ESSEX COUNTY COLLEGE
SELF-STUDY DESIGN

ESSEX COUNTY COLLEGE
STUDENTS FIRST

**SUBMITTED TO THE
MIDDLE STATES COMMISSION
ON HIGHER EDUCATION
JANUARY 2021**

SELF STUDY DESIGN

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1. INSTITUTIONAL OVERVIEW
OVERVIEW OF ESSEX COUNTY COLLEGE

Founded in 1966, Essex County College (ECC) is one of New Jersey's 19 public, two-year colleges. Serving the County of Essex and located in Newark, New Jersey, the College typically enrolls more than 10,000 students annually seeking to earn an associate's degree or academic certificate and an additional 9,000 students enrolled in non-credit, continuing education programs. Roughly half of students who are pursuing a degree or academic certificate attend full-time, yielding an annual full-time equivalency of nearly 6,000 degree-seeking students each fall semester. The College offers 48 associate degree programs, 21 academic certificate programs, an array of non-credit, continuing education and workforce development programs, as well as a high school dual enrollment program.

The College's student body is comprised of nearly 60 percent women, has a median age of 22 years old, and is the only college in the State of New Jersey bearing designations as both a Predominantly Black Institution (PBI) and a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI). Using the Federal Title III and Title V definitions, over 90 percent of the College's students are minority. The largest racial/ethnic populations among students are African-American (45 percent) and Hispanic (26 percent). Adding to the College's rich diversity, it annually serves approximately 150 international students representing over 50 countries, and is a veterans friendly institution.

ECC is comprised of two campuses with the main campus located in Newark, New Jersey and the West Essex branch campus located in West Caldwell, New Jersey. Roughly 90 percent of student credit hours are taken at the main campus, with most of the balance taken at the West Essex branch campus. The College also has three additional sites located in Newark with small enrollments.

Essex County College predominantly serves students who reside in Essex County (91 percent) with a large portion of students residing in the city of Newark (43 percent). Newark is Essex County's largest municipality, both in terms of land area (24.2 square miles) and population (277,140) and accounts for roughly a third of Essex County's total population (798,975). Newark has a median household income of just $33,025 and a per capita income of $17,198 while also having the highest cost of living to income gap among the 19 municipalities that are home to New Jersey's community colleges. Roughly 76% percent of financial aid applicants receive need-based aid in the form of a Pell Grant and those financial aid applicants have a median household income of only $24,443.

These economic disparities dramatically impact the student learning experience. Just prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Essex County College participated in the #RealCollege Survey administered by the Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice, at Temple University. According to this study, administered prior to the pandemic, 59 percent of students at ECC experienced food insecurity in the previous 30-day period. This figure is 20 percentage points higher than both the State and National averages for the community college sector.

In addition to these food insecurities, the majority of ECC students experience unstable living conditions with 61 percent reporting housing insecurity in the previous year, a figure 16 percentage points higher than both the State and National averages for the sector, with 16 percent experiencing homelessness in the prior year. An analysis of these three metrics shows that 75 percent of students are affected by at least one of these economic barriers (food insecurity, housing insecurity, homelessness).

Data collected during the COVID-19 pandemic via the #RealCollege During the Pandemic Survey, indicated that ECC students are being severely impacted by the ongoing health crisis. Among students who were employed prior to the pandemic, 42% lost their jobs, 27% saw reduced hours and/or pay and 47% reported caring for a family member due to the pandemic. This data was collected in June of 2020, and it is reasonable to assume employment figures further since then.,

The findings of this research also validated in-house research by confirming the vast digital divide that exists at the College. According to the #RealCollege During the Pandemic Survey, 31 percent of Essex County College students reported that they did not having a functional laptop and reliable internet connection at home, which significantly added to the challenge of transitioning to remote-learning during the pandemic.

These statistics starkly illustrate why Essex County College must be fully committed to a holistic approach to student support. The College strongly believes that meeting the needs of all students to overcome these socio-economic barriers, is the best way to empower students to reach their full potential and become leaders in their community. This guiding principle permeates the philosophy of Essex County College's Mission, Vision, and Values and the introspective analysis that guides the Self-Study process.

Mission

Essex County College is an open access community college that serves the diverse needs of students through comprehensive educational programs, training, and continuing education. Essex County College is dedicated to academic excellence and the success of its students.

Vision

A Beacon for Education and Knowledge, Essex County College attracts people who seek a better life through education. We transform lives, broaden learning and empower students to achieve their full potential. Our college community and graduates are change agents and leaders who contribute to the health, vitality and advancement of society.

Values

TEACHING AND LEARNING: We affirm teaching and learning as our primary purpose. The College seeks to instill in students general and specialized knowledge, the ability to think critically, and a commitment to civic responsibility. We value academic freedom and support the open exchange of ideas and experiences.

EXCELLENCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY: We believe in creating a learning environment that fosters high expectations for achievement. The College is committed to rigorous academic standards, faculty excellence, and responsive support services that enable students to reach their full academic, professional and personal potential. We provide excellent programs that utilize technology, demonstrate innovation, and undergo evaluation to ensure consistent and outstanding performance.

COMMUNITY AND ENGAGEMENT: We support programs that enhance the economic and social development of Essex County. We value our role as a vital community resource and are dedicated to forging effective partnerships with our many constituencies.

LEGACY AND TRANSFORMATION: We honor our history and valued traditions of Essex County College, the City of Newark and the County of Essex. We also welcome transformative power of education to change lives. Building upon our past achievements, we eagerly embrace the future by pursuing innovations in teaching, administration, and student services.

DIVERSITY AND ACCESS: We support programs that enhance the economic and social development of Essex County. We value our role as a vital community resource and are dedicated to forging effective partnerships with our many constituencies.

2. INSTITUTIONAL PRIORITIES TO BE ADDRESSED IN THE SELF-STUDY

As the College continues to implement STUDENTS FIRST: Strategic Plan 2019-2024, the Self-Study process offers an opportunity to assess which areas of the strategic plan should be given the highest priority as higher education, the institution, and the fabric of the student body and community are impacted by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Essex County College has developed institutional priorities for our Self-Study that are aligned with its mission, vision, and values, while also representing a distillation of the Strategic Plan's most pressing goals and objectives. Even if, as all hope, the worst effects of the pandemic are moderated by vaccines, the following four institutional priorities will be the institution's focus over the next two years during the Self-Study process and are strategically aligned with the Strategic Plan's first goal of "using student success as a guide for all of our actions."

1. Eliminate barriers to student success by ensuring sustainable, effective, and efficient organizational structures, processes, and policies

Essex County College experienced a transition in the College Presidency five times from 2010 to 2020. As a result of leadership turnover, organizational structures, processes, and policies originating from various administrations are not always aligned. The College will focus on eliminating gaps and redundancies in the institutional infrastructure to remove institutional barriers to student success.

2. Increase access through enrollment services initiatives

Research at the College shows that not all applicants who would like to attend Essex County College find their way into the classroom. In a commitment to educational access, the College will focus on guiding applicants, many of whom are among the first in their family to attend college, through all of the steps that need to be taken between time of application and attending their first class. Using a variety of approaches, such as the opening of a new Welcome Center, improving advising practices, increasing communications, and expanding support in navigating the financial aid process, ECC aspires to identify and implement innovative strategies to help students achieve their goal of attending the College.

3. Provide support-based retention initiatives to increase enrollment

To increase enrollment and student persistence, the College will focus on retention strategies that provide enhanced learning support through holistic wraparound services. This includes the ongoing redesign of its developmental education model through support-based initiatives such as tutoring, mentoring, counseling, and better supporting faculty by professional development opportunities

4. Increase completion and articulation through clear and well-designed academic pathways

The College will continue to focus on increasing completion and articulation by clarifying and simplifying academic pathways so that students can establish clear goals, a clear plan for reaching those goals, and the ability to easily monitor progress towards these goals. Examples of initiatives include the development of a new course catalog, plans for a redesigned website, and the implementation of a more rigorous program review process that will ensure programs are designed to best serve the needs of their students..
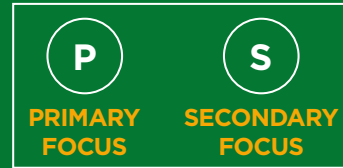
To better define the connection between ECC's institutional priorities for Self-Study and ECC's institutional goals, a matrix has been developed to illustrate the level of association. The letters "P" and "S" are used to indicate whether the relationship will be a primary focus or a secondary focus throughout the Self-Study.

Table 1
RELATIONSHIP OF SELF-STUDY INSTITUTIONAL PRIORITIES

KEY:

(P) PRIMARY FOCUS   **(S)** SECONDARY FOCUS

Strategic Planning Goals	Self-Study Institutional Priorities			
	1. Eliminate barriers to student success by ensuring sustainable, effective, and efficient organizational structures, processes, and policies	2. Increase access through enrollment services initiatives	3. Provide support-based retention initiatives to increase enrollment	4. Increase completion and articulation through clear and well-designed academic pathways
Goal I. Use student success as a guide for all of our actions	P	P	P	P
Goal II. Foster institutional improvement through assessment, evaluation, and evidence-based planning	P	P	P	P
Goal III. Promote innovative public and private partnerships	S			P
Goal IV. Increase public awareness of our achievements in academic excellence, cultural diversity, and our wide range of program offerings		S	S	S
Goal V. Promote a welcoming and inclusive campus culture	S	P	P	S

Similarly, to better define the connection between ECC's institutional priorities for Self-Study, and the Middle States Standards of Accreditation, a matrix has been developed to illustrate the level of association. The letters "P" and "S" are used to indicate whether the relationship will be a primary focus or a secondary focus throughout the Self-Study.

Table 2
RELATIONSHIP OF SELF-STUDY INSTITUTIONAL PRIORITIES TO THE MIDDLE STATES STANDARDS OF ACCREDITATION

KEY:
(P) PRIMARY FOCUS   (S) SECONDARY FOCUS

Strategic Planning Goals	Self-Study Institutional Priorities			
	1. Eliminate barriers to student success by ensuring sustainable, effective, and efficient organizational structures, processes, and policies	2. Increase access through enrollment services initiatives	3. Provide support-based retention initiatives to increase enrollment	4. Increase completion and articulation through clear and well-designed academic pathways
Standard I. Mission and Goals	P	S	S	S
Standard II. Ethics and Integrity	P	S	S	S
Standard III. Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience	P	S	P	P
Standard IV. Support of the Student Experience	P	P	P	P
Standard V. Educational Effectiveness Assessment	P	S	P	P
Standard VI. Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement	P	S	S	S
Standard VI. Governance, Leadership, and Administration	P	S	S	S

3. INTENDED OUTCOMES OF THE SELF-STUDY

Essex County College continues to implement components of its Institutional Effectiveness Framework. This document outlines the most critical components of our institutional framework, and the relationships among these processes. Processes include the planning, budgeting, student learning outcomes assessment, program review, and institutional and unit mission and goal assessment, among others. The Self-Study process is an opportunity for the College to advance and provide additional support and focus to these ongoing college-wide efforts. It also represents an opportunity to reexamine how processes interrelate with each other to organically support its mission, values, and strategic direction. Through collaboration and representation from all areas of the College, Essex County College will seek to achieve the following intended outcomes during its Self-Study:

Self-Study Intended Outcomes

1. Demonstrate how the institution currently meets the Commission's Standards for Accreditation and Requirements of Affiliation;

2. Focus on continuous improvement in the attainment of the institution's mission and its institutional priorities;

3. Engage the institutional community in an inclusive and transparent self-appraisal process that actively and deliberately seeks to involve members from all areas of the institutional community;

4. Improve long-term stability in leadership, accreditation status, organizational structure, fiscal planning, and financial responsibility.

4. SELF-STUDY APPROACH

Essex County College will be adopting the Standards-Based approach in structuring the 2022-23 Self-Study Report. After consideration by the President and key Self-Study leaders, it was determined that the Standards-Based approach is the most useful format for sharing the story of the College and demonstrating the degree to which it is achieving its mission, meeting its strategic goals, making meaningful progress towards its four institutional priorities. Additionally, the Standards-Based approach best facilitates the execution of our Steering Committee and Working Group charges in addressing the Commission's Standards of Accreditation, Requirements of Affiliation, and the compilation of a comprehensive evidence inventory.

5. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE AND STANDARDS WORKING GROUPS

In September of 2020, Essex County College named two Steering Committee Co-Chairs who would take the lead in engaging the College community in a meaningful process of self-reflection and self-improvement.

Co-Chair Dr. Jeffrey Lee is a faculty member and program coordinator for the Environmental Science A.S. program at the College. Complementing his experience in the classroom as an educator, Dr. Lee has administrative experience as the former Vice-President of Academic Affairs at the College and has a comprehensive understanding of the Middle States policies which he has gained as a Middle States Peer Reviewer.

Co-Chair Dr. Leigh Bello-de Castro is the Associate Dean of the West Essex Campus and Online Education. Over her long tenure at the College, Dr. Bello-de Castro has served in multiple roles such as the Associate Dean of Online and Learning Resources, Adjunct Professor for the Business division, and coordinator for several of the College's fundraising initiatives. More recently, Dr. Bello-de Castro played a key role in the College-wide transition to fully remote learning in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In October of 2020, Essex County College participated in the Middle States Self-Study Institute which was delivered virtually because of the health crisis. Due to the virtual format, the Commission allowed institutions to send up to seven representatives. Three were designated as the required Institution Representatives (Accreditation Liaison Officer and two Steering Committee Co-Chairs) and four additional attendees participated. All seven took part in five live plenary sessions and weekly SSI meetings, with the three Institution Representatives also participating in five additional breakout sessions hosted by ECC's VP Liaison Dr. Paul Starkey.

TABLE 3
SELF-STUDY INSTITUTE ATTENDEES

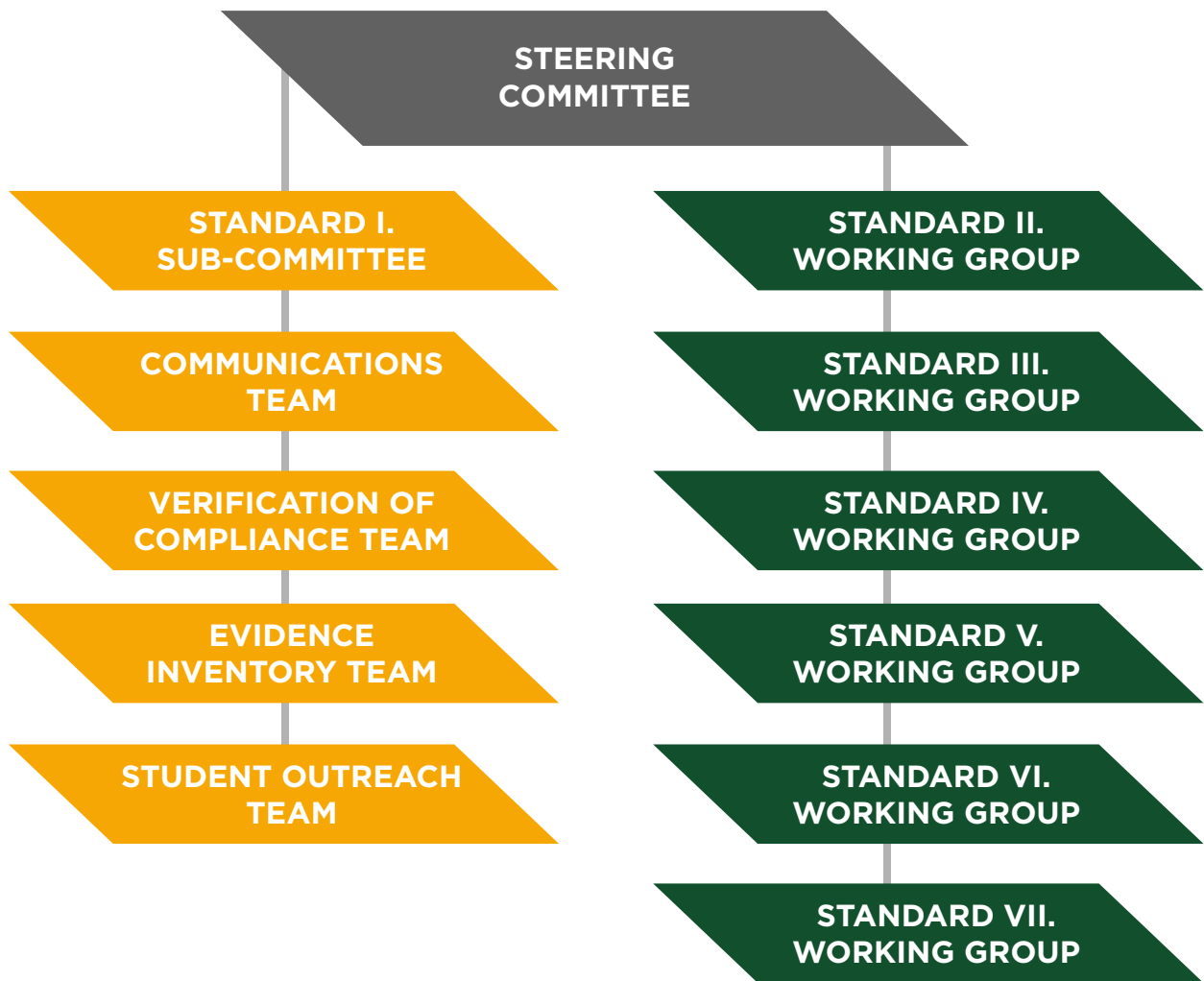| Designated Institution Representatives:	
Jeffrey Lee	Steering Committee Co-Chair Faculty, Biology
Leigh Bello-de Castro	Steering Committee Co-Chair Associate Dean of the West Essex Campus and Online Education
John Runfeldt	Accreditation Liaison Officer Executive Director, Institutional Effectiveness, Planning, and Assessment
Additional Institution Representatives:	
Germaine Albuquerque	Acting Chair, Business Division
Charles Reid	Faculty, Social Sciences
Syrion Jack	Director, Compliance and Deputy General Counsel
Keith Kirkland	Dean, Student Affairs

Formation of the Steering Committee

A decision was made at the outset of the Self-Study Institute by the Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO) and Steering Committee Co-Chairs in conjunction with the College President, to include the four additional Self-Study Institute attendees on the Steering Committee. The three designated Institution Representatives (Co-Chairs and ALO) and the four additional representatives met weekly throughout the Self-Study Institute and convened upon completion of the institute to develop the College's Self-Study committee structure, identify the remaining members of the Steering Committee, and identify Working Group Chairpersons. These leadership roles were discussed with the President and members received official invitations to serve, directly from the President.

Formation of the Steering Committee

The Self-Study committee structure consists of a Steering Committee, six standard-based Working Groups (Standard I will be addressed by a sub-committee of the Steering Committee), and four Special Teams that will work across all groups. The committee structure is:

TABLE 4
SELF-STUDY COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

STEERING COMMITTEE	
STANDARD I. SUB-COMMITTEE	**STANDARD II. WORKING GROUP**
COMMUNICATIONS TEAM	**STANDARD III. WORKING GROUP**
VERIFICATION OF COMPLIANCE TEAM	**STANDARD IV. WORKING GROUP**
EVIDENCE INVENTORY TEAM	**STANDARD V. WORKING GROUP**
STUDENT OUTREACH TEAM	**STANDARD VI. WORKING GROUP**
	STANDARD VII. WORKING GROUP

The Charge to the Steering Committee

The Middle States Self-Study Steering Committee, appointed by President Augustine Boakye, is responsible for planning and overseeing the Self-Study and reaccreditation process. Dr. Jeffrey Lee, Professor, Biology and Dr. Leigh Bello-de Castro, Associate Dean of the West Essex Campus and Online Learning serve as co-chairpersons of the Steering Committee.

Responsibilities

1. Designing the Self-Study process
2. Participating in the selection of Working Group chairpersons and members
3. Serving as liaisons to the Working Groups
4. Providing clear assignments to each Working Group
5. Providing resource information for each Working Group
6. Providing clear guidelines to each Working Group for formatting the report
7. Preparing, with the Working Group chairs, a schedule for submission of interim and final reports from each Working Group
8. Reviewing and responding to all interim reports from the Working Groups
9. Being active in preparing the draft of the Self-Study report
10. Being active in the campus review of the draft of the Self-Study report
11. Assisting in revising the Self-Study report
12. Participating in campus visits by the Middle States Commission liaison, team chair and evaluation team

Member	Title(s), Area/Discipline	Steering Committee Role(s)
Leigh Bello-de Castro	Associate Dean, West Essex Campus and Online Education	Co-Chair Communication Team Leader
Jeffrey Lee	Faculty, Program Coordinator, Environmental Science	Co-Chair Evidence Inventory Team Leader
John Runfeldt	Executive Director, Institutional Effectiveness, Planning, and Assessment	Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO)
June Persaud (Chair)	Associate Dean, Recruitment and Student Services	Std. I Sub-Committee Chair
Germaine Albuquerque	Acting Chair, Business Division	Std. I Sub-Committee
Aneliia Chatterjee	Librarian, Faculty	Std. I Sub-Committee Evidence Inventory Team
Charles Reid	Faculty, Social Sciences	Std. I Sub-Committee
Syrion Jack	Director of Compliance, Deputy General Counsel	Std. II Working Group Liaison Verification of Compliance Team Leader
Gale Gage	Chair, Nursing and Health Sciences Division	Std. III Working Group Liaison
Keith Kirkland	Dean, Student Affairs	Std. IV Working Group Liaison Student Outreach Team Leader
Patrice Davis	Faculty, Program Coordinator, Social Sciences	Std. V Working Group Liaison
Mohamed Seddiki	Executive Dean/CIO, Administrative and Learning Technologies	Std. VI Working Group Liaison
Yvette Henry	Executive Director, Human Resources	Std. VII Working Group Liaison

Formation of the Working Groups

From August to October of 2020, a Self-Study Nomination survey was administered which allowed all employees of the College to either self-nominate or nominate others to serve on a Self-Study Working Group. The nomination process and the nomination survey web address was announced at the fall 2020 Commencement, and emailed to all College employees by the President, with a follow-up reminder from the Accreditation Liaison Officer. All College employees were encouraged to nominate themselves regardless of area or title. The form allowed each nominee to indicate up to three preferences regarding which Working Group they wished to serve on. Further messaging was designed to reinforce the College's commitment to a Self-Study that was open and inclusive of all voices at the College. A total of 47 employees were nominated through this process. .

Following the identification of the Working Group Chairs, six individual meetings took place that consisted of ALO, Steering Committee Co-Chairs, the respective Steering Committee Liaison, and Working Group Chair(s). In these meetings, the Working Group membership was decided. These meetings allowed the Working Group Chairs and the Steering Committee Liaisons on opportunity to have a voice in the identification of their Working Group members. The role of the ALO and the Steering Committee Co-Chairs was to ensure:

• That the pool of nominees was given priority consideration for placement on a Working Group.

• That individuals were not recruited into multiple Working Groups and that individuals were placed into Working Group that best leveraged their experience and expertise.

• That there would be a diverse make-up within the Working Groups with equitable representation across race/ethnicity, sex, employment type (administration, staff, full and part-time faculty), administrative areas, and academic disciplines.

Once the Working Group membership was identified, selections were reviewed with the President and members received a formal invitation to serve from him.

Charge to all Working Groups

The Self-Study process is designed to produce a comprehensive picture of the College, its achievements, the internal and external environments in which it functions, and its plans for the future. The process examines its mission, goals, programs, services, governance structure, faculty, resources, and, most importantly, the students we serve. Outcomes of the areas studied are evaluated and suggestions offered for improvement.

The Steering Committee developed a comprehensive Self-Study design with specific charges for each of the Working Groups. It is the responsibility of each Working Group to investigate the areas identified in the charges, to identify additional areas of inquiry if it deems it necessary, and to produce a report in the specified format.

Research Strategies

• Recognize that the bulk of your report should be analytical, not merely descriptive. Wherever possible, provide evidence for your findings and conclusions.

• Read the entire Middle States Commission on Higher Education Accreditation Standards and Requirements of Affiliation, paying particular attention to the area your team is investigating. Refer to the crosswalk relating the Standards and the Requirements of Affiliation.

• Develop an action plan - what is to be done, by whom, how, and when. Two or more members of the Working Group should be assigned to each Research Question. Members will most like be working on more than one question.

• Develop a timeline and remain on schedule. The timetable should include an anticipated schedule of meetings of the Working Group. To the extent required, members must become familiar with the use of Zoom for meetings.

• Familiarize yourself with your identified sources of information. Sources of information/data may be individuals, committees, academic or administrative offices, documents, research studies, etc.   The Evidence Inventory Team will both assist the Working Group and gather documents from the Group.

• Should additional data be necessary, consult with your liaison. The Steering Committee must approve all surveys and/or focus group efforts in advance.

• Certain issues, such as the mission, institutional integrity, the four institutional priorities, and diversity, should be considered by every Working Group in addressing its specific charges. Since the Standards are all related to College operations, each group should anticipate contacting other groups.

• All documents consulted for your report should be catalogued in your Working Group's Evidence Inventory in SPOL. Training will be provided by the Evidence Inventory Team.

• The use of graphs and tables, where they will facilitate understanding, is encouraged.

• Every Working Group will make recommendations in the final portion of its report. Recommendations must flow from the analysis done by the Working Group and supported by documentation. A few well-reasoned policy and significant operations recommendations are preferable to a long list of to-do items.

• All the information gathered by the Working Groups is valuable in developing a comprehensive picture of the college, however not all of it will appear in the final report. Drafts and final Working Group will be available for review and comment by the campus community. The task of the Steering Committee is to review and consolidate the team reports into a final Self-Study report that meets Middle States editorial and length guidelines.

STANDARD I:
MISSION AND GOALS

The institution's mission defines its purpose within the context of higher education, the students it serves, and what it intends to accomplish. The institution's stated goals are clearly linked to its mission and specify how the institution fulfills its mission.

As the Standard I Sub-Committee, you are undertaking one of the most important activities in the Self-Study process. The research, analysis, and recommendations that result in your report will make up a significant part of the Self-Study – an introspective review of how the College defines its purpose and sets and aligns goals in order to fulfill its mission.

As you begin, be sure to review Section 6 of the Self-Study Design as it provides detailed guidance of how to approach your tasks. You will also find editorial guidance that will make it possible to bring seven reports together in the Self-Study that will be submitted to Middle States. Section 7 of the Self-Study Design will give you an overview of the Self-Study and how your report should be organized.

Similarly, be sure to review the institutional priorities set out in Section 2 of the Self-Study Design as they should be kept in mind and addressed where appropriate when responding to the Research Questions. You should also be aware that Standard I incorporates components of Requirements of Affiliation 7 and 10 and your responses should include a description and analysis that concludes that the College meets the requirements or how it needs to make changes to do so.

Research Questions

RQ I-1. Describe the process by which the College's current statement of Mission, Vision, and Values was developed. Was that a successful process? Does the statement address internal and external factors? Has the statement been formally approved by the Board of Trustees? What evidence shows that the Board supports it? How are the Mission, Vision, and Values periodically evaluated?

RQ I-2. Do the institutional goals and objectives described in STUDENTS FIRST, the current strategic plan, derive from the College's Mission, Vision, and Values? Have they been developed with input from the College community? Do the objectives reflect changes that have occurred in the College's environment in recent years? Are the objectives realistic and appropriate to higher education?

RQ I-3. How are the College's Mission, Vision, and Values communicated to all stakeholders? Are they utilized as a framework for College governance and a guide for resource allocation, and program and curricular development?

RQ I-4. Describe the College's policies and procedures for evaluating and accepting credits that originate from outside the College. In addition to transfer credits, address experiential learning credits, competency-based assessment, and any other alternative learning approaches that the College accepts as college credit.

RQ I-5. How are student records protected and how is FERPA compliance ensured? Is there an IRB process? Is there a data governance committee? What evidence indicates that third-party technical and support services follow College policy, procedures, and standards in delivering their content?

RQ I-6. Describe how athletic, student life, and other extracurricular activities are in alignment with the College's mission, academic priorities, strategic planning objectives, budgetary procedures, and any other administrative principles that apply to the entirety of the College.

RQ I-7. Do students taking courses at the West Essex Campus or online have access to the same support services as those enrolled at the Newark campus? What measures has the College taken to ensure all students receive the same support serviced regardless of location and mode of delivery? Describe and supply evidence of how has this been assessed?

Standard I Sub-Committee Membership

Member	Title
June Persaud (Chair)	Associate Dean, Recruitment and Student Services
Germaine Albuquerque	Acting Chair, Business Division
Aneliia Chatterjee	Librarian, Faculty
Charles Reid	Faculty, Social Sciences

* The Standard I. Sub-Committee is comprised of four members of the Steering Committee.

STANDARD II: ETHICS AND INTEGRITY

Ethics and Integrity are central, indispensable, and defining hallmarks of effective higher education institutions. In all activities, whether internal or external, an institution must be faithful to its mission, honor its contracts and commitments, adhere to its policies, and represent itself truthfully.

As the Standard II Working Group, you are undertaking one of the most important activities in the Self-Study process. The research, analysis, and recommendations that result in your report will make up a significant part of the Self-Study– an introspective view of how the institution is faithful to its Mission, operates with integrity, and represents itself with truthfulness.

As you begin, be sure to review Section 6 of the Self-Study Design as it provides detailed guidance of how to approach your tasks. You will also find editorial guidance that will make it possible to bring seven reports together in the Self-Study that will be submitted to Middle States. Section 7 of the Self-Study Design will give you an overview of the Self-Study and how your report should be organized.

Similarly, be sure to review the institutional priorities set out in Section 2 of the Self-Study Design as they should be kept in mind and addressed where appropriate when responding to the Research Questions. Standard II does not directly incorporate components of Requirements of Affiliation, though Requirements 1-6 and 14 (with emphasis on 5, 6, and 14) play a role in determining whether Standard II is met. If necessary, your responses should include a description and analysis that concludes that the College meets these requirements, or how it needs to make changes to do so.

Research Questions

RQ II-1. What are the College's policies that seek to ensure a climate that avoids conflicts of interest, inequities in hiring, evaluation, promotion and separation, and honesty in all communications, both internal and external? What is the evidence that standards of ethical behavior are upheld? How are these standards communicated to the College community and relevant stakeholders? Are all college communications and publications honest and forthright in their statements? What steps does the College take to assess whether ethical standards are being met?

RQ II-2. What grievance policies exist for College employees and students? How is this information communicated to employees and students? Are grievances from students and employees promptly handled and properly documented? Is there any evidence that grievances are not handled fairly, impartially, and equitably?

RQ II-3. How are students made aware of possible sources of funding for their education? How does the College assist students and applicants in understanding these sources and the responsibilities that they assume when accepting funds? Assess the effectiveness of this assistance.

RQ II-4. How does Essex County College evidence that is has an environment that promotes academic freedom, freedom of expression and respect for intellectual property right? Is there a climate that fosters respect all students and College employees and their diverse backgrounds and points of view?

RQ II-5. What institution-wide assessments are conducted regularly at the College? How are these assessment results disclosed to the College community and to the public? Are the assessments and the disclosures sufficient?

RQ II-6. Consider the wide-range of reporting and other requirements that the College has to the State and Federal government, as well as to the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. What policies and procedures are in place that seek to ensure that these requirements are met? Is the College meeting its reporting requirements?

Standard II Working Group Membership

Member	Title
David Smedley (Chair)	Director, Financial Aid
Hamid Alouach	Adjunct Professor, Physics
Karen Bridgett	Associate Director, Human Resources
Nessie Hill	Faculty, English
Shadiquah Hordge	Assistant to the Executive Dean, Faculty and Academics
Serrietta Johnson	Technical Assistant, Online Education
Myrna Scott	Faculty, Nursing
Korena Stewart	Faculty, Nursing
Joy Tolliver	General Counsel

* Steering Committee Liaison – Syrion Jack, Director of Compliance, Deputy General Counsel

STANDARD III: DESIGN AND DELIVERY OF THE STUDENT LEARNING EXPERIENCE

An institution provides students with learning experiences that are characterized by rigor and coherence at all program, certificate, and degree levels, regardless of instructional modality. All learning experiences, regardless of modality, program pace/schedule, level, and setting are consistent with higher education expectations.

As the Standard III Working Group, you are undertaking one of the most important activities in the Self-Study process. The research, analysis, and recommendations that result in your report will make up a significant part of the Self-Study–an introspective review of how the College entrusts qualified faculty in the design, delivery, and assessment of its learning experiences in a manner that ensures sufficient rigor.

As you begin, be sure to review Section 6 of the Self-Study Design as it provides detailed guidance of how to approach your tasks. You will also find editorial guidance that will make it possible to bring seven reports together in the Self-Study that will be submitted to Middle States. Section 7 of the Self-Study Design will give you an overview of the Self-Study and how your report should be organized.

Similarly, be sure to review the institutional priorities set out in Section 2 of the Self-Study Design as they should be kept in mind and addressed where appropriate when responding to the Research Questions. You should also be aware that Standard III incorporates components of Requirements of Affiliation 8, 9, 10, and 15 and your responses should include a description and analysis that concludes that the College meets the requirements or how it needs to make changes to do so.

Research Questions

RQ III-1. Describe the overall offerings of the College, including degree and certificate programs, and continuing education programs. Are they of an appropriate length and rigor to meet their stated goals? Describe the faculty that design, deliver, and assess these programs of study. Are they effective, and qualified for their positions? Are they sufficient in number and given adequate professional development? Described the process used for their systematic evaluation. Consider any programs delivered by third-parties and determine if they are adequately reviewed and assessed.

RQ III-2. Are the College's programs of study clearly described in official publications in a way that students can follow and complete them efficiently? Are students provided adequate resources to support their academic progress in accordance with the College's Mission and Vision?

RQ III-3. Describe the design and delivery of the College's General Education curriculum. Describe the breadth of the General Education offerings. How does the design of the curriculum ensure students acquire and demonstrate the essential academic skills expected of all graduates of the College? How is the attainment of these essential skills assessed?

RQ ill-4. How does the College ensure that academic programs are characterized by the same level of rigor, regardless of modality? How is technology leveraged by the College to ensure academic rigor is upheld regardless of modality? What policies and processes has the College put in place to ensure the delivery of academic content is not impacted by remote delivery? How has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted how the College delivers academic content remotely.

Standard III Working Group Membership

Member	Title
Eunice Kamunge (Co-Chair)	Chair, Biology, Chemistry, and Physics Division
Elvira Vieira (Co-Chair)	Dean, Community, Continuing Ed. and Workforce Development
Emmanuel Adepo	Faculty, Math
Olalekan Adetoro	Adjunct, Biology
Frank Duroy	Faculty, General Science
Ines Figueiras	Faculty, Math
Jeffrey Jones	Adjunct, Math
Akil Khalfani	Faculty, Director, Center for Global Education and Experiences, Africana Institute
Mikal Nash	Faculty, History
Charles Pinderhughes	Faculty, Social Science
Margaret Stevens	Faculty, Humanities
Leola Taylor-Bandele	Faculty, Librarian
Lynn Wilson	Faculty, Biology

* Steering Committee Liaison – Gale Gage, Chair, Nursing and Health Sciences Division

STANDARD IV: SUPPORT OF THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Across all educational experiences, settings, levels, and instructional modalities, the institution recruits and admits students whose interests, abilities, experiences, and goals are congruent with its mission and educational offerings. The institution commits to student retention, persistence, completion, and success through a coherent and effective support system sustained by qualified professionals, which enhances the quality of the learning environment, contributes to the educational experience, and fosters student success.

As the Standard IV Working Group, you are undertaking one of the most important activities in the Self-Study process. The research, analysis, and recommendations that result in your report will make up a significant part of the Self-Study – an introspective review of how the College recruits and supports its students.

As you begin, be sure to review Section 6 of the Self-Study Design as it provides detailed guidance of how to approach your tasks. You will also find editorial guidance that will make it possible to bring seven reports together in the Self-Study that will be submitted to Middle States. Section 7 of the Self-Study Design will give you an overview of the Self-Study and how your report should be organized.

Similarly, be sure to review the institutional priorities set out in Section 2 of the Self-Study Design as they should be kept in mind and addressed where appropriate when responding to the Research Questions. You should also be aware that Standard IV incorporates components of Requirements of Affiliation 8 and 10 and your responses should include a description and analysis that concludes that the College meets the requirements or how it needs to make changes to do so.

Research Questions

RQ IV-1. Describe how College policies and processes are designed to provide opportunities for admittance, attendance, and completion in a manner that is aligned with the College's institutional mission? How is information on financial assistance communicated to prospective and current students?

RQ IV-2. How are students in need of additional academic support identified and supported in order to meet the programmatic and institutional educational goals? Describe the College's developmental education program and assess its effectiveness.

RQ IV-3. What academic support services such as orientations, advisement, and counseling, and others, are available to students to help them reach their educational goals, for example degree completion and further study? How do these services enhance persistence and completion? How is this information on these services communicated to them and what evidence shows the extent to which students are using them? How do you assess the effectiveness of these services?

RQ IV-4. Describe the College's policies and procedures for evaluating and accepting credits that originate from outside the College. In addition to transfer credits, address experiential learning credits, competency-based assessment, and any other alternative learning approaches that the College accepts as college credit.

RQ IV-5. How are student records protected and how is FERPA compliance ensured? Is there an IRB process? Is there a data governance committee? What evidence indicates that third-party technical and support services follow College policy, procedures, and standards in delivering their content?

RQ IV-6. Describe how athletic, student life, and other extracurricular activities are in alignment with the College's mission, academic priorities, strategic planning objectives, budgetary procedures, and any other administrative principles that apply to the entirety of the College.

RQ IV-7. Do students taking courses at the West Essex Campus or online have access to the same support services as those enrolled at the Newark campus? What measures has the College taken to ensure all students receive the same support serviced regardless of location and mode of delivery? Describe and supply evidence of how has this been assessed?

Standard IV Working Group Membership

Member	Title
Sanja Dizdarevic (Co-Chair)	Assistant Director, Enrollment Services
Jamil Graham (Co-Chair)	Director, Student Life and Activities
Kathlyn Battle	Counselor, Student Development and Counseling, Faculty, Social Sciences
Patty Howard	Assistant Director, Financial Aid
Mirian Ochoa	Student Sevices Representative, Enrollment Services
Joseph Ott	Program Coordinator, Student Life and Activities, West Essex Campus
Sonia Rios-Cardoso	Assistant Director, Enrollment Services
Shalia Story	Staff, Graphics
Ada Torres	Lecturer, West Essex Campus
Diane Young-Garrett	Adjunct Professor, Social Sciences

* Steering Committee Liaison – Keith Kirkland, Dean, Student Affairs

STANDARD V: EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS ASSESSMENT

Assessment of student learning and achievement demonstrates that the institution's students have accomplished educational goals consistent with their program of study, degree level, the institution's mission, and appropriate expectations for institutions of higher education.

As the Standard V Working Group, you are undertaking one of the most important activities in the Self-Study process. The research, analysis, and recommendations that result in your report will make up a significant part of the Self-Study – an introspective review of how the College assesses student learning to ensure students are achieving educational goals, and that assessment results are systematically used to improve academic programs.

As you begin, be sure to review Section 6 of the Self-Study Design as it provides detailed guidance of how to approach your tasks. You will also find editorial guidance that will make it possible to bring seven reports together in the Self-Study that will be submitted to Middle States. Section 7 of the Self-Study Design will give you an overview of the Self-Study and how your report should be organized.

Similarly, be sure to review the institutional priorities set out in Section 2 of the Self-Study Design as they should be kept in mind and addressed where appropriate when responding to the Research Questions. You should also be aware that Standard V incorporates components of Requirements of Affiliation 8, 9 and 10 and your responses should include a description and analysis that concludes that the College meets the requirements or how it needs to make changes to do so.

Research Questions

RQ V-1. Discuss the College's institutional level educational goals. How were these goals developed and how do they reflect the Mission of Essex County College? How has the general education curriculum been designed in alignment with these goals? How is the general education curriculum assessed to ensure student achievement of these goals?

RQ V-2. Discuss the program level learning goals at the College. How were these goals developed and how do they align with the program's mission and goals? How are academic programs assessed to ensure that program goals are sufficiently introduced and reinforced by the curriculum? Are summative assessment measures embedded into each program's curricula to ensure that upon completion of the program, students have demonstrated mastery of each of the program's outcomes? How is this data collected and reported by the program? Is this process systematic and sustainable?

RQ V-3. Describe the action-planning process of how assessment results are regularly used to improve the program and guide policy and decision-making. Has this process resulted in systematic quality improvement? Provide several examples of how assessment results have been used to improve programs.

RQ V-4. How is the effectiveness of the assessment process regularly examined? How are outcomes, curriculum maps, measures, and targets regularly reviewed?

Standard V Working Group Membership

Member	Title
Patrice Davis (Co-Chair)	Faculty, Social Sciences
Yasser Kabakibi (Co-Chair)	Faculty, Biology/Pre-Med.
Ezdehar Abu-Hatab	Faculty, Biology
Gennevieve Danville	Faculty, Program Coordinator, Nursing LPN
Jamal Elborj	English Coordinator, Humanities
Ledawn Hall	Director, Men and Women of Excellence Scholars Program
Yelena Lyudmilova	Assistant Director, Education and Computing Technologies
Kenneth Mailly	Faculty, Physical Therapy
Brooke Orosz	Chair, Mathematics, Engineering Tech. and Computer Science Division
Beatrice Spitzer	Adjunct Faculty, Business
William Tooma	Faculty, English
Bridget Turner	Adjunct Faculty, Education

* Steering Committee Liaison – Patrice Davis, Faculty, Social Sciences

STANDARD VI: PLANNING, RESOURCES, AND INSTITUTIONAL IMPROVEMENT

The institution's planning processes, resources, and structures are aligned with each other and are sufficient to fulfill its mission and goals, to continuously assess and improve its programs and services, and to respond effectively to opportunities and challenges.

As the Standard VI Working Group, you are undertaking one of the most important activities in the Self-Study process. The research, analysis, and recommendations that result in your report will make up a significant part of the Self-Study – an introspective review of all aspects of the College's operations.

As you begin, be sure to review Section 6 of the Self-Study Design as it provides detailed guidance of how to approach your tasks. You will also find editorial guidance that will make it possible to bring seven reports together in the Self-Study that will be submitted to Middle States. Section 7 of the Self-Study Design will give you an overview of the Self-Study and how your report should be organized.

Similarly, be sure to review the institutional priorities set out in Section 2 of the Self-Study Design as they should be kept in mind and addressed where appropriate when responding to the Research Questions. You should also be aware that Standard VI incorporates components of Requirements of Affiliation 8, 10 and 11 and your responses should include a description and analysis that concludes that the College meets the requirements or how it needs to make changes to do so.

Research Questions

RQ VI-1. How does the College as a whole, and as individual academic and administrative units, determine long and short-term objectives that are designed to achieve mission and goals? How does the College incorporate results from systematic assessments of its academic, administrative, and other units to establish these objectives?

RQ VI-2. How are planning and improvement processes developed? Are previous assessment results utilized? What is done to encourage participation of various constituencies? How are assessment results utilized? How are the plans communicated to the College community? Describe the planning and improvement processes utilized by academic and administrative units, such as strategic and student learning goals. What institutional assessments are produced on a recurring basis to inform planning and improvement efforts? Do these assessments appear to be adequate for strategic planning?

RQ VI-3. Describe the process used to develop the College's annual budget. What steps are taken to align the budget with the mission and goals? How are institutional and unit strategic goals and objectives operationalized through the budget?

RQ VI-4. Are the College's fiscal and human resources sufficient to support all aspects of its operation? It is appropriate to consider pre-COVID conditions in comparuisoin to the current situation. What steps are the College taking to ensure it long-range fiscal stability? This will be a very dynamic section and will be periodically updated.

RQ VI-5. Considering the College's organization chart and other documents, does there appear to be a clear assignment of responsibility and accountability? What methods are used when making institution-wide decisions? Are there opportunities for stakeholders to be heard?

RQ VI-6. Describe the College's process for the development of facilities, infrastructure, and technology plans. Does the process lead to plans that include consideration of sustainability and deferred maintenance and linked to the institution's

strategic and financial planning processes? Do the current plans reflect the way operations have changed due to the pandemic? If not, how should they be modified?

RQ VI-7. Is the College commissioning an annual independent audit? Discuss the results from the past three years. What evidence is there that there has been follow-up of any material issues or recommendations in the management letter that is part of the audit report? serviced regardless of location and mode of delivery? Describe and supply evidence of how has this been assessed?

RQ VI-8. How has the College assessed the availability and utilization of its fiscal and human resources and the effectiveness of planning, resource allocation, and periodic institutional review.

Standard VI Working Group Membership

Member	Title
Alvin Williams (Chair)	Acting Executive Dean, Faculty and Academics
Matilda Abavana	Faculty, Business
Elizabeth Barkley	Director, Information Technology
Yvette Jefferies	Director, College Advancement and Foundation
Stephen Keister	Librarian, Faculty
Jinsoo Park	Director, Institutional Research
Raquel Pernia	Faculty, Business
George Peterson	Chief Financial Officer
Joana Ramos-Ribeiro	Assistant to the Dean of Community, Continuing Ed. and Workforce Development
Alice Sanchez-Vinci	HR Generalist, Human Resources

* Steering Committee Liaison – Mohamed Seddiki, Executive Dean/CIO, Administrative and Learning Technologies

STANDARD VII: GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP, AND ADMINISTRATION

The institution is governed and administered in a manner that allows it to realize its stated mission and goals in a way that effectively benefits the institution, its students, and the other constituencies it serves. Even when supported by or affiliated with governmental, corporate, religious, educational system, or other unaccredited organizations, the institution has education as its primary purpose, and it operates as an academic institution with appropriate autonomy.

As the Standard VI Working Group, you are undertaking one of the most important activities in the Self-Study process. The research, analysis, and recommendations that result in your report will make up a significant part of the Self-Study – an introspective review of all aspects of the College's operations.

As you begin, be sure to review Section 6 of the Self-Study Design as it provides detailed guidance of how to approach your tasks. You will also find editorial guidance that will make it possible to bring seven reports together in the Self-Study that will be submitted to Middle States. Section 7 of the Self-Study Design will give you an overview of the Self-Study and how your report should be organized.

Similarly, be sure to review the institutional priorities set out in Section 2 of the Self-Study Design as they should be kept in mind and addressed where appropriate when responding to the Research Questions. You should also be aware that Standard VI incorporates components of Requirements of Affiliation 12 and 13, and your responses should include a description and analysis that concludes that the College meets the requirements or how it needs to make changes to do so.

Research Questions

RQ VII-1. Describe the College's governance structure. Are there well-defined roles that allow for efficient decision making at all levels including trustees, administration, faculty, staff, and students? How is public made aware of this structure?

RQ VII-2. Describe the structure of the Board of Trustees, including how they are appointed and its role in College operations. Does the Board operate with independence from the entities that appointed the members? What steps are taken to ensure that they comply with their written conflict of interest and self-evaluation policies?

RQ VII-3. Discuss the Board's role at the policy level in College operations and note if there are any concerns of overreaching into daily decision making. Does the Board satisfy its oversight obligations in the areas of finance, the establishing of degree requirements, and final approval of policies?

RQ VII-4. What is the process by which the president is appointed and evaluated? Does the president have the credentials, experience, and authority to lead the institutions in achieving its Mission and Vision and its stated objective and goals?

RQ VII-5. Is there an administrative structure that provides for clearly defined roles and reporting relationships? Do administrators have the credentials, experience, and tools, such as information systems, to allow them to both assist the president and guide and supervise those who report to them? Are administrators evaluated and do they evaluate those who report to them?

RQ VII-6. Describe the measures taken by the Board of Trustees, President, and the administration, in response to the change in conditions brought about by the pandemic.

Standard VI Working Group Membership

Member	Title
Carlos Rivera (Chair)	Faculty, Business
Mary Ellen Carpenter	Faculty, Radiology
Andrew McCarthy	Adjunct Professor, English
Darlene Miller	Bursar
Cheryl Newton-Banks	Director, Enrollment Services, West Essex Campus
Joanna Romano	Director, Educational Opportunity Fund
Brian Shube	Adjunct Professor, Business
Robert Spellman	Faculty, Art
Victor Stolberg	Counselor, Student Development and Counseling, Faculty, Social Sciences
Jean-Wilner Alexandre	Faculty, Business

* Steering Committee Liaison – Yvette Henry, Executive Director, Human Resources

SPECIAL TEAMS

In addition to the Steering Committee and six Working Groups, four additional small teams were created to work with the Steering Committee and Working Groups, each with a specialized role. Each is led by a member of the Steering Committee, have three members, and may draw additional help from other members of the College as needed.

Special Teams Descriptions and Membership

Communications Team	
Oversees outgoing communications from the Steering Committee to the College community. This includes communications to employees, students, alumni, the President's Cabinet, and the Board of Trustees as described in the Communication Plan in Section 10.	• Leigh Bello-de Castro (Team Leader) Associate Dean, West Essex Campus, Online Education • Wayne Yourstone Senior News writer, Marketing and Communications • Jayson Hull Marketing Assistant, Institutional Advancement

Verification of Compliance Team	
Assists the Steering Committee and the Working Groups to ensure that the 15 Requirements of Affiliation are fully addressed and properly reflected in evidence throughout the Self-Study Report. Oversees the Verification of Compliance Plan as described in Section 8.	• Syrion Jack (Team Leader) Director of Compliance, Deputy General Counsel • Joy Tolliver General Counsel • Shaliele Hunt Administrative Assistant, Finance

Evidence Inventory Team	
Assists the Steering Committee and the Working Groups by providing an electronic platform and methodology for the cataloguing of evidence related to the Self-Study Report as outlined in Section 12.	• Jeffrey Lee (Team Leader) Faculty, Program Coordinator, Environmental Science • Aneliia Chatterjee Librarian, Faculty • Yelena Lyudmilova Assistant Director, Education and Computing Technologies

Student Outreach Team	
Assists the Steering Committee and the Working Groups by coordinating contact with students as-needed to ensure the student voice is considered throughout the Self-Study in an efficient, yet effective manner.	• Keith Kirkland (Team Leader) Dean, Student Affairs • Jamil Graham Director, Student Life and Activities • Patricia Slade Associate Dean, Student Life and Development

6. GUIDELINES FOR REPORTING

One of the chief functions of the Steering Committee is to ensure that the Working Groups are well-informed of their charges, are given all necessary assistance, remain on schedule, and produce the required report and recommendations. As the self-study process is being organized, the COVID-19 pandemic is making face-to-face meetings virtually impossible and requiring that the collegiality and information sharing that develops from those encounters be achieved through different means. As the situation and restrictions change, so may some of the mechanical aspects described below, though the goal will not: the preparation of a Self-Study through the investigation, analysis, and recommendations of the Working Groups.

Seeking a regular flow of guidance and supervision, the Working Groups will have a liaison from the Steering Committee sitting as a member. Standard I will be investigated by a subcommittee of the Steering Committee. By structuring itself this way, the Steering Committee will be able to assist the Working Groups in a timely way while being regularly updated on their activities.

Similarly, since each Working Group will be represented through its liaison at all Steering Committee meetings, information and guidance will easily flow both ways. This process will also facilitate collaboration between the Working Groups.

The Steering Committee and the Working Groups will establish timetables for the initial drafting, review, revision, and completion of reports and other work products. In addition, there will be a schedule of meetings of each entity, recognizing that regular meetings are vital for continual progress. It is necessary that meetings be held through the calendar year, with some consideration for holiday periods. In consultation with their Steering Committee liaison, plans should be made for at least the chair to meet with the chair of other Working Groups. Section 9 of the Self-Study Design sets out an overall timetable for the Self-Study process and must be consulted when establishing schedules.

Writing and Editorial Guidelines

The Self-Study Report documents the internal evaluation of the College, its mission, and consequent functions. The report also provides a guide for the visiting team of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. Thus, the final document should be direct, efficient, and clear to its varied readers. It should be primarily analytical with as much description as is necessary to put the discussion in context and to make the recommendations meaningful. Strict standards will facilitate the writing and editing of the report to meet these criteria.

To facilitate the collaborative writing and review process, Working Groups will utilize a number of tools and follow a set of guidelines detailed below. After discussions within each group, members will be assigned to respond to the Research Questions found in its charge.   As research and writing progresses, SPOL will be utilized until the Working Group determines that it is complete.

The Working Groups will incorporate the responses to the questions into a Word document that will eventually form the foundation of the Self-Study.

Computer Hardware and Software

Word Processing Software: Word in Office 2016 or 2019 or Office 365. If using a personal computer that does not have Office, use Word 2016 or 2019 and save the document with the extension docx.

Collaborative Tool: Drafts of responses to Research Questions should be written in SPOL. Each question will have a separate field to allow for easy collaboration between the Working Group members assigned to that question and for review by the entire group. A manual to assist in the use of SPOL will be distributed to all Working Group members and assistance can be sought from the Evidence Inventory Team throughout the Self-Study.

As the Working Group begins to make progress in responding to the Research Questions, the responses should be transferred to a Word document following these guidelines.   Introductory and transition language should be added as appropriate to provide for a narrative report that provides the discussion, evidence, and analysis indicating compliance with the Standard.

Page Format

Font: In SPOL use Times New Roman, size 4. When transferring to Word, use 12-point Times New Roman

Margins: Use one-inch margins on all sides. Do not right justify.

Line and Paragraph Spacing:
• In Word under Home, click on Paragraph
• Use "Line Spacing single-space." On many computers using Word, the default is "Line spacing 1.08" so please change it as you begin your Word report.
• Set spacing to "Before = 0" and "After = 6pt." Uncheck the box for "Don't add space between paragraphs of the same style."

Naming Convention: Working Group drafts should be named Standard X Date Submitted. For example, Standard IV 1-15-2021. That will help to ensure that the latest version is the one under consideration.

Page numbering: Number each page on the bottom right. Use the convention Standard-Page Number. For example, IV-3.

Spacing: Single space the report with the following exceptions:
• Double space between paragraphs.
• Begin a new report component on a new page.
• When going to a new page, use a page break, rather than using the Enter key multiple times. .
• Do not let a heading separate from the text that follows.
• Add two character spaces between sentences.

Headings:

• Major Headings: Centered in bold, all upper 12 point. Double-space after.

• Secondary Headings: Left Justified in bold, upper and lower case, 12 point. Text Starts a new paragraph on a new line after a single space.

• Tertiary Headings: Left Justified in non-bold, underlined, 12 point. Heading ends with a colon (do not underline the colon). Text continues on the same line.

• Spacing Before and After headings: Double- space before and after a major heading and before a sub-heading. Double-space (using the space bar, not the Enter key) after the colon in a sub-heading.

THIS IS A PRIMARY HEADING
This is a Secondary Heading
This is a Tertiary Heading:

Content Style

Language:

• Write in a positive tone with clarity and simplicity.

• Use the active voice, such as "The task force gave the assignments."

• Do not use the passive voice, such as, "The assignments were given by the task force."

• Refer to positions, offices, areas, or groups, rather than to individuals' names.

• Avoid jargon so that various audiences can understand the terminology; define any specialized terms that intelligent, non-specialist audiences would not know.

• Use third person rather than "I," "we," or "you."

• Use impersonal, non-emotional language. Do not use subjective phrases, such as "I feel" or "we think."

• Avoid contractions.

• When using acronyms or initialisms, introduce the acronym in parentheses after the first use of the full term in each section of the document.

Capitalization:

• Use Committee when referring to an official college committee.

• Use capital letters when referring to the Team Chair, and different tiles at ECC (e.g. Vice-President, Dean, etc.).

• Use capital letters when referring to the Evaluation Team, the Self-Study, the Self-Study Design, Self-Study Report, Self-Study Document, Verification of Compliance Report, and the Working Groups.

• Use capital letters when referring to institutional documents and processes such as the Strategic Plan, Operational Plan and the Evidence Inventory Group/Team.

• Fall and spring are not capitalized.

Mechanics:

• Use spell check.

• Do not use unnecessary abbreviations. Use the abbreviations MSCHE (or, the Commission) and ECC (or, the College) after the first reference in each section of the report.

• Use a hyphen in the word "Self-Study" and do not hyphenate "Working Group."

• Italicize titles of books, newspapers, reports, and other publications.

• Use quotation marks with titles of chapters, articles, or information from bound periodicals.

• Use a comma after each item in a series, such as "surveys, questionnaires, and reports."

• Place commas and periods inside final quotation marks and place colons and semicolons outside the quotation marks.

• Place question marks inside the quotation marks if the quoted matter is a question.

• Capitalize College when it refers to ECC.

• For non-numbered lists, use bullets as in this example.

Miscellaneous Provisions:

• In most cases, use parenthetical references rather than endnotes or footnotes.

• Refer to positions or titles, rather than the names of individuals.

• Spell out 0-9 and use numerals for 10 and higher.

• Include appendices at the end of the report. Alphabetize appendix references, such as Appendix A.

Style Decisions: Editors will use the MLA Handbook. These Guidelines address changes or additions to the MLA style. Each editor will have copies of English Simplified for usage standards and American Heritage Dictionary for preferred spellings of words. William Strunk, Jr. and E.B. White's The Elements of Style will govern stylistic decisions, keeping in mind the unique nature of a Middle States Self-Study.

7. ORGANIZATION OF THE FINAL SELF-STUDY REPORT

Essex County College has adopted the Standards-Based approach and the Self-Study Report will be organized following that structure.

Chapter 1 — Executive Summary

Chapter 2 — Institutional Overview

Chapter 3 — Standard I

Chapter 4 — Standard II

Chapter 5 — Standard III

Chapter 6 — Standard IV

Chapter 7 — Standard V

Chapter 8 — Standard VI

Chapter 9 — Standard VII

Chapter 10 — Conclusions

Chapter 11 — Glossary and Appendices

Chapter 12 — Certifications

Each chapter that discusses a Standard will be organized with:
• A heading indicating the Standard being discussed
• A presentation of evidence and analysis in context of the Standard and criteria
• Conclusions that include strengths and opportunities
• Recommendations for improvement

8. VERIFICATION OF COMPLIANCE STRATEGY

The compliance processes related to the Self-Study at Essex County College will be coordinated by the Verification of Compliance Team which consists of:

Syrion Jack
Verification of Compliance Team Leader

Chief Compliance Officer and
Deputy General Counsel
Steering Committee Member

Joy Tolliver

General Counsel
Standard VII Working Group Member

Shaliele Hunt

Administrative Assistant,
Controller's Office

The team will be charged with reading the Verification of Compliance with Accreditation-Relevant Federal Regulations and the Institutional Federal Compliance Report template and having a working knowledge and understanding of those documents and how they relate to the Self Study.

The Verification of Compliance Team will assess and document Essex County College's compliance with relevant federal regulations developed by the United States Department of Education. The team will collect documentation of policies relating to institutional compliance in the following areas:

1. Student identity verification in distance and correspondence education
2. Transfer of credit policies and articulation agreements
3. Title IV program responsibilities
4. Institutional records of student complaints
5. Required information for students and the public
7. Contractual relationships

8. Assignment of credit hours
9. Examine and collect documentation of compliance with the MSCHE Requirements of Affiliation (1-6 and 14)

The team will be responsible for preparing the Institutional Federal Compliance Report and compiling same with the supporting evidence into a single document which will be uploaded as evidence prior to the on-site visit. The team members will communicate on a regular basis with the Chairs of the other working groups, particularly with Working Group for Standard II (Ethics and Integrity), to ensure that all elements of the aforementioned compliance components are present in the appropriate areas of the Self-Study. Relevant evidence will be solicited through working group chairs as well as directly from departments throughout the institution. Progress updates and issues identified will be discussed at regular Steering Committee meetings.

9. SELF-STUDY TIMETABLE

Essex County College's approach to the Self-Study is to make it a meaningful and transformative experience. Therefore, the College elects a spring visit, in effect extending the length of time spent in active Self-Study. To further maximize the time that the Working Groups can spend engaging in Self-Study activities, the parameters of the timeline given below use an aggressive timeline in the earlier stages of the Self-Study in order to get the Working Groups operational as quickly as possible. It is important to note, that this schedule still works within the parameters of the Commission's suggested timeline for spring visits.

Time Period	Activity/Task
September – November 2020	· Institution Representatives attend the Self-Study Institute · Administer a Nominations for Participation electronic sign-up, College-Wide
November 2020	· Finalize the Steering Committee · Identify Working Group Chairs and Co-Chairs · Begin drafting the Self-Study Design · Meet with Institutional Advancement to begin developing our Self-Study webpage
December 2020	· Meet individually with Working Group Chairs and Co-Chairs to establish Working Group membership · Outreach to obtain informal confirmations of willingness to serve by Working Group members · Provide an update to the President and the Board of Trustees on the development of the Self-Study Design · Create a late stage working draft of the complete Self-Study Design · Conference call with our MSCHE VP Liaison (Held on 12/21/20) · Send a Pre-Winter Break Update to the Steering Committee, Working Group Chairs, and the Cabinet
January - February 2021	· Official letters of invitation to be sent from the President to all Self-Study Team members · Host the first full Steering Committee meeting to review and obtain feedback the late stage working draft of the Self-Study Design · Host an Orientation with the full Self-Study Team · Host an ALO and VP Liaison Conference Call to finalize the agenda for the Preliminary Visit · Deliver training to the Self-Study Team on the use of the SPOL Accreditation Module · Host our Preliminary Visit with our VP Liaison (Scheduled for 2/11/20) · Acceptance of the SSD by the Commission
Spring 2021	· Working Groups begin meeting to work on their Charge · Conduct a spring 2021 Town Hall Event

Time Period	Activity/Task
Fall 2021	· Working groups continue drafting their chapters and compiling evidence · First full drafts of the Standard Chapters are submitted to the Steering Committee and edited into a first draft. · Drafts are posted on the Self-Study website to solicit stakeholder feedback. · Conduct a fall 2021 Town Hall Event
Early Spring 2022	· Self-Study Evaluation Team Chair chosen · Visit dates chosen · Accepted SSD sent to Chair. · Working groups incorporate stakeholder input and continue refining their chapters and continue to compile evidence until mid-semester. · Working Groups submit second drafts of their Standard Chapters to the Steering Committee
Late spring 2022	· The Steering Committee compiles and edits chapter drafts into a final Self-Study Report and conducts a final review in preparation for the Team Chair Preliminary Visit · Conduct a spring 2022 Town Hall Event
Fall 2022	· Self-Study Report draft sent to Team Chair (2 weeks prior to visit) · Team Chair's Preliminary Visit · Self-Study Report finalized based on Team Chair feedback and shared with campus
Spring 2023	· Final Self-Study Report/Verification of Compliance/Evidence Inventory uploaded to MSCHE portal (six weeks before team visit) · Self-Study Evaluation Team Visit · Team Report · Institutional Response
June 2023	· Commission meets to determine action and notifies the institution
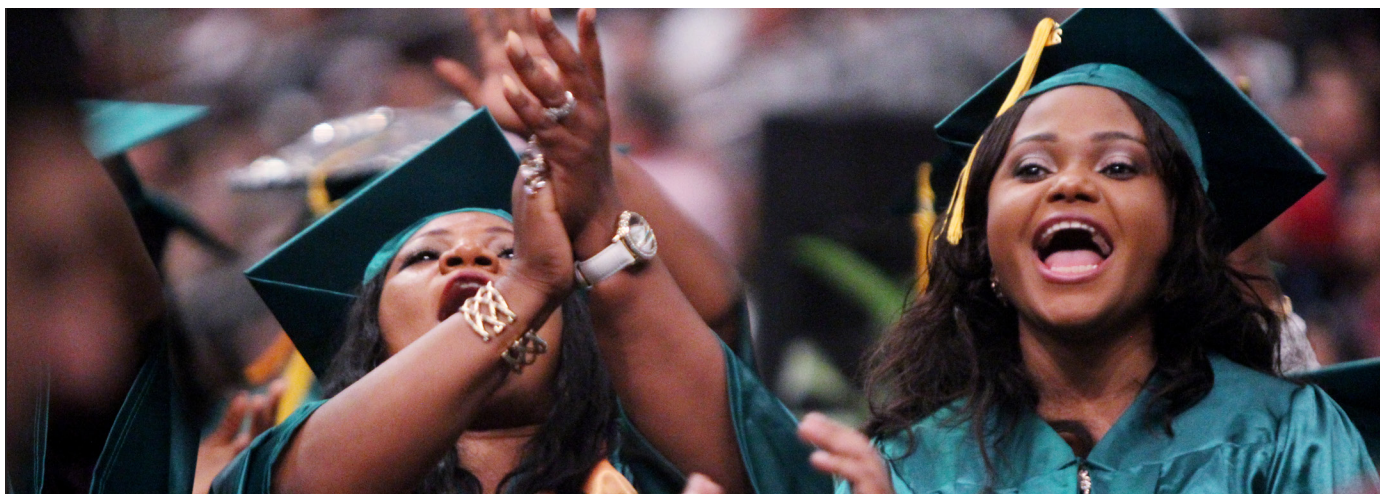
10. COMMUNICATION PLAN

All official communications regarding the Self-Study process will be coordinated by the Communications Team in collaboration with the Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO).

The Communications Team consists of:

Leigh Bello-de Castro
Communications Team Leader
Associate Dean, West Essex Campus
and Online Education
Steering Committee Member

Wayne Yourstone
Senior News Writer

Jayson Hull
Marketing Assistant

The Communications Team is responsible for all communications from the Steering Committee to the College Community, including to staff, faculty, students, the Board of Trustees, and Alumni.

The main responsibilities of the Communication Team will be to:

1. Establish and amend communication timeline as needed

2. Work with the Steering Committee and ALO to ensure the College Community is kept abreast of Self-Study activities and progress

3. Collaborate with the Accreditation Liaison Officer to develop e-newsletters, and written updates on the progress of the Self-Study to various audiences

4. Develop and oversee the development of the Self-Study web presence, including oversight of the public comment period

5. Coordinate the logistics and marketing of Self-Study Town Halls held each fall and spring throughout the Self-Study process

6. Archive all pertinent evidence of the communications process

COMMUNICATION PLAN

Objective	Target Audience	Methods of Communication	Timing
Annual Updates at Convocation	Faculty, Administration, Staff	Presentation at the Fall Convocation by ALO	fall 2020, fall 2021, end fall 2022 Convocations
Invite all members of the College Faculty, Administration, and Staff to community to nominate themselves or others to serve on the Self-Study Team	Faculty, Administration, Staff	· Link to nomination form shared at Fall 2020 Convocation by the ALO · President sends an email invitation and the link to the nomination form to the entire Faculty, Administration, and Staff. The ALO sends a follow-up email invitation and the link to the nomination form to the entire Faculty, Administration, and Staff	September 2020, October 2020, November 2020
Deliver an update to the newly formed Self-Study leadership team on the progress of the Self-Study Design and upcoming events.	Self-Study leadership team (Steering Committee and Working Group Chairs)	Email an e-newsletter before the Winter break	December 2020
Letters of invitation to serve are sent out	Self-Study Team (Steering Committee, Working Groups, Special Teams)	The Communication Team coordinated with the Office of the President to have official letter of invitation to serve on the Self-Study Team sent to all members	January 2021
Weekly updates on Self-Study	President, Cabinet	The ALO delivers a weekly status update during the weekly Cabinet meeting. · An oral update is given at the meeting a written summary of the updates is sent to the Office of the President to be distributed with the minutes.	Weekly from Fall 2020 through the visit in Spring 2023
Monthly updates on the Self-Study	President	The ALO uploads a monthly status report on the Self-Study to the SPOL system. This becomes part of the Cabinet's monthly report to the President.	Monthly from Fall 2020 through Spring 2023
Semester update on the Self-Study	Students	Each semester, an e-newsletter will be written to students to keep them abreast of the Self-Study process, how it affects them, with an invitation to be part of the process. The newsletter will be send via email to all students and will also be included in the Students First daily email blast for several weeks each semester.	April 2021, October 2021, April 2022, October 2022, April 2023
Semester update on the Self-Study	Board of Trustees	The ALO delivers a detailed written report and presentation to the Board of Trustees during the executive session of the December, 2020 Board Meeting.	December 2020, June 2021, December 2021, June 2022, December 2022, June 2023
Town Hall Events that include updates and encourage public discourse	Entire College community including, but not limited to students, faculty, administration, staff and alumni	Live, in-person, Town Hall events. This format will facilitate more opportunities for Q&A and provides an open public forum for discussion. These events will ensure that all members of the College community have an opportunity to have their voices heard throughout this process. *	spring 2021, fall 2021, spring 2022, fall 2022, spring 2023

* Town Hall events will be held virtually on Zoom until government and health officials deem it safe to hold these events in-person, on-campus.

11. EVALUATION TEAM PROFILE

As the only institution in the State of New Jersey that is both a Predominantly Black Institution (PBI) and a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), Essex County College seeks an Evaluation Team with a deep understanding of the challenges faced by urban community colleges serving diverse, largely minority, student populations. Having the largest EOF program in the State and with over three-quarters of financial aid applicants qualifying for need-based aid in the form of Pell Grants, the College also seeks an evaluation team with a deep understanding and experience working with student bodies facing severe financial challenges.

As such, Essex County College requests a Team Chair that meets the following criterion:

• A President from an urban, open-access, public, two-year college

• A deep understanding and significant experience working with a diverse, largely minority student body

• A deep understanding and significant experience working with a student body facing severe financial challenges

In addition, Essex County Colleges seeks an evaluation team with the following characteristics:

• All members should have experience working at an urban, open-access, highly unionized, public, two-year college

• All members should have experience working with diverse learners. In addition to racially diverse students, this includes experience with large populations of first-generation students, adult learners, ELL students (English Language Learners), student bodies with large immigrant populations

• As the New Jersey community college with the largest non-credit enrollment, at least one member of the evaluation team should have significant experience working with non-credit continuing education and workforce development programs

• As an institution with a large population of new first-time students requiring developmental education, at least one member of the evaluation team should have significant experience in the design and delivery of developmental education programs

• As an institution with its mission, values, and strategic goals aligned with providing holistic support services to meet the needs of all students, at least one member of the evaluation team should be a Student Affairs leader with experience working with a comparably diverse and economically challenged student body

Additional Relevant Information

Comparable institutions include:

- Passaic County Community College, Paterson, NJ

- CUNY Queensborough Community College, Queens, NY

- Bunker Hill Community College, Boston, MA

- Community College of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA

Aspirational institutions include:

- Union County College, Cranford, NJ

- Middlesex County College, Edison, NJ

Major competitor institutions:

- Rutgers University, Newark, NJ

- Kean University, Union, NJ

- Montclair University, Montclair, NJ

Institutions with a potential conflict of interest:

- Borough of Manhattan Community College, Manhattan, NY

Largest academic programs at Essex County College:

- General Science (including pre-Allied Health) A.S.

- Liberal Arts A.A.

- Business Administration A.S.

- Social Science A.A.

- Criminal Justice A.A.

12. EVIDENCE INVENTORY

The process of collecting, organizing, and cataloguing evidence will be coordinated by the Evidence Inventory Team which consists of:

Jeffrey Lee
Evidence Inventory Team Leader
Biology Faculty
Steering Committee Co-Chair

Aneliia Chatterjee
Librarian, Faculty Member
Steering Committee Member

Yelena Lyudmilova
Assistant Director,
Education and Computing Technologies

To manage our Middle States Evidence Inventory, the team will meet with the Working Group chairs on integrating evidence into the final report. They will also review and refine evidence as it comes in as well as determine proper cross-linking of documents to minimize duplication and allow for more efficient data searching.

All evidence will be annotated by the team, as well as cross-linked to the claims that it supports. This will allow for more efficient secondary and final editing. This will also allow more efficient analysis of the evidence by the team to identify gaps in the inventory and notify the proper Working Groups about any omissions.

The working inventory will be housed electronically in the Strategic Planning Online (SPOL) Accreditation Module which allows for articles of evidence to be associated to multiple standards. A physical copy of the evidence inventory will also be compiled in a campus location dedicated to the Self-Study, that will also double as a meeting room throughout the Self-Study. This will allow for easy access to evidence during Self-Study meetings. This dedicated space will eventually be converted into a resource room for use by the Evaluation Team during the site visit.

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ESSEX COUNTY COLLEGE
SELF-STUDY DESIGN

ESSEX
COUNTY COLLEGE
STUDENTS FIRST