Academic and Institutional Effectiveness Committee (AIEC)

Meeting Notes Date: August 31, 2026 **Time:** 7:17 PM **Facilitator:** Sara-Beth Bittinger **Duration:** 37 minutes

Attendees

- Sara-Beth Bittinger
- Tim Pelesky
- Justin Dunmyre
- Matthew Crawford
- Jeffrey Graham
- Sharman Siebenthal
- Lei (Lily) Ye
- Latisha (Tish) Cooper
- Yum Nguyen

Absent:

- Jennifer Walsh (schedule conflict)
- Jessica (unable to attend)
- Randy (submitted notes)

Purpose of Meeting

The committee continued its review of the MSCHE 15th Edition Standards, focusing on identifying significant changes from the 13th Edition, discussing implications for Frostburg State University, and considering areas that should be prioritized for evidence collection and assessment planning.

Standard Reviews

Standard I: Mission and Governance

Presented by: Tim Pelesky

Key Changes

- No major components were removed from the previous standards.
- Increased emphasis on:

    - Institutional governance.
    - Board policies and effectiveness.
    - Leadership and administration.
    - Assessment of governance effectiveness.

Implications

- Institutions will need stronger evidence demonstrating:
    - Governance structures and bylaws.
    - Effectiveness of leadership processes.
    - Assessment and continuous improvement of governance practices.

Follow Up

- Tim will share his detailed Copilot-generated comparative analysis with Sara-Beth.

Standard II: Ethics, Integrity, and Safe Learning Environment

Presented by: Sara-Beth Bittinger

Major Changes

- Stronger focus on providing and maintaining a safe environment for learning and teaching.
- Expanded emphasis on:
    - Campus safety.
    - Employee well-being.
    - Student well-being.
    - Institutional responsibility for maintaining supportive learning conditions.

Potential Evidence Areas

- Title IX programs and compliance efforts.
- Campus safety reporting.
- Behavioral intervention processes.
- Student conduct systems.
- Employee wellness resources.
- Emergency preparedness efforts.
- Campus climate assessments.

Additional Observations

- Less explicit emphasis on DEI as a standalone principle.
- Greater emphasis on:
    - Mission alignment.
    - Student experience.

    - Data-informed decision making.
    - Holistic assessment.
    - Innovation.
- Continued emphasis on assessment and continuous improvement.

Discussion

Sharman raised the possibility that digital accessibility initiatives may also serve as evidence under this standard. Sara-Beth noted that accessibility may indeed be relevant as evidence but further review of proposed evidence guidance is needed.

Standard III: Student Success

Presented by: Justin Dunmyre

Major Changes

The new standard merges elements of previous Standards III and V.

Key Areas of Emphasis

Equity Across Student Populations

- Equal treatment and support across instructional modalities.
- Comparable support for:
    - Online students.
    - Transfer students.
    - Traditional students.

Career Readiness and Workforce Alignment

Greater focus on:

- Labor market analysis.
- Employer partnerships.
- Graduate placement outcomes.
- Earnings outcomes.
- Program continuance decisions.

Student Success Metrics

Increased attention to:

- Time to degree.
- Credits at completion.

- Academic progress data.
- Program-level outcome monitoring.

Areas Identified for Early Action

Student-Faculty Interaction

Potential use of Student Evaluation of Instruction (SEI) data to assess:

- Faculty availability.
- Timeliness of feedback.
- Regular and substantive interaction.

Labor Market and Post-Graduation Data

Need for sustainable processes to:

- Review labor market demand.
- Track placement outcomes.
- Use findings in program review and planning.

Academic Progress Monitoring

Need for:

- Trend analysis at both institutional and program levels.
- Feedback loops to departments and chairs.

Learning Outcomes Assessment

Committee should discuss:

- Whether current course-level assessment processes adequately support institutional-level assessment expectations.

Faculty Support Assessment

Need evidence demonstrating effectiveness of:

- Instructional design support.
- Information technology support.
- Faculty development efforts.

Artificial Intelligence

AI appears explicitly in MSCHE examples.

Potential areas for future evidence:

- Faculty support and training related to AI.
- Student guidance and support regarding AI use.

Student Costs and Fees

Need to assess:

- Program-related costs beyond tuition.
- Additional course or participation fees.
- Transparency regarding student expenses.

Follow-Up

Sara-Beth noted that an assessment meeting regarding:

- Curriculum mapping,
- HelioCampus Assessment Platform implementation, and
- Assessment reporting will be scheduled mid-semester.

Standard IV: Student Experience and Support

Presented by: Jeffrey Graham, with comments from Sharman Siebenthal and Lily Ye

Key Findings

- Relatively few changes from the previous standards.
- Strong continuation of expectations around:
    - Admissions.
    - Financial aid.
    - Student support services.
    - Transparency and fairness.

Areas of Continued Emphasis

- Admissions processes.
- Retention strategies.
- Financial aid compliance.
- Transfer credit evaluation.
- Credit for Prior Learning (CPL).

Potential Areas for Evidence

- Inquiry-to-enrollment processes.
- Transfer student support.
- GPS (Guiding Peers to Success) program outcomes.

- Student-athlete support.

Additional Themes

Input vs. Output

Sharman observed a stronger focus on demonstrating outcomes rather than merely documenting activities.

Future evidence should show:

- What students gained from experiences.
- How interventions affected student success.
- Measurable impacts of institutional efforts.

General Education Assessment

Discussion highlighted that:

- General Education Program (GEP) assessment may appear across multiple standards.
- Evidence of student learning and achievement will be critical.

Telling the Story Through Data

Lily emphasized that accreditors increasingly seek:

- Evidence of action.
- Evidence of improvement.
- Demonstration that data are used to make decisions.

The institution must move beyond reporting data toward demonstrating impact.

Standard V: Institutional Effectiveness and Financial Sustainability

Presented by: Latisha Cooper (Randy provided notes)

Key Findings

- Much of the evidence previously collected remains applicable.
- Existing documentation appears generally strong.

Area Requiring Additional Attention

Long-Term Financial Planning

Need to:

- Expand existing evidence.
- Provide more robust documentation.
- Demonstrate long-range financial sustainability planning.

Next Steps

- Continue reviewing evidence.
- Identify and address any remaining gaps.

Department of Education Regulatory Changes

Sara-Beth briefed the committee on proposed federal changes affecting accreditation and institutional accountability.

Areas Potentially Impacted

- Program-level student outcomes reporting.
- Transfer credit evaluation processes.
- Student-facing transfer pathways.
- Methodologies and performance thresholds.
- Accreditor oversight responsibilities.

Key Observations

- Proposed changes align in many ways with Maryland transfer expectations.
- Significant workflow and reporting adjustments may be required.
- Additional federal guidance will likely be necessary if regulations move forward.

Committee Awareness

Members were encouraged to monitor developments, as future accreditation expectations may continue evolving.

Institutional Effectiveness Planning

New AIEC Role

Sara-Beth explained changes to the Institutional Effectiveness (IE) process:

Previous Process

- AIEC reviewed departmental reports.
- AIEC tracked compliance and followed up on deficiencies.

New Process

- Departments will continue assessment activities.
- Colleges and divisions will consolidate findings.
- Division leaders (VPs/Deans) will submit reports.
- AIEC will review divisional-level reports rather than individual departmental plans.

Discussion Points

Concerns Raised

Justin and Yum expressed concern about:

- Losing established assessment processes.
- Confusion regarding timelines and responsibilities.
- Need for communication with deans and academic units.

Proposed Response

Sara-Beth will:

- Develop a visual workflow/process map.
- Outline responsibilities, timelines, and reporting structures.
- Share the draft with AIEC before broader implementation discussions.

Action Items

Action Item	Responsible Party
Share Standard I Copilot analysis	Tim Pelesky
Compile committee feedback on MSCHE 15th Edition changes	Sara-Beth Bittinger
Schedule assessment discussion meeting (curriculum mapping, HelioCampus, reporting)	Sara-Beth Bittinger
Continue reviewing Standards IV and V evidence gaps	Jeff Graham, Sharman Siebenthal, Lily Ye, Latisha Cooper, Randy
Develop divisional assessment workflow and timeline document	Sara-Beth Bittinger
Meet with dean representatives regarding revised IE reporting process	Sara-Beth Bittinger, Matthew Crawford, Yum Nguyen, others

Action Item	Responsible Party
Continue monitoring federal accreditation regulation proposals	AIEC

Key Themes Emerging Across Standards

1. **Increased emphasis on assessment and continuous improvement.**
2. **Stronger focus on demonstrating outcomes, not merely activities.**
3. **Greater use of data-informed decision making.**
4. **More attention to labor market alignment and student success outcomes.**
5. **Expanded expectations around safe and supportive learning environments.**
6. **Growing importance of program-level assessment and evidence of effectiveness.**
7. **Need for sustainable assessment and reporting structures that support future accreditation requirements.**

Adjournment

The meeting concluded with appreciation for members' work reviewing the standards and agreement to continue discussions throughout the fall semester as recommendations are developed for university leadership.

AI-Assisted Analysis Statement

AI-Assisted Review: Portions of the comparative analysis of the MSCHE 13th and 15th Edition Standards referenced during this meeting were generated with assistance from Microsoft Copilot. All analyses, interpretations, and recommendations were reviewed by committee members and discussed during the meeting.

Works Cited

Middle States Commission on Higher Education. *Standards for Accreditation and Requirements of Affiliation, Fifteenth Edition*. MSCHE, 2025.

Middle States Commission on Higher Education. *Standards for Accreditation and Requirements of Affiliation, Thirteenth Edition*. MSCHE, 2015.

Microsoft. *Microsoft Copilot*. Microsoft Corporation, https://copilot.microsoft.com/. Accessed August 2026.