

August 26, 2016

Dear Members of the University Community,

The University's decennial Middle States Self-Study will begin this fall. This three-year process will culminate with the submission of our Self-Study Report in winter 2019, and a visit by a Peer Review Team in spring 2019. As has been our tradition, a Self-Study Steering Committee will be led by two co-chairs, one individual from the full-time faculty, and one individual from the staff/administration. The co-chairs will lead the Steering Committee and Working Groups comprised of representatives from across campus. I am pleased to announce that Dr. Rebecca Beal, Professor of English and Chair, English & Theatre, and Ms. Julie Schumacher Cohen, Director of Community and Government Relations, have accepted my invitation to serve as Steering Committee co-chairs.

The Steering Committee and Working Groups will conduct research and analysis, compile evidence, and prepare reports that document our strengths, our ability to meet Middle States' new [Standards for Accreditation & Requirements for Affiliation](#), and form recommendations for self-improvement. The standards are:

- Standard 1: Mission and Goals
- Standard 2: Ethics and Integrity
- Standard 3: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience
- Standard 4: Support of the Student Experience
- Standard 5: Educational Effectiveness Assessment
- Standard 6: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement
- Standard 7: Governance, Leadership, and Administration

We move into this self-study with a clean bill of health from Middle States. As was reported earlier, Middle States received our 2016 Monitoring Report on *Standard 14: Assessment of Student Learning* favorably and has not required any additional follow up on that standard. This success is due to the outstanding work of our faculty and academic leadership and the collaborative efforts promoted by the Office of Educational Assessment. Yet, despite this strong progress, we must continue to nurture assessment at the University – both the assessment of student learning, and of administrative and student support structures and processes.

In late October, the co-chairs will complete their Middle States training. The University will receive official guidelines for self-study at that time, and we will then form our Steering Committee and Working Groups. The self-study timeline is available on the University's Middle States web page, [www.scranton.edu/middlestates](http://www.scranton.edu/middlestates). This web site, and a new [selfstudy@scranton.edu](mailto:selfstudy@scranton.edu) email account, will be important vehicles for communication throughout the process. The collective contributions and talents of our entire University community are essential for a successful self-study, and there will be many ways to be involved. For some, this may be service on the Steering Committee or Working Groups; for others, taking part in various fora, meetings and interviews, providing information from your program or department, or reviewing draft reports. I encourage you all to participate however you can, and to become familiar with the accreditation standards. To share questions or comments about the self-study process, email [selfstudy@scranton.edu](mailto:selfstudy@scranton.edu).

As a Jesuit institution, reflection and a restless pursuit of excellence are core characteristics of our mission. Many thanks to all those who will support this important opportunity to examine how well we meet the Middle States standards, highlight our many strengths and identify goals for ongoing improvement.

Sincerely,

Kevin P. Quinn, S.J.  
President