



AMERICAN UNIVERSITY MIDDLE STATES FORUM

November 30, 2022

Presented by:

The AU Middle States Self-Study Steering Committee

Sheila Bedford and Karen Froslid Jones, Co-Chairs

Today's Discussion

WELCOME FROM PROVOST STARR

ABOUT ACCREDITATION

AU'S SELF-STUDY

AU's Approach

Brief from the Subcommittees

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

Middle States Self-Study: Provost's Perspective



Middle States Accreditation is...

- Known as “Regional Accreditation”
- “Voluntary”but
 - Required for an institution to offer federal financial aid
 - A key method for federal government to verify compliance with regulations
- Based on peer review and self-regulation
- Centered around a **self-study** process that assesses compliance with seven standards



<http://msche.org>

A hand holding a pen over a document with a purple header bar.

What is “Self-Study”?

“Self Study” refers to both a process and a final document, or report.

Process

- A multi-year process: November 2021-Spring 2024.
- Conducted by a steering committee and subcommittees composed of faculty, staff, and students.
- Involves a review of how well AU meets Middle States standards and our own mission.
- Culminates in a review by a visiting team from peer/like institutions.
 - The visiting team may offer AU suggestions or recommendations about how to better meet Middle States standards.

Report

- A written report that documents how we meet the Middle States standards of accreditation, all within the context of AU’s mission.
- A report delivered to Middle States and reviewed by a team of peers from other higher education institutions.
- A report that offers insights into university strengths and opportunities for improvement.
- The report will offer our own recommendations for how we can better meet the Middle States standards and our mission.

What is expected of self-study?

- A focus on institutional priorities.
- An honest appraisal of how well it meets the Standards, including significant accomplishments and suggestions for improvement.
- An evidence-based approach to review that includes supporting documentation.
- A document that reflects the community as a whole.

*“Self-study will require that the institution engage in an **indepth, comprehensive, and reflective assessment** process to assess the institution’s educational quality and success in meeting its **mission**, as well as identify opportunities for improvement and innovation”*

-Middle States

Middle States Standards

I. Mission and Goals

II. Ethics and Integrity

III. Design and Delivery of the Learning Experience

IV. Support of the Student Experience

V. Educational Effectiveness Assessment (assessment of student learning)

VI. Planning, Resources and Institutional Improvement

VII. Governance, Leadership and Administration

<https://www.msche.org/standards/>

Middle States Approaches to Self-Study

Option One: : Standards-Based Approach

The self-study is organized around the seven standards of accreditation.

Option Two: A Priorities-Based Approach

The self-study is organized around 3-5 institutional priorities. Within each chapter, the standards for accreditation must be addressed

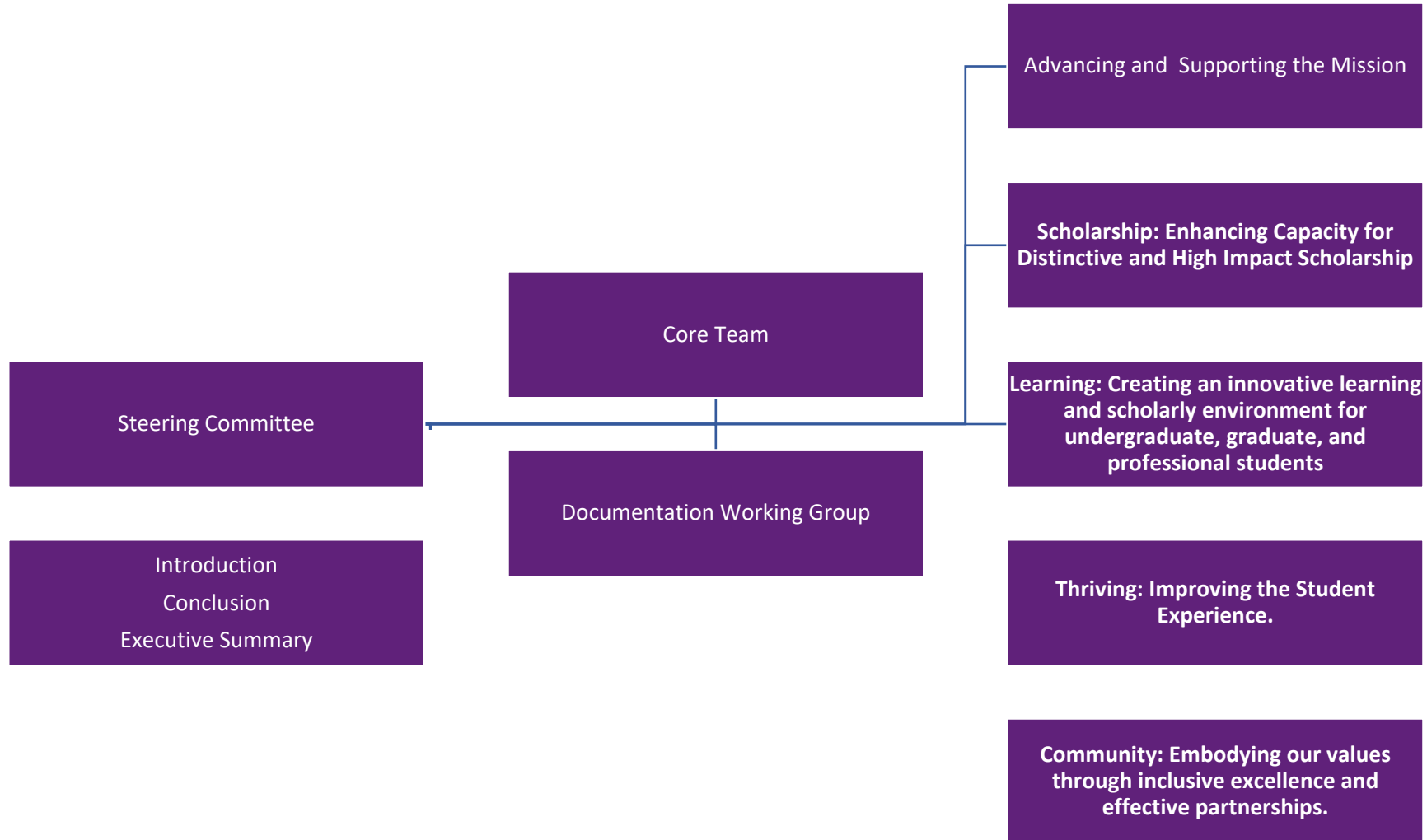
AU Self-Study Priorities

- I. Advancing and Supporting the Mission of American University
- II. Scholarship: Enhancing Capacity for Distinctive and High Impact Research
- III. Thriving: Improving the Student Experience
- IV. Learning: Creating an Enriching Learning and Scholarly Environment for Students
- V. Community: Embodying Our Values through Inclusive Excellence and Effective Partnerships

Each group should consider how the impact of COVID-19, the commitment to inclusive excellence (strategic imperative 6) and How AU Works (strategic imperative 9) impacts its work.

-Self Study Design

AU's Self-Study Organizational Structure



Steering Committee Members

Co-chairs:

Sheila Bedford
Senior Professorial Lecturer,
Kogod

Karen Froslid Jones
Assistant Provost,
Institutional Research and Assessment
Provost

Sharon Alston
Sarah Baldassaro

Robin Beads

Rachel Borchardt
Nicole Bresnahan
Jeffrey Brown
Diana Burley
Corbin Campbell

Elizabeth Deal

Larry Engel
Gihan Fernando
Geraldyn Franceschini
Benjamin Leff
Jackie Mabry
Garret Martin
Jadyn Newman
Bryant Oskvig
Mike Schroeder

Amanda Taylor

Rene Thomas
Paula Weissman

Núria Vilanova

Joe Young

Vice Provost for Undergraduate Enrollment
Chief of Staff
Associate Director, Institutional Research
and Assessment
Librarian
Assistant Vice President and Controller
Dean of Students
Vice Provost for Research and Innovation
Associate Dean, Academic Affairs
Assistant Vice President for Community and
Internal Communications
Associate Professor, Film and Media Arts
Assistant Vice Provost, Career Center
Executive Director, Strategic Implementation
Professor
Executive Director, Principal Gift Strategies
Senior Professorial Lecturer
Undergraduate Student
Chaplain
Associate Dean for Graduate Education
Assistant Vice President of Diversity, Equity,
and Inclusion
Director of Graduate Studies
Senior Professorial Lecturer
Associate Dean of Undergraduate Studies,
Associate Professor
Professor

Campus Life
President
Provost
University Library
Office of Finance and Treasurer
Campus Life
Provost
SOE
University Communications and Marketing
SOC
Provost
People and External Affairs
WCL
Development and Alumni Relations
SIS, Faculty Senate
SPA
Campus Life
SIS
Inclusive Excellence
Kogod, Staff Council
SOC
CAS
SPA

The Purpose of AU's Self-Study



Demonstrate how the institution **meets the commission's standards** for accreditation and requirements of affiliation



Demonstrate best practices in institutional assessment by analyzing how well the institution is meeting key institutional priorities related to its mission and strategic plan. Focus on continuous improvement by demonstrating how assessment has driven institutional change



Engage the AU community in a **transparent and inclusive self-study process** that enables the university to communicate its accomplishments as well as the areas where further work may be needed to better fulfill its mission. Advance the culture of continuous improvement by making recommendations based on the self-study findings



Coordinate and collaborate with those implementing the strategic plan and others in order to advance strategic priorities

AU'S SELF-STUDY

I. Advancing and Supporting the Mission of American University

Scope:

- This chapter will put the entire self-study in context by studying the appropriateness of the mission and Strategic Plan. It will evaluate how well the university's resources are used to advance its goals.

Strategic Imperatives (SI) Covered:

- All

Primary Standards Covered:

- Standard I (Mission)
- Standard VI (Planning and Resource Allocation)

Mission: Examples of Study Questions

- How well do the mission and strategic plan serve the institution and guide the institution in making decisions? Are the mission and strategic plan sufficiently flexible for the institution to be able to respond to internal and external opportunities and changes, including emerging academic disciplines, changing demographics, and new instructional methods and technologies?
- To what extent are the strategic plans integrated with human resources, technology, financial, and facilities planning? How well does the financial planning and budgeting process align with the institution's mission and goals, and how is this alignment continuously improved? How well do the university's resource development, allocation processes, and management practices position the university to meet the current and future opportunities and challenges of fulfilling AU's mission?
- What approach is taken to implement the strategic plan and how well is progress against outcomes assessed? To what extent does the university have metrics that enable it to track and inform progress on key strategic goals, and how can AU better measure whether it is delivering on its goals?

Members of the Mission Subcommittee include:

Tri-Chairs

Sarah Baldassaro, chief of staff,
President's Office

Nicole Bresnahan, assistant vice
president and controller, OFT

Jan Post, executive director,
university budget planning and
operations, University Budget
Office, OFT

Members

Ernesto Castañeda-Tinoco, associate professor, CAS

Tony Cortes, director of capital program management, OFT

Geralynn Franceschini, executive director of strategic implementation, Office of People and External Affairs

Olivia Ivey, librarian, University Library; former chair, Faculty Senate Committee on Academic Budgets and Benefits

Ann Joiner, executive director, total awards and service delivery, Human Resources

Eric Leal, associate dean of budget and administration, CAS

Jackie Mabry, executive director, principal gift strategies, Development and Alumni Relations

Joseph Riquelme, vice provost and chief online officer

Syed Salahuddin, financial planning and analysis director, WCL

Ximena Varela, associate professor, CAS

Vicky Wilkins, dean, SPA

Julie Zito, assistant vice president of marketing, University Communications and Marketing

II. Enhancing Capacity for Distinctive and High Impact Scholarship and Research

Scope:

- Scholarship is one of the three strategic theme of the university's strategic plan and aims to advance the scholar-teacher ideal. AU is committed to amplifying the impact of its scholarship and pursuing opportunities that address the most pressing issues facing our local, national, and global communities. Although scholarship is not covered well in the standards for accreditation, it is important to AU's mission.

Strategic Imperatives (SIs) Covered:

- SI 1 (Areas of Strategic Focus)
- SI 2 (Research)

Primary Standards Covered:

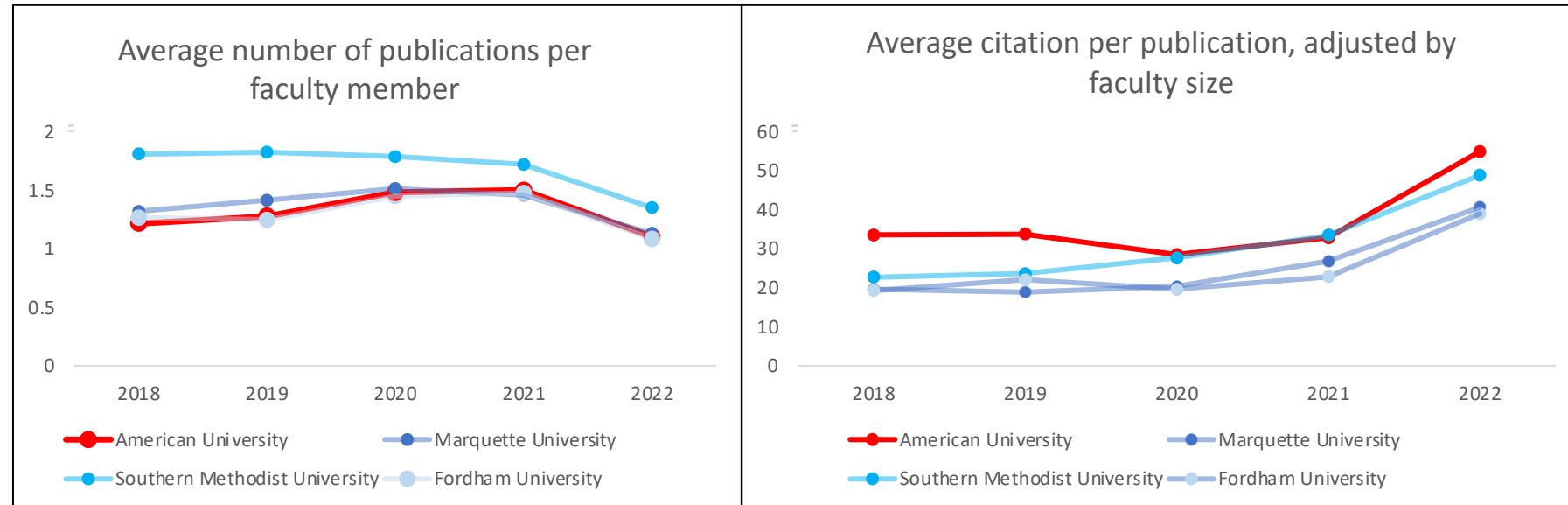
- Standard I (Mission)
- Standard III (Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience)
- Standard VI (Planning and Resource Allocation)

Scholarship: Examples of Study Questions

- How does AU define the scholar-teacher ideal? What are the values that define its research goals within the context of this ideal? How can the university be the best version of this ideal?
- How can AU measure productivity and the impact of its scholarship using both traditional (e.g., citation counts) and non-traditional scholarly measures? How can AU's portfolio of productivity measures be improved to capture policy impact? What are the most appropriate measures of student engagement in research? How does the university define and measure diversity, equity, and inclusion in the research enterprise?
- How does AU frame its approach to research within the context of the transformation of higher education, and how can our approach be improved? What does this transformation mean for research at AU in the next five and 10 years? How can resources and structures be used to better meet our goal? How might a new approach further AU's mission?

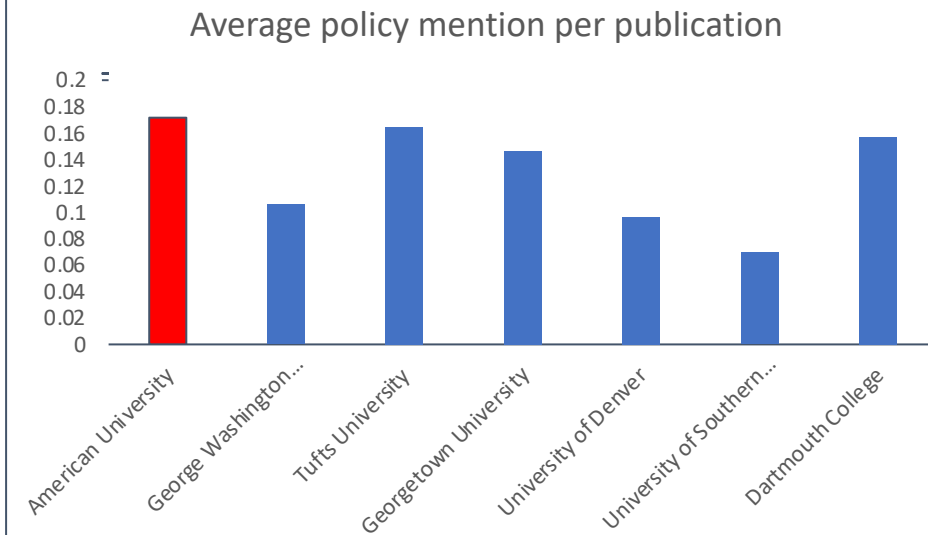
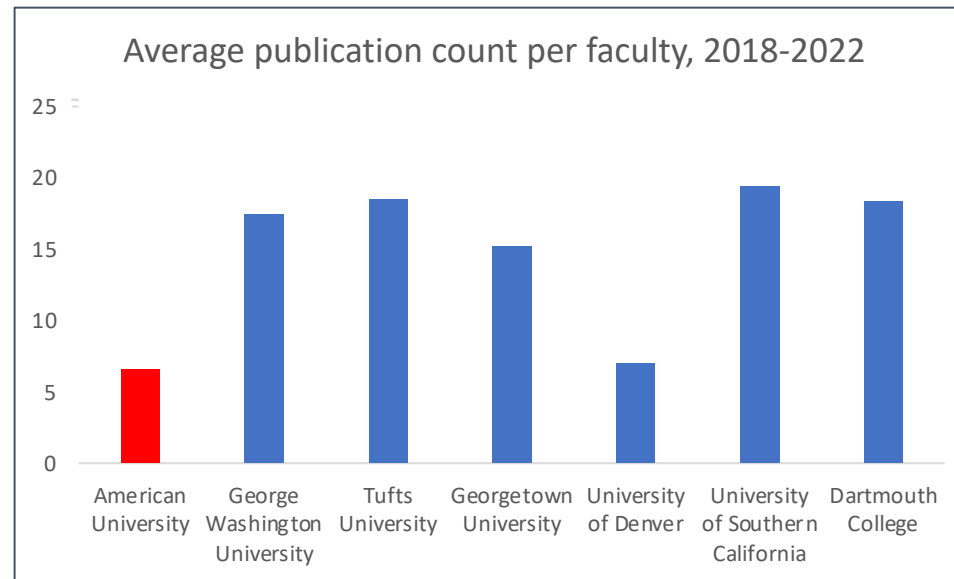
Some preliminary findings: scholarly impact

- **AU is comparable, or even slightly ahead, on scholarship and scholarly impact compared to similar R2 institutions**



Preliminary findings: policy impact

- We are **AHEAD** of other policy school leaders when it comes to citation in policy documents



Members of Scholarship Subcommittee include:

Co-Chairs:

Rachel Borchardt, librarian,
University Library

Joe Young, professor, SPA & SIS

Members

Diana Burley, vice provost for research and innovation

Derrick Cogburn, professor, SIS and Kogod

Kim Blankenship, professor and associate dean for research, CAS

Raychelle Burks, associate professor of chemistry, CAS

Amy Butler, senior director, corporate and foundation relations, Development and Alumni Relations

Parthiban David, senior associate dean, Kogod

Terry Davidson, director, Center for Behavioral Neuroscience and distinguished professor, CAS

Dustin Friedman, associate professor, CAS

Kiho Kim, professor, CAS; executive director, Center for Teaching, Research and Learning

Jenny Roberts, professor, WCL; member, Faculty Senate Committee on Scholarship

Darrion Sprueill, project manager, AU ADVANCE

Maggie Stogner, professor and executive director, Center for Environmental Filmmaking, SOC

Matt Taylor, associate professor and interim associate dean of research, SIS

Matt Zembrzuski, research compliance manager, Office of Sponsored Programs
PhD Student (TBD)

III. Thriving: Improving the Student Experience

- Building on the strength of AU’s high-quality teaching and curriculum, AU focuses on enhancing the overall student experience and offering strong cocurricular, extracurricular, social and growth experiences...This chapter examines the student experience from admission to graduation and beyond...It studies the degree to which AU admits students who can be successful. It examines how the university supports students and how AU provides an overall experience that enables students to not just graduate but thrive.

Strategic Initiatives (SIs) Covered:

- SI 3 (The Student Experience)
- SI 4 (Learning for Undergraduate, Graduate and Professional Students)

Primary Standards Covered:

- Standard II (Ethics and Integrity)
- Standard IV (Governance, Leadership, and Administration)

Thriving: Examples of Study Questions

- What does thriving mean at American University? How does thriving differ from retention and graduation? How does wellness contribute to thriving? How does thriving differ by student type or academic level? How does AU's commitment to inclusive excellence shape our definition of thriving? To what extent does the university show a commitment to thriving? How do we measure thriving?
- What role do high impact learning experiences such as experiential learning (for example, internships, study abroad, student research) and/or student involvement play in student thriving and student success? To what extent are they available to all students? To what extent might curricular or other structures prevent students from taking advantage of these opportunities? How well does this experience link into what happens in the classroom? How could these experiences be enhanced?
- What support services does AU offer students and what services are available to students regardless of modality? To what extent are the services adequate? Are there lessons learned from providing services during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Members of the Thriving Subcommittee include:

Tri-Chairs:

Sharon Alston, vice provost for undergraduate enrollment

Larry Engel, associate professor, SOC

Gihan Fernando, assistant vice provost, Career Center

***Andrea Felder** will be a tri-chair after Sharon retires

Members:

Justin Bernstine, associate dean of students, Campus Life

Traci Callandrillo, assistant vice president, Campus Life

Jimmy Ellis, associate dean, undergraduate education

Andrea Felder, assistant vice provost, undergraduate admissions, Office of Enrollment

Garrett Graddy-Lovelace, associate professor, SIS

Shirleyne McDonald, director, financial aid communication and service, Office of Enrollment

Jadyn Newman, undergraduate student, SPA

Sharyl Pattillo, director, student development and services, Kogod

Ayana Wilson, director, Center for Student Involvement, Campus Life

Graduate Student (TBD)

IV. Creating an Enriching Learning and Scholarship Environment for Students

- This chapter focuses on all aspects of the student learning experience, including how well the university provides a comprehensive, integrative experience that includes core curriculum, learning in the major, and experiential learning opportunities.

Strategic Initiatives (SIs) Covered:

- SI 3 (The Student Experience)
- SI 4 (Learning for Undergraduate, Graduate and Professional Students)
- SI 5 (Lifelong Learning)

Primary Standards Covered:

- Standard III (Design and Delivery of the Student Experience)
- Standard V (Educational Effectiveness Assessment)

Learning: Examples of Study Questions

- How well does AU develop, manage, and enact undergraduate curricula that reflect foundational concepts, modes of inquiry, diverse perspectives, latest developments in the field, and pedagogical best practices to position students for success? How well does AU Core (general education) program advance AU's mission?
- How well does AU develop, manage, and enact graduate, including professional curriculum—regardless of modality—that reflect theoretical approaches, empirical or historical foundations, diverse perspectives, latest developments in the field, and pedagogical best practices to position students for success?
- To what extent does AU recruit, retain, and develop a diverse body of faculty who are experts in their academic disciplines and professional fields to design and deliver effective learning experiences for many different types of learners and programs across the institution? How well are faculty supported as they address the changing nature of higher education and the changing needs of students?
- How well did AU's response to the COVID-19 pandemic meet student learning needs, and what lessons were learned that can inform the way the institution is thinking about new approaches to teaching and learning going forward? How are we responding to the different needs of students in how they think about learning (i.e., students requesting multiple modalities)?

Members of the Learning Subcommittee include:

Co-Chairs:

Núria Villanova, associate dean of undergraduate studies, CAS

Paula Weissman, senior professorial lecturer, SOC; member, Faculty Senate Committee on Learning Assessment

Members:

Karen Baehler, associate dean of faculty and scholar in residence, SPA

Jessica Bancroft, associate director of professional studies, Office of Graduate and Professional Studies

Christina Bush, assistant librarian, University Library

Corbin Campbell, associate dean of academic affairs and associate professor, SOE

Kimberly Cowell-Meyers, associate professor, SPA; member, Faculty Senate Committee on Learning Assessment

Brad Knight, senior director, AU Core and University College, Office of Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies

Ben Leff, professor, WCL

Mike Piller, senior director, academic technology, University Library

Mike Schroeder, associate dean for graduate education, SIS

Shari Watkins, senior research fellow, Center for Teaching, Research and Learning
Graduate Student (TBD)

Undergraduate Student (TBD)

V. Community: Embodying Our Values Through Inclusive Excellence and Effective Partnerships

- The third theme of the strategic plan, community, examines how well AU has followed through on its commitment of building an inclusive, functional, and trusting community for students, faculty, staff, and others. It examines how well AU has improved ties with one another and with the DC region, the nation, and the world. It examples how well AU builds effective partnerships both across schools at AU and between AU and the public, private, nonprofit sectors.

Strategic Initiatives (SIs) Covered:

- SI: 3 (The Student Experience)
- SI: 6 (Inclusive Excellence)
- SI: 7 (Working with Washington)
- SI: 9 (How AU Works)

Primary Standards Covered:

- Standard II (Ethics and Integrity)
- Standard VII (Governance, Leadership, and Administration)

Community: Examples of Study Questions

- How does AU define community, and how well does our strategic plan advance this definition?
- What evidence demonstrates that AU is committed to ensuring inclusive excellence? In what ways does AU demonstrate a climate that fosters respect among students, faculty, staff, and administration from a range of diverse backgrounds, ideas, and perspectives?
- To what extent does AU have a clearly articulated and effective governance and administrative structures? In what ways do leadership and governance structures work together to realize AU's mission and goals? How well do AU's policies, processes, and practices contribute to creating a culture of trust and transparency among all AU constituencies? Based on this analysis, how can AU govern and administer in a manner that allows it to best meet its mission and goals?
- How does the AU community (including faculty, students, staff, and alumni) and Washington, DC, mutually support one another? And in what ways does AU contribute to and develop effective partnerships with institutions and communities beyond Washington, DC?

Members of the Community Subcommittee include:

Tri-Chairs:

Garret Martin, senior professorial lecturer, SIS, and former chair of the Faculty Senate

Amanda Taylor, assistant vice president of diversity, equity, and inclusion

Rene Thomas, director of graduate studies, Kogod, and Staff Council representative

Members:

Maria Barry, director of community relations, Office of People and External Affairs

Amy Butler, senior director, corporate and foundation relations, Office of Development and Alumni Relations

Marcy Campos, director, Center for Community Engagement

Ellen Feder, professor, CAS

Monica Jackson, professor, CAS; deputy provost and dean of faculty

Dan Kerr, associate professor, CAS

Jane Palmer, associate professor, SPA

Andie Rowe, director, Employee Wellness and Work-Life, Office of Human Resources

Lacey Wootton, director of writing studies, CAS, and former chair of the Faculty Senate

Key Dates in Self-Study Timeline

Spring 2023:

Draft Report Created by Steering Committee
(Draft self recommendations included)
Middle States begins to shape visiting team

Fall 2023:

Draft Report Shared with AU Community For Comment
Visiting team chair visits AU and reviews the draft

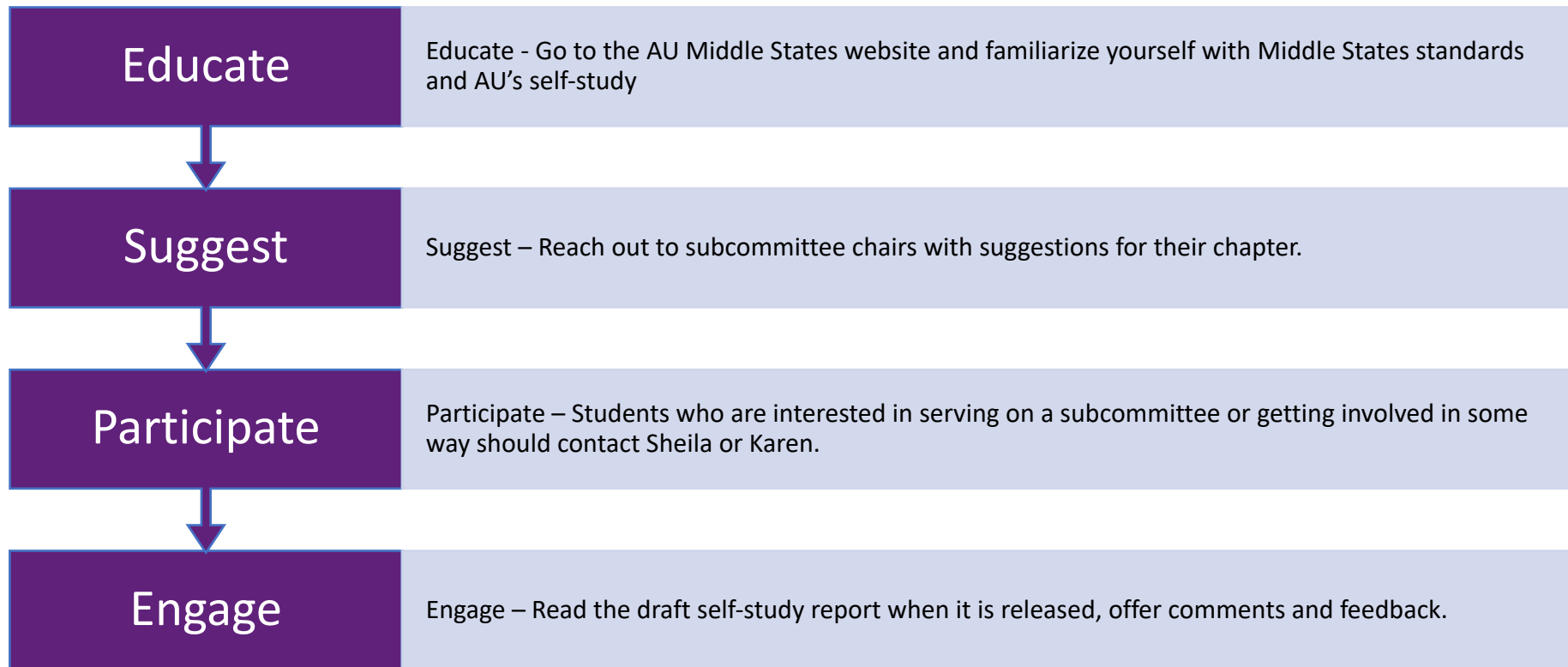
Spring 2024

Visiting Team comes to campus for 4 days and meets with AU community. Issues preliminary findings

Summer 2024

Commission reviews team report, makes final recommendations for re accreditation

Make a Difference: Get Involved



Questions? Comments?

middlestates@american.edu

<http://American.edu/middlestates>



AMERICAN UNIVERSITY
W A S H I N G T O N , D C