

FROSTBURG STATE UNIVERSITY

SELF-STUDY DESIGN

PREPARED FOR MIDDLE STATES COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Revised MAY 2023



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I. Institutional Overview

Founded in 1898, Frostburg State University (FSU) is a comprehensive, regional, largely residential university set on 260 acres in the scenic highlands of Western Maryland. The University is the only four-year public institution in Maryland west of the Baltimore-Washington metropolitan area and serves as the premier educational and cultural center for Western Maryland and surrounding counties in Pennsylvania and West Virginia.

Established as a normal school for the education of teachers, the institution expanded in keeping with student needs. It became a four-year teacher's college in 1934 and Frostburg State College in 1963. In 1988, the college acquired university status and in 2015 granted its first doctoral degrees. The University has a major economic impact on the region through employment of students, faculty, and staff. Frostburg further enhances the quality of life in the region by serving as its cultural center and providing programs, events, athletics, and facilities.

In the fall of 2022, Frostburg's 3,264 undergraduate students enrolled in 47 majors offered by the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (60% of students); the College of Education (14%); the College of Business (11%); and the remaining in pre-programs, undecided, or non-degree seeking (15%). The University's 723 graduate students sought 17 majors/certificates in liberal arts (38% of students), education (43%), and business (19%). Additionally, 81 doctoral students pursued their Doctorate in Educational Leadership.

Mission Statement and Strategic Goals

Frostburg State University is a student-centered teaching and learning institution featuring experiential opportunities. The University offers students a distinctive and distinguished baccalaureate education along with a select set of applied master's and doctoral programs. Frostburg serves regional and statewide economic and workforce development; promotes cultural enrichment, civic responsibility, and sustainability; and prepares future leaders to meet the challenges of a complex and changing global society.

In fulfillment of its mission and in keeping with the goals of the Maryland Higher Education Commission's 2022 *State Plan for Postsecondary Education* and the University System of Maryland's Strategic Plan, Frostburg State University continues to address the following strategic goals, which were adopted in 2018:

- I. Focus learning on both the acquisition and application of knowledge.
 - A. Ensure students acquire the essential knowledge and skills needed to succeed.
 - B. Infuse applied learning throughout the FSU curriculum.
 - C. Integrate innovative practices and technology into the learning process.
- II. Provide engaging experiences that challenge our students to excel.
 - A. Implement an advising/support structure that meets student needs from applicant through alumna/us.
 - B. Integrate effective career and professional development into the student experience.
 - C. Create a campus climate that enhances the well-being of our students and is welcoming, inclusive, and contributes to the cultural competence of each of our graduates.

III. Expand regional outreach and engagement.

- A. Support economic development in Western Maryland through targeted initiatives.
- B. Provide opportunities for student engagement to address community needs in the region.
- C. Promote and market Frostburg State University's successes, strengths, and assets in Maryland and the region.

IV. Align university resources - human, fiscal, and physical - with strategic priorities.

- A. Develop a marketing, recruitment, and retention plan that identifies realistic and sustainable goals for first-year, transfer, online, adult, graduate, and international students, and the resources necessary to implement this plan.
- B. Ensure academic programs meet student and workforce expectations.
- C. Implement a transparent budgeting model that addresses university priorities and needs.
- D. Provide professional development opportunities that empower faculty and staff success.

Main Programs of Study

Frostburg offers 47 undergraduate degree programs; 80 specialized programs of study; 12 graduate degree programs; 9 undergraduate and 5 graduate certificate programs; and its first doctoral degree program, the Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership, which it began offering in 2012. The University enrolled its first M.S. in Nursing cohort in the fall of 2014 and, more recently, began enrolling students in its graduate Physician Assistant Studies program in 2019.

In terms of number of undergraduate degrees awarded, Frostburg's largest programs currently are: 1) Nursing; 2) Business; 3) Psychology; 4) Education; and 5) Liberal Studies. The largest number of graduate degrees awarded are in 1) Business Administration; 2) Education (M.Ed.); 3) Physician Assistant Studies; 4) Computer Science; and 5) Nursing.

Student Populations Served

Frostburg State University serves the far western counties of Maryland, as well as nearby counties in Pennsylvania and West Virginia. In addition, many students come from the Baltimore/Washington metro areas. It also serves students at the University System of Maryland at Hagerstown, at Anne Arundel Community College, at Cecil College, and across the globe in online and face-to-face classes. The University has experienced an increasing number of international students, including 345 enrolled in the fall of 2022 through a partnership with Hunan University of Technology and Business.

The undergraduate population is traditional college age (94%), from Maryland (78%), and enrolled full-time (77%). First-time first-year cohorts have decreased by 32% over the last five years (from 737 in fall 2018 to 499 in fall 2022) due to several factors, including the pandemic, increasing competition from other institutions, and a declining number of college-age students in the Western Maryland region. The fall 2022 second-year retention rate was 72%, and the fall 2016 six-year graduation rate was 49 percent.

Key Developments, Environmental Factors, and Challenges

Frostburg is in the second year of implementing major academic advising improvements after the Excellence in Academic Advising Project (NACADA and Gardner Institute) and is expanding the dual advising model. All first- and second-year students and a few students enrolled in specialized programs (e.g., RN-to-BSN) now have a university advisor to provide holistic advising and support and a faculty mentor to help students with their professional goals. The university recently launched the EAB Navigate platform to support advising and student success efforts, including early alerts and referrals, appointment tracking, communication campaigns, and case management. As an early measure of success, FSU's continuing student reenrollment rates for fall 2022 were higher than fall 2021 for every undergraduate student cohort. Reenrollment rates for transfer students were at five-year highs.

Scheduled for completion in the summer of 2023, the Education and Health Sciences Center will house programs in the education, health, and wellness professions. It will provide technologically enhanced classrooms and state-of-the-art learning environments for teachers, educators, nurses, health professionals, and the growing fields of exercise and sport science and athletic training. The facility will also be the new home for the Brady Health Center and Counseling and Psychological Services, uniting the student healthcare operations in modern surroundings. In addition, it will feature dedicated space for the Children's Literature Centre and teaching technique labs for science, mathematics, and technology. Healthcare-oriented disciplines will have dedicated lab and simulation spaces, such as the nursing simulation laboratory.

In November 2020, FSU named two campus buildings to honor the history and legacy of Frostburg's African American community, following approval from the University System of Maryland Board of Regents. The newly built residence hall was established as Brownsville Hall, and a former school for African Americans was named the Adams/Wyche Multicultural Center at the Lincoln School. The Center serves as a hub for events focused on fostering greater awareness and change for the surrounding community.

Throughout the spring 2022 semester, Frostburg's President met with each academic department chair (along with the Provost, Academic Affairs staff, deans, and Admissions and Marketing staff) to discuss academic program enrollment trends and to learn more about departmental initiatives. Insights from these meetings were submitted to the USM (University System of Maryland) Board of Regents as part of Frostburg's Strategic Enrollment Management Plan in April 2022. During the fall of 2022, the President and Provost met with the three college deans and the department chairs regarding the realignment of the university's three colleges. As a result of these meetings, the President and Provost have developed and presented a plan for college realignment to the campus community to better serve FSU's students and mission.

In September 2022, Frostburg State University became a full member of Division II, as announced by the NCAA, completing its three-year transition from Division III. Full membership allows all FSU teams to compete in regional and national NCAA postseason events.

Over the previous three academic years, the University has been able to compete in conference tournaments within the Mountain East Conference and the East Coast Conference. Various teams have had successes within both conferences, including outright championships for Football and Women's Swimming, as well as tournament appearances for various other sports.

Frostburg's greatest challenge in meeting the goals of the *2022 State Plan for Postsecondary Education* has been declining undergraduate enrollment. Over the last five years, the number of undergraduates enrolled at FSU has decreased by 29.6% (from 4,638 in fall 2018 to 3,264 in fall 2022). This decline has been consistent with undergraduate enrollment decreases experienced by other USM institutions, in part because of the pandemic. However, Frostburg is proactively addressing its enrollment-related challenges through its Strategic Enrollment Management Plan, which includes implementing several programs and initiatives that will attract more undergraduate students.

Five-year enrollment trends show a significant decline in the number of undergraduate students, and this trend is most prominent in the number of African American students enrolled over the last five fall semesters (see Table 1).

Table 1
Trends in Undergraduate Enrollment
By Race/Ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity	Term				
	Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Fall 2021	Fall 2022
Unknown	52	31	26	25	22
African American/Black	1446	1309	1186	994	769
American Indian	10	8	11	12	8
Asian	96	77	60	47	47
Hispanic/Latino	232	216	206	204	191
White	2318	2193	2055	1852	1691
Other	298	403	381	380	373
Hawaiian	1	0	1	2	5
Two or More Races	185	192	193	161	158
Total Undergraduate	4638	4429	4119	3677	3264

The University has also experienced decreasing second-year retention and six-year graduation rates. This trend is most prominently exemplified in the persistence and graduation rates among minority students, specifically African American students (see Table 2).

Table 2
Trends in Retention and Graduation Rates
First-Time, Full-Time Freshman, Degree-Seeking Students Entering in the Fall Semester
Percent of First-Time, Full-Time Students Who are Continually Enrolled or Graduated from FSU

		All First-Time, Full-time Students					
Cohort Year	Cohort Size	Retention Rates			Graduation Rates		
		2nd Yr	3rd Yr	4th Yr	4-year	5-year	6-year
2012	813	77%	68%	62%	28%	50%	53%
2013	889	76%	62%	58%	29%	47%	52%
2014	957	77%	64%	59%	26%	48%	52%
2015	931	77%	60%	54%	25%	43%	47%
2016	829	74%	61%	54%	29%	45%	49%
2017	777	77%	66%	61%	31%	48%	
2018	737	74%	64%	56%	31%		
2019	739	74%	59%	51%			
2020	627	70%	58%				
2021	586	72%					
2022	496						

		All First-Time, Full-time African American Students					
Cohort Year	Cohort Size	Retention Rates			Graduation Rates		
		2nd Yr	3rd Yr	4th Yr	4-year	5-year	6-year
2012	230	80%	66%	61%	20%	43%	48%
2013	325	79%	62%	56%	28%	44%	49%
2014	350	83%	66%	63%	21%	50%	56%
2015	394	78%	58%	53%	18%	39%	44%
2016	296	71%	57%	50%	19%	37%	42%
2017	301	77%	61%	56%	20%	42%	
2018	292	72%	59%	51%	21%		
2019	283	70%	49%	41%			
2020	232	66%	52%				
2021	191	64%					
2022	137						

		All First-Time, Full-time Minority Students					
Cohort Year	Cohort Size	Retention Rates			Graduation Rates		
		2nd Yr	3rd Yr	4th Yr	4-year	5-year	6-year
2012	327	78%	64%	60%	21%	44%	49%
2013	434	79%	61%	56%	27%	43%	48%
2014	487	80%	65%	61%	23%	48%	53%
2015	513	77%	58%	51%	19%	39%	44%
2016	418	69%	55%	47%	21%	35%	40%
2017	414	74%	60%	56%	21%	41%	
2018	396	72%	59%	51%	23%		
2019	395	71%	51%	45%			
2020	311	66%	51%				
2021	265	68%					
2022	222						

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

The University's Strategic Plan for 2018-2023 outlines a vision for 2023:

Frostburg State University is a regionally acclaimed and nationally recognized academic institution that provides distinctive programs to support state and regional workforce needs. Faculty, staff, and students foster collaboration in a welcoming and inclusive campus culture.

Students value the opportunities open for them at FSU and form close mentoring relationships with faculty and staff, who are committed to their success and well-being. Students apply knowledge and skills learned in the classroom to internship, civic engagement, study abroad, and research experiences to meet the challenges of a complex and changing global society.

The university is integrated into the fabric of the community as a valued and respected regional asset. We are committed to making changes that secure our future while celebrating the values that reflect our history.

Frostburg established priorities for this Self-Study and its next three-year strategic plan through reflection on this vision and its progress on the current strategic plan. In November 2022, the campus community was invited to participate in a review and feedback session on the FSU 2018-2023 Strategic Plan. Over 60 university faculty and staff participated in the session, which was led by Dr. Pat Sanaghan, the consultant who assisted FSU in developing the plan. There was a follow-up meeting in February 2023 for additional consensus and framing discussions to establish focus for the next two to three years, based upon the current rapidly changing environment of higher education nationally and regionally.

Currently, the general vision for both FSU's strategic plan (2024-2026) and its Self-Study institutional priorities will be to focus on increasing enrollment (Standards I, III, IV, V) and strategies that focus on promoting a more inclusive campus culture (Standards II, VI, VII). Further, these priorities demonstrate alignment to Frostburg's institutional goals, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3
Alignment of Self-Study Priorities with Institutional Goals

Institutional Self-Study Priority (Strategy/Measure/Assessment)	Standards for Accreditation	Institutional Strategic Plan Goal Alignment
Increasing Enrollment (SEM Plan)	Standard I. Mission and Goals Standard III. Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience Standard IV. Support of the Student Experience Standard V. Educational Effectiveness Assessment	IV. Align university resources - human, fiscal, and physical - with strategic priorities. A. Develop a marketing, recruitment, and retention plan that identifies realistic and sustainable goals for first-year, transfer, online, adult, graduate, and international students, and the resources necessary to implement this plan.
Promotion of a campus culture that emphasizes student success, enhances the well-being of our students and employees, and fosters a sense of belonging.	Standard II. Ethics and Integrity Standard IV. Support of the Student Experience Standard VI. Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement	II. Provide engaging experiences that challenge our students to excel. C. Create a campus climate that enhances the well-being of our students and is welcoming, inclusive, and contributes to the cultural competence of each of our graduates.

	Standard VII. Governance, Leadership, and Administration	IV. Align university resources - human, fiscal, and physical - with strategic priorities. D. Provide professional development opportunities that empower faculty and staff success.
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III. Intended Outcomes of the Self-Study

The Middle States Self-Study process affords Frostburg State University an exceptional opportunity to demonstrate the ways by which the institution:

1. currently meets or exceeds the Commission’s Standards for Accreditation and Requirements of Affiliation,
2. embraces a culture of continuous improvement in the fulfillment of its mission and institutional priorities,
3. engages the institutional community in a comprehensive and transparent self-appraisal process that actively and consciously seeks to include members from all areas of the institutional community,
4. undertakes a multipronged approach towards achieving its critical institutional priority of boosting enrollment toward projected numerical targets in service of the goals outlined in the *2022 State Plan for Postsecondary Education*, and
5. creates a welcoming campus culture that emphasizes student success, celebrates diversity and inclusiveness, and fosters an abiding sense of belonging within its community.

This comprehensive process enables the University to systematically catalog its strengths, innovations, and successes, while also acknowledging opportunities for improvement in meeting its mission, accomplishing key performance goals, and elevating its overall reputational profile and effectiveness as an institution.

IV. Self-Study Approach

Frostburg State University has chosen the *Standards-Based* approach. This decision was made by the University’s leadership, in partnership with the Self-Study co-chairs, after considering the strengths and challenges of both approaches and FSU’s experience with the *Priorities-Based* approach in its previous Self-Study. The *Standards-Based* approach will enable Frostburg to systematically confirm its alignment with each of the seven standards of accreditation, with institutional priorities incorporated into each chapter, as appropriate.

V. Organizational Structure of Steering Committee and Working Groups

Steering Committee Membership

The Steering Committee consists of representatives from both faculty and staff who were appointed by the President, with efforts made to have fair representation from across campus and to ensure that the Self-Study process is collaborative and transparent. Three co-chairs guide the Steering Committee, and each committee member serves as the liaison for one of the Working Groups. In addition, the President and members of the executive cabinet will serve in an advisory role to the Steering Committee. The Co-Chairs were selected based on their representation across campus, the longevity of their tenure at Frostburg State University, and by the President in consultation with the Provost.

Self-Study Steering Committee Co-Chairs:

- Sara-Beth Bittinger, Associate Vice President - External Relations and Fiscal Management, Middle States Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO)
- Sudhir Singh, Dean - College of Business, Professor - Finance
- Sara Wilhelm, Director of Office of Sponsored Programs, Staff Senate Vice Chair

Steering Committee Members:

- Latisha Cooper, Director - Student Accessibility Services
- Jeffrey Graham, Senior Associate Vice President - Student Affairs
- Robert Ketterman, Facilities Planner
- John Lombardi, Professor - Communication Department, Chair of Faculty
- Janet Mattern, Associate Professor - Department of Educational Professions
- Denise Murphy, Assistant Vice President - Finance and Budget
- Benjamin Norris, Associate Professor - Chemistry

Advisory Members to the Steering Committee:

- Ronald H. Nowaczyk, President
- Albert Delia, Vice President - Regional Development and Engagement
- Michael Mathias, Dean – College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
- Traki L. Taylor, Provost and Vice President - Academic Affairs
- Artie Travis, Vice President - Student Affairs
- Troy Donoway, Vice President - Administration and Finance
- John Short, Vice President - University Advancement
- Boyce Williams, Dean – College of Education
- Hugh J. Breslin, III, Board of Regent Liaison – University System of Maryland

Steering Committee Co-Chair Charge

1. Establish basic structures for the Self-Study (e.g., steering committee and working group structure, resource repository, evidence inventory, guidelines, and processes).
2. Facilitate a transparent, collaborative, and inclusive Self-Study process.
3. Organize and lead steering committee meetings and cross-institution coordination and communication about the Self-Study process and institutional accreditation.
4. Support all steering committee members in accomplishing their tasks.
5. Ensure the Self-Study process meets all milestones on established timeline.

6. Edit and synthesize working group reports and other documents to create a coherent Self-Study design and Self-Study report that authentically represents input from institutional stakeholders.
7. Serve as liaisons between the steering committee, institutional leaders, stakeholders, and representatives of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education and manage all Self-Study-related submissions to the MSCHE portal.
8. Coordinate all visits associated with the Self-Study process.
9. Prepare the campus community for the reaccreditation team's visit by leading the development and implementation of the steering committee's communication plan.
10. Assist the President in producing the response to the Evaluation Team Report.
11. Help identify institutional gaps of process or policy and work collaboratively with institutional stakeholders to improve effectiveness.

Advisory Members to the Steering Committee Charge

1. Provide oversight to the Steering Committee and Working Groups to ensure that the progress of the Self-Study is meeting milestones on the establish timelines.
2. Receive status reports from the Self-Study co-chairs and provide feedback on reports and drafts as requested.
3. Help to ensure active campus and stakeholder participation and facilitate appropriate communication to the campus community.

Steering Committee Charge

1. Provide oversight to ensure that Working Group composition is representative of the entire university. Each Steering Committee member will serve on a working group as the liaison between the Working Group to the Steering Committee.
2. Ensure that the selected Self-Study priorities are aligned with the university's mission and strategic plan.
3. Ensure that the priorities are selected with the consensus of all university stakeholders.
4. Ensure that the Commission's Standards for Accreditation and Requirements of Affiliation are analyzed in the Self-Study Report utilizing the institution's existing evaluation and assessment information.
5. Provide the Working Groups with appropriate support for the evaluation and assessment of Commission Standards and the priorities selected for analysis in the Self-Study document.
6. Ensure that a wide variety of stakeholders, including students, have input.
7. Ensure that final documents (Self-Study Report and Self-Study Design) have one institutional voice in theme and technical content.
8. Help develop and implement the communication plan.
9. Ensure that intended outcomes of the Self-Study are part of the Self-Study Design.
10. Ensure that each assigned Working Group is focused and adheres to the Working Group charge.

Working Group- and Team Structure

Seven Working Groups have been identified - one for each of MSCHE standard - and four Teams: a Writing Team, a Communications/Logistics Team, a Data Team, and a Verification for Compliance Team have been formed. Each Working Group will be guided by two Working Group Co-Chairs and supported by a liaison from the Steering Committee. The President solicited faculty and staff governance bodies for nominations of constituents to serve on each of the Working Groups. Nominations were reviewed and Working Group members were chosen by the President and Steering Committee Co-Chairs with the purpose of having adequate representation from faculty and staff on each of the Working Groups.

Working Group Charge

1. Each Working Group will convey the MSCHE standard that will be addressed by them.
2. Identify and collect relevant assessment information, institutional processes, documents, procedures, data, and other evidence to be reviewed and summarized by the Working Group in support of its assertions and conclusions in the Self-Study Report.
3. Collaborate with the Writing Team and Data Team for organizing, compiling, and maintaining the Evidence Inventory.
4. Follow the blueprint that has been developed in the Self-Study Design.
5. Develop lines of inquiry that address institutional priorities and pursue those lines of inquiry objectively and faithfully.
6. Regularly conceptualize the connections between the mission, Standards and Requirements, priorities, and outcomes.
7. Avoid individual agendas and promote the collective benefit of the Self-Study for FSU and its community.
8. Ground findings in gathered evidence to demonstrate compliance with the Commission's Standards and Requirements.
9. Compose realistic recommendations for institutional improvement.
10. Understand the expectation that both institutional strengths and challenges will be identified.
11. Identify opportunities for improvement and innovation.
12. Address recommendations from previous Self-Study outcomes, if any.

Working Group Membership and Lines of Inquiry

Working Group - Standard I: Mission and Goals

Steering Committee Liaison: Robert Ketterman, Facilities Planner

Co-Chairs:

- Amy Shimko, Director - Career and Professional Development Center

- Rebekah Taylor, Associate Professor and Chair - Biology

Membership:

- Natalia Buta, Associate Professor and Chair - Recreation and Parks Management
- Troy Dell, Athletic Director
- Jay DeWire, Assistant Professor - Music
- Cody Kent, Assistant Professor - Biology
- Ken Levitt, Associate Professor - Management
- Stacy Wassell, Director - Remote Work Center, Small Business Development Center
- Robin Wynder, Assistant Vice President - Center for Student Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Lines of Inquiry:

1. To what extent does FSU have a clearly defined mission and goals?
2. To what extent are the institutional goals realistic, appropriate to higher education, and consistent with FSU's mission?
3. How do the goals focus on student learning and related outcomes?
4. To what extent are the goals supported by the administration and educational and student support programs and services?
5. How does the university periodically assess the mission and goals to ensure they are relevant and achievable?

Working Group - Standard II: Ethics and Integrity

Steering Committee Liaison: Latisha Cooper, Director – Accessibility Services

Co-Chairs:

- Carl Crowe, Assistant Vice President, Dean of Students - Student Affairs
- Eric Moore, Professor - Physics

Membership:

- Lori Bennett, Director - Information Technology Security
- Ben Brauer, Director - Title IX/ADA/EEO
- Naomi Gades, Assistant Professor - English and Foreign Languages and Literature
- Sean Henry, Librarian III
- Kevin Kehrwald, Professor - English and Foreign Languages and Literature
- Angie Luvara, Assistant Professor - Sociology
- Tamara Lowry, Contract and Grant Specialist - Office of Sponsored Programs
- Elly McConnell, Associate Professor - History
- Cindy Smith, Chief - University Police
- Liza Zakharova, Librarian II

Lines of Inquiry:

1. How does the university demonstrate a commitment to academic freedom, intellectual freedom, freedom of expression, and respect for intellectual property rights?
2. How does the university create a climate that fosters respect among students, faculty, staff, and administration representing a range of diverse backgrounds, ideas, and perspectives?
3. What university policies, procedures, and practices are in place to address complaints and grievances, to avoid conflicts of interest, to assure fair and impartial treatment of constituencies in all facets of operations, and to assure that communications are honest and truthful to both internal and external constituencies?
4. How does the university promote affordability and accessibility and ensure that students understand funding options, value received for cost, and methods to make informed decisions about incurring debt?
5. What evidence shows that the university complies with all applicable federal, state, and Commission reporting policies, regulations, and requirements, including those in the Verification of Compliance?
6. How does the university periodically assess ethics and integrity as evidenced in institutional policies, processes, practices, and the manner in which these are implemented?

Working Group - Standard III: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience

Steering Committee Liaison: Benjamin Norris, Associate Professor - Chemistry

Co-Chairs:

- Jill Buterbaugh, Associate Professor - Nursing
- Justin Dunmyre, Interim Associate Dean - College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Associate Professor - Mathematics

Membership:

- Ali Ashraf, Associate Dean - College of Business, Associate Professor - Finance
- Holly Currie, Associate Professor - Chemistry, Director - Center for Teaching Excellence
- Victoria Gearhart, Director - Center for International Education
- Kim Kurek, Director - Programs Advancing Student Success
- Kate Sheehan, Assistant Professor - Biology
- Rita Thomas, Manager - Instructional Design and Technology

Lines of Inquiry:

1. How are university degree and certificate programs designed to foster coherent student learning experiences and to promote synthesis of learning?

2. To what extent are student learning experiences designed, delivered, and assessed by faculty who demonstrate effective professional responsibilities, are qualified for the positions they hold, are sufficient in number, engage in professional growth and innovation, and are regularly evaluated?
3. How are academic programs clearly and accurately described in official university publications so that students can understand and follow degree and program requirements and expected completion time?
4. To what extent does FSU provide sufficient learning opportunities and resources to support the institution's programs of study and students' academic progress?
5. In what ways does the general education program offer a sufficient scope of academic programs to draw students into new areas of intellectual experience, expand their cultural and global awareness and cultural sensibility, prepare students to make well-reasoned judgements, and ensure that students acquire essential skills?
6. How do graduate programs offer opportunities for the development of research, scholarship, and independent thinking led by faculty with credentials appropriate for graduate-level curricula?
7. How does the university review and approve student learning opportunities that are designed, delivered, or assessed by third-party providers?
8. How does the university periodically assess the effectiveness of programs providing student learning opportunities?

Working Group - Standard IV: Support of the Student Experience

Steering Committee Liaison: Jeff Graham, Senior Associate V.P. - Student Affairs

Co-Chairs:

- Robert Cooper, Assistant Vice President for Student Engagement - Student and Community Involvement
- Kara Platt, Associate Professor and Chair - Nursing

Membership:

- Kim Hinds-Brush, Director - Residence Life
- Katherine Kinsinger, Director - Academic Advising
- Patrick O'Brien, Director - Civic Engagement
- Kara Rogers-Thomas, Professor - Sociology, Director - University Honors Program
- Carrie Saunders, Assistant Athletic Director - Academics and Student Athlete Development, Senior Woman Administrator - Athletics
- Bill Seddon, Professor - Biology

Lines of Inquiry:

1. To what extent does the university have clearly stated policies and processes for admissions, financial aid, retention, supporting underprepared students, advising, and successful student achievement?
2. To what extent does the university have policies and procedures for evaluating and accepting transfer credits and credits earned through means other than higher education?
3. What policies and procedures are in place to ensure the safe and secure maintenance and appropriate release of student information and records?
4. How does FSU ensure that athletics, student life, and other extracurricular activities are regulated by the same academic, fiscal, and administrative principles and procedures that govern all other programs?
5. How does the university review and approve student support services that are designed, delivered, and assessed by third-party providers?
6. How does the university periodically assess the effectiveness of programs that support the student's experience?

Working Group - Standard V: Educational Effectiveness Assessment

Steering Committee Liaison: Janet Mattern, Assoc. Professor - Educational Professions

Co-Chairs:

- Jill Morris, Associate Professor - English and Foreign Languages and Literature
- Keith Terry, Assistant Dean - College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Professor - Communication

Membership:

- David Bunnell, Associate Director - Physician Assistant Program, Assistant Professor - PA Medicine
- Jenna Epstein, Assistant Professor - Educational Professions
- Audra Houser, Assistant Professor - Nursing
- Sherri Sheetz, Assistant Director - Budget and Fixed Assets
- Jason Speights, Associate Professor - Physics and Engineering
- Jodi Ternent, Associate Registrar

Lines of Inquiry:

1. How are the university's educational goals at the degree/program and institutional levels interrelated and aligned with its mission?
2. How is student achievement of degree/program goals systematically assessed?
3. How are assessment results used for the improvement of educational effectiveness?
4. What evidence shows adequate and appropriate institutional review and approval of assessment services that are designed, delivered, and assessed by third-party providers?

5. How does the university periodically assess the effectiveness of assessment processes for educational effectiveness improvement?

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

Steering Committee Liaison: Denise Murphy, Assistant V.P. - Finance and Budget

Co-Chairs:

- Karen Keller, Professor - Biology
- Randall Lowe, Librarian IV

Membership:

- John Brewer, Director - Physical Plant
- Tim Pelesky, Chief Information Officer - Information Technology
- Eric Seifarth, Assistant Athletic Director - Compliance
- Rubin Stevenson, Senior Associate Athletic Director - Internal Operations
- Jaime Striplin, Assistant Professor - Nursing
- Jamie Winters, Assistant Director - Student Activities
- David Zheng, Professor - Computer Science and Information Technologies
- Katie Buehner, Assistant Director - Residence Life

Lines of Inquiry:

1. How are institutional objectives assessed and linked to mission and goal achievement, and how are assessment results used for planning and resource allocation?
2. How do planning and improvement processes provide for constituent participation and incorporate the use of assessment results?
3. What evidence is there that the financial planning and budgeting process is aligned with the university's mission, goals, and strategic plan?
4. To what extent are the university's fiscal and human resources and physical and technical infrastructure adequate to support its operations and program delivery?
5. What evidence is there of well-defined decision-making processes and clear assignment of responsibility and accountability?
6. To what extent does the university have a comprehensive plan for facilities, infrastructure, and technology that is linked to the strategic and financial planning processes?
7. Does the university have an annual independent audit confirming financial viability, and how does the university address any cited concerns?
8. What strategies are used to measure and assess the adequacy and efficient utilization of institutional resources that are required to support the institution's mission and goals?
9. How does the university periodically assess the effectiveness of planning, resource allocation, institutional renewal processes, and availability of resources?

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

Steering Comm. Liaison: John Lombardi, Professor - Communication, Chair - Faculty Senate

Co-Chairs:

- Johnston Hegeman, Assistant Vice President and Registrar
- James Saku, Professor - Geography

Membership:

- Holly Clark, Director - TRIO Student Support Services
- Chris Everett, HR Business Partner - Human Resources
- Rachel Farris, Director - Bookstore
- Lea Messman-Mandicott, Director - Library
- Nooh Muhammad, Assistant Professor - Computer Science and Information Technologies
- Mike Murtagh, Professor - Psychology
- Cindy Troutman, Executive Administrative Assistant - College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
- Michael Williams, Assistant Professor - Educational Professions

Lines of Inquiry:

1. To what extent does the university have a clearly articulated and transparent governance structure?
2. What evidence demonstrates that the university has a legally constituted governing body with clearly defined roles and responsibilities for oversight?
3. What evidence demonstrates that the President and Executive Cabinet have appropriate experience, skills, and credentials and that their roles and reporting relationships are clearly defined?
4. How does the university periodically assess the effectiveness of governance, leadership, and administration?

Writing Team

The Writing Team will ensure that the final document utilizes one common university voice. Members of this team are seasoned university professionals responsible for authoring reports and/or experienced academic writers.

Steering Committee Liaisons: Sara-Beth Bittinger, Sudhir Singh, Sara Wilhelm

Co-Chairs:

- Michael Mathias, Dean - College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Professor - Philosophy
- Sean Morton, Senior Institutional Research Analyst - Assessment and Institutional Research

Membership:

- Heather Hurst, Associate Professor - Educational Professions
- Benjamin Norris, Associate Professor - Chemistry

Communications/Logistics Team

The Communications/Logistics Team will ensure that the university community is informed of the Self-Study process, articulate communication and messaging to maximize stakeholder participation, and assist the Steering Committee with managing the logistics of the Self-Study.

Steering Committee Liaisons: Sara-Beth Bittinger, Sudhir Singh, Sara Wilhelm

Co-Chairs:

- Mia Cross, Director - Communication
- Nicole McDonald, Assistant Vice President - News and Media Services

Membership:

- Allen Flanagan, Director - Student Auxiliary Services
- Brittni Kaetzel, Director - Special Academic Services
- Donnell VanSkiver, Executive Administrative Assistant - Office of the President
- Boyce Williams, Dean - College of Education

Data Team

The Data Team will ensure that the evidence inventory is comprehensive and encompasses all appropriate evidence to support the Self-Study process.

Steering Committee Liaison: Sara-Beth Bittinger

Co-Chairs:

- Tim Pelesky, Chief Information Officer - Information Technology
- Selina Smith, Director - Assessment and Institutional Research

Membership:

- Ali Ashraf, Associate Dean - College of Business, Associate Professor - Finance
- Jennifer Delaney, Program Specialist - College of Education

- Justin Dunmyre, Interim Associate Dean - College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Associate Professor - Mathematics
- Sean Morton, Senior Institutional Research Analyst - Assessment and Institutional Research
- Kim Rotruck, Associate Dean - College of Education, Professor - Educational Professions
- Natalie Wagoner, Director - Admissions

Verification for Compliance Team

The Verification for Compliance Team will ensure that the Self-Study demonstrates that FSU is compliant with all accreditation-relevant federal regulations and will ensure completion and submission of the Institutional Federal Compliance Report.

Steering Committee Liaison: Sara-Beth Bittinger

Co-Chairs:

- Brad Nixon, General Counsel - Office of the President
- Johnston Hegeman, Assistant Vice President and Registrar

Membership:

- Ben Brauer, Director - Title IX/ADA/EEO
- Scott Fridley, Financial Analyst - Budget Office
- Lisa Hersch, Chief Human Resources Officer
- Tim Pelesky, Chief Information Officer - Information Technology
- Tina Nightingale, Bursar - University and Student Billing
- Travis Hitchins, Director - Financial Aid

VI. Guidelines for Reporting

Each Working Group will provide its reports and/or other deliverables in collaboration with the Steering Committee in accordance with the timeline established in IX below. Working Groups will use the following template when developing draft and final reports:

I. Executive Summary of Report

II. Introduction: Provide a general overview of the lines of inquiry and how the Working Group addressed the criteria for the appropriate Standard considering the institutional priorities addressed, and identify the programs and units involved in the working group's product.

III. Method and Analysis: Describe the data compiled and analyzed and the procedures used by the Working Group to gather the information needed to address its lines of inquiry. Identify appropriate evidence relative to the criteria (see Table 4). Present narrative on how the

institution adheres to the relevant Standard. This section is expected to constitute the largest and most substantial component of the report.

IV. Institutional Strengths: Enumerate concisely the evidence-supported strengths, innovations, and successes of the institution, as determined in the analysis.

V. Areas for Improvement: Briefly identify the issues that need to be addressed by the institution, in accordance with the gathered evidence and the resultant analysis.

VI. Recommendation(s): Identify major suggestions for addressing the areas for improvement noted above, along with proposed strategies for institutional improvement. Be mindful of any budgetary, regulatory, or institutional constraints that may potentially limit implementation of your suggestions.

Each report should be appropriately comprehensive yet concise (typically 10 pages in length, double-spaced using the Times New Roman 12-point font, and paragraph format with one-inch margins).

VII. Organization of the Final Self-Study Report

The final Self-Study Report will be organized by chapter, beginning with an executive summary that includes key findings and recommendations for continuous improvement and innovation as well as a crosswalk to the key assessments within the assessment inventory. The introduction will include an alignment table to clearly demonstrate the connections to the evidence inventory (see Table 4).

Table 4
Template for Alignment Table

Standard (I-VII)	Evidence Inventory Crosswalk Mapping
Criteria	

An introductory chapter will provide an overview of the institution and brief description of how the institutional priorities were selected and align to the standards and institutional mission and goals. The introduction will also explain the organization of the remaining chapters. Subsequent chapters will be organized by standard and each will contain the following:

- narrative of analytically based inquiry and reflection
- conclusions, including identified strengths and challenges, with reference to appropriate criteria
- recommendations for ongoing institutional improvement and innovation
- summary of the effect the pandemic and FSU's COVID protocols affected compliance with the criteria as needed
- cross-references to relevant materials in other parts of the report
- table of documents used to support each assertion

The report will be organized as follows:

1. Table of Contents, Glossary, List of Tables
2. Executive Summary
3. Introduction
4. Standard I: Mission and Goals
5. Standard II: Ethics and Integrity
6. Standard III: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience
7. Standard IV: Support of the Student Learning Experience
8. Standard V: Educational Effectiveness Assessment
9. Standard VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement
10. Standard VII: Governance, Leadership, and Administration
11. COVID-19 Addendum (as needed based on self-study process)
12. Requirements of Affiliation (including links to where each is addressed in the report and additional evidence if not addressed in the body of the report)
13. Conclusion (including a summary of key findings, outline of initial plans to address identified opportunities, and concluding observations of how the Self-Study process is being used to continuously improve student achievement and meet the University's mission and goals)

VIII. Strategy for Verification of Compliance with Applicable Federal Regulatory Requirements

As part of Frostburg's Self-Study process, it has identified a Verification for Compliance Team, co-chaired by the University General Counsel and the Registrar, who will collaborate with appropriate units across the institution to compile evidence for the Verification of Compliance with Accreditation and Relevant Federal Regulations Report and Requirements of Affiliation related to compliance. Regular updates will be provided to the steering committee during monthly steering committee meetings.

The steering committee will facilitate further communication between the Verification of Compliance team and other working groups as needed. A draft compliance report will be submitted to the steering committee for approval in October 2024. The Institutional Federal Compliance Report and supporting evidence will be combined into a single bookmarked PDF file and **uploaded to the MSCHE portal in January 2025**, along with the Self-Study Report and other relevant documents. The Verification for Compliance Team membership includes:

- Ben Brauer, Director - Title IX/ADA/EEO
- Brad Nixon, University Counsel, Co-Chair
- Jay Hegeman, Assistant Vice President and Registrar, Co-Chair
- Lisa Hersch, Chief Human Resources Officer
- Sara Beth Bittinger, Self-Study Co-Chair and Steering Committee Liaison
- Scott Fridley, Financial Analyst - Budget office
- Tim Pelesky, Chief Information Officer
- Tina Nightengale, Bursar
- Travis Hitchins, Director - Financial Aid

Based on the current compliance areas, Table 5 includes a non-exhaustive list of units to be consulted in the process:

Table 5
Units to be Consulted Based on Current Compliance Areas

Compliance Area	Units to be Consulted
Student identity verification in distance and correspondence education	Offices of the Registrar, Financial Aid, Student Billing, and Information Technology
Transfer of credit policies and articulation agreements	Office of the Provost, Office of Admissions, Office of the Registrar
Title IV program responsibilities	Office of Financial Aid
Institutional records of student complaints	Student Affairs, University Counsel, Office of the Provost, Deans' Offices
Required information for students and the public	Assessment and Institutional Research, Office of the Registrar, Office of IT, Provost's Office
Standing with State and other accrediting agencies	Assessment and Institutional Research, Provost's Office, Deans' Offices
Contractual relationships	Office of the University Counsel, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, Office of the Provost, Office of Student Affairs, Budget, and Finance
Assignment of credit hours	Office of the Registrar, Faculty Senate

IX. Self-Study Timetable

Table 6 outlines all significant events and major milestones during the Self-Study process, beginning with early preparation to completion. As communicated to the MSCHE Staff Liaison, the University prefers the campus visit by the Evaluation Team to be scheduled in Spring 2025.

Table 6
Self-Study Timetable (Spring 2025 Visit)

Date(s)	Activity/Task
November 2022	Middle States Self-Study Institute
January 2023	Assemble Steering Committee, remote meeting with Commission Staff Liaison (third - fourth week), and begin to outline draft of Self-Study Design (SSD)
February - April 2023	Assemble Working Groups, submit draft SSD by April 11 (two weeks prior to Self-Study Pre-Visit)
March - April 2023	Commission Staff Liaison Self-Study Pre-Visit (SSPV) to campus

May 2023	Revisions and acceptance of SSD
June – November 2023	Working Groups gather, assemble, and analyze pertinent information and submit working drafts to the Steering Committee. Submit the working draft November 30 th .
January - May 2024	Self-Study Evaluation Team Chair selected, visit dates set, accepted SSD sent to Team Chair, and Self-Study Report initial draft shared with campus community (May 1, 2024)
May - September 2024	Self-Study Report revisions and campus review
September - November 2024	Self-Study Report draft sent to Team Chair (two weeks before visit), Team Chair's preliminary visit
December 2024 - January 2025	Self-Study Report finalized based on Team Chair feedback and shared with campus
February - March 2025	Final Self-Study Report/Verification of Compliance/Evidence Inventory uploaded to MSCHE portal (six weeks before Evaluation Team visit)
April - May 2025	Self-Study Evaluation Team Visit, Team Report, Institutional Response
June/November 2025	Commission meets to determine action (Note: Team Visits conducted after April 15 are reviewed and acted upon by the Commission at the November meeting)

X. Communication Plan

Frostburg State University has developed a communication plan that will inform its stakeholders and provide opportunities for input throughout the Self-Study process. The Self-Study co-chairs have partnered with FSU's News and Media Services department to ensure that information is relayed in a consistent and concise manner that will keep all stakeholders apprised of the Self-Study progress. The effectiveness of the communication plan will be assessed through measurement of campus participation in open forums, responsiveness to Self-Study-driven campus surveys, periodic surveys to gauge campus awareness of the Self-Study process, and the like. Table 7 details the audiences, communication methods, and timing of communications.

Table 7
Communication Plan

Audience	Communication Method	Timing
President and Provost	In-person meetings with the Self-Study co-chairs to provide updates and seek guidance on Self-Study process	Bi-weekly from inception to completion
Steering Committee and Workgroup members	Hybrid meetings with co-chairs to review progress and discuss next steps	Monthly, starting January 2023 through Spring 2025
Faculty, Staff, and Students	Open forums held in hybrid format (in-person and virtual) to receive input/feedback on the Self-Study process and provide updates on major milestones	Each semester starting Spring 2023 through Fall 2025
	Campus-wide email updates	Included in the President's weekly email update to the campus as needed, beginning Spring 2023
Executive Cabinet	Provide updates and request input/feedback at weekly cabinet meetings with the President	As needed throughout the Self-Study process
Alumni, Surrounding Community, and Other External Stakeholders	Work with News and Media Services to disseminate information publicly about the Self-Study process	At least semi-annually and as needed

XI. Evaluation Team Profile

The Evaluation Team Chair should have knowledge of and experience with MSCHE institutions that have comparable missions and priorities, challenges, Carnegie classifications, enrollments, and student/faculty populations to those of Frostburg. Specifically, FSU believes a president of a regional comprehensive institution (e.g., a state-system university) with an appreciation of and focus on regional development would serve well as the Evaluation Team Chair.

Regarding potential Evaluation Team Members, FSU has identified the following characteristics and expertise it would prefer those individuals to possess:

- Expertise with institutions that have strong student career foci in the following degree areas (over 50% of Frostburg applicants mention these career aspirations):
 - Educational Professions
 - Health and Natural Sciences
 - Business Administration, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
- An appreciation for student diversity and the challenges associated with inclusion (more than 40% of FSU's enrollment is students of color)
- An understanding of the challenges faced by first-generation students.
- Experience with Division II student athletes and sports
- Union expertise is not a strong need: AFSCME (for staff) and FOP (for police) are the only collective bargaining units on campus, and AFSCME is bargained at the University System of Maryland level
- An appreciation for institutions in rural/college town settings
- Familiarity with faculty members who teach a 4/4 workload
- Appreciation for a strong student focus in service/community engagement

- Familiarity with residential higher education institutions (80%+ of FSU students live on-campus or in the town of Frostburg)
- Experience with online student learning at the graduate level (e.g., Master of Business Administration, M.S. in Nursing, M.S. in Applied Computer Science)

Frostburg also suggests the following peer institutions for comparative analysis, all of which are within MSCHE's scope:

Peers	Aspirant
Clarion University of Pennsylvania	College of New Jersey
Kean University	Millersville University of Pennsylvania
SUNY Buffalo State	Shippensburg University
SUNY College at Potsdam	SUNY at New Paltz

In terms of number of undergraduate degrees awarded, Frostburg's largest programs currently are: 1) Nursing; 2) Business; 3) Psychology; 4) Education; and 5) Liberal Studies. The largest number of graduate degrees awarded are in: 1) Business Administration; 2) Education (M.Ed.); 3) Physician Assistant Studies; 4) Computer Science; and 5) Nursing.

Evidence Inventory Strategy

The master evidence inventory is a repository of all resources and documents identified to document compliance with the standards and requirements of affiliation. The master inventory will be curated and refined to create the final evidence inventory, which will contain only those documents used to support assertions made in the draft and final reports.

The master inventory will facilitate identification of areas lacking sufficient documentation and create a long-term resource for the University. The primary inventory is housed in a Microsoft Teams site linked to the Self-Study SharePoint site.

Steering committee and working group members will have access to the inventory. The master inventory will initially be populated by the Office of the Assessment and Institutional Research (AIR) and the Data Team using the Documentation Roadmap. AIR will provide technical support and expertise in using the inventory. A research librarian was consulted to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of the reference functions of the evidence inventory.

A multi-phase process will be used to populate and curate the evidence inventory:

Evidence Collection. Working groups will gather all relevant resources and documents to support their assigned standards and requirements of affiliation. As evidence is collected, members will populate the master inventory. Groups are charged with completing their initial evidence collection by the end of August 2023. Documents in the inventory will contain a number for each document, the document name, a brief description of the document, a link to the document, the version/date of publication, the individual or unit responsible for the process or

enforcement of the policy, and which criteria, standard(s), or requirement(s) the evidence supports. The Data Team will ensure that all documents meet these criteria.

Gap Analysis. Following the initial evidence collection, Working Groups will identify and document gaps and provide recommendations for addressing the gaps. The steering committee will review the gap analyses and determine how to address identified gaps. The Data Team will assist in this effort. This gap analysis will lead to the development of the Final Evidence Inventory. The final inventory will include only the documents referenced in the final Self-Study Report. This final inventory will be uploaded to the MSCHE portal in January 2025. The master and final inventories will be maintained and made available to the Evaluation Team and Commissioners upon request.