Middle States Retreat
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AND

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Inspiration as Defined by Merriam-Webster

“Something that makes someone want to do something or that gives someone an idea about what to do or what to create.”
The Self-Study

• What to do
• What to create
Middle States Self-Study:

What to do.
Stay Focused on the Mission
The Mission as Defined by Middle States

“The accrediting process is intended to strengthen and sustain the quality and integrity of higher education, making it worthy of public confidence and minimizing the scope of external control.”
Accreditation Standards
That Define Characteristics of Excellence

**Institutional Context**
- Mission and Goals
- Planning, Resource Allocation, and Institutional Renewal
- Institutional Resources
- Leadership and Governance
- Administration
- Integrity
- Institutional Assessment

**Educational Effectiveness**
- Student Admissions and Retention
- Student Support Services
- Faculty
- Educational Offerings
- General Education
- Related Educational Activities
- Assessment of Student Learning
What to create.
When you complete your self-study, what should what you created look like?

“Characteristics of Excellence incorporates 14 individual standards, these standards should be viewed as an interrelated whole.”
What will the Middle States reviewers do with what you created?

“Evaluators must consider the totality created by the fundamental elements and any other relevant institutional information or analysis.”
Back to what to do:

• Focus on the charge of your committee BUT be aware of what the other committees are doing and what they produce along the way.

• Be aware that standards assigned to your committee may overlap with those assigned to other committees. You need to be consistent in how you address these standards in the written document and when you meet with the site visitors visit in 2016.

• Identify RED FLAGS as you part of your committee work.

• Assign someone in your committee to develop an action plan and time line for addressing red flags.

• Acknowledge what is needed and ask for help.
What to do:

• Keep all stakeholders informed about the process, campus wide, and do this in a positive, easy to understand way (e.g. town hall meetings, newsletters, a blog).

• Keep sending a message that tells all stakeholders that “great things are happening at Downstate” (e.g. the new building, new student- and faculty-focused initiatives, important research findings).
What to do:

• Regularly post the accreditation standards on public monitors to remind everyone that our success is an imperative and we will continue to sustain our excellence in education, research, and service to the community we serve.

• Have some fun. As you approach the finish line, plan a campus “Middle States Fair.”

And finally...
As President Williams has asked:

“If you see something, say something.”

His goal is **quality improvement**. The issues may or may not be red flags but they probably need to be addressed – quickly.

**Examples:**
- dirty classrooms
- bathrooms that don’t work
- security force and customer service
Pearls of Wisdom (1)

• All committee members should review Downstate’s 2006 Middle States document, in particular, the sections for which they are responsible now.

• The Steering Committee should try to find recent, publically available Middle States documents from other successful institutions and share that information with committees.
Pearls of Wisdom (2)

• Pay close attention to RED FLAGS that will require a change in the way we document that we are in compliance with specific standards.
• Act quickly to remedy compliance deficiencies so that there will be an acceptable paper trail (e.g. a one year record) demonstrating that we are in compliance.
• Be transparent about this in the document submitted to the Middle States. Reviewers like to know that the self-study identified deficiencies and that we acted appropriately to remedy the deficiency.
Pearls of Wisdom (2)

• Determine which Middle States standards are most frequently identified as standards in non-compliance when institutions are reviewed. This will give everyone a heads-up about where we might be vulnerable.

• Document everything!

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Irish Proverbs

“Need teaches a plan.”

“Put silk on a goat, and it’s still a goat.”