AMP Process and Middle States Commission of Higher Education

Creating an Academic Master Plan is not only a best practice, it is an expected practice for our regional accreditation by the Middle States Commission of Higher Education (www.msche.org).
This document has three sections.

- The first section describes the next report that is due to the Middle States Commission of Higher Education (a.k.a. Middle States).
- The second section shows the relevant standards and summarizes salient points for the AMP process.
- The final section shows the recommendations and suggestions from the final report to Middle States and relevant recommendations from our Self-study.

Section 1: Reporting to Middle States Commission of Higher Education, due June 1, 2014

Though our decennial visit from an evaluating team has occurred and the next visit will be in 2019, we must submit a Periodic Program Report (**PRR**) to Middle States by **June 1, 2014**. This section contains information that the **AMP-DTF** needs to keep in mind about this report.

The purpose of the **PRR** is to provide Middle States with a progress report on the recommendations made by the visiting team in April 2009 and to provide them with planning information. In addition, it serves the purpose of documenting our continued compliance with the 14 accreditation standards. (Of the 14 standards, those most relevant to the AMP-DTF will be summarized in the next section.) To quote the PRR manual[1], "At its best, the periodic review of accredited institutions is a creative means of assisting in the continuous assessment of the institutions' educational mission, goals, and objectives. … The resulting report should serve as a useful planning and development document for the institution." Therefore, if we have a good, sustained Academic Master Plan, then the preparation of the PRR will be a matter of summarizing existing documents.

Content in the **PRR** should meet the following AMP-DTF relevant objectives, as well as others, as enunciated in the PRR manual.[2]

- To assess the institution's response to recommendations resulting from the previous evaluation
- To determine the current status of the implementation of plans for the assessment of institutional effectiveness and the assessment of student learning outcomes (accreditation standards 7 and 14)
- To assess the extent to which linked institutional planning and budgeting processes are in place

The PRR document will need to contain a section that shows "[E]vidence that linked institutional planning and budgeting processes are in place (Standard 2)". Our evidence that we met this standard in the self-study and team visit was the explanation of our planning and budgeting process which is outlined in the Program Planning and Budget Guidelines. (See "Existing Committees and Processes at Shippensburg Involved with Planning" on the Bb site in SU Resources) The AMP-DTF needs to keep this process in mind and, when necessary, make recommendation for changes to the process. For example, the DTF may wish to recommend that an annual report of the assessment of the goals used in planning

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[1] Handbook for Periodic Review Reports, 11th edition, 2008, Middle States Commission of Higher Education, pg. 1, http://www.msche.org/publications/PRRhandbook08081114133252.pdf
[2] Ibid, pg. 2

be submitted as this step in 'closing the loop' is not explicit in the Program Planning and Budget Guidelines. Because of the importance of providing the evidence for Standard 2, the following is verbatim from the PPR manual.[3] The emphasis indicated by the underlining is from the AMP-PST.

> **6) Linked institutional planning and budgeting processes (pg. 5 PRR manual)**
> Accreditation Standard 2 (Planning, Resource Allocation, and Institutional Renewal) provides the primary context for this final section of the PRR: <u>An institution conducts ongoing planning and resource allocation based on its mission and goals, develops objectives to achieve them, and utilizes the results of its assessment activities for institutional renewal. Implementation and subsequent evaluation of the success of the strategic plan and resource allocation support the development and change necessary to improve and to maintain institutional quality.</u>
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> Institutions should provide a brief narrative describing current institutional planning and budgeting processes, with particular attention to demonstrating how such processes are integrated and linked. The narrative should be supported by reference to institutional planning documents (provided in paper copy or via electronic access). If no such documents exist, the narrative must provide a detailed account of what the institution is currently doing to carry out linked planning and budgeting processes.
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> Alternatively, institutions that have developed effective strategic or long-range master plans may satisfy this requirement of the PRR by making reference to such documents in the PRR and <u>by including the planning documents as attachments.</u> Because the materials which demonstrate these processes usually are extensive, brevity in this narrative section is encouraged.

Section 2: Middle States Standards[4] and salient points in those standards concerning AMP

The information in this section regarding standards that are relevant to the AMP-DTF is from two FACT articles that were used to prepare the campus for the evaluating team's visit. The first two paragraphs illustrate the linkages among <u>Standards 1, 2, 3, 7, 12 and 14.</u>

> The planning and budget process is driven by the university's mission and goals. The importance of a university's mission and goals is described in Standard 1. Because mission/goals are linked to planning/budget, our Program Planning Guidelines include the mission and goals each year along with the directions for the process. In addition, this document includes the connection of our goals to the state system's goals. The process we use satisfies Standard 2: *Planning, Resource Allocation and Institutional Renewal*. Standard 3, entitled *Institutional Resources*, expects that resources are allocated efficiently and effectively to meet the mission and goals. Assessment of the institution (Standard 7) and of the assessment of student learning (Standard

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[3] Ibid pg 5.
[4] Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education, Requirements of Affiliation and Standards of Accreditation, Online Version revised March 2009, Middle States Commission on Higher Education, http://www.msche.org/publications/CHX06_Aug08REVMarch09.pdf

14, and specific to General Education, Standard 12), is expected to occur to inform the allocation of resources.

One example of the use of this process is highlighted in the self-study, the reallocation of two tenure-track faculty lines to the English department in order to address concerns raised by the results of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). The results of this institution-wide survey showed that the students needed more experiences reading critically and communicating. The two faculty lines were used so that all first-year students could take a more intensive course with 20 students (Writing Intensive First-year Seminar) instead of College Writing with 26 students. Assessment of this reallocation of resources is on-going, to see if it created the desired change in student learning.

The only Standard not mentioned in that particular FACT article (was in Feb. 16th) but should be mentioned here is Standard 11 which is called "Educational Offerings". "We meet the requirements of this Standard by having a curriculum proposal process through the University Curriculum Committee that ensures "academic content, rigor, and coherence" appropriate to our mission. With this process we ensure that the student learning outcomes and methods of assessment are clearly articulated for new courses and new programs. The Program Review process meets the expectation that the curricula are examined on a regular schedule to determine if they are still effective. Our Program Review process has included the evaluation of curricula since its inception in 1982, and with our recently implemented assessment report, known as the 5-column model, we annually and systematically document the use of assessment results. This Standard also addresses the collection of skills referred to as "information literacy" which are the skills involved "in acquiring and processing information in the search for understanding, whether that information is sought in or through the facilities of a library, through practica, as a result of field experiments, by communications with experts in professional communities, or by other means."

Section 3: Middle States 2009 self-study findings

The table below summarizes the recommendations (**Rec**) and suggestions (**Sug**) by the Middle States evaluating team as contained in the final report (**FR**), and recommendations in our self-study (**SS**) that are relevant to the Academic Master Plan. Remember that progress on recommendations in the final report must be reported in the 2014 Periodic Review Report. As to the suggestions in the final report and the recommendations in our self-study, the campus can determine which of these it will act upon. The evaluating team endorsed some of our self-study recommendations and they are indicated with two asterisks (**). The first column of the table provides a label to the amount of responsibility the AMP-DFT should take for the recommendation / suggestion.

A primary activity is one that the DTF will accomplish through its actions, a secondary activity is one that it will influence through its actions and a tertiary activity is one that it might influence.

Responsibility level	Reference	Recommendation / Suggestion	Notes
primary	SS 4.5	Establish an academic master plan committee with broad representation to establish planning processes and develop a draft plan for review by all stakeholders.	Done.
primary	SS 4.6	Direct the academic master plan committee to develop a model that systematically examines institution-wide and program assessments to establish institutional needs and make recommendations about the allocation of resources.	Should be part of charge.
primary	SS 5.1	Use the findings from the marketing study to assess the development and growth of academic programs for traditional college-aged and adult students.	Should be part of charge.
primary	SS 4.1	Continue to promote transparency in the process of allocating resources by sharing budget projections with the entire campus community.	The AMP-DTF will have a transparent process. The budget portion of this recommendation is not its responsibility directly but the DTF should remind the campus of its commitment to transparency.
secondary	FR Sug Std 2	The 5-year Strategic Plan should fully address the resource implications of planned future student enrollment growth and the proposed Engineering program that would complement Shippensburg's existing strengths in the sciences and mathematics. It will be especially important to secure new facilities, equipment, and faculty as part of the Engineering approval process.	The AMP results will feed into the University's Strategic Plan (USP). The USP will need to contain an enrollment growth plan and a budget plan.
secondary	SS 4.3	Reconstitute the Strategic Planning Steering (SPS) Committee given the significant number of retirements and role transitions since the strategic plan was approved in March 2005.	The AMP-DTF will need to communicate regularly with the SPS committee so that the update to the USP can occur in parallel with the creation of the AMP.

secondary	SS 4.4 **	Communicate the results of University-wide assessment efforts beyond the venues of the University Forum and the College Councils.	The AMP-DTF needs to help promote the communication of assessment results. The assessment results of planning and budget activities must be communicated.
secondary	SS 8.4 **	Continue to standardize University, college, and departmental assessment efforts and coordinate the use of the assessment results in planning and budgeting cycles.	The AMP-DTF needs to help promote the communication of assessment results. It might make recommendations for change to the appropriate bodies, such as the President's office regarding Program Planning and Budget Guideline changes.
secondary (see SS 8.4)	SS 8.6	Develop new mechanisms to communicate the importance of assessment and encourage broad participation in the processes at the departmental, college, and University-wide levels to various constituencies, including faculty members, staff members, administrators, students, and the greater community.	See SS 4.4 and 8.4 above.
secondary	SS 8.7	Develop stronger connections between Shippensburg University's assessment and resource allocation to promote institutional changes by reviewing the flow of information about annual assessment activities and the timing of the annual budget and planning process.	The AMP-DTF needs to be aware of the current processes and make recommendations to the appropriate bodies. See *Existing Committees and Processes at Shippensburg Involved in Planning*, found in Box 9.

Responsibility level	Reference	Recommendation / Suggestion	Notes
tertiary	FR Rec # 1	The team fully endorses the recommendation in the self-study (7.8) that calls upon the University to determine how to retain greater number of students from under-represented populations, and further recommends more effective identification of barriers which may contribute to these higher attrition rates, careful assessment of the needs of these students, the setting of measurable retention goals, and more effective coordination of these retention efforts. (Standard 8)	The AMP-DTF needs to be aware of this recommendation so that any goals they create for Academic Affairs does not harm the achievement of this recommendation and if possible, enhances its accomplishment.
tertiary	FR Rec # 2	The Middle States team notes that data on the number and percentage of minority faculty members demonstrates insufficient diversity among the faculty, and recommends the identification and pursuit of more proactive approaches to expanding the ethnic diversity of faculty pools. (Standard 10)	The AMP-DTF needs to be aware of this recommendation so that any goals they create for Academic Affairs does not harm the achievement of this recommendation and if possible, enhances its accomplishment.
tertiary	FR Sug Std 5	Consider providing new members of the campus-wide Planning and Budget Council (P&BC) with an extensive orientation program to ensure they are adequately prepared to fulfill their responsibilities.	The AMP-DTF needs to be aware of what the P&BC does and to inform P&BC of recommended changes. See *Existing Committees and Processes at Shippensburg Involved in Planning*, found in Box 9.
tertiary	FR Sug Std 7	The campus should review how it evaluates and uses data from the four annual university-wide surveys, such as NSSE, and make the adjustments necessary to ensure the results are used in a timely and appropriate manner to inform campus decisions.	The AMP-DFT needs to be aware of university-side surveys and make recommendations on how their results can be used in the planning / budget / assessment process.

Responsibility level	Reference	Recommendation / Suggestion	Notes
tertiary	FR Sug Std 9	Enrollment growth has placed a strain on some student services. The team endorses the recommendations (7.6 and 7.7) in the self-study regarding the importance of assessing the need for additional staffing in certain student service operations.	The AMP-DFT needs to be aware of the impact to student services, especially those beyond Academic Affairs, when new programs are created.
tertiary	FR Sug Std 12	Given concerns expressed by some about student writing and the fact some departments have already responded with a discipline-specific advanced writing course, the team suggests the campus consider having all students receive a writing course beyond the current Writing Intensive First Year Seminar.	The AMP-DTF needs to be aware of this recommendation.
tertiary	FR Sug Std 13	Review the Distance Learning Policies and Procedures, which have been in place since 2000, and consider eliminating or modifying the "non-competitive" clause, which seems to be unnecessarily holding distance education back.	The AMP-DTF needs to be aware of this recommendation and to keep informed of any changes to this policy if they develop.
tertiary	FR Sug Std 14	Campus support for learning outcomes assessment should be buttressed by insuring adequate resources are devoted to the accomplishment of these commendable endeavors	The AMP-DTF needs to be aware of this recommendation.
tertiary	SS 4.2	Assess the impact of declining revenue from the Commonwealth and develop an action plan that identifies additional external resources as well as a strategy for obtaining those resources.	The AMP-DTF needs to be aware of this recommendation and understand its implications.
tertiary	SS 8.5	Evaluate the feasibility of the creation of a central office for assessment to coordinate the efforts of departments from both the Division of Academic Affairs and the Division of Student Affairs.	The AMP-DTF needs to be aware of this recommendation.