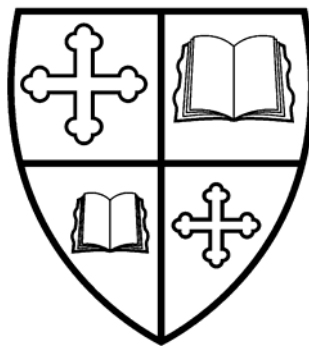


**St. Lawrence University  
Design for Self-Study**



**Submitted to:  
The Middle States Commission on Higher Education  
October 23, 2006**

**St. Lawrence University**  
**Self-Study Design**  
**Prepared for the Middle States Commission on Higher Education**

**Table of Contents**

<b>I.</b>	<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>4</b>
	Institutional Profile.....	4
	University Governance.....	5
<b>II.</b>	<b>Nature and Scope of the Self-Study.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>III.</b>	<b>Specific Goals and Objectives.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>IV.</b>	<b>Organizational Structure and Membership of the Steering Committee...9</b>	
<b>V.</b>	<b>Charges to the Working Groups.....</b>	<b>11</b>
	Standard 1: Mission, Goals and Objectives.....	12
	Standards 2 & 3: Planning, Resource Allocation and Institutional Renewal and Institutional Resources.....	13
	Standards 4 & 5: Leadership and Governance and Administration.....	16
	Standard 6: Integrity.....	17
	Standard 7: Institutional Effectiveness.....	18
	Standards 8 & 9: Student Admissions & Retention and Student Support Services.....	20
	Standard 10: Faculty.....	21
	Standards 11, 12 & 13: Educational Offerings, General Education, and Related Educational Activities.....	22
	Standard 14: Student Learning.....	24
<b>VI.</b>	<b>Inventory of Support Documents.....</b>	<b>25</b>
	General Documents.....	25
	University Governance Documents.....	26
	Accreditation and Certification Reports.....	26
	Mission and Vision Statements.....	26
	Policies and Procedures.....	26
	Task Force and Other Reports.....	27
	Survey Data, Benchmarks, and Other Statistical Data.....	27
	Middle States Association Publications.....	28
<b>VII.</b>	<b>Editorial Style and Format.....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>VIII.</b>	<b>Self-Study Timeline.....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>IX.</b>	<b>Organization of the Report.....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>X.</b>	<b>Evaluation Team Profile.....</b>	<b>30</b>

I. Appendix A..... 32

II. Appendix B..... 35

## I. Introduction

### *Institutional Profile*

St. Lawrence is a small, private, liberal arts university chartered in 1856 by the State of New York. Our institutional mission is to provide an inspiring and demanding undergraduate education in the liberal arts to students selected for their seriousness of purpose and intellectual promise. Located halfway between the high peaks of the Adirondack Mountains and Ottawa, the national capital of Canada, the University provides access to international government, cultural opportunities, and outdoor recreation. The University's 2,100 full-time undergraduate students, with relatively balanced male (48%) and female (52%) populations, come from 41 U.S. states and 21 countries. The University has 167 full-time faculty members, 99% of whom have a Ph.D. or the highest terminal degree in their field. Individualized learning in close collaboration with faculty mentors is a primary emphasis throughout the curriculum. The student-to-faculty ratio is 11-to-1 and 66% of all undergraduate classes have less than 20 students enrolled. St. Lawrence remains an independent, non-denominational University.

The University offers bachelors degree programs in 31 majors and minors are also offered in most of those fields, as well as in 11 other disciplinary areas. The University offers three graduate programs in education which enroll 34 full-time and 99 part-time students. In conjunction with seven engineering institutions, St. Lawrence offers a 3+2 Basic Engineering Combined Plan Program, and with Clarkson University, in Potsdam, New York, a 4+1 MBA Program.

- St. Lawrence sponsors study abroad programs in Australia, Austria, Canada, China, Costa Rica, Denmark, England, France, India, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Spain, and Trinidad, and participates in the International Student Exchange Program (ISEP).

Off-campus, domestic programs are offered in the Adirondacks, with American University in Washington, D.C., and with Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee.

### ***University Governance***

St. Lawrence is part of the University of the State of New York, which is governed by the fourteen-member Board of Regents elected by a joint session of the legislature. The 38-member St. Lawrence University Board of Trustees is vested with all corporate authority and responsibility and operates with five standing committees and 10 Committees of the Corporation. Two elected delegates from the student body and faculty respectively, and one alumni delegate attend and participate in Board meetings as non-voting members. The President of the University is appointed by the Trustees and is charged with carrying out the actions and policies established by the Board. Faculty Council is the chief elected deliberative body of the faculty and the President is a non-voting member, *ex officio*, of the faculty and of Council. Appendix B shows the organizational structure of the administration for Fall 2006.

## **II. Nature and Scope of the Self-Study**

Since St. Lawrence's last decennial review (1998), our strategic efforts to address the strongest recommendation from the Middle States Team Evaluation, to enhance admissions performance and manage the discount rate, have resulted in significant institution-wide accomplishments, all of which are in support of the pressing need to attract and retain an appropriately prepared and more diverse student body. Specific admissions accomplishments are presented in Table 1. With 10 years of leadership from President Daniel F. Sullivan, the institution has made tremendous strides in broadening its curricular initiatives (e.g., the introduction of six new majors, including Global Studies and four new minors, including U.S. Cultural and Ethnic Studies) and has added faculty positions to reflect and support this growth in academic programs. In addition to 24 new faculty lines, approximately 43% of our

current faculty were hired since 1997 and the faculty exhibits greater gender and racial diversity (Table 2).

**Table 1. Admissions Performance**

	Student entering in the Fall of:		
	1997	2002	2006
Applicants	2499	2867	3192
Admit Rate	71.3%	65.2%	58.8%
Yield	26.7%	33.2%	32.6%
Matriculants	476	620	612
% US Students of Color	5.3%	5.8%	11.9%
Avg. Composite SAT*	1128	1143	1191
Top 10% HS Rank	26.7%	30.7%	32.9%

\* *St. Lawrence became test-optional in 2005-06*

**Table 2. Faculty Size and Hires**

	1997	2002	2006**	change
				1997-2006
Faculty Lines*	146	163	170.2	24.2
Tenured and Tenure- Track Faculty	141	159	156	
% Female	31.9%	37.7%	44.9%	13.0%
% US Faculty of Color	4.3%	8.8%	12.8%	8.5%
Total Faculty of Color	5.7%	10.7%	16.0%	10.3%
New Hires since Fall 1997			67	42.9%

\* *Excludes faculty lines that have been redefined into administrative positions*

\*\**Data from 2005*

The establishment and expansion of Student Life programs (e.g., Leadership Academy and Career Services, respectively) have enhanced co-curricular offerings for St. Lawrence students as well. Significantly upgraded facilities, including the Owen D. Young Library (1999) and Brewer Bookstore (1999), and completely new buildings including the Newell Field House and Stafford Fitness Center (2001), Steiner Student Residences (2003), and the Student Center (2004), represent an unprecedented series of building and renovation

projects that enhance campus life for all constituencies. Indeed, when the Johnson Redlich Hall of Science is completed in the summer of 2007, St. Lawrence will have spent \$180 million on facilities upgrades and new construction since our last decennial review.

The St. Lawrence campus prepares for the next decennial review informed with President Sullivan's 2009 retirement date. President Sullivan and the senior staff of Vice Presidents he has assembled and mentored have fostered timely and open communication and sharing of information among constituencies on and off campus. From developing a Board of Trustees that is deeply committed to and engaged with our educational enterprise to nurturing the Canton Initiative to enhancing the attractiveness of the area through improved economic viability and the establishment of a "partnership" spirit between the University and the citizens of Canton, the leadership at the Presidential and senior staff level has consistently moved St. Lawrence in positive, productive directions. The occasion of this Self-Study at the same time we prepare for a presidential transition affords us an opportunity to identify and institutionalize administrative and governance practices that have operated effectively for St. Lawrence under the current leadership and to evaluate others that may not serve the institution as well.

We also prepare for this Self-Study aware we have reached our debt capacity. After investing 180 million on new and upgraded facilities over the past 10 years, funded from both increased debt and gifts, we face competing demands for limited resources that pit a properly balanced annual operating budget against the needs for physical assets to provide an ever more competitive educational outcome. As St. Lawrence prepares to kick off a \$200 million capital campaign in the Fall of 2006, with \$100 million earmarked for the endowment, this Self-Study process prompts us to pose questions that will allow us to

determine and then finance the academic, co-curricular, and capital improvements that are financially responsible and sustainable.

Rather than fine-tune the current curricular and co-curricular programs or expect to simply sustain our accomplishments over the past 10 years, this Self-Study pushes us to ask “What is next for St. Lawrence?” In anticipation of new leadership during a period of relative institutional health and energy, we have selected a Comprehensive Model to fully and realistically assess our current strengths and liabilities in order to create a useful road map for strategic planning for the future.

### **III. Specific Goals and Objectives**

The decennial Self-Study affords the St. Lawrence community the occasion for intentional and focused self-reflection. The rapid pace at which we have grown the faculty and staff, expanded our curricular and co-curricular offerings, and upgraded campus facilities has been done through inclusive processes and careful consideration, but the impact of these changes and their implication for our collective future work have not been fully analyzed or assessed.

The primary goal of the Self-Study process is to evaluate the implicit and explicit priorities of our current curricular, co-curricular, and institutional programs and practices in the context of our stated mission, aims, and objectives. Further, we intend to examine the extent to which our work at St. Lawrence University through our mission, aims and objective, engages and realizes the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) accreditation standards.

As we address the 14 *Characteristics of Excellence* through the broad lens described above, and whenever possible, provide limited commentary to contextualize the Self-Study

questions, we also intend to include, wherever appropriate, exploration of the three goals and objectives below:

1. To contribute to the University's ongoing improvements to fulfill our mission with excellence and integrity. Toward this end, we intend to create a document that provides all constituencies with a deeper understanding of St. Lawrence's mission, especially in light of active, theoretical conversations about pursuing educational excellence of the kind attributed to the best liberal arts colleges while continuing to manage our assets strategically and not compromise values that we hold as central to our institutional identity. Because such discussions raise questions and indeed, shape decisions, about improving our position in the admissions marketplace, they are likely to raise attendant concerns about maintaining the integrity of the learning environment that is unique to St. Lawrence. The self-knowledge gained from this decennial review will be timely and valuable for these conversations.

2. To encourage on-going campus-wide understanding, acceptance, and application of assessment practices in the service of student learning and institutional resource allocation and strategic planning. Toward this end, we intend to create a document that serves as a strategic guide for campus-wide decisions over the course of the next 3-7 years.

3. To examine St. Lawrence University's ongoing commitment to diversity in terms of access, retention, and campus climate for faculty, staff, and students. We intend to create a document that both acknowledges successes in these areas and critically engages its shortfalls to ensure continued progress toward diversifying our community in a climate of inclusion.

#### **IV. Organizational Structure and Membership of the Steering Committee**

In March 2006, the university established a nine-person Self-Study Steering Committee consisting of faculty and staff. The committee met throughout the remaining

months of the spring semester to learn about the Self-Study process and then used the summer months to set priorities and generate goals and charge questions for the Self-Study.

The Steering Committee is responsible for:

- Determining the relevant issues for the Self-Study and developing the Self-Study design
- Identifying conceptual relationships between *Characteristics of Excellence* that allow for collapsing specific standards in such a way as to address questions more comprehensively
- Choosing the membership of the working groups, establishing their charges, and co-chairing at least one of the groups
- Establishing the timetable and communicating the Self-Study design and other expectations to the working groups
- Assuring communication within the Steering Committee, working groups, and institutional constituencies about the Self-Study process
- Planning and arranging institution-wide review of and responses to a draft of the Self-Study
- Overseeing the completion of the final Self-Study report and any other documents relevant to the self study process and team visit.

Chairing the Steering Committee is **Dr. Kim Mooney**, Associate Professor of Psychology. Dr. Mooney was appointed to the St. Lawrence faculty in 1989 and served as the Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs from 1998-2003. Dr. Mooney is the founding director of the Center for Teaching and Learning and was appointed Special Assistant to the President for Assessment in January 2006. Members of the Steering Committee are:

**Dr. Carol Bate** - Director, Career Services and Leadership Education  
**Mr. Neil Cifuentes, '96**— Coordinator of Student Athlete Development  
 Women's and Men's Assistant Soccer Coach  
**Dr. Ning Gao** - Associate Professor, Chemistry  
**Ms. Mary Hussmann** - Associate Professor, English  
**Ms. Kathy Mullaney** - Vice President for Finance and Treasurer  
**Dr. Celia Nyamweru** - Associate Professor, Anthropology  
**Dr. Michael Temkin** - Associate Professor, Biology  
**Ms. Christine Zimmerman** - Director, Institutional Research

In addition to the Steering Committee, nine working groups have been formed to conduct the necessary research and writing to address the questions for each of the *Characteristics of Excellence* groupings (Appendix A). Working group membership was

determined in consultation with Faculty Council and Senior Staff in order to achieve broad and diverse representation among faculty and staff. In particular, faculty were invited to participate based on their divisional representation and relevant committee and professional experience that might best contribute to discussions on particular standards. Students were invited through a presentation to their governance committee, the Thelomathesian Society and through recommendations from faculty and staff members.

#### **V. Charges to the Working Groups**

The Steering Committee welcomes broad participation from the university during the Self-Study process and has begun to generate an inclusive list of faculty, staff, students, alumni, and trustees to join specific working groups where their expertise and interests will be best utilized. Working groups will be charged with addressing specific questions representing the university issues prioritized by the Steering Committee and guided by the *Characteristics of Excellence*. Working groups will also be responsible for fully reviewing and addressing the elements of their assigned Middle States Standards. As part of their work, each group will familiarize itself with the relevant university documents, solicit input from the various university constituencies, and write a section of the Self-Study report. All working groups will embed common questions concerning institutional effectiveness and assessment in their respective projects (for the three specific questions, see *Standard 7*).

The chair of the Steering Committee will meet with each working group at the commencement of their work and provide them with their respective charges and a template that provides editorial and substantive coverage guidelines (see Section VII, this report). Working groups will be coordinated by co-chairs: one of whom is a member of the Steering Committee and one of whom is a participating faculty or staff member. Working groups will arrange their own meeting schedules but will be expected to meet common deadlines set by

the Steering Committee for updates on their work. All working group members will have access to an electronic inventory of support documents on the Assessment web site (see Section VI, this report) cross-referenced by Standards. All working groups will have access to a meeting room in the central University library where additional relevant documents and resources will be housed, as well as a computer. Because the Steering Committee will also have a regular meeting schedule, any issues or concerns with progress or resource availability can be brought to our attention in a timely way.

Co-chairs will facilitate how respective working groups approach their research and analytical questions and will encourage not just document review, but other methods for data gathering that seem appropriate (e.g., focus group and individual meetings with key people). However, as much as possible, these additional methods will be discussed at Steering Committee meetings to avoid redundancy. Ideally, if surveys are proposed, this data collection will be coordinated by the Steering Committee to avoid over-sampling any constituency.

Throughout the Middle States process, the Steering Committee will periodically request drafts of and provide feedback on all working groups' reports. Final drafts of the reports will be due to the Steering Committee on May 18, 2007. The Steering Committee will then develop a comprehensive report over the course of the summer and begin sharing it among campus constituencies in Fall 2007.

***Standard 1: Mission, Goals and Objectives***

A subcommittee of the members of the newly formed Institutional Assessment Committee will serve as the working group that reviews and examines the university's mission, aims, and objectives. Endorsed in 1999, one year after our last decennial review, our mission statement and curricular and co-curricular objectives reflect the St. Lawrence

community's philosophy of a liberally educated person. The Self-Study questions below are formulated to examine closely whether discrepancies exist between widely stated aims and objectives and our actual institutional practices. The questions also explore the processes used to develop and communicate these central tenets of undergraduate education at St. Lawrence.

1. **To what degree are the mission statements and their implementations at each level of the organization integrated and aligned with the University's overall mission statement?**
  - To what degree does each division of the organization engage in the regular articulation and assessment of their goals and objectives?
  - How successful is each division in connecting their goals and objectives to the goals of other divisions and overall institutional priorities?
  
2. **Given our articulated mission and stated aims and objectives for a liberal education:**
  - What evidence suggests that specific aims and objectives have not been recognized or realized as central to our educational mission?
  - Are there practices that have become important components of our academic and co-curricular work with students that are not presently accounted for in our stated mission, aims and objectives? To what degree do these discrepancies deter us from achieving our stated mission, goals and objectives?
  - Based on the answers to these questions, what courses of action are recommended for the academic affairs and student life divisions of the institution?
  
3. **Is the base of participation in the process of developing, revising, and communicating the University's mission, aims and objectives sufficient representation of the myriad divisions of the University?**
  - Are the University's aims and objectives effectively used to develop and assess student learning goals in academic departments and programs and in academic support and co-curricular initiatives?

***Standards 2 & 3: Planning, Resource Allocation and Institutional Renewal and Institutional Resources***

In our 2003 Periodic Review Report, St. Lawrence indicated its intentions to achieve a balanced budget by 2006-2007. Through a combination of revenue enhancements as well as cost containments that objective was achieved in 2005-06. Besides achieving aggressive

enrollment objectives and reducing the growth of financial aid, revenue achievements included a record breaking fund raising year in 2005-06. Cost savings activities included eliminating administrative positions through attrition, saving \$1.3 million in salaries, and focused programs on reducing energy use and improving energy procurement practices among other endeavors. Our primary challenge is to sustain a balanced budget with continued growth in depreciation and interest cost, while implementing a proposed new salary policy. Current projections show an operating surplus in fiscal year 2007, deficits in fiscal years 2008 and 2009, and returning to and staying with a balanced budget after that.

The challenge going forward will be to maintain the momentum of the last ten years and continue the improvements to our academic and co-curricular programming that are required to compete in our marketplace. This Self-Study is an opportunity to digest all we have accomplished to date, to examine our present planning and resource allocation practices, and to institutionalize the good features and improve where necessary.

- 1. How does resource allocation, financial planning and budgeting relate to the plans, goals and objectives of divisions and departments and to overall University goals and objectives?**
- 2. What strategies are in place to measure and assess the level of, and efficient utilization of, institutional resources required to support the institution's mission and goals?**
- 3. What decision making processes are in place to allocate limited resources to competing requests?**
  - What groups or individuals are responsible for facilitating institution wide planning?
  - Are the processes understood by various constituencies?
  - How does constituency involvement in the planning process reflect broader governance structures?
  - Are there constituencies affected by the allocation of resources that are not adequately represented?
  - How are decisions communicated to the college community and is that communication adequate?
- 4. Are multi-year budgets prepared for all units as well as institution wide?**

5. **Is there a comprehensive facilities master plan and facilities life-cycle management plan in place and in use? Are these effective practices?**
6. **How do the departments, divisions, and the institution assess whether planning, resource allocation, and institutional renewal processes are effective and efficient?**
  - What groups or individuals are responsible for achieving departmental, divisional, and university mission and goals and how are they assessed and held accountable?
  - How are these assessment results fed back into the planning process to assure improvement?
  - What benchmarks are used in the assessment process? Are benchmark comparison groups appropriately identified and periodically evaluated for relevancy to the University mission and aims and objectives?
7. **How are changing technologies incorporated into the departments', divisions' and university's plans?**
  - How are new technologies identified?
  - How does the university decide what technologies to use?
  - How are assessments of the effective and efficient use of these resources made?
  - How are the technology plans incorporated into the financial planning and budgeting of the University?
8. **How are admissions goals and objectives integrated in the university's planning and resource allocation process?**
  - How are institutional goals and objectives incorporated into admissions goals and objectives?
  - Who participates in the decisions for setting admissions goals and objectives?
  - How are competing goals reconciled? (e.g. improving the discount rate while continuing to offer financial aid to eligible students improving our academic profile, and strengthening our commitment to diversifying the student body).
  - How are admissions marketing concerns incorporated into the university planning process?
  - How are admissions results assessed and fed back into the university-wide goal setting loop?
9. **What is the priority in the budget and planning process for enhancing diversity at St. Lawrence – in its academic and co-curricular programs and with respect to a greater representation of students, faculty and staff on campus?**
10. **How do our human resources compare to similar institutions?**
  - Are the targets the University has set regarding a “zero” net growth in faculty for the coming years and a decline in administrative/clerical staff sustainable?

**11. Is an annual independent audit conducted and evidence of follow-up on any concerns cited in the audit's management letter?**

***Standards 4 & 5: Leadership and Governance and Administration***

In our 2003 Periodic Review Report, we acknowledge that university governance has been perceived as a problem in our three previous Middle States Evaluation Team reports. One of the major problems concerning university governance was that there was no description of the faculty's role in the governance of the university. Since the last Middle States review, the university has added Article VI to the bylaws of the university which specifically defines the responsibilities of the faculty in the governance of the institution. A second governance issue that was recognized in the last review was the organization of the university committee system. In spite of a comprehensive attempt by Faculty Council between 2000 and 2002 to streamline the governance structure by reducing the number of standing committees, we find similar questions about committee charges, organization, and membership on the Fall 2006 Faculty Council and faculty meeting agendas. Much of this discussion is in response to concerns about faculty workload and the increasing roles of faculty and students in governance.

In anticipation of new university leadership when our current president retires in three years, we are interested in assessing how well the practices and policies for maintaining accountability and transparency in university governance that have been established over the past ten years have been embedded in our institutional culture. As an institution, we have come to recognize that essential governance issues about accountability and transparency should be more strongly guided by sound, understood, and accepted practices, and less influenced by personality and leadership style.

1. **Does the structure and organization of the governance system provide for effective policy development and decision-making?**
  - Are our policies, procedures, and mission statements, including the faculty and student handbooks, written, organized, and available in a manner that allows for the effective governance and administration of the university?
  - Does the university governance system effectively ensure that diverse perspectives are valued?
  - How effective are university policies and/or practices for including students in university governance?
  - Do we effectively assess the policy development and decision-making processes of our governance system?
  
2. **Is our Board of Trustees an effective governing body of the university?**
  - Does the composition of the Board of Trustees provide for effective leadership in university governance?
  - Is the current committee system of the Board of Trustees being effectively used for policy development and decision-making?
  - Is the Board of Trustees obtaining information from faculty, students, and administrators in a manner that provides for effective university leadership?
  
3. **Has the university been effective in recruiting and retaining people to fill key leadership positions in the administration of the university?**
  - Does the university effectively assess the performance of university administrators, including department chairs?
  - Are there issues or concerns about our “campus culture” that decrease our ability to achieve our mission and objectives that could be significantly improved by leadership from key administrators (e.g., the President, Academic Dean, or Dean of Student Life)?

### ***Standard 6: Integrity***

From the Board of Trustees during their June retreat to first-year faculty and first-year students during their August orientations, the recent AAC&U publication, *Academic Freedom and Educational Responsibility*, has been widely read by the St. Lawrence community. This document has also been selected as a primary reading for an upcoming on-campus conference sponsored by a local four-college consortium. St. Lawrence is an institution that embraces opportunities to engage in thoughtful discussion and dialogue about perennial and emerging issues in the liberal arts and in higher education.

Although there is a strong and probably justifiable ethos of trust on this campus, as a community we are not immune to the kinds of academic honesty and integrity issues that are experienced in most higher education institutions. It is how we approach and resolve them that will be unique to our campus, our culture, and ultimately to preserving the climate of trust that we enjoy.

1. **In what ways does St. Lawrence University promote a climate of academic and intellectual freedom?**
2. **To what degree is there congruency between the Academic Honesty policy and practice? To what degree is there congruency between the Student Life Code of Conduct and institutional practices?**
  - Are these policies widely discussed and understood among students and faculty?
  - What recent educational efforts have been made to disseminate the policies and address consistent enactment and if so, what evidence suggests these efforts have been effective?
3. **To what extent do university policies address circumstances that might represent conflicts of interest or inconsistent practices among divisions and departments (e.g., direct supervisory relationships in academic and other departments, the role of pre-tenure faculty formally voting on tenure cases)?**
  - How are conflict of interest issues addressed at the institutional level? Do the outcomes indicate effective practices?
4. **What might be gained by an institution-wide implementation of the 360 Review Policy for administrative staff?**
  - What steps need to be taken to ensure that supervisors in all divisions of the university conduct thorough reviews and submit them to the appropriate offices?
5. **Are we confident that sound and understood institutional practices shape the messages that market St. Lawrence to the public?**

***Standard 7: Institutional Effectiveness***

In order to ensure that this Self-Study adequately addresses questions of institutional effectiveness, standard-specific assessments have been embedded in each standard. In addition, all working groups for standard 1-6 and 8-14 will be asked to review and evaluate

their research findings in a larger organizational context. The general questions below will be given to all working groups.

1. **How do we define as well as assess institutional effectiveness for this standard? In what ways are both academic and nonacademic administrative units of the university involved?**
2. **Do the various divisions of the University share whatever assessment data they might have when Senior Staff makes major decisions? Are efforts made to articulate connections between assessment outcomes, planning, and budget allocations?**
3. **How does this specific standard fit together with the other standards addressed in the Self Study? To what extent is there coordination to provide for a comprehensive feedback loop that focuses on the institution's overall mission and goals that forefronts student learning? Are there ways in which we can use information about our performance to inform our changes to those practices that relate directly to student learning?**

The working group for Standard 7 will summarize the assessments addressed in each standard to draw conclusions about the institutional effectiveness as a whole. This working group will focus on the following questions:

1. **How well are the assessment processes documented at the institution?**
2. **Are the processes mission-driven, useful, cost effective, accurate and truthful, organized and sustained and integrated with each other?**
3. **To what extent do these assessments reflect awareness of student learning goals on all parts of the University, and how do academic and non-academic divisions see their work within this context?**
4. **Are assessments comprehensive? Where do we have gaps or where is too much overlap, and how could this be improved?**
5. **How are assessment results shared, and what evidence do we have that assessment results are being used for decision making and institutional improvement?**
6. **How is the assessment process itself being evaluated for its completeness and effectiveness?**

***Standards 8 & 9: Student Admissions & Retention and Student Support Services***

Since the 1998 decennial review St. Lawrence has paid significant attention to the quality of students admitted to St. Lawrence University and to the retention of those students. Recommendations from the 2000 Retention Task Force gave us clear direction for improved practices which ultimately lead to the establishment of more comprehensive and better organized academic student support services (e.g., Academic Planning and Advising Office) and to the closer realization of numerous admissions benchmarks (e.g., increased number of applications, improved SAT scores, decreased percentage of admitted students), but there is still not a clear sense of ownership around retention.

Student learning does not stop outside of the classroom and our students do not bifurcate the academic and co-curricular experiences, so there is a need to better understand the ways in which academic and student life programs communicate and coordinate their efforts to best serve student learning.

1. **Is St. Lawrence's approach to enrollment management comprehensive, integrated, and effective broadly disseminated and understood? How do we assess the effectiveness of our current approach?**
  - What mechanisms exist that allow academic, co-curricular, and admissions offices to mutually inform recruitment goals and practices?
  - What do we need to do as an institution to increase our applicant pool to attract students who fulfill our desired profile while at the same time enhancing our flexibility to meet potentially competing recruitment goals?
2. **How and at what points during the undergraduate years are we assessing student success and performance (i.e., persistence, retention, overall satisfaction, co-curricular involvement, graduation rates) and how are we using that data to inform future admissions criteria and policy?**
3. **Are the programs to support traditionally underrepresented students fulfilling their aims and objectives (HEOP, McNair, etc.)?**
  - Are effective support services in place for underrepresented students that don't fit into the HEOP, McNair, CSTEP or PDS designation?

4. **Is the campus community doing all it can to provide a supportive and welcoming experience for minority and underrepresented students? If not, in what areas can we improve?**
5. **What evidence exists to indicate that the programs to support students with learning and other disabilities are fulfilling their aims and objectives?**
6. **How does the St. Lawrence residential mission intersect with the broader university mission, aims and objectives?**
  - Is the level of co-curricular program offerings appropriate to our institutional mission and student body interest? How do we determine and assess co-curricular programming?

***Standard 10: Faculty***

St Lawrence University is justifiably proud and excited about advancements made on behalf of the St. Lawrence faculty since our last decennial review. The university has received numerous faculty development grants (e.g., Hewlett, Luce, and Freeman Foundations) and used one such grant for start-up funds to establish a Center for Teaching and Learning (e.g., Mellon Foundation). Since 1998, St. Lawrence has also introduced a number of programs that facilitate improved professional and personal opportunities for faculty including pre-tenure sabbaticals, a maternity leave policy, and hiring practices that benefit trailing spouses and partners. In spite of these initiatives, there remain dimensions of faculty life that call for systematic review, assessment, and improvement - so we propose to focus our attention on two areas: the experiences of underrepresented faculty and the perceptions of the tenure and promotion processes.

The changing demographics of the St. Lawrence faculty has both strengthened the institution and presented it with unique challenges. Through the Self-Study questions for this standard, we intend to assess the impact of our increased faculty diversity on the achievement of the institutional mission and goals. St. Lawrence is a campus that welcomes diversity but we are not fully informed on how increased faculty diversity impacts the

curriculum and classroom experience (i.e., specialized course content, approaches to teaching, etc.) and how responses to such diversity (e.g., course evaluations) informs colleagues' experiences and attitudes toward their work here.

Outcomes on a number of recent tenure and mid-probationary review cases have challenged assumptions about tenure and promotion policies and practices and have created concern among faculty about the implementation of our stated guidelines and practices.

- 1. Does the allocation of faculty positions reflect our academic and programmatic priorities?**
  - How do we determine the degree to which faculty and other professionals are appropriately prepared and qualified for the positions they hold? Are these strategies effective and widely understood?
  - Is the extent to which the University uses adjunct/lecturer positions appropriate for our mission?
- 2. What are the factors that contribute to differing experiences among pre-tenure faculty?**
  - Are there possible institutional programs and structures that might enhance mentoring for junior faculty?
  - What is the nature of the feedback loop for pre-tenure colleagues?
  - How have we assessed and improved support systems in general?
- 3. Are the tenure and promotion expectations for teaching and scholarly production transparent to the faculty?**
  - Are our stated tenure and promotion policies and guidelines consistently articulated in different venues?
  - How can we better understand whether promotion and tenure criteria are equitably applied as the membership of the Professional Standards Committee changes from year to year?
- 4. As part of our stated institutional commitment to a diverse faculty, are we providing effective structure and support for the professional and personal success and fulfillment of faculty of color?**

***Standards 11, 12 & 13: Educational Offerings, General Education, and Related Educational Activities***

St. Lawrence University offers a robust liberal arts curriculum, so in addressing these three standards, we seek to better understand and improve upon how we live up to or fall short of our educational mission. So, in addition to important perennial questions

concerning our general education curriculum, we want to focus on building a better bridge between the curriculum and c-curriculum and assessing our international studies programs.

Since 1998, we have made progress in important academic and co-curricular collaborations (e.g., civic engagement and FYP orientation programs) but we seek to identify other opportunities and resolve communication issues that may still require attention.

Because international programs and off-campus study are central to our commitment to diversity and global education and to the types of experiential learning we value for our students, declining student participation rates in these areas prompts us to consider the possible factors contributing to this change in order to plan for the near and distant future.

1. **Have we clearly articulated learning goals for general education requirements?**
  - Are the eight curricular objectives articulated as part our educational mission adequately met by our current course offerings?
  - Should we consider alternative models to the current distribution model, and how might we assess their viability?
  - Do the general education requirements adequately prepare students for challenges after they complete their studies at SLU?
2. **What are our academic criteria and expectations for information literacy? Do our current general education requirements or disciplinary courses intentionally and effectively address these expectations?**
3. **How are commitments to “integrated” and “engaged” learning addressed in the general education curriculum? What evidence do we have that these experiences enhance student learning?**
4. **What are the connections and points of coordination in the curriculum and co-curriculum around general education goals?**
  - How do they contribute to the overall aims and objectives?
  - In what ways do we assess the collaboration itself?
5. **Does our current practice of curricular development reflect a commitment to our eight educational objectives (i.e., Academic Affairs Committee process for course approval for example)?**
  - Is there a holistic approach at the institutional level to curricular development beyond individual interests and/or departmental initiatives?

- Given that departments have recently articulated learning goals, how will they be integrated into a broader vision of curricular development for general education and how will they be assessed?
6. **How are the international and off-campus study opportunities offered at St. Lawrence meeting our students' educational needs?**
    - How can off-campus academic programs better attract and support more under represented groups such as students of color, North Country students, male students, and students in the sciences?
    - How do we assess individual off-campus programs in terms of student enrollment, academic rigor, and resource allocation and use the findings to improve our programs?
  7. **How do the University's pre-professional offerings and its graduate school of education integrate with the University's mission?**
    - How do they fit into the students' experience at St. Lawrence?
    - How do they contribute to the students' experience at other schools and in graduate programs?
    - What market forces should be considered?
    - Is the current balance right or should programs be expanded?

***Standard 14: Student Learning***

We have only recently begun the earnest and arduous work of assessing student learning outcomes. Dedicating a year's time to engaging the faculty and student life staff in scholarly, critical conversations about learning goals before progressing to similar discussions about the assessment of those goals bodes well for our ultimate goal of creating a climate for and culture of assessment. This Self-Study coincides with early stages of educating ourselves about assessment strategies and preparing ourselves for concentrating this work at the departmental levels, both in academic affairs and in student life. At the same time, the Assessment Committee, whose membership is appointed by the President and is not yet a part of the formal governance structure, continues to actively collaborate with the academic dean and faculty council to define its charge within the larger mission of creating an institutional assessment plan.

1. **How have we articulated our learning outcomes for students at the course, departmental, and institutional levels?**

- Are they consistent with the mission, aims and objectives of the institution?
2. **What is the University's formal plan and program for the assessment of student learning?**
    - Who participates in designing and implementing the program?
    - Who reviews the program's successes and shortcomings?
    - Who then implements recommendations and changes?
    - Are these strategies effective and do they lead to improvements?
  3. **How do we use assessments of student learning in formative ways at course, departmental and institutional levels?**
  4. **How does the institutional committee structure facilitate or impede the assessment of student learning goals?**
  5. **How do we use assessment to see how student life, academic affairs, and athletics are collaborating to facilitate student learning?**
    - How do we know whether we have created and sustained productive partnerships for student learning?
  6. **Are students active partners in the assessment of student learning?**
    - If so, how are they involved?
    - Could their role be enhanced and if so, how?

## **VI. Inventory of Support Documents**

Christine Zimmerman, Director of Institutional Research and Steering Committee member, is prepared to regularly collaborate with working group chairs in order to provide them with the data and documentation required for each group to responsibly and completely address its charges. Materials that are prepared, organized and readily available include, but are not limited to:

### ***General Documents***

- St. Lawrence University Catalog
- St. Lawrence University Charter & Bylaws
- SLU Master Statistics
- Common Data Set
- Audited Financial Statements
- Routine Financial Reports
- St. Lawrence University Trustee Directory
- St. Lawrence University Organizational Chart
- Middle States Annual Institutional Profile

Admissions Publications sent to prospective students  
 Job descriptions, recent VP and Associate Dean hires

***University Governance Documents***

Faculty Council Minutes  
 Post-Board Memorandums  
 Faculty Council Report on the Restructuring of the Tri-Partite Committee  
 Structure (2006)  
 Trustee Self Study (Canaras 2005)

***Accreditation and certification reports***

Middle States Decennial Accreditation Self Study Report (Fall 1997)  
 Middle States Team Visit Report (Spring 1998)  
 Middle States Periodic Review Report (June 2003)  
 Middle States Evaluation Report (Sept 2003)  
 TEAC Draft Self-Study (Education)  
 Education Department CACREP Accreditation Report (Counseling Grad Program)  
 Accreditation Report Chemistry?  
 NCAA Institutional Self-Study (May 2006)

***Mission and vision statements***

St. Lawrence University Mission, Aims and Objectives  
 Strategic Planning Paper - President Sullivan 2005  
 Academic Freedom Statement, President  
 Dean's Report to the Faculty 2005  
 Dean's Opening Remarks, May Faculty College 2005  
 Dean's Opening Remarks, May Faculty College 2006  
 White Paper Civic Engagement  
 Community-Based Learning - AAC&U Bringing Theory to Practice Grant 2005-  
 2007 (Grant Proposal/Annual Report)  
 White Paper Critical Literacies  
 White Paper Academic Planning  
 White Paper International/Global Studies at SLU  
 Academic Program Learning Goals  
 Student Life - Mission and Values Statements (also by department)  
 Student Life - Aims & Objectives Statement  
 Department of Intercollegiate Athletics Long-Range Plan 2005-06  
 University Financial Strategy Past History-Current Choices (Feb. 2006)  
 Facilities Planning Revisited (September 2000)  
 Facilities Planning – February 2006 - Review of Accomplishments, Priorities, and  
 Assumptions to Date (dashboard)  
 Annual Capital Revisited Fall 2005 (see dashboard)  
 University Advancement - Strategic Reports by Dept (dashboard Oct 2005)  
 Information Technology Milestones Report Sept. 2005

***Policies and procedures***

University Policies (incl. HR policies) - website link  
 Student Handbook

## Faculty Handbook

***Task force and other reports***

Presidential Speeches/State of the Union Addresses - website  
 Retention Efforts at St. Lawrence University - Summary document Aug. 2005  
 Retention Committee Report 2003  
 Multicultural Affairs Report  
 Compensation Committee report  
 Greek Engagement Project and updates  
 McNair Annual Report/HEOP Annual Report  
 White Paper Bowen-Shulman Review Game of Life (2001 + 2003)  
 Pricing Strategy - Memo Dan Sullivan (Canaras 2005) and Letter to  
 Senator Susan Collins (2003)  
 FYP Annual Report 2005  
 Registration-Course Close Out Report 2005  
 Career Services Placement Report (annual)  
 Information Technology at St. Lawrence University:  
 Student Preparation, Academic Use, and Student Satisfaction (Sept. 2005)  
 May Faculty College 2006 - Reasons for Being (Here): Student Purpose, Institutional  
 Mission and Graduation Outcomes (Speech Grant Cornwell and Data  
 Analysis)  
 Assessment Inventory of the Planning & Priorities Committee (2005)  
 Presentation to Moody's Investors Service (July 2001)  
 2005 Equity in Athletics Disclosure Act Summary  
 Sightlines Benchmarking Project Spr 2006 (see dashboard)  
 Sherrie Babcock report/power point presentation on faculty/staff climate (2005)

***Survey Data, Benchmarks, and other Statistical Data***

CIRP Summary 1985-present  
 HEDS Senior Survey Summary 1990-present  
 Admitted Student Questionnaire Summary 2000-present  
 St. Lawrence University College Success Questionnaire Summary 2001-present  
 National Survey of Student Engagement 1999, 2001 and 2005  
 HERI Faculty Survey 1998, 2001 and 2004  
 Study Abroad survey summaries  
 Admissions Benchmarks  
 Retention Benchmarks  
 Alcohol Benchmarks  
 Financial Benchmarks  
 Strategic Indicators for Facilities  
 Strategic Indicators for Advancement  
 Administrative Positions by Department 1980-present  
 Faculty Positions by Department 1980-present  
 Student Enrollment statistics  
 Graduating Students by Major  
 Admissions & Financial Aid comparative statistics, 1995-present  
 Campus Crime Statistics (Educ. Dept. Statistics and Bias-Related Incidences Report)

***Middle States Association publications***

Characteristics of Excellence

Designs for Excellence

Assessment of Student Learning: Options and Resources (June 2002 draft)

Handbook for Chairing and Hosting Self-Studies

**NOTE:** The University's Assessment web site will be used as a repository for all electronic versions of the documents listed above which will be cross-referenced by Standards. All steering committee and working group members will have access to these documents.

**VII. Editorial Style and Format**

Because one component of every working group's charge includes writing a chapter for the final Self-Study document, working group co-chairs will be asked to ensure that each chapter fits with the Self-Study documents as a whole. Each chapter should be well-researched, well-documented, and well-written and should also adhere to the specific style and format guidelines outlined below:

- Microsoft Word for the chapter's text
- Tables in Microsoft Word or as embedded Microsoft Excel for tables
- Charts in Microsoft Excel
- 12-point Garamond font
- double-spaced
- indented and ragged paragraphs
- 1 inch margins (top, bottom, left, right)
- present tense with active voice
- American Psychological Association Manual citations, footnotes, references
- Main headers in bold and in capital letters

So that each chapter has a consistent and comprehensive approach to its coverage of the Self-Study questions, each working group will also be asked to consider and address the following components in its final narrative:

- An overview of the issues being covered, including relevant historical information to contextualize the questions and analysis.
- An analytical, critical, and reflective approach to addressing each question with the intention to pursue candid, evidence-based responses.

- A conclusion that summarizes the central findings for the assigned *Standards* and discussion of any topical connections or collaborations with other working groups.
- Recommendations to address any concerns or opportunities for improvements and innovations based on the research findings.

### VIII. Self-Study Timeline

#### 2005

Nov.7-8 Middle States Self-Study Institute in Philadelphia

#### 2006

February President appoints Self-Study Chair.  
Chair meets with Faculty Council to discuss Steering Committee Membership.

March Chair discusses purpose of Self-Study at faculty meeting.  
Steering Committee meets for first time.

April Steering Committee defines goals, strategy, and calendar for Self-Study.

June-July Steering Committee prepares *Design for Self-Study*, develops general charges for working groups, and discusses possible memberships of working groups.

August Steering Committee continues work on the *Design* document and begins compiling resources for the working groups.  
Begins planning visit by Middle States liaison, Luis Pedraja.

September Steering Committee submits *Design for Self-Study* to Middle States and our Middle States liaison, Luis Pedraja, visits campus.  
Membership of working groups established and initial meetings with Steering Committee scheduled.  
*Design for Self-Study* shared with campus community as part of new Institutional Assessment web site.  
General informational meetings scheduled to discuss Self-Study plan and process.

October Final *Design* submitted to MSCHE and posted to web site.

Oct.-Dec. Working groups and Steering Committee work on Self-Study.

#### 2007

Jan.-April Working groups prepare reports and submit a first draft to the Steering Committee in mid-April.

May 18 Final reports due from working groups.

May-June	Steering Committee reviews report drafts, assembles first draft of Self-Study, and shares with Trustees at annual retreat.
Summer	Steering Committee revises report.
Sept.-Oct.	Campus responds to Self-Study report.
Oct-Dec.	Steering Committee finalizes Self-Study report. Evaluation Team Chair visits campus.

## 2008

January	Final report submitted to Middle States 6 weeks prior to site visit. Institution begins to plan meeting schedule.
March or April	Middle States Team site visit.
April-May	Follow-up with Middle States team.

## IX. Organization of the Report

### Chapter 1. Introduction

Institutional profile

Brief historic overview

Review of accomplishments and setbacks since 1998 decennial review

Overview of self-study design

Chapters 2 – 10. Overview, analysis, recommendations for each cluster of standards

Chapter 11. Roadmap for the future based on findings and recommendations

## X. Evaluation Team Profile

St. Lawrence would welcome an evaluation team committed to the careful examination of our design, documentation, and final report and to stretch us beyond any inadvertent complacency or apparent misunderstanding of our strengths and challenges. An evaluation team familiar with the financial strategies, capabilities, and constraints of a private, selective residential university in a rural location (for example, Fred Rogers, Carleton College) that seeks to diversity its faculty, staff, and student body and make more educationally viable its facilities and grounds, would also serve our needs well.

St. Lawrence University would further welcome administrative staff and faculty team members experienced in advancing academic programs similar to some of our own strategic initiatives: the development of academic advising practices for the intentional learner; the integration of writing, speaking, research, and technology in the curriculum and in student academic support services; the creation of an ongoing, vital program of learning outcomes assessment (for example, Carol Trosset, Hampshire College; Kathleen Haring, Muhlenberg College); and the construction of educational bridges between curricular and co-curricular programs.

Finally, information technology reports to the Dean of Academic Affairs at St. Lawrence, and it would be helpful to us to work with a CAO or CIO familiar with this model (for example, Joel Smith, Carnegie-Mellon).

Other colleagues suggested for the Evaluation Team include: Jim Swartz, Grinnell College and Liz McCormick, Bryn Mawr.

## Appendix A

### Middle States Working Groups

#### **Standard 1: Mission, Aims and Objectives**

**Co-Chairs:** Kim Mooney, Steering Committee & Peg Kelsey Cornwell, Project Director for the Leadership Academy

Caroline Bishop '10

Jon Cardinal '08

Tom Coakley, Vice President for Administrative Operations

Marina Llorente, Associate Professor of Modern Languages & Literatures

Lorie MacKenzie, Assistant Dean for Academic Administration

Eve Stoddard, Professor of English

#### **Standards 2 & 3: Planning, Resource Allocation and Institutional Renewal and Institutional Resources**

**Co-Chairs:** Kathy Mullaney, Steering Committee & Brian Chezum, Associate Professor of Economics

Alison Almasian, Senior Associate Director of Admissions

Ed Harcourt, Assistant Professor of Mathematics, Computer Science & Statistics

James Mattice, Co-CIO and Director of Network Technologies

Daniel Seaman, Director of Facilities Operations

#### **Standards 4 & 5: Leadership and Governance and Administration**

**Co-Chairs:** Michael Temkin, Steering Committee & Member of Working Group

Peter Bailey, Professor of English

Karen Bruett, Member of the Board of Trustees

Lisa Cania, Associate Vice President for University Relations

Rance Davis, Associate Dean of Student Life

Baylor Johnson, Associate Professor of Philosophy & Director of Outdoor Studies

Lindsay Muetterties '07

Pedro Ponce, Assistant Professor of English

#### **Standard 6: Integrity**

**Co-Chairs:** Kim Mooney, Steering Committee & Kathleen Buckley, University Chaplain

Abye Assefa, Assistant Professor of Sociology

Lisa Cania, Associate Vice President of University Relations

Susan Cypert, Associate Vice President for Human Resources

Joe Erlichman, Associate Professor of Biology

Daniel Koon, Associate Professor of Physics  
 Jan Langlois, Member of the Board of Trustees  
 Cathy Tedford, Director of the Brush Art Gallery

**Standard 7: Institutional Effectiveness**

**Co-Chairs:** Christine Zimmerman, Steering Committee & Liz Regosin, Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs & Associate Professor of History

Mike Archibald, Vice President for University Advancement  
 Michele Burns, Associate Director of Residential Learning Communities  
 Dekkers Davidson, Member of the Board of Trustees  
 Mark Denaci, Assistant Professor of Fine Arts  
 Alan Draper, Professor of Government  
 Chris Phelps, Head Football Coach, Intercollegiate Athletics & Recreation

**Standards 8 & 9: Student Admissions & Retention and Student Support Services**

**Co-Chairs:** Neil Cifuentes, Steering Committee & Steve Horwitz, Associate Dean for the First Year Program & Professor of Economics

Terry Cowdrey, Vice President and Dean of Admissions & Financial Aid  
 Patti Frazer Lock, Department Chair and Professor of Mathematics, Computer Science & Statistics  
 Hillory Oakes, Director of the Writing Center  
 Lynette Sumpter, Coordinator of Academic Achievement  
 Matha Thornton, Assistant Dean of Student Life & Director of Residence Life

**Standard 10: Faculty**

**Co-Chairs:** Ning Gao & Mary Hussmann, Steering Committee

Roy Caldwell, Associate Professor of Modern Languages  
 Loraina Ghiraldi, Associate Professor of Psychology  
 Evette Hornsby-Minor, Assistant Professor of Gender Studies  
 Sid Sondergard, Professor of English

**Standards 11, 12 & 13: Educational Offerings, General Education, and Related Educational Activities**

**Co-Chairs:** Celia Nyamweru, Steering Committee & Member of Working Group

Grant Cornwell, Vice President and Dean of Academic Affairs  
 Carrie Johns, Department Chair & Associate Professor of Environmental Studies  
 Val Lehr, Professor of Government & Gender Studies Program Coordinator  
 Assis Malaquias, Associate Dean for International & Intercultural Studies  
 Ron Sigmundi, Associate Professor of Psychology  
 Margie Strait, Director of Intercollegiate Athletics & Recreation

**Standard 14: Student Learning**

**Co-Chairs:** Carol Bate, Steering Committee & Member of Working Group

Carol Budd, General Biology Specialist & First Year Program

Abbie Bullard, '07

Carolyn Filippi, University Registrar

Kirk Fuoss, Associate Professor of Performance & Communication Arts

Michelle Gillie, Access Services Librarian

Laura Rediehs, Associate Professor of Philosophy

Joe Tolliver, Vice President & Dean of Student Life

Appendix B

