

Summary Report on the 2005 Self-Study Institute:  
Recommendations and Questions

Submitted by Kim Mooney and Christine Zimmerman

**I. Guiding Principles for the Self Study**

After reading Middle States documents, listening to plenary speakers, and participating in breakout group discussions, five guiding principles and attendant suggestions seem appropriate for the St. Lawrence campus self-study:

- 1). Commit to framing the Self-Study as a purposeful, introspective, and enriching undertaking for St. Lawrence rather than focusing on Middle States re-accreditation** (e.g., choose a design that is most meaningful to the institution; emphasize campus-wide assessment work as the beginning of an ongoing program, not just a means to a Middle States end).
  
- 2). Address assessment plans and programs as dynamic and iterative processes that do not result in static and final documents. Create expectations for revision as determinations are made about whether or not specific learning goals are achieved** (e.g., Dean Cornwell articulates for chairs an unfolding process that might have departmental assessment cycles every 2-3 years).
  
- 3). In consultation with the President and a representative steering committee, determine the goals of the self-study and develop a design guided by meaningful, analytical research questions that can be substantiated by relevant data. Recognize that all standards under the new Middle States Self-Study guidelines include embedded assessment expectations.**
  
- 4). Create early and continuous communication opportunities about the purpose and progress of the self-study and be transparent and inclusive throughout the process** (e.g., develop a web site that provides information on self-study design, steering committee membership, minutes from the meetings, important deadlines, etc).
  
- 5). Prepare a fair and representative final document that puts Middle States standards in the context of the St. Lawrence mission and goals and that celebrates our strengths, proposes solutions to problems, and identifies opportunities for growth and development. The final document should become a living document and serve as a reference guide for all constituencies for a minimum of three to five years.**

## **II. Recommendations for and Questions about the Steering Committee and the Self-Study Design**

According to Middle States, institutions whose self-study visit is scheduled for AY 07-08 are expected to fully gear up this fall. The first two steps necessary in the self-study process are the creation of the steering committee and the determination of the self-study model.

### **One possible organizational structure of the Steering Committee:**

- Appoint chair and executive steering committee (no more than 4-5 members total who broadly represent campus constituencies)
- Invite 12-16 diverse and representative faculty/admin staff to join steering committee (for a total size of 16-20 for the larger steering committee)
- Expect steering committee members to chair or co-chair working groups

### **Executive Steering Committee**

- Responsible for some of the initial planning steps for the self study (e.g., website design, collection of documentation, etc.)
- Approves and coordinates working group plans to collect data or distribute surveys
- Serves as independent readers and editors for chapters submitted by working groups

### **Working Groups**

- Pending self-study design selection, each working group addresses one (or combined) standards through the lens of the self-study research questions and produces chapter
- The organizational structure and membership of the working groups needs to be determined by early spring 06

### **Recommendations for Steering Committee Membership**

The recommendation from the Self-Study Institute is to draw membership, where possible, from the “center” of the institution. **Appendix A** represents a first pass at generating a list of individuals who are respected and have the requisite skills, institutional memory, fresh and diverse perspectives, and enough enthusiasm and/or skepticism to make productive and consistent contributions to the Middle States Steering Committee. **Note:** Students will be asked to serve on working groups. The commitment of select VP’s is also necessary.

### **Questions to discuss with the President**

- Who selects the self-study design?
- Who determines which faculty, staff, and students (?) join the steering committee/working committees, and who invites them?
- Who (which individuals, group, or subgroup) develops the goals and research questions for the self-study?
- Can hourly staff be included in the working groups?
- What is the relationship between Middle States assessment expectations and our current assessment planning committee? Should this committee become a standing University Committee and membership for the MS working committee will be drawn from this group?
- To what degree do we want to use standing university committees to accomplish the MS charges?

### **III. Recommendations for a General Self-Study Timeline**

Developing a timeline that is endorsed by the President and Senior Staff and widely understood by the steering committee, working groups, and campus in general will facilitate the support and cooperation necessary to conduct a comprehensive self-study. See **Appendix B** for a tentative timeline.

### **IV. Recommendations for Resources**

The resources listed below are essential to executing the Self-Study in a collaborative, organized, and consistent way:

- dedicated clerical support for the Middle States and assessment planning work to attend select meetings, record and post minutes, manage the ANGEL site(s), update the Self-Study web site, call meetings, and organize documents and resources for the assessment and steering committees, and coordinate the Middle States team visit
- a cost-share budget (with CTL?) that would allow for the purchase of relevant reading materials and other necessities of the resource room/library
- a cost-share budget (with CTL?) that would allow for institutional team travel to specific assessment institutes and workshops
- occasional and select use of meal passes for convening the steering committee

## Appendix A

### Recommendations for Steering Committee Membership

#### Administrative Staff

Lorie MacKenzie (Ac Support)  
Carolyn Filippi (Registrar)  
Carol Kissam (Ac Support)  
Kathleen Buckley (Chaplain)  
Rene Murphy (IT)  
Bob Durocher (Athletics)  
Eric Weinhold (Admiss)  
Lisa Cania (Advancemt)  
Susan Pankey (Advancemt)  
Pat Gagnon (StudLife)  
Carol Bate (StudLife)  
Peg Cornwell (StudLife)  
Mary Cosmo (Finance)  
Debbie Mousaw (HR)  
Christine Zimmerman (IR)

#### Faculty

Ron Flores  
Alison DelRossi  
Kerry Grant  
Daniel Koon  
Assis Malaquias  
Erin McCarthy  
Pat Alden  
Mike Sheard  
Dorothy Limouze  
Catherine Jahncke  
Pamela Thacher  
Eric Williams Bergen  
Mary Jane Smith  
David Hornung  
Marina Llorente  
Steve Horwitz  
Celia Nyamweru  
Mike Temkin  
Robin Lock  
Nadia Marano  
Karl Shoenberg  
Rebecca Daniels

## Tentative Timeline for Year One of the Self-Study: Fall 2005-Summer 2006

The current draft of Middle States Manual *Self Study: Creating a Useful Process and Report* provides a sample time table with milestone dates by which certain tasks need to be accomplished. The table below specifies individual tasks we need to accomplish within the next 9 months to stay on track.

- Select chair and executive steering committee November 2005
- Schedule MSCHE staff liaison self-study preparation visit with Luis Pedraja for spring or fall 2006 Nov/Dec 2005
- Select steering committee members December 2005
- Steering Committee begins regular meetings; determines memberships of working groups and working groups formed January 2006
- Begin with the collection of documentation and set-up of an Angel site for steering/working committees and a website for the larger community January 2006
- Chair and executive steering committee discuss Self-Study at faculty, ALC, and Thelmo meetings Early February 2006
- Steering Committee identifies questions to be addressed and submits them to working groups February 2006
- Steering Committee receives feedback from working groups and develops specific charges Late February 2006
- Chair and executive group write draft of Self-Study Design and submit to Steering Committee for review Early March 2006
- Draft Self-Study design submitted to Luis Pedraja Late March 2006
- Self-study design put on web page and campus conversations held to discuss it Early April 2006

- Visit to SLU by Luis Prajada. Meetings with Steering Committee, President, Board Members, And select members of campus community Late April 2006
- Chair and executive committee revise Self-Study design and submit to Steering Committee May 2006
- Self-Study design submitted to Luis Pedraja June 2006
- Working groups given final charges June 2006
- Set up resource room and build self-study library Summer 2006