



Hamilton

**Hamilton College
Self-Study Design Report**

**Submitted to:
The Middle States Commission on Higher Education
Rev. November 4, 2019**

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I. Institutional Overview

Originally founded in 1793 as the Hamilton-Oneida Academy and chartered in 1812 as the third oldest college in New York State, Hamilton College is today comprised of approximately 2,000 students from nearly all 50 states and approximately 40 countries. It is distinguished by a faculty of 190 members who are dedicated to teaching and scholarship, by innovative academic programs, by a commitment to diversity in its broadest sense, by outstanding modern facilities, and by talented and motivated students. The College is located on a wooded 1,350-acre hilltop campus overlooking the New England-style Village of Clinton, New York. The campus is within a 4-5 hour drive of New York, Boston, Toronto and Philadelphia, and there is a rich variety of cultural opportunities on campus and in nearby Utica (10 minutes), Syracuse (45 minutes) and Cooperstown (55 minutes).

Mission Statement

Hamilton College prepares students for lives of meaning, purpose, and active citizenship. Guided by the motto “Know Thyself,” the College emphasizes intellectual growth, flexibility, and collaboration in a residential academic community. Hamilton students learn to think independently, embrace difference, write and speak persuasively, and engage issues ethically and creatively. One of America’s first liberal arts colleges, Hamilton enables its students to effect positive change in the world.

Educational Goals

Hamilton College is committed to the intellectual and personal development of students. We seek to nourish a love of learning, a creative spirit, and an informed and responsible engagement with an ever-changing world. To promote these qualities, the College challenges all of its students to work with their advisors to devise an educational program that fosters:

Intellectual Curiosity and Flexibility — examining facts, phenomena and issues in depth, and from a variety of perspectives, and having the courage to revise beliefs and outlooks in light of new evidence

Analytic Discernment — analyzing information, patterns, connections, arguments, ideas, and views quantitatively and symbolically

Aesthetic Discernment — evaluating quality and value in a variety of artistic and other intellectual domains

Disciplinary Practice — engaging in the focused and sustained practice of disciplinary techniques and methodologies in order to acquire mastery of a specific ability or craft

Creativity — imagining and developing original ideas, approaches, works and interpretations, and solving problems resourcefully

Communication and Expression — expressing oneself with clarity and eloquence, in both traditional and contemporary media, through writing and speaking, and through visual, aural, gestural and other modalities

Understanding of Cultural Diversity — critically engaging with multiple cultural traditions and perspectives, and with interpersonal situations that enhance understanding of different identities and foster the ability to work and live productively and harmoniously with others

Ethical, Informed and Engaged Citizenship — developing an awareness of the challenges and responsibilities of local, national and global citizenship, and the ability to meet such challenges and fulfill such responsibilities by exercising sound and informed judgment in accordance with just principles

In pursuing these goals, students should progress meaningfully along a path toward fulfilling their potential for being thoughtful, responsible and purposeful individuals with the capacity to make a positive difference in the world.

Foundations

An education at Hamilton College is built on a series of curricular foundations. The faculty expects that students will attain a high level of engagement early in their studies and will develop as creative and critical thinkers, writers and speakers. To achieve these aims, the College requires students to complete the Writing and Quantitative and Symbolic Reasoning programs.

The Writing Program (WI): Students must pass at least three writing-intensive courses.

The Quantitative and Symbolic Reasoning Program (QSR): Every student must pass at least one designated quantitative and symbolic reasoning course. This requirement should be completed by the end of the second year.

The Social, Structural, and Institutional Hierarchies Requirement (SSIH): Beginning with the Class of 2020 every student must complete a concentration requirement that will focus on an understanding of structural and institutional hierarchies based on one or more of the social categories of race, class, gender, ethnicity, nationality, religion, sexuality, age, and abilities/disabilities.

In addition, the College encourages students to participate in the First-Year Course and Proseminar programs.

The First-Year Course Program: First-year courses are a special set of small courses or sections of courses open only to first-year students. These courses are designed to address students' academic transition to college and to provide an introduction to a liberal arts education. They also offer an opportunity for close interaction and the development of strong relationships among first-year students and instructors. Each first-year course will be a Writing Intensive (WI), Quantitative and Symbolic Reasoning (QSR) or Speaking Intensive (SI) course.

The Proseminar Program: Proseminars emphasize active participation and engagement in learning. Proseminars offer intensive interaction among students, and between students and instructors, through

emphasis on writing, speaking and discussion, and other approaches to inquiry and expression that demand such intensive interaction. Descriptions of proseminars are available in the Catalogue.

Breadth in the Liberal Arts

As a liberal arts college, Hamilton expects students to undertake coursework in a wide variety of disciplines, to explore areas unfamiliar to them and to make connections across courses and disciplines. A liberally educated person studies in the traditional academic divisions of the arts, foreign languages, the humanities, mathematics, the sciences and the social sciences. Hamilton also emphasizes cultural analysis, including the study of non-western traditions and of diversity in the United States. Students will work with their advisors to determine how best to achieve this intellectual balance.

Concentration

Each student must meet the requirements for a concentration, including a requirement that will help students gain an understanding of structural and institutional hierarchies based on one or more of the social categories of race, class, gender, ethnicity, nationality, religion, sexuality, age, and abilities/disabilities.

Senior Program

All students are required to complete the Senior Program in their concentrations as a means of demonstrating an appropriate level of mastery of the content and methods of a discipline. Each department and program of concentration has designed a senior program that serves as an integrating and culminating experience for the concentration. Building on their courses and showing their increasing ability to work independently in terms of both motivation and subject matter, seniors are required to produce a significant synthesis of knowledge by means of one of the following: a research project leading to a written, aural or visual creation; a seminar for concentrators, including a major presentation and

research paper by each student; or comprehensive examinations ideally involving both written and oral components.

Students make progress toward meeting these goals by studying broadly across diverse areas of inquiry, guided by their advisors, and investigating a particular area of study more thoroughly by completing a concentration of their choosing. A faculty advisor assigned to each student provides information, advice and dialogue about choice of courses as the student strives to meet these goals. For many faculty members and students, this relationship will be as important as any they form. As the primary intellectual guide, the faculty determines the fundamental structure and the basic requirements of the curriculum in light of the liberal arts tradition and its appropriate adaptation to the contemporary world.

II. Institutional Priorities to be addressed in the Self-Study

Institutional stakeholders consulted in identifying the priorities

The Strategic Planning Steering Committee (SPSC) initiated a three phase plan that occurred during the 2017 calendar year. The process was a collaborative venture that began with three committees constituted of faculty, staff, students, and trustees under a charge from the President. The strategic planning outcome – *Connected Hamilton* – provides four pillars that identifies new initiatives and reaffirms and expands existing initiatives for the College over the next five years but will have lasting institutional impacts on the student learning experience.

The Accreditation Steering Committee (ASC) agreed that the Strategic Planning priorities should be the self-study priorities since the strategic plan is in its early stages, providing an opportunity to aid in implementing the pillars of Connected Hamilton.

Selected priorities align with the institution’s mission and goals

Connected Hamilton is a roadmap for meeting the institutional mission and goals. The planning process identified three areas of focus including Residential Hamilton, Digital Hamilton, and Experiential Hamilton, while simultaneously targeting several existing commitments for expansion and growth (Advising at Hamilton, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at Hamilton, and Teaching at Hamilton). These existing commitments combined stand as our fourth pillar. The four pillars of Connected Hamilton will map on to the Commission Standards in a variety of ways with major and minor emphases in each chapter (Table 1).

How Commission Standards align (or map to) the selected priorities.

Each chapter will focus on a Commission Standard with specific details regarding how the four pillars of Connected Hamilton align to the institutional priorities.

Table 1. How Institutional Priorities map to Standards

	Residential	Digital	Experiential	Advising	Diversity, Equity, Inclusion	Teaching
Standard I	O	O	O	X	X	X
Standard II	O	O	O	O	X	X
Standard III	X	X	X	O	O	X
Standard IV	O	O	O	X	O	X
Standard V	X	X	X	X	X	X
Standard VI	X	X	X	X	X	O
Standard VII	O	O	O	O	X	O
Legend						
O = minor emphasis, X = major emphasis						

III. Intended Outcomes of the Self-Study

Provided here are the institution's list of outcomes that it intends to achieve through the self-study process, considering ways the self-study can help the institution meet its mission, assist in meeting key institutional goals, and enhance its overall effectiveness. Outcomes may include but are not limited to:

- reaffirm Hamilton's accreditation by Middle States;
- aid in implementing the Connected Hamilton Strategic Plan;
- review and reflect on current practices and determine where the College can improve the student experience and also where it innovates;
- use the opportunity of self-study to identify and improve assessment of student learning;
and
- carry forward existing strengths and integrate Early Career Faculty.

Self-Study Approach

The ASC has decided on a Standards Based Approach to the self-study focused on linking institutional priorities to the standards. The ACS has sought to bring the best possible working group members to the appropriate standard under consideration and to link the ongoing work that other institutional committees and groups are conducting on each institutional priority.

IV. Organizational Structure of the Steering Committee and Working Groups

This section of the Self-Study Design provides information about the membership of the Accreditation Steering Committee and Working Groups including the names and titles of chairpersons of the Steering Committee and its members, with their positions of responsibility at the institution.

Accreditation Steering Committee (ASC)

Nathan Goodale (Co-Chair, Steering Committee), Associate Dean of Faculty and Associate Professor of Anthropology

Shari Whiting (Co-Chair, Steering Committee), Interim Director for Institutional Research and Assessment

Tina Hall (Co-Chair, Standards I & II), Professor of Literature and Creative Writing

Ian Rosenstein (Co-Chair, Standards I & II), Associate Professor of Chemistry

Penny Yee (Co-Chair, Standards III & IV), the James L. Ferguson Professor of Psychology

Onno Oerlemans (Co-Chair, Standards III & IV), Associate Dean of Faculty and Professor of Literature

Tara McKee (Co-Chair, Standard V), Associate Dean of Students for Academics and Associate Professor of Psychology

Chau Fang Lin (Co-Chair, Standard V), Assistant Director of Institutional Research and Assessment

Joe Shelley (Chair, Standard VI), Vice President for Library and Information Technology Services

Kevin Grant (Chair, Standard VII), the Edgar B. Graves Professor of History

The strategies the ASC will use to encourage Working Groups to interact with one another in the interest of engaging in common areas of inquiry and reducing undue duplication of effort include:

1. Working Group Chairs make up the ASC, insuring there will be natural integration with regular meetings informing the ASC of each Working Group's progress;
2. a Google Team Drive will be used as a sharing tool to prepare the self-study and evidence inventory;

3. the Google Team Drive meets the digital security standards of our information technology division to handle sensitive or confidential materials;
4. a Working Group retreat is scheduled for August, 2019 to review the standards and allow Working Group Chairs to begin work with their teams; and
5. regular Working Group reports are scheduled from Fall 2019 through Spring 2020, leading to the completed draft of the self-study (see timeline below).

The collective membership of the ASC with individuals that will also Chair (or Co-Chair) committees focused on each Commission Standard, will provide oversight to the self-study process. The committee structure will also ensure that Working Groups receive appropriate support for evaluation and assessment of Commission Standards and the priorities selected for analysis in the self-study document.

The ASC will ensure that the institutional mission, the Connected Hamilton pillars as institutional priorities, and the Commission's Standards will be analyzed in the Self-Study Report utilizing the institution's existing evaluation and assessment information through a process of:

1. the members of the ASC will be responsible for gathering and distributing evaluation and assessment information and
2. the ASC will be monitoring the progress of the working groups through meetings with chairs and multiple mid-year progress reports.

Assembled here are the Working Groups including the names and title of chairperson(s) and members of each Working Group with their positions of responsibility at the institution. Each committee will focus on a Commission Standard with the Requirements of Affiliation, Criteria to meet each Standard, the

Institutional Priorities to be addressed, the assessment related to each Standard, follow up from past accreditation reports, and recommendations for improvement.

Steering Committee (Co-Chairs)

Nathan Goodale (Steering Committee Co-Chair), Associate Dean of Faculty, Associate Professor of Anthropology

Shari Whiting (Steering Committee Co-Chair), Interim Director for Institutional Research and Assessment

Working Groups

Working Group 1: Standard I - Mission and Goals and Standard II - Ethics and Integrity

Working Group Members for Standards I and II

Tina Hall (Co-Chair), Professor of Literature and Creative Writing

Ian Rosenstein (Co-Chair), Associate Professor of Chemistry

Catherine Beck, Assistant Professor of Geosciences

Gordon Jones, Litchfield Professor of Astronomy

Jeff McArn, College Chaplain

Alexandra Plakias, Assistant Professor of Philosophy

Steve Stemkoski, Director of Human Resources

Requirements of Affiliation:

Standard I: The institution's mission defines its purpose within the context of higher education, the students it serves, and what it intends to accomplish. The institution's stated goals are clearly linked to its mission and specify how the institution fulfills its mission.

Standard II: Ethics and integrity are central, indispensable, and defining hallmarks of effective higher education institutions in all activities, whether internal or external, an institution must be faithful to its mission, honor its contracts and commitments, adhere to its policies, and represent itself truthfully.

Criteria to Demonstrate for Standard I:

1. The College has clearly defined mission and goals that were developed through appropriate collaborative participation by all who facilitate or are otherwise responsible for institutional development and improvement; address external as well as internal contexts and constituencies; are approved and supported by the governing body; guide faculty, administration, staff, and governing structures in making decisions related to planning, resource allocation, program and curricular development, and the definition of institutional and educational outcomes; include support of scholarly inquiry and creative activity, at levels and of the type appropriate to the institution; are publicized and widely known by the institution's internal stakeholders; are periodically evaluated;
2. The institutional goals are realistic, appropriate to higher education, and consistent with mission;
3. The goals focus on student learning and related outcomes and on institutional improvement; are supported by administrative, educational, and student support programs and services; and are consistent with institutional mission; and
4. There is periodic assessment of mission and goals to ensure they are relevant and achievable.

Criteria to Demonstrate for Standard II:

1. The College exhibits a commitment to academic freedom, intellectual freedom, freedom of expression, and respect for intellectual property rights;
2. The College climate fosters respect among students, faculty, staff, and administration from a range of diverse backgrounds, ideas, and perspectives;

3. A grievance policy that is documented and disseminated to address complaints or grievances raised by students, faculty, or staff. The institution's policies and procedures are fair and impartial, and assure that grievances are addressed promptly, appropriately, and equitably;
4. There is an avoidance of conflict of interest or the appearance of such conflict in all activities and among all constituents;
5. The College has fair and impartial practices in the hiring, evaluation, promotion, discipline, and separation of employees;
6. There is honesty and truthfulness in public relations announcements, advertisements, recruiting and admissions materials and practices, as well as in internal communications;
7. Services or programs in place to promote affordability and accessibility; to enable students to understand funding sources and options, value received for cost, and methods to make informed decisions about incurring debt;
8. There is evidence for compliance with all applicable federal, state, and Commission reporting policies, regulations, and requirements to include reporting regarding: the full disclosure of information on institution-wide assessments, graduation, retention, certification and licensure or licensing board pass rates; the institution's compliance with the Commission's Requirements of Affiliation; substantive changes affecting institutional mission, goals, programs, operations, sites, and other material issues which must be disclosed in a timely and accurate fashion; the institution's compliance with the Commission's policies
9. There is periodic assessment of ethics and integrity as evidenced in institutional policies, processes, practices, and the manner in which these are implemented.

Priorities: Advising; Diversity, Equity, Inclusion; Teaching

Assessment: Standard I - Meeting campus wide goals. For example the assessment of Senior Projects and how they meet the eight educational goals and concentration goals. Standard II - For example increase in diversity of both faculty and students, COLT Policies webpage (Campus Wide Policies Handbook).

Follow up items from previous self-study and periodic report

Recommendations for improvement

Working Group 2: Standard III - Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience, Standard IV - Support of the Student Experience

Working Group for Standards III and IV

Onno Oerlemans (Co-Chair), Associate Dean of Faculty and Professor of Literature

Penny Yee (Co-Chair), the James L. Ferguson Professor of Psychology

Jennifer Ambrose, Director of the Writing Center

David Thompson, Director of the Charlean & Wayland Blood Fitness & Dance Center & Campus Wellness and Professor of Physical Education

Jeff Landry, Associate Vice President for Student Affairs

Peaches Valdes, Dean of Admission

Amanda Kim - SGA President (or representative)

Requirements of Affiliation:

Standard III - An institution provides students with learning experiences that are characterized by rigor and coherence at all program, certificate, and degree levels, regardless of instructional modality. All learning experiences, regardless of modality, program pace/space/schedule, level, and setting are consistent with higher education expectations.

Standard IV - Across all educational experiences, settings, levels, and instructional modalities, the institution recruits and admits students whose interests, abilities, experiences, and goals are congruent

with its mission and educational offerings. The institution commits to student retention, persistence, completion, and success through a coherent and effective support system sustained by qualified professionals, which enhances the quality of the learning environment, contributes to the educational experience, and fosters student success.

Criteria to Demonstrate for Standard III:

1. All certificate, undergraduate, graduate, and/or professional programs leading to a degree or other recognized higher education credential, of a length appropriate to the objectives of the degree or other credential, are designed to foster a coherent student learning experience and to promote synthesis of learning;
2. Any student learning experience is designed, delivered, and assessed by faculty (full-time or part-time) and/or other appropriate professionals who are:
 - a. rigorous and effective in teaching, assessment of student learning, scholarly inquiry, and service, as appropriate to the institution's mission, goals, and policies;
 - b. qualified for the positions they hold and the work they do;
 - c. sufficient in number;
 - d. provided with and utilize sufficient opportunities, resources, and support for professional growth and innovation;
 - e. reviewed regularly and equitably based on written, disseminated, clear, and fair criteria, expectations, policies, and procedures;
3. Academic programs of study are clearly and accurately described in official publications of the institution in a way that students are able to understand and follow degree and program requirements and expected time to completion;

4. Sufficient learning opportunities and resources to support both the institution's programs of study and students' academic progress are available;
5. A general education program, free standing or integrated into academic disciplines, that:
 - a. offers a sufficient scope to draw students into new areas of intellectual experience, expanding their cultural and global awareness and cultural sensitivity, and preparing them to make well-reasoned judgments outside as well as within their academic field;
 - b. offers a curriculum designed so that students acquire and demonstrate essential skills including at least oral and written communication, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis and reasoning, technological competency, and information literacy. Consistent with mission, the general education program also includes the study of values, ethics, and diverse perspectives; and
 - c. in non-US institutions that do not include general education, provides evidence that students can demonstrate general education skills;
6. Adequate and appropriate institutional review and approval on any student learning opportunities designed, delivered, or assessed by third-party providers; and
7. Periodic assessment of the effectiveness of programs providing student learning opportunities.

Criteria to Demonstrate for Standard IV

1. Clearly stated, ethical policies and processes to admit, retain, and facilitate the success of students whose interests, abilities, experiences, and goals provide a reasonable expectation for success and are compatible with institutional mission, including:
 - a. accurate and comprehensive information regarding expenses, financial aid, scholarships, grants, loans, repayment, and refunds;
 - b. a process by which students who are not adequately prepared for study at the level for which they have been admitted are identified, placed, and supported in attaining appropriate educational goals;

- c. orientation, advisement, and counseling programs to enhance retention and guide students throughout their educational experience;
 - d. processes designed to enhance the successful achievement of students' educational goals including certificate and degree completion, transfer to other institutions, and post-completion placement;
2. Policies and procedures regarding evaluation and acceptance of transfer credits, and credits awarded through experiential learning, prior non-academic learning, competency-based assessment, and other alternative learning approaches;
 3. Policies and procedures for the safe and secure maintenance and appropriate release of student information and records;
 4. Assessment of the effectiveness of programs supporting the student experience

Priorities: Residential, Digital, Experiential, Advising, Teaching

Assessment: Standard III - for example, any wide range of assessment activities from the department level to the campus level. The Writing Assessment project, for one. Standard IV - the surveying of students who use the Academic Resource Centers.

Follow up items from previous self-study and periodic report

Recommendations for improvement

Working Group 3: Standard V - Educational Effectiveness Assessment

Chau Fang Lin (Co-Chair), Assistant Director of Institutional Research and Assessment

Tara McKee (Co-Chair), Associate Dean of Students for Academics and Associate Professor of Psychology

Emily Conover, Associate Professor of Economics

John Eldevik, Associate Professor of History

Amy Gaffney, Director of the Oral Communication Center

Janine Oliver, Associate Director, Career Development

Ben Smith, Director of the Quantitative and Symbolic Reasoning Center

Andrea Townsend, Assistant Professor of Biology

Requirements of Affiliation:

Assessment of student learning and achievement demonstrates that the institution's students have accomplished educational goals consistent with their program of study, degree level, the institution's mission, and appropriate expectations for institutions of higher education.

Criteria to demonstrate for Standard V:

1. Clearly stated educational goals at the institution and degree/program levels, which are interrelated with one another, with relevant educational experiences, and with the institution's mission;
2. Organized and systematic assessments, conducted by faculty and/or appropriate professionals, evaluating the extent of student achievement of institutional and degree/program goals. Institutions should:
 - a. define meaningful curricular goals with defensible standards for evaluating whether students are achieving those goals;
 - b. articulate how they prepare students in a manner consistent with their mission for successful careers, meaningful lives, and, where appropriate, further education. They should collect and provide data on the extent to which they are meeting these goals;
 - c. support and sustain assessment of student achievement and communicate the results of this assessment to stakeholders;

3. Consideration and use of assessment results for the improvement of educational effectiveness.

Consistent with the institution's mission, such uses include some combination of the following:

- a. assisting students in improving their learning;
- b. improving pedagogy and curriculum;
- c. reviewing and revising academic programs and support services;
- d. planning, conducting, and supporting a range of professional development activities;
- e. planning and budgeting for the provision of academic programs and services;
- f. informing appropriate constituents about the institution and its programs;
- g. improving key indicators of student success, such as retention, graduation, transfer, and placement rates;
- h. implementing other processes and procedures designed to improve educational programs and services;

4. Adequate and appropriate institutional review and approval of assessment services designed, delivered, or assessed by third-party providers; and

5. Periodic assessment of the effectiveness of assessment processes utilized by the institution for the improvement of educational effectiveness.

Priorities: Residential, Digital, Experiential, Advising; Diversity, Equity, Inclusion; Teaching

Assessment: For example, the assessment of senior projects and how they demonstrate measurement of the eight educational goals.

Follow up items from previous self-study and periodic report

Recommendations for improvement

Working Group 4: Standard VI - Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement

Joe Shelley (Chair), Vice President, Library and Information Technology Services

Katherine Brown, Associate Professor of Physics

Paul Hagstrom, Professor of Economics

Karen Leach, Vice President, Administration and Finance

Michelle LeMasurier, Associate Professor of Mathematics

Roger Wakeman, Associate Vice President for Facilities & Planning

Nicholas de la Riva, Assistant Dean for Finance and Resources in Academic Affairs

Requirements of Affiliation:

The institution's planning processes, resources, and structures are aligned with each other and are sufficient to fulfill its mission and goals, to continuously assess and improve its programs and services, and to respond effectively to opportunities and challenges.

Criteria to Demonstrate for Standard VI:

1. Institutional objectives, both institution wide and for individual units, that are clearly stated, assessed appropriately, linked to mission and goal achievement, reflect conclusions drawn from assessment results, and are used for planning and resource allocation;
2. Clearly documented and communicated planning and improvement processes that provide for constituent participation, and incorporate the use of assessment results;
3. A financial planning and budgeting process that is aligned with the institution's mission and goals, evidence-based, and clearly linked to the institution's and units' strategic plans/objectives;
4. Fiscal and human resources as well as the physical and technical infrastructure adequate to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered;
5. Well-defined decision-making processes and clear assignment of responsibility and accountability;

6. Comprehensive planning for facilities, infrastructure, and technology that includes consideration of sustainability and deferred maintenance and is linked to the institution's strategic and financial planning processes;
7. An annual independent audit confirming financial viability with evidence of followup on any concerns cited in the audit's accompanying management letter;
8. Strategies to measure and assess the adequacy and efficient utilization of institutional resources required to support the institution's mission and goals; and
9. Periodic assessment of the effectiveness of planning, resource allocation, institutional renewal processes, and availability of resources.

Priorities: Residential, Digital, Experiential; Diversity, Equity, Inclusion

Assessment: Audited financial statements, bond ratings, and evaluation of the strategic plan.

Follow up items from previous self-study and periodic report

Recommendations for improvement

Working Group 5: Standard VII - Governance, Leadership, and Administration

Kevin Grant (Chair), the Edgar B. Graves Professor of History

Alistair Campbell, Associate Professor of Computer Science

Mike Debraggio, Associate Vice President Communications

Courtney Gibbons, Associate Professor of Mathematics

Gbemende Johnson, Associate Professor of Government

Gill King, Chief of Staff and Secretary to the Board of Trustees

Lea Haber Kuck, Charter Trustee

Requirements of Affiliation:

The institution is governed and administered in a manner that allows it to realize its stated mission and goals in a way that effectively benefits the institution, its students, and the other constituencies it serves.

Criteria to Demonstrate for Standard VII:

1. A clearly articulated and transparent governance structure that outlines roles, responsibilities, and accountability for decision making by each constituency, including governing body, administration, faculty, staff and students;
2. A legally constituted governing body that:
 - a. serves the public interest, ensures that the institution clearly states and fulfills its mission and goals, has fiduciary responsibility for the institution, and is ultimately accountable for the academic quality, planning, and fiscal well-being of the institution;
 - b. has sufficient independence and expertise to ensure the integrity of the institution. Members must have primary responsibility to the accredited institution and not allow political, financial, or other influences to interfere with their governing responsibilities;
 - c. ensures that neither the governing body nor its individual members interferes in the day-to-day operations of the institution;
 - d. oversees at the policy level the quality of teaching and learning, the approval of degree programs and the awarding of degrees, the establishment of personnel policies and procedures, the approval of policies and by-laws, and the assurance of strong fiscal management;
 - e. plays a basic policy-making role in financial affairs to ensure integrity and strong financial management. This may include a timely review of audited financial statements and/or other documents related to the fiscal viability of the institution;

- f. appoints and regularly evaluates the performance of the Chief Executive Officer;
- g. is informed in all its operations by principles of good practice in board governance;
- h. establishes and complies with a written conflict of interest policy designed to ensure the impartiality of the governing body by addressing matters such as payment for services, contractual relationships, employment, and family, financial or other interests that could pose or be perceived as conflicts of interest;
- i. supports the Chief Executive Officer in maintaining the autonomy of the institution;

3. A Chief Executive Officer who:

- a. is appointed by, evaluated by, and reports to the governing body and shall not chair the governing body;
- b. has appropriate credentials and professional experience consistent with the mission of the organization;
- c. has the authority and autonomy required to fulfill the responsibilities of the position, including developing and implementing institutional plans, staffing the organization, identifying and allocating resources, and directing the institution toward attaining the goals and objectives set forth in its mission;
- d. has the assistance of qualified administrators, sufficient in number, to enable the Chief Executive Officer to discharge his/her duties effectively; and is responsible for establishing procedures for assessing the organization's efficiency and effectiveness;

4. An administration possessing or demonstrating:

- a. an organizational structure that is clearly documented and that clearly defines reporting relationships;
- b. an appropriate size and with relevant experience to assist the Chief Executive Officer in fulfilling his/her roles and responsibilities;
- c. members with credentials and professional experience consistent with the mission of the organization and their functional roles;

- d. skills, time, assistance, technology, and information systems expertise required to perform their duties;
- e. regular engagement with faculty and students in advancing the institution's goals and objectives;
- f. systematic procedures for evaluating administrative units and for using assessment data to enhance operations; and

5. Periodic assessment of the effectiveness of governance, leadership, and administration.

Priorities: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Residential, Digital, Experiential,

Assessment: Trustee evaluation of senior staff, evaluations of faculty governance and governance structure.

Follow up items from previous self-study and periodic report

Recommendations for improvement

V. Guidelines for Reporting

The processes the ASC will use to ensure that Working Groups stay on task include:

1. Retreat for Working Groups – August 16, 2019 afternoon 3-5pm followed by a working/discussion dinner
2. Each Working Group Chair (Co-Chair) will be responsible for scheduling the meetings for their group
3. Status report on Working Group Progress - November, 2019
4. Faculty Meeting Progress Report - December Faculty Meeting
5. Mid-year report – January 24, 2020
6. Final report – April 17, 2020

7. Template for Working Group Reports - TBD by the ASC during fall 2019

VI. Organization of the Final Self-Study Report

This section includes an outline of the organization, format and structure of the final Self-Study Report, including information that will be found in the document's introduction and conclusion, and initial indications of the focus of each chapter.

Details

- Microsoft Word
- Double spaced
- 1 inch margins
- Times Roman 11pt
- Table of Contents

Chapter 1. Introduction (5 pages)

Chapter 2. Compliance (3 pages)

Chapter 3. Standards I (20 pages)

Chapter 4. Standard II (20 pages)

Chapter 5. Standard III (20 pages)

Chapter 6. Standard IV (20 pages)

Chapter 7. Standard V (20 pages)

Chapter 8. Standard VI (20 pages)

Chapter 9. Standard VII (20 pages)

Chapter 10. Inventory (10 pages)

Appendices

VII. Verification of Compliance Strategy

The Verification of Compliance process will be led by the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment to coordinate completion of this report. The ADOF for Institutional Research is also the Steering Committee co-chair, so communication will be imbedded in the process.

VIII. Self-Study Timetable

Below is a timetable for each major step in the accreditation process, from early preparation to completion of the process. We prefer a Spring 2021 visit by the Evaluation Team.

Timeline for 2021 Middle States Evaluation Visit

Fall, 2018

- Co-chairs attend Middle States Self-Study Institute (Nov 5-7) ☐
- Report to faculty and other constituencies on overview of process ☐
- Select accreditation steering committee (ASC) members based on the 7 Standards

Nominations/Prospects to be asked/appointed by the President ☐

- Begin developing outline of design report ☐
- Start collecting documents, reports and data ☐
- Start setting up shared folders and evidence inventory ☐
- Schedule Middle States VP liaison visit (Ellie Fogarty April 30) ☐

Spring, 2019

- Send email to the working groups ☐
- Meet with ASC – kickoff, discuss design report and working groups ☐
- Assign working groups and develop research questions ☐
- Continue and finish design report due to MS VP April 19 ☐
- Middle States liaison prep visit April, 30th - scheduled ☐

- Schedule August retreat for working groups to discuss standards and evidence inventory (August 16th afternoon-evening)

Summer, 2019

- ASC Co-Chairs compile documents, reports and data
- Begin to populate evidence inventory

Fall, 2019

- August retreat for working groups to discuss standards and evidence inventory (August 16th afternoon-evening)
- Template for Working Group Reports - TBD (ASC Co-Chairs will work on and give to Steering Committee)
- Self-study kickoff
- Working groups begin deliberations
- Report at Trustee Meeting
- Working groups check-in November
- Co-chairs/Dean report out to faculty and constituents - December Faculty Meeting

Spring, 2020

- January 24, 2020 mid-year report for each Working Group
- Working groups' final reports due April 17, 2020
- Drafting of self-study report begins
- Co-chairs/Dean report out to faculty and constituents (May Faculty Meeting)
- Report at Trustee Meetings

Summer, 2020

- Self-study report drafted

Fall, 2020

- Self-study circulated for comment, appropriate revisions
- Preliminary visit by visiting team chair
- HEA compliance report completed by Office of Institutional Research and Assessment

Winter, 2020-21

- Self-study report submitted to Middle States

Spring, 2021

- Visiting team on campus
- Middle States response to team report

IX. Communication Plan

See Section VIII timetable for details. Regular reports will be given at:

- Faculty Meetings
- Staff Assembly
- Student Assembly
- Trustee Board Meetings

We are also in the process of hiring a new VP of Communication and plan to consult with him/her for ideas.

X. Evaluation Team Profile

Included below are the characteristics of a Team Profile that can evaluate the institution's compliance with Commission standards and give meaningful feedback to the institution relating to the institution's selected priorities.

- Team Chair: Our Open Curriculum, which presents great opportunities as well as challenges, is the foundation of the academic experience at Hamilton. We need a chair, preferably from an institution that also has an open curriculum, who understands those opportunities and challenges. Other colleges in the northeast that run open curricula include Brown, Amherst, Smith, and Wesleyan

Peer Evaluators: Individuals who have expertise/experience with academic affairs, assessment, student affairs, faculty issues, and financial issues from small, competitive, residential liberal arts colleges are most appropriate peer evaluators. Suggestions include:

- Academic Affairs - Mark Schneider, VPAA and DOC, Ursinus College (formerly worked at Grinnell which has an open curriculum)
- Assessment - Mark Halsey, VP of Institutional Research and Assessment and Professor of Mathematics, Bard College (is familiar with Hamilton through past information sharing activities)
- Admission - Christopher Gruber, VP and Dean of Admissions, Davidson College (recommended as someone who is particularly thoughtful and ethical about the admission process).
- Financials - Chief Financial Officers: Dave Surgala, Bucknell University; Fred Rogers, Carleton College; Dan Konstalid, Gettysburg College (all have various levels of knowledge about Hamilton's financial model),

Institutions that are considered comparable peers, preferably within the Middle States region;

- Haverford College, Lafayette College, Skidmore College, Vassar College

Institutions that are considered aspirational peers, preferable within the Middle States region;

- Swarthmore College

Institutions whose representatives might present conflicts of interest should they serve on the self-study evaluation team;

- Colgate University

A listing of the institution's top programs by enrollment would be helpful as well.

- By course enrollments:
 1. Economics
 2. Government
 3. Mathematics
 4. Biology
 5. Literature and Creative Writing

XI. Evidence Inventory

The Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA) will coordinate with input and oversight from the ASC. OIRA will categorize documents by standard and will provide an initial list of documents at the beginning of working group deliberations. Documents will then be added as requested. A final inventory of cited documents will be made available to the visiting team.