

Read ahead for Middle States Brief by Dr. Yaeger

During the December 2020 Board of Visitor’s meeting the Board will be given an overview of the Middle States Self-Study process, which is an important aspect of NDU’s reaffirmation of institutional accreditation. An inclusive process involving the Board is important for our institutional improvement.

The University owes Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) a self-study design near the end of this Academic Year. An important part of the design is identifying *three to five* Institutional Priorities. The goal of evaluating the priorities selected for the self-study is to benefit the institution in ensuring “institutional accountability, self-appraisal, improvement, and innovation.” Institutional priorities must support the University’s mission and be tied to at least one middle states standard. Two **examples** of Institutional Priorities are:

1. Enhance Teaching	Develop a knowledge base and training program to enhance and improve teaching across all delivery modes (classroom, hybrid and online). Prioritizing teaching excellence will improve support to the joint warfighter.
2. Strengthen academic technology	Enhance and sustain academic technology, ensuring that all faculty, staff, and administration have the training and opportunity to apply the technology in the most effective manner possible. Prioritizing academic technology will ensure that NDU can effectively and efficiently deliver instruction; create and maintain academic records; and execute academic and business process workflows.

The plan is to finalize the priorities during the next Board meeting. A February Board meeting would work well to accommodate an inclusive process and incorporate the priorities into the Self-Study design.

The intent is to have a bottom up process with the final selection being approved by the BoV. Therefore, at the December Board meeting we will not be discussing the initial set of priorities. We want to give the first shot at that to the faculty and staff.

The process for determining NDU’s Institutional Priorities is:

- Disseminate process and initial set of priorities as broadly as possible across the University.
- Have two existing councils, the Faculty Advisory Council (FAC) and Staff Advisory Council (SAC), prioritize the initial list. If there is a strong sense a priority is missing, they may add to the list. Any addition must tie to the NDU mission and Middle States Standards. The expectation is that FAC and SAC members will be discussing and obtaining input from the constituents they represent. Target is to complete task NLT 25 JAN 21.

- The Dean's Council may meet with the FAC and SAC chairs to understand significant (greater than four) differences in priorities. The Dean's Council will then produce a final prioritized list of the initial priorities. Again, if there is a strong sense a priority is missing, they may add to the list. Any addition must tie to the NDU mission and Middle States Standards. Target NLT 31 JAN
- The self-study leadership team will ensure they understand the Dean's reasoning behind the priorities. They will reduce the number of priorities (5-10) to be presented to the Executive Council. Target NLT 7 FEB
- The Executive Council will validate the priorities, place them in the order of importance from their perspective and reduce the number to four to eight. Target NLT 14 FEB
- The Board of Visitors will have a presentation and discussion on each institutional priority. The BoV will make an independent assessment and along with University leadership determine the top three to five institutional priorities to be included NDU's MSCHE Self-Study. Target NLT 27 FEB