

The Washington & Jefferson Approach for Self-Study: Open, Participatory, Transparent

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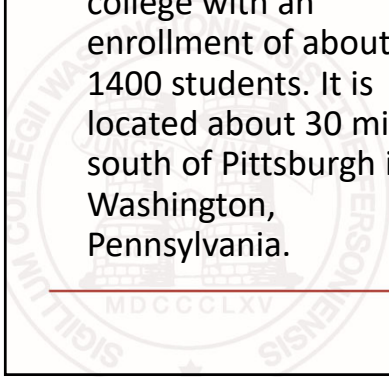
Accreditation Liaison Officer

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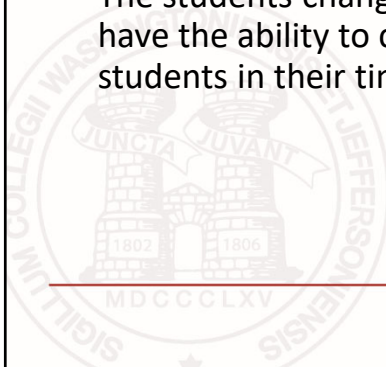
Institutional Overview

- Washington & Jefferson College (W&J) is a selective, private, residential liberal arts college with an enrollment of about 1400 students. It is located about 30 miles south of Pittsburgh in Washington, Pennsylvania.



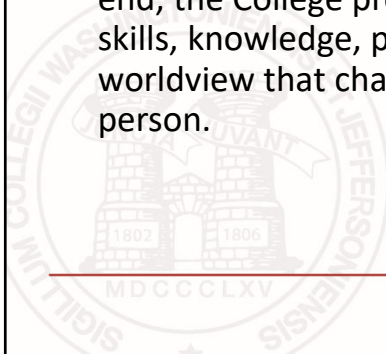
Our Roots

- W&J has weathered the demands of change for nearly 240 years.
- Through such evolution, W&J has learned that survival depends on adaptation.
- The students change under our watch, but we also have the ability to change to meet the needs of our students in their time.



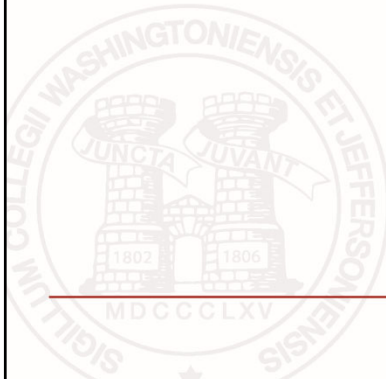
Mission

- The College's mission is to graduate people of uncommon integrity, competence, and maturity who are effective lifelong learners and responsible citizens, and who are prepared to contribute substantially to the world in which they live. To this end, the College promotes the development of skills, knowledge, personal qualities, and a worldview that characterize a well-educated person.



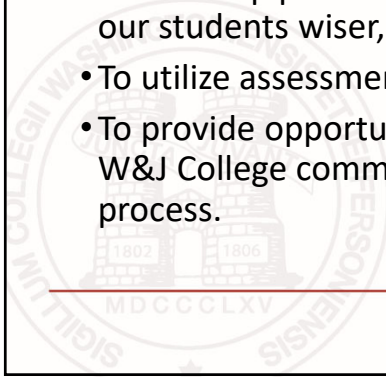
Accreditation

- Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE)



W&J Goals for the Self-Study

- To demonstrate that we meet the standards for reaccreditation and also to assess our strengths and weaknesses, identify our opportunities and our challenges.
- To develop plans to make our institution stronger, our students wiser, and our world better.
- To utilize assessment data.
- To provide opportunities for all members of the W&J College community to participate in the process.



Overview of Our Process (2016-2019)

2016

- January – co-chairs selected
- February – steering committee formed
- March through May – steering committee reviews standards
- April – preliminary survey sent to college community
- June through August – steering committee writes charges and research questions for work groups
- September – work groups established and orientation held for work group chairs
- October through December – work groups study standards, charges, and research questions
- November-December – steering committee and work groups prepare documentation roadmap
- November-December – work groups prepare survey questions for spring 2017 College community survey



Overview of Our Process (2016-2019)

2017

- January – champions appointed
- January-February – steering committee writes and finalizes the self-study design
- January-February – steering committee and work groups finalize the documentation roadmap
- January-February – steering committee develops agenda and outcomes for spring 2017 self-study open meetings
- March – MSCHE liaison visit; internal website released to College community
- March – self-study design approved by MSCHE
- March – survey sent to the College community
- March-April – self-study open meetings with faculty and staff
- March through November – work groups research and meet with College community
- May – work groups submit outlines of reports
- August-September – self-study open meetings with faculty and staff
- November – work groups submit report



Overview of Our Process (2016-2019)

2018

- January – co-chairs consult with president and senior staff on institutional priorities
- January through March – steering committee writes chapter drafts
- February – survey sent to work group member to assess the work-group process
- March – MSCHE selects evaluation-team chair, chair sets date for team visit and evaluation-team chair preliminary visit, co-chairs send self-study design to evaluation- team chair
- March-April – speed dating sessions with College community to discuss drafts
- May – survey sent to community to assess the self-study process
- May through August – steering committee edits report for consistency
- August – W&J community reviews final draft of self-study
- September – Board of Trustees reviews final draft of self-study
- September – evaluation-team chair preliminary visit and review of self-study
- October – evaluation-team chair reviews final self-study
- November – College submits final self-study



Overview of Our Process (2016-2019)

2019

- March – self-study evaluation team visits
- June – MSCHE action regarding accreditation status



Selection of the Steering Committee

- Following the appointment of the steering committee's two co-chairs followed the selection of the steering committee.
- The co-chairs selected members on the basis of expertise in specific areas or deep knowledge of the college.
- The aim was for an even balance between faculty and staff, representation from many units of the College, and as much inclusion as possible.



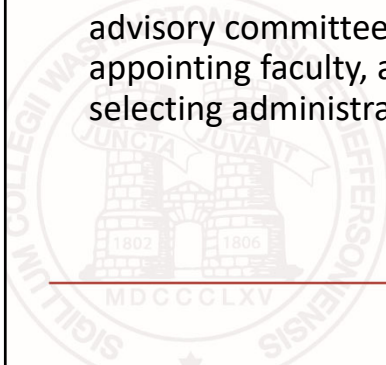
W&J Middle States Steering Committee

- Patricia Brletic, Professor of Chemistry (Co-Chair)
- Lindsey Guinn, Director of Assessment and Institutional Research (Co-Chair)
- Elizabeth Bennett, Professor of Psychology
- Beth Creehan, Director of Enrollment Systems
- T. Scott Frank, Professor of Communication Arts
- Mark Harris, Professor of Chemistry
- Tyler Kowcheck, Director of Residence Life
- Ralph Liberatore, Associate Professor of Economics/Business
- Kim Paletta, Administrative Assistant in Advancement
- Ketwana Schoos, Assistant Dean of Student Life for Inclusive Campus Engagement
- Thomas Szejko, Associate Vice President for Business
- Linda Troost, Professor of English
- Kelly Weixel, Associate Professor of Biology



Selection of the Work Groups

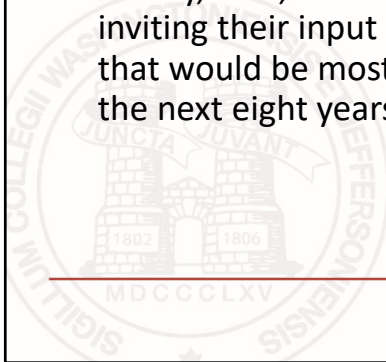
- Sent an invitation to invite staff and faculty to serve on a work group.
- Forty-two work group members were selected to represent a cross-section of faculty and staff. Current or recent service on relevant governance or advisory committees was considered when appointing faculty, and staff expertise when selecting administrative members.



Surveys

2016

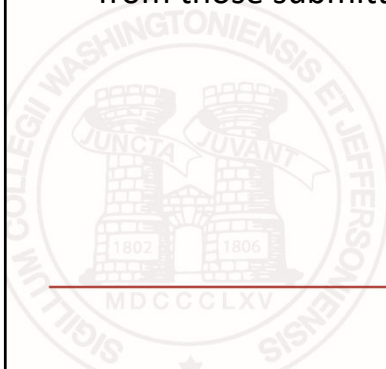
- In an effort toward creating an open and broadly participatory self-study process, the steering committee conducted an electronic survey of all faculty, staff, students, and trustees in spring 2016 inviting their input on identifying the eight issues that would be most important to the institution in the next eight years.



Surveys

2017

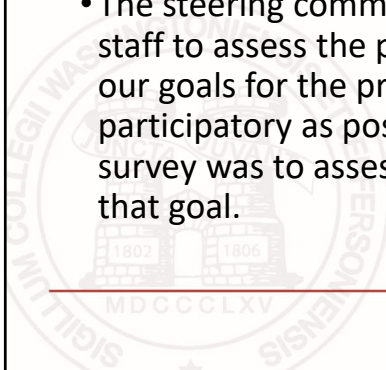
- The steering committee helped by organizing and administering surveys in the spring for faculty, staff, students, trustees, and alumni, drawing questions from those submitted by work groups.



Surveys

2018

- In February, the steering committee sent a survey to work group chairs and members for them to share feedback on the work group process.
- The steering committee sent a survey to faculty and staff to assess the process in May of 2018. One of our goals for the process was to make it as participatory as possible. So the purpose of the survey was to assess how well we did in meeting that goal.



Student Consulting Group

- Thirty-four W&J students provided their perspectives to the steering committee and work groups.
- Potential members were identified by soliciting faculty and staff for recommendations and by inviting students to self-identify.
- Students attended one of two orientation sessions that explained the role of the consulting group and were introduced to the work-group chairs.



Champions

- Two “champions” were added midway through the process to foster a sense of ownership among the campus community with in the context of the self-study open meetings.
- The steering committee provided direction to the champions and they led open meetings, guided discussion, and encouraged participation and openness.



Open Meetings/Speed Dating Sessions

- The steering committee arranged open meetings with faculty, staff, and students facilitated by two faculty members (champions).
- In addition, the co-chairs met with the Board of Trustees and the Alumni Executive Council at Commencement and Homecoming.
- Speed dating sessions were held in March/April of 2018 for faculty and staff to review drafts of the self-study.
- Faculty and staff who could not attend open meetings or speed dating sessions were invited to comment online.



Outcomes from Our Process

- Engaged in a participatory and transparent process that involved members of all areas of the Washington & Jefferson College community and caused them to reflect on the status of current institutional and strategic priorities;
- Demonstrated that Washington & Jefferson College meets the *Middle States Standards for Accreditation* and the *Requirements of Affiliation* with a focus on continuous improvement in the attainment of its vision, mission, and goals;
- Documented current assessment practices to identify challenges and opportunities and detailed how the College is using assessment data in decision-making processes; and
- Provided a concise, comprehensive, and accurate analysis of Washington & Jefferson College to facilitate planning.



Standards

- I – Mission and Goals
- II – Ethics and Integrity
- III – Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience
- IV – Support of the Student Experience
- V – Educational Effectiveness Assessment
- VI – Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement
- VII – Governance, Leadership, and Administration



Organizational Structure of the Self-Study

- Executive Summary
- Prologue
- Chapter 1 (Standards I and VI)
 - Endurance of the Mission and Anticipation of the Future
- Chapter 2 (Standards VII and II)
 - Institutional Leadership and Ethical Practices
- Chapter 3 (Standards III and V)
 - An Effective Curriculum for the 21st Century Student
- Chapter 4 (Standard IV)
 - The Comprehensive Student Experience from Recruitment to Graduation and Beyond
- Conclusion
- Appendix



Strategic Planning

- In the spring of 2018, the college initiated a strategic planning process that is making use of the self-study findings.
- Areas of institutional improvement along with the institutional priorities identified in the self-study have become some of the areas of focus in the strategic planning process.
- This will continue W&J's move forward for all people of the College – students, staff, administrators, faculty, and trustees.



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Questions?

