CSI Self-Study Information Sheet

Since the Spring 2020 semester, a broad cross-section of the CSI community—representing faculty, staff, and students—have been collaborating on a Self-Study that is required for re-accreditation under the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (Middle States).

What is Middle States Accreditation all about?

To ensure that students are provided with a quality higher education, American colleges and universities are required to receive accreditation through an authorized accrediting body. Like other CUNY colleges, CSI is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. As an accredited college, CSI must go through a reaccreditation process every eight years. This process involves conducting a Self-Study, a written report that assesses how the College fulfills its mission and goals in alignment with Middle States Standards.

Who conducts the Self-Study?

The Self-Study is overseen by a Steering Committee and eight Working Groups, one for each of the seven Middle States Standards and the Verification of Compliance. The Steering Committee and the Working Groups are comprised of faculty, staff and students from across the College. To learn more about who the members are, visit the CSI Middle States website.

What is the Self-Study Report?

This document consists of a written reflection and analysis of the institution's mission and goals in relation to the Middle States Standards. This work began at the start of the 2020-2021 academic year and was overseen and coordinated by the Self-Study Steering Committee and Working Groups. A final report was submitted to Middle States in February 2022 for review by the Middle States Evaluation Team. The report is available here: CSI Self-Study. (To access the report login with your CSI FLAS username and password.)

What is the Self-Study Visit?

This is conducted by a Middle States Evaluation Team and will occur on **March 27-30, 2022**. Ordinarily, team members would visit the campus in person; but this time, the visit will be conducted through a series of Zoom meetings. The peer reviewers on the team are selected by Middle States and consist of volunteers from other Middle States-accredited institutions. The reviewers do not work for Middle States. The Evaluation team reviews the Self-Study report, meets with people representing all areas of the College (faculty, staff, and students), and then provides a written analysis of their evaluation to Middle States about whether or not we are in compliance with the Standards.

The agenda for the visit is still in progress. The Evaluation Team chair notifies the Self-Study co-chairs about which CSI departments, offices, or programs that the Evaluation team would like meet. During the course of the visit, it is possible that meetings may be canceled or rescheduled. It is also possible that some meetings may be added. However, no meeting will occur without previous arrangement.

How can I prepare for the visit?

The visit is a time to evaluate the College's strengths and identify ways that it can continue to improve its practices in fulfillment of its mission. To prepare for the visit:

- Become familiar with the Middle States Standards
- Review the CSI Strategic Plan
- Review the CSI Self-Study Report
- Consider the following questions:
  o How does my work support the CSI Mission and Strategic Priorities?
  o What are the mission and goals of your office?
  o How does assessment data inform the decisions that you make (instructional, curricular, budgetary, etc.)?
  o Is your department accomplishing the goals it sets for itself?

CSI Self-Study Report Highlights

The following pages briefly summarizes some of the key content within the Self-Study.

Self-Study Institutional Priorities
The CSI Self-Study report highlights three Institutional Priorities. The table below lists the Institutional Priorities, how they link to the CSI Mission and Strategic Priorities, and their alignment with the Middle States Standards.

Elements of the CSI Mission Statement	CSI's Strategic Priorities 2017-2022	Self-Study Institutional Priorities	Middle States Standards
Help students fulfill their creative and educational aspirations; embrace the strength of our diversity.	Student Success	Foster success for students at all levels and from diverse backgrounds by providing a comprehensive approach to student support services.	• Standard IV - Support of the Student Experience • Standard VI – Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement
Provide competitive and rigorous undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs. Commitment to the highest standards in teaching, research, scholarship and service.	Scholarship-Driven Education	Demonstrate a commitment to faculty and student scholarship and the integration of this work into campus life.	• Standard II - Ethics and Integrity • Standard III - Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience
The only public institution of Higher Education in the Borough. Nurture responsible citizens of our City.	Borough Stewardship	Advance the College as an "anchor institution" on Staten Island by promoting the two-way exchange of knowledge and expertise between the College community and the Staten Island community.	• Standard III - Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience • Standard VI – Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement

CSI and the Middle States Standards
Listed below are the key takeaways from each chapter, which highlight how our work is in compliance with the Middle States Standards. Identified opportunities for improvement and innovation are also listed.

Standard I: Mission and Goals
- CSI has clearly defined Mission and goals that were developed through a collaborative process
- The CSI Strategic Plan guides the College in planning
  - **Student Success**: enhancements to advising; participation in Academic Momentum campaign
  - **Global Engagement**: The Center for Global Engagement hosts international scholars and students; sponsors *World on Wednesday* lecture series on campus
  - Borough Stewardship: New York Small Business Development Center; CSI Tech Incubator
  - Destination Campus: opening of St. George location; capital project completion

- - Scholarship-Driven Education: Annual Undergraduate Research Conference; enhanced support through Office of Sponsored Programs and Research
  - Resource Management: budgeting retreat and communication enhancements; enhanced OTPS budgeting process
- Standard I Opportunities for Improvement and Innovation
  - **Promoting Assessment Practices**: Articulate the role of assessment in relation to the Strategic Plan to assist with planning and decision making.
  - **Strengthening institutional memory and highlighting achievements**. In searching for evidence of major achievements (e.g., honors, grants, publications, and productions) over the past several years, we have found that there has been no centralized, regularly maintained database to draw upon. That gap has begun to be filled with the January 2022 debut of *CSI Today*, a newsletter available through the College website that celebrates faculty accomplishments and other milestones and developments. We hope that this new platform heralds a revitalized effort to preserve institutional memory and broadcast CSI's story in a compelling and accessible way.

Standard II: Ethics and Integrity

- College-wide focus on diversity, equity and inclusion
  - Faculty Diversity Strategic Plan 2013-2018 sets forth the goals of strengthening outreach to diverse candidates; retaining underrepresented groups of faculty, and fostering a welcoming an inclusive environment.
  - The CSI Diversity Council was reinstated in Spring 2021
- Promotion of affordability and accessibility to all students through frequent communications, robust financial aid information, and advising procedures
- The Office of Diversity and Compliance ensures a fair and equitable recruitment and hiring process
- Promotion of academic integrity and ethical standards in research
  - Through coursework (e.g., ENG 111, ENG 151, LIB 102)
  - IRB requirements
- Standard II Opportunities for Improvement and Innovation
  - **Further pursue diversity and improving campus climate**
  - **Strengthen faculty and staff retention**
  - **Provide a more regular review of the Faculty Handbook**

Standard III: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience

- Research facilities support faculty research and teaching.
- Faculty Center for Professional Development offers guidance, support, and training, especially in online pedagogy. Instrumental support during Covid-era pivot to remote learning.
- Faculty and curricular innovation fostered by standing committees of the Faculty Senate.
- Library supports student learning and faculty research, despite budgetary challenges.
  - Promotion of Open Education Resources for affordability and accessibility.
- Expansion of graduate and professional programs.
- Standard III Opportunities for Improvement and Innovation
  - **Improve FTE-to-faculty ratio**. CSI ranked tenth out of eleven senior CUNY colleges in its student FTE ratio to instructional faculty, according to the 2021 PMP report. The College should strive to improve this ratio.

- o **Improve faculty retention**. CSI should strive to improve its recruitment and retention of faculty of color, in the interest of more closely reflecting the demographic composition of the student body.

Standard IV: Support of the Student Experience
- CSI has robust support services to support student success
  - o Strong recruitment, admissions, and preparation for student entry (NSO, Testing, CART placement) to ensure students are enrolled appropriately and set up for success
  - o Continued advisement and counseling from entry through exit (CAAS, department, tutoring, etc.) with special initiatives (retention specialist, block scheduling, EduCares, Early Alert, etc.)
  - o A network of curricular and co-curricular support services for students that make a large school more personal (SEEK, ASAP, CSA, BMI, CGE, Honors)
  - o A strong system of co-curricular activities that enhance the student experience (Student Life, Athletics, Health and Wellness, etc.).
- Standard IV Opportunities for Improvement and Innovation
  - o **Expand the reach of Navigate**. A coordinated campaign through the divisions of Academic Affairs and Student Life would allow for greater access to online and in-person student services.
  - o **Promote athletic programs and participation**. Building on the successful leap to Division II athletics, CSI should work to engage the larger student body to support the teams.
  - o **Global engagement**. Using the Strategic Plan as a guide, CSI should consider additional support for global activities—including the recruitment of greater numbers of international students to CSI, scholarships to encourage studying abroad, and the delivery of globally relevant courses in the curriculum. Such efforts, which are aligned with AAC&U's High Impact Practices, are known to increase both student retention and success rates.
  - o **Online delivery of services**. As this Self-Study comes amid a global pandemic, it presents a unique opportunity to assess the delivery of services previously delivered in-person and transitioned to online while the campus was primarily offering remote instruction. As the campus emerges from the pandemic, it is recommended that a concerted effort be made to survey a broad swath of students to determine their overall satisfaction with remote delivery of services and campus programming. This information can be used strategically to meet students where they are and increase levels of support.

Standard V: Support of the Student Experience
- Through the Self-Study, CSI has reflected on its assessment processes across the College
- Working towards revitalizing assessment processes
  - o Developed institutional effectiveness guidelines
  - o Reviewing program and course learning goals
  - o Developed and are implementing a general education assessment plan
- Evidence of assessment data used to improve curriculum, teaching, and learning
- Standard V Opportunities for Improvement and Innovation
  - o **Emphasizing assessment in the next Strategic Plan.** As we have noted in Chapter I, the College's current Strategic Plan 2017-202 directly mentions assessment only once. The next plan should do more to emphasize the importance of cultivating a campus-wide culture of assessment, with rigorous attention to student learning outcomes, program learning goals, educational equity, student success, and resource management in a time of budgetary austerity and structural deficits.

- Faculty participation in assessment. A revitalized culture of assessment should promote the alignment between teaching, learning, and assessment design. To that end, we recommend that faculty take a leading role, with the support of administration and the director of Assessment in the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, in developing processes that use assessment outcomes to better inform instructional practices and assessment design.
- Assessment of associate programs. As a comprehensive college, CSI has always viewed its associate programs as an onramp to its baccalaureate programs and has therefore treated them as part of their corresponding baccalaureate programs. CSI should develop more individualized assessment plans for its two associate programs in Liberal Arts and Sciences (one Science track and one non-Science track).

Standard VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement
- As a comprehensive college funded as a senior college, CSI faces special budgeting challenges to meet the educational needs of all of its students
  - Those challenges are partially alleviated by program-specific funding (e.g., ASAP)
- Planning around capital budgeting has led to improvement of infrastructure on campus
- Planning during the Covid pandemic has led to increased online learning and support for faculty, staff, and students
- Standard VI Opportunities for Improvement and Innovation
  - Enhance the assessment process through the development of a cost of instruction model to further support resource allocation decisions.
  - Continue to develop and provide a more transparent assessment process that links decision-making and resource allocation to faculty, staff and students.
  - Improve upon academic and administrative department participation in ongoing assessment as part of their own operational work.
  - Continue to develop and communicate processes to ensure transparency about the budget process to faculty, students and staff.

Standard VII: Governance, Leadership, and Administration
- CSI has a clearly articulated governance structure within the CUNY system
  - CUNY Board of Trustees and CUNY Chancellor
  - CSI shared governance structure
- Qualified chief executive officer and senior leadership
- Decisions are made through shared governing committees
  - Campus Health, Safety, and Re-entry committee comprises senior administrators, faculty, and students in adaptive response to the pandemic
- Standard VII Opportunities for Improvement and Innovation
  - CSI should improve on its sharing of data assessment with the entire campus community in order to drive discussions and develop proposed actions on best ways to move the College forward.
  - CSI should implement a policy to ensure that the organizational charts and curricula vitae of senior administrators are up-to-date, especially when personnel and reporting relationships change throughout the College. This could be included as part of a process with yearly evaluations.
  - The College Council's Bylaws Committee should review the Governance Plan and engage the college community in identifying items that need to be addressed.
  - Because of personnel departures at the Executive Compensation Level (ECP) during the pandemic and related financial constraints, the College has a high number of interim positions, with some

assuming multiple high-level duties. The College's reporting structure should be reviewed and appropriate hires made to ensure that the administration is able to effectively function.