**ESF Self-Study Steering Committee**

**Charge, Structure, and Background**

Work to begin in Fall 2019

**Overall Committee Purpose**

The Self-Study Steering Committee will be comprised of ESF faculty, professional staff, administrators, and students in order to assess and document the quality of programming, student experiences, administrative functionality, ethics, and alignment with institutional ESF’s mission and strategic goals since our Periodic Review Report, which was accepted on July 1, 2017. Included in the work of this committee will be review of Middle States Commission on Higher Education standards for accreditation and requirements of affiliation, and to document and articulate a unified vision of assessment and continuous improvement at ESF. Participation in this committee will present opportunities to gain a deeper understanding of regional accreditation expectations and an opportunity to have a voice in how ESF documents the quality of education and support available. This commitment will require active involvement in committee, and Working Groups of the committee, activities beginning in Fall 2019 and culminating with the Fall 2021 MSCHE self-study site visit.

All aspects of the self-study should connect to the institutional mission. ESF’s institutional mission is: “The mission of the College of Environmental Science and Forestry is to advance knowledge and skills and to promote the leadership necessary for the stewardship of both the natural and designed environments.”

**Specific Charge**[1]

· Consult with institutional stakeholders and identify areas of strength and opportunity associated with the achievement of the institution’s mission

· Work with institutional leadership to identify 3-5 institutional priorities to be addressed in the self-study;

· Select the organizational approach to the institution’s self-study;

· Develop the Self-Study Design;

· Establish, charge, and oversee the Working Groups and coordinate their work;

· Ensure that the institutional priorities are adequately addressed in the Working Groups’ analysis;

· Review interim reports that will be used to write the final Self-Study Report;

· Ensure that the Timeline is implemented as planned;

· Employ a Communications Plan to effectively communicate within the institution;

· Identify the most important opportunities for improvement and innovation that will be included in the final Self-Study Report;

· Arrange for institution-wide review of and responses to a draft of the Self-Study Report;

· Oversee the completion of the final Self-Study Report, including the refinement of the Evidence Inventory and completion of the Verification of Compliance materials; and

· Oversee arrangements to host the Evaluation Team visit.

Co-chairs should plan to attend a November 2019 MSCHE Self-Study Institute with the Assistant Director for Assessment and Institutional Research to prepare to lead the steering committee through the two year self-study process.

**Committee Membership**

Characteristics to consider in selecting Steering Committee membership[2]:

* Are familiar with the institution’s mission and goals;
* Have a sense of commitment to the self-study process and to the institutional priorities of the institution;
* Have a broad institutional perspective that transcends that of their own
* Represent various institutional constituencies and include adequate faculty representation. Students, staff, and trustees should be involved in the self-study process as appropriate.

The proposed Self-Study Steering Committee will be comprised of the following members:

· Co-Chairs: Two representatives from the Accreditation Committee (1 Faculty, 1 Staff)

· 3 representatives from institutional administration

· 3 representatives from institutional staff

· 6 faculty representatives

· 1 representative from the Undergraduate student body

· 1 representative from the Graduate student body

**Background: Need for MSCHE Self-Study Steering Committee**

With the upcoming reaccreditation self-study of ESF due to MSCHE in the 2021-2022 academic year, it will be vital to begin work at least two-years in advance of the Fall 2021 site visit in order to produce a robust, clear, and comprehensive self-study document. This committee will lead the campus community in the discussion, discovery, and documentation of our effectiveness as a higher education institution and our alignment with MSCHE standards and requirements. It is essential to have broad representation of campus stakeholders included on this committee to facilitate discussions with all academic departments and administrative units in order to have a community-wide understanding of our institutional mission, program quality, and ethical and accountable institutional processes. Through broad representation and open communication, we can create a document that clearly articulates our congruence with MSCHE guidelines, as well as speak to those expectations during the Fall 2021 site visit.

[1] Middle States Commission on Higher Education, Module Two – Initiating the Self-Study Process (2018). *Accreditation > Early Preparation before the Self-Study Institute.* Retrieved from https://www.msche.org/accreditation/self-study-guide/module-two/

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