lines of Inquiry
4. Ask for any clarification needed on the above.
5. Identify available documents and data to support compliance; determine document and data needs and include in progress report to Chairs to report to Self-Study Steering Committee

## March -April 30, 2020

- Discuss preliminary findings and responses to Lines of Inquiry
- Discuss Self-Study design and format of the Self-Study document
- Based on needs and to avoid duplication, Working Groups interact with other Working Groups to divide focus on particular Standard, Requirement of Affiliation or Institutional Priority

## April 30, 2020

Assignment #2 Due

1. Draft initial outline of your standard chapter, following template to be provided
2. Co-Chairs to report out to Self-Study Steering Committee

## September-December 2020

- Working Groups analyze data and finalize findings

## December 6, 2020

Assignment #3 Due

1. Working groups draft progress report for Co-Chairs; Co-Chairs report out to Self-Study Steering Committee

## December 2020

- Self-Study Steering Committee convenes; reviews Working Groups findings; begins preparations on full Self-Study Draft

## April 2021

- Working Groups meet with MSCHE Self-Study Steering Committee to review Self-Study Draft chapters for accuracy

## May 2021

- Self-Study Draft shared with campus community for comment
- Working Groups and Steering Committee members attend session to respond to questions

## May 2021-January 2022

- Working Groups meet periodically with Self-Study Steering Committee for updates
- Self-Study Steering Committee convenes; reviews Working Groups findings; begins preparations on full Self-Study Draft
- Determination of which data from local evidence repository will be uploaded to online Evidence Inventory

## TBA Fall 2021 or Spring 2022

Depending upon assigned team visit date from MSCHE

- Submission of Final Self-Study Report
- Self-Study team Visit

## **Working Group Report Template\***

When preparing your report, respond to each of the items listed below with concise statements or bullet points, rather than a narrative. A different group will have the task of compiling the findings of all working groups and writing the narrative for the final report. For consistency, please use Times New Roman (font) with a size 12 type.

### **1. Overview of Working Group's Charge**

Insert the charge to your working group, including the standards, priorities and objectives that were assigned to you.

### **2. Description of Lines of Inquiry**

Provide an overview of the lines of inquiry addressed by your working group and how these enabled your working group to fulfill its charge and the institution's self-study outcomes.

### **3. Collaboration and Connections**

1. Provide an overview of how your working group collaborated with those refining the Evidence Inventory and, where applicable, Verification of Compliance process.
2. Include a list of documentation to be included in the Evidence Inventory.
3. Describe collaborative discussions with members of other working groups and, where needed, strategies for avoiding undue duplication.

### **4. Assessment Information Utilized**

Provide a description (or listing) of assessment information utilized to conduct analyses consistent with the lines of inquiry.

### **5. Analytical Report**

Prepare a report that addresses the lines of inquiry including analysis of assessment information and data.

### **6. Areas of Strength**

Based on analytical report, discuss evidence-based areas of strength consistent with the working group's charge and assigned Standards and Priorities.

### **7. Opportunities for Improvement and Innovation**

Based on analytical report, discuss evidence-based opportunities for improvement and innovation consistent with the working group's charge and assigned Standards and Priorities. The Steering Committee will determine a maximum number of recommendations for each working group.

*\*modified from MSCHE Module Five*



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

- **Executive Summary**
  - Brief overview of the study contents with focus on major findings regarding compliance and progress on our institutional priorities.
- **Introduction**
  - Background and contextual information on SUNY Cortland
  - Review of the self-study process including work of committees and engagement of campus
- **Chapter 1- 7**
  - Chapters 1-7 will each address a specific standard and the relevant institutional priorities and objectives
  - Presentation of intersection or alignment of MSCHE Standard and SUNY Cortland priorities and objectives as relevant
  - Description of working group process including how campus was engaged
  - Summary of findings regarding compliance, progress, strengths and areas for improvement including evidence for findings
- **Conclusion**
  - Reflection on process
  - Summary of major themes across all chapters
  - Strategies to respond to major findings and continuous improvement as indicated by evidenced based discussions.

## **VIII. Verification of Compliance Strategy**

A separate working group will be established to address Verification of Compliance. Offices involved in concert with the President's Office will include Admissions, Financial Aid, Registrar, Information Resources, Institutional Research and Analysis, and Marketing. The President's Office will secure necessary certifications and other information from SUNY System Administration on behalf of the Compliance Working Group.

The Compliance Working Group will function like the other Working Groups, with assignments and deadlines. The representative from the Middle States Self Study Steering Committee who is co-chairing the Compliance Working Group will report back to the Steering Committee.

## **IX. Self-Study Timetable**

We have selected a Spring 2022 team site visit and a timetable for a Spring 2022 visit follows.

**Table 5 Timetable for Spring Evaluation Visit**

<b>SUNY Cortland Timetable for Spring Evaluation Visits</b>	
<b>Date(s)</b>	<b>Activity/Task</b>
<b>October 28-29, 2019</b>	Self-Study Institute
<b>December 12, 2019 January 17, 2020</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assemble Steering Committee</li> <li>• Remote meeting with Commission staff liaison (2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> week)</li> <li>• Begin to draft SSD</li> </ul>
<b>February–April 2020</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assemble Working Groups</li> <li>• Submit draft SSD by February 17, 2020 (2 weeks prior to SSPV)</li> </ul>
<b>March 3, 2020</b>	Commission staff liaison Self-Study Prep Visit to campus
<b>June – September 2020</b>	Revisions and acceptance of SSD
<b>September – December 2020</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working Groups gather and analyze data</li> <li>• Submit progress reports to Steering Committee</li> </ul>
<b>January – May 2021</b>	<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> <li>• Self-Study drafted and shared with campus community</li> </ul>
<b>May – September 2021</b>	Self-Study revisions and campus review
<b>September – November 2021</b>	<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>
<b>December 2021 – January 2022</b>	Self-Study Report finalized based on Team Chair feedback and shared with campus
<b>February – March 2022</b>	Final Self-Study Report/ Verification of Compliance/Evidence Inventory uploaded to MSCHE portal (six weeks before team visit)
<b>February– May 2022</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-Study Evaluation Team Visit</li> <li>• Team Report</li> <li>• Institutional Response</li> </ul>
<b>June-November 2022</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commission meets to determine action</li> <li>• Visits conducted after April 15 are acted on by the Commission at the November meeting</li> </ul>

## **X. Communication Plan**

An initial Communication Plan with a listing of intended audiences, communication methods, and timing is presented in Table 6 below. This plan is used to guide the Steering Committee and its Working Groups in gathering feedback from institutional stakeholders and updating them about major developments related to the self-study process. This may be integrated with the Self-Study Timetable (Section IX) if desired.

**Table 6 Middle States Communication Plan**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Method of Delivery</b>	<b>Audience</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>
<b>MSCHE Steering Committee Meeting #1</b>	Overview of process and resources	Face-to-face meeting	MSCHE Self-Study Steering Committee	December 11, 2019	MSCHE Co-chairs
<b>Campus Kick-Off at President's Spring Opening of School</b>	Informational; overview of process and resources	Face-to-face panel, video streamed and archived	SUNY Cortland faculty/staff	January 23, 2020	MSCHE Co-chairs and Director of Institutional Research and Analysis
<b>Teaching &amp; Learning Newsletter</b>	Introduction to MSCHE standards and self-study process	Electronic communication	SUNY Cortland faculty/staff	Early February 2020; quarterly thereafter	President's Office
<b>Bulletin</b>	Introduction to MSCHE standards and self-study process and upcoming Design visit	Electronic communication	All-campus	Mid-February 2020	Communications Office
<b>Dragon Chronicle (student newspaper)</b>	Introduction to MSCHE standards and self-study process and upcoming Design visit	Printed newspaper	All-campus	Mid-February 2020	Student paper, staff, President's Office
<b>Targeted emails</b>	MSCHE progress	Electronic communication	All-campus		President's Office
<b>Targeted emails</b>	Celebration of MSCHE Design Approval	Electronic communication	All-campus	Before and after visit and approval (after March 3, 2020)	President's Office
<b>Updates to President's Cabinet</b>	MSCHE progress	Face-to-face meetings	President and Vice Presidents		MSCHE Co-chairs
<b>Updates to President's Council</b>	MSCHE progress	Face-to-face meetings	College Administrators	monthly	MSCHE Co-chairs
<b>Updates to College Council</b>	MSCHE process and progress	Face-to-face meetings	Members	quarterly	MSCHE Co-chairs
<b>Updates to Faculty Senate</b>	MSCHE process and progress	Face-to-face meetings	Faculty/student Senators	Semester and quarterly as site visit approaches	MSCHE Co-chairs

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Method of Delivery</b>	<b>Audience</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>
<b>Updates to Student Government Association</b>	MSCHE process and progress	Face-to-face meetings	Student government members	Each semester	MSCHE Co-chairs
<b>Sandwich Seminars</b>	MSCHE process and progress	Face-to-face meetings	Faculty, staff, Students, Cortland community	Each semester as needed	MSCHE Co-chairs and Steering Committee
<b>Development of MSCHE website</b>	MSCHE process/progress/resources	Online- both public face and password protected sections	Faculty, staff students, Cortland community	Summer 2020 and ongoing	MSCHE Co-chairs, President's Office, Marketing Office
<b>Development of Steering Committee/Working Group electronic platform</b>	MSCHE standards progress/resources/findings/reports	Shared electronic communication drive	Steering Committee and working group members	Summer 2020 and ongoing	Information Resources, Institutional Research and Analysis, MSCHE Co-Chairs
<b>Telephone calls/emails with MSCHE Liaison</b>	Questions, progress, Site visit planning	Electronic and phone	Liaison, ALO, Co-chairs	As needed	MSCHE ALO and Co-chairs
<b>"Moments" Alumni Magazine</b>	MSCHE process and progress	Electronic communication	SUNY Cortland alumni	Annually; throughout process as needed	MSCHE ALO and Communications Office
<b>Summer President's Administrative Retreat</b>	MSCHE progress and updates	Face-to-face meetings	Administrators, faculty, staff	Each summer	MSCHE Co-chairs
<b>Targeted emails</b>	Notification of MSCHE Self-Study Site Visit	Electronic communication	All-campus	2021-22	President's Office
<b>Targeted emails</b>	Notification of MSCHE reaccreditation approval	Electronic communication	All-campus	Summer or Fall 2022	President's Office
<b>Celebration of MSCHE Accomplishments</b>	Campus-wide reception	Electronic communication. Bulletin, Dragon Chronicle	All-campus	2022	President's Office

## **XI. Evaluation Team Profile**

SUNY Cortland seeks the following characteristics in a Team Chair and Peer Evaluators:

- 1) Experience in/with a public institution, and preferably as a member institution within a system.
- 2) Understanding of the needs of a public institution in a geographically rural setting.
- 3) Expertise in teacher education/preparation programs; the largest programs by major at SUNY Cortland include physical education (744), early childhood/childhood education (635), exercise science (501), business economics (429) and sport management (420).
- 4) According to the 2018 IPEDS Data Report, SUNY Cortland's peer institutions include: Shippensburg University, Edinboro University of Pennsylvania, Millersville University of Pennsylvania, California University of Pennsylvania and Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania. Statistics used to establish the comparison group include Carnegie Classification of Masters Colleges and Universities (larger programs), public, and enrollment of a similar size. Additional peers include: Kutztown, Frostburg, Townsend, and Mansfield.
- 5) A rural college with success in recruitment of diverse faculty.
- 6) We are open to suggestions from our Accreditation Liaison.
- 7) A President or Provost of a public, master's granting, and residential institution would be preferred as a team leader.

## **XII. Evidence Inventory**

The Evidence Inventory will allow us to arrange existing institutional documentation gathered for the self-study by Standard, Criterion, and Requirement of Affiliation. We have established a specific Working Group to manage this task, with one of the co-chairs also serving on the Steering Committee. This will help ensure coordination of the documentary evidence needs of each of the Working Groups while also minimizing duplication of effort. The Working Group includes information and technology specialists who have expertise in areas that extend across the other Working Groups and who can help Steering Committee and Working Group members find, reference, and annotate information effectively.

Initially we will establish a shared network folder to collect working copies of all potentially needed documentary evidence. The folder will be accessible to members of the Steering Committee, Evidence Inventory Working Group, other Working Group co-chairs, and other Working Group members as needed. The Evidence Inventory Work Group will develop a consistent file-naming convention.

The various Working Groups will gather feedback from staff, faculty, and administrators about what documentation might be available, as well as identifying gaps in documentation. They will consult with offices and departments across campus whose staff may know where relevant information is available.

It is anticipated that more documents and evidence will be gathered than what will be submitted for the final self-study report. Over the course of the self-study, the Steering Committee and Working Groups will continue to refine the Evidence Inventory. The Documents in the working folder will be pared down to those that are most essential, eliminating duplication and redundancy. For lengthy documents, the Evidence Inventory Working Group will work with the other Working Groups to isolate specific pages or excerpts, rather than using the full documents. Final versions will be converted to pdf format and saved with consistent, standardized filenames.

