



FIVE TOWNS COLLEGE

SELF-STUDY DESIGN

MIDDLE STATES COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION



JUNE 23, 2025

**Five Towns College
Middle States Self-Study Design**

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I. INSTITUTIONAL OVERVIEW

Five Towns College is a private, coeducational, non-sectarian institution of higher education founded in 1972 by Stanley Cohen, Ed.D. and Lorraine Kleinman Cohen, M.S. Both were enthusiastic college educators who realized a need for post-secondary education during the time and wanted to serve the local community of students. At Five Towns College, students can pursue their passion and prepare for their future careers, which undoubtedly leads to them becoming valuable and productive members of society.

Nestled in the rolling hills of Long Island's North Shore, Five Towns College offers students the opportunity to study on a beautiful suburban campus, with all the incredible amenities of an urban metropolis nearby. The 35-acre campus is located in the wooded countryside of Dix Hills, in the Town of Huntington, NY – the geographic and cultural center of Long Island.

Occupying the heart of the campus, Old Main is the primary academic structure, which consists of 12 interconnected buildings. These include the Five Towns College Performing Arts Center; the Sound Athletics Arena; Television Studio 400; the FTC Sound Stream Radio Station; the Upbeat Dining Commons; the Student Success Center; and the Library/Learning Resource Center; along with classrooms and computer, piano, technology support, and Musical Instrument Digital Interface (MIDI) laboratories.

In the middle of Old Main is The John Lennon Center for Music and Technology (JLC). The JLC houses the College's industry-standard complex of audio recording studios, including SSL Studio A, Film Stage D, the Interactive Media Arts Lab, the IT Help Desk, and the Internet-based Radio Station, the FTC Sound Stream.

Adjacent to Old Main is the FTC Studio Theatre, a small black box theatre dedicated to developing the actor's craft. The campus is also home to the Five Towns College Living/Learning Center (LLC). The LLC is a modern, gated, and secure complex of four residence halls for undergraduate and graduate students. The LLC is also home to the Five Towns College Center for Applied Music (CAM), The Downbeat Student Center, the FTC Store, and Film Stage E.

Five Towns College offers a learning environment that is personalized and practical. The College community is large enough to offer all the advantages of a comprehensive institution of higher education, yet small enough to provide students with an opportunity to express themselves as individuals in a welcoming and supportive environment. Students receive personalized attention, hands-on training, and a practical, well-rounded education that allows them to grow and develop as young adults.

Throughout its 50-year history, Five Towns College has established a growing reputation for educational innovation and excellence. It is in the vanguard of those institutions that have recognized and responded to the unique responsibilities and opportunities that are the province of highly focused, personalized, and specialized institutions. The College is committed to providing relevant educational opportunities to the widest mix of students. It is aware of its pivotal role in educating tomorrow's workers – and doing so in terms of what is required to succeed economically, technologically, and culturally in the 21st century.

Accreditation

Five Towns College holds an Absolute Charter granted by the New York State Board of Regents and its curricula are registered by the New York State Education Department (NYSED). In addition to being accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE), Five Towns College also holds accreditations for its Music and Music Education (K-12) programs through the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) and for its Theatre Arts program through the National Association of Schools of Theatre (NAST). The College's Business Management program is also currently a candidate for accreditation by the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP).

Mission Statement

Five Towns College is a creative learning community that develops in students the knowledge, skills, and competencies necessary to pursue careers in the performing arts, media and communications, business and industry, and the teaching professions. Through programs that combine general education and content specialty areas, the undergraduate and graduate curricula integrate rigorous academic inquiry, industry standard technologies and facilities, experiential learning, and respect for diversity and ethical values. In so doing, the College helps each student to expand their unique talents to the fullest, while also preparing graduates to contribute to the advancement of society.

Institutional Goals

- To develop in undergraduate students college-level proficiencies in general education
- To develop in undergraduate students content expertise within the context of specific career objectives
- To strengthen graduate students' professional-level proficiencies in content-specific areas
- To engage in strategic planning activities that nurture a culture dedicated to institutional and student learning assessment, and leads to clearly articulated student achievement outcomes

Programs of Study

Five Towns College helps students refine, develop, and grow their natural talents to be professionals in their chosen field. Students at the College benefit from a small congenial campus with a stellar faculty, hands-on pedagogy, professional experiences, dedicated advisors, and a mission driven by creativity.

Undergraduate programs leading to a Certificate, Associate, or Bachelor degree are available in Business Administration (AS), Business Management (AAS, BBA), Court Reporting (Certificate, AOS), Film and Television (BFA), Interactive Media Arts (AAS, BFA), Liberal Arts (AA), Mass Communication (BS), Music Performance (AAS, MusB), Music Education (MusB), and Theatre Arts (BFA). Within their chosen field, undergraduate students can focus their studies on a number of concentrations within their degree program, including Acting, Audio Recording Technology, Broadcasting, Composition, Instrumental, Journalism, Live

Entertainment and Media Production, Management, Marketing, Music Entertainment Industry Studies, Musical Theatre, Performance, Songwriting, Theatrical Design and Technology, and Vocal/Piano/Guitar.

All undergraduate degrees offered by Five Towns College include a Liberal Arts and Sciences / General Education component (LAS/GE). The LAS/GE consists of two parts. The first part is a Common Core Curriculum of 21 credits that is common to all undergraduate degree programs. The second part is the additional course requirements in the Liberal Arts and Sciences, which are required for candidates to earn each specific degree offered by the various academic divisions of the College.

The 21-credit Common Core Curriculum expresses the fundamental characteristics that the faculty seek to develop in all undergraduate students. It is designed so that students acquire and demonstrate college-level proficiency in essential skills, including oral and written communication, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis and reasoning, technological competency, and information literacy. The Common Core Curriculum also incorporates the study of values, ethics, and diverse perspectives. All of the courses in the Common Core Curriculum count toward the fulfillment of the New York State Education Department's distribution requirement for the liberal arts and sciences.

Graduate programs leading to a Masters or Doctorate degree are available in Composition (MM), Composition and Arranging (DMA), Music Education (MAT, MM, DMA), Music History (MM), Music History and Literature (DMA), Music Performance (MM, DMA), Music Technology (MM), and Sound Recording Technology (MPS).

Key Facts and Indicators

With a full-time equivalent (FTE) student-to-faculty ratio of 11:1, Five Towns College offers a personalized learning experience where students are taught by some of the top leaders in their respective industries. The College currently employs 16 full-time and 129 part-time/adjunct faculty, who are supported by 50 full-time and 57 part-time administrators and staff.

For the current Spring 2025 semester, 546 undergraduate and graduate students are enrolled in the College's various degree programs. Approximately 87% of students are enrolled in full-time study, with a little over a quarter of the student population residing on campus. While the nature of Five Towns College's degree programs attracts a majority male student population (64% male, 31% female, and 5% other or unknown), the racial and ethnic composition of the College's student population is quite diverse, with 46% of students identifying as white, 28% as Hispanic, 16% as African American, 3% as two or more races, and 7% who identify as American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, or Hawaiian or Pacific Islander.

Retention rates at the College have held relatively steady between 65-75% in recent years, with the Fall 2023 cohort achieving a retention rate of 70%. Graduation rates, on the other hand, have increased significantly in recent years. While the Fall 2015 entering cohort had a 4-year graduation rate of only 29%, within five years this rate had increased by 17% when the Fall 2020 cohort achieved a 4-year graduation rate of 46%. Similarly, while the Fall 2015 entering cohort

had a 6-year graduation rate of 40%, within three years this rate had increased by 15% when the Fall 2018 cohort achieved a 6-year graduation rate of 55%.

Semester and yearly trends in enrollment show that the College was holding relatively steady in the years leading up to the Covid-19 pandemic. Despite a dip in enrollment between AY 2020-21 and AY 2022-23, the College has slowly started to rebuild its enrollment and is employing a robust marketing and admissions strategy with a goal of matching and surpassing pre-pandemic enrollment numbers for the College.

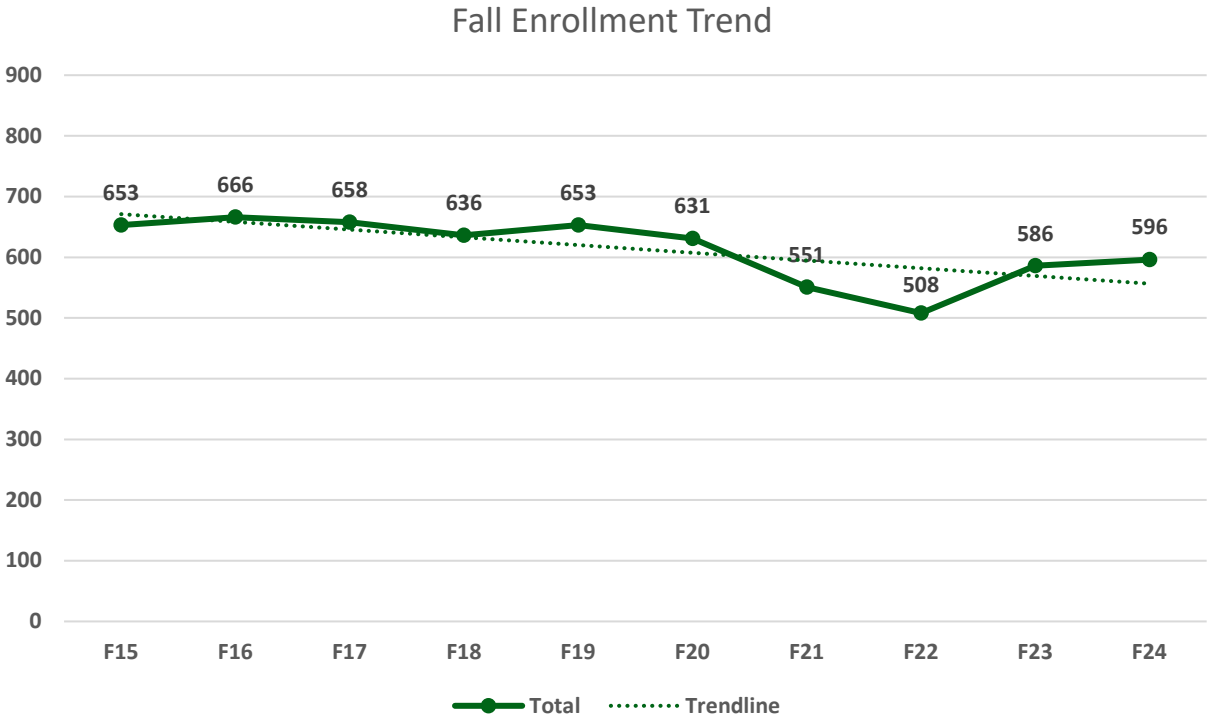
The tables below provide a more detailed breakdown of the current Spring 2025 faculty, staff, and student numbers, along with recent trends in retention rates, graduation rates, and fall, spring, and annual enrollment at the College.

Spring 2025 Faculty and Staff		
	N	%
Total Faculty	145	
Status		
Full-Time	16	11.0%
Part-Time/Adjunct	129	89.0%
Gender		
Male	80	55.2%
Female	65	44.8%
Race/Ethnicity		
Asian	7	4.8%
Black or African American	8	5.5%
Hispanic	5	3.4%
White	125	86.2%
Total Staff	107	
Status		
Full-Time	50	34.5%
Part-Time	57	39.3%
Gender		
Male	69	47.6%
Female	38	26.2%
Race/Ethnicity		
Asian	4	2.8%
Black or African American	20	13.8%
Hispanic	18	12.4%
Two or more races	1	0.7%
White	64	44.1%

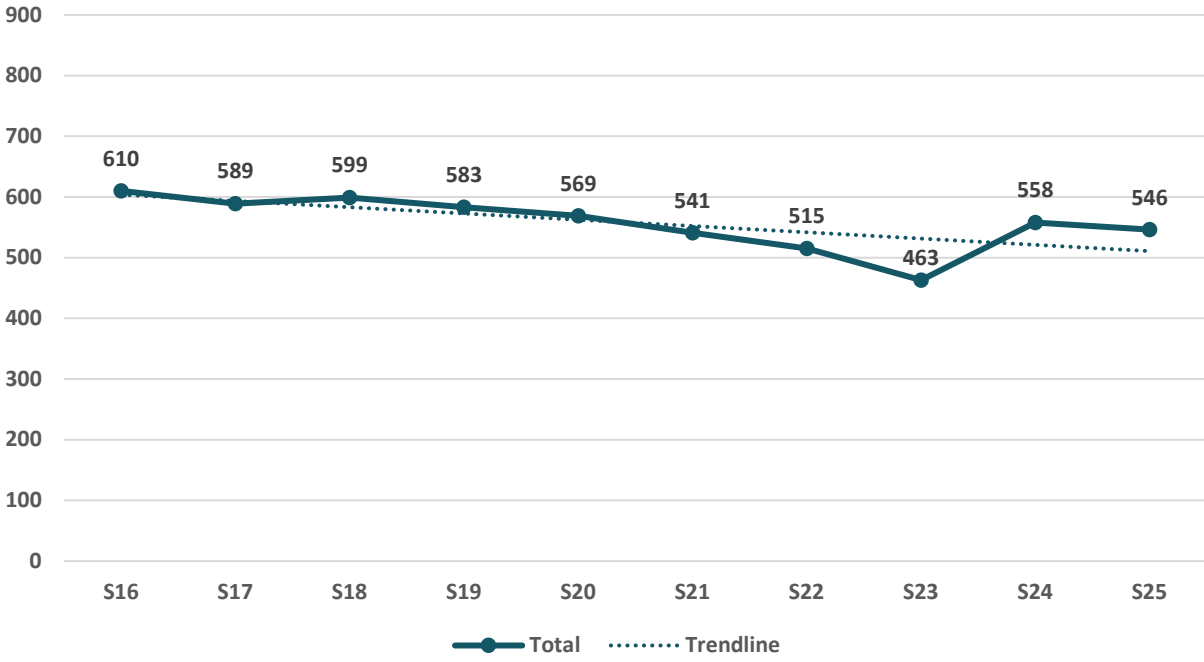
Spring 2025 Degree-Seeking Student Population		
	N	%
Total Degree-Seeking Students	546	
Degree Level		
Undergraduate students	501	91.8%
Graduate Students	45	8.2%
Enrollment Status		
Full-Time	476	87.2%
Part-Time	70	12.8%
Housing Status		
Live on campus	144	26.4%
Commuters	402	73.6%
Geographical Origin		
New York State	504	92.3%
Out-of-state	38	7.0%
International	4	0.7%
Gender		
Male	349	63.9%
Female	170	31.1%
Other/Did not disclose	27	4.9%
Race/Ethnicity		
American Indian, Alaska Native	1	0.2%
Asian	3	0.5%
Black or African American	88	16.1%
Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	1	0.2%
Hispanic	150	27.5%
Non-Resident Alien	9	1.6%
Two or more races	14	2.6%
White	253	46.3%
Unknown/Did not disclose	27	4.9%

10-Year Trend in Retention and Graduation Rates										
Bachelors First-Time, Full-Time Freshmen	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	Fall 2017	Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Fall 2021	Fall 2022	Fall 2023	Fall 2024
Total Cohort	110	128	135	130	129	144	88	83	145	112
1-Year Retention Rate	66%	65%	70%	77%	67%	74%	67%	75%	70%	
2-Year Retention Rate	48%	45%	56%	64%	56%	53%	55%	60%		
3-Year Retention Rate	40%	41%	50%	55%	53%	52%	49%			
4-Year (100%) Graduation Rate	29%	32%	39%	48%	44%	46%				
5-Year (125%) Graduation Rate	38%	38%	47%	55%	50%					
6-Year (150%) Graduation Rate	40%	38%	48%	55%						
8-Year (200%) Graduation Rate	40%	38%								

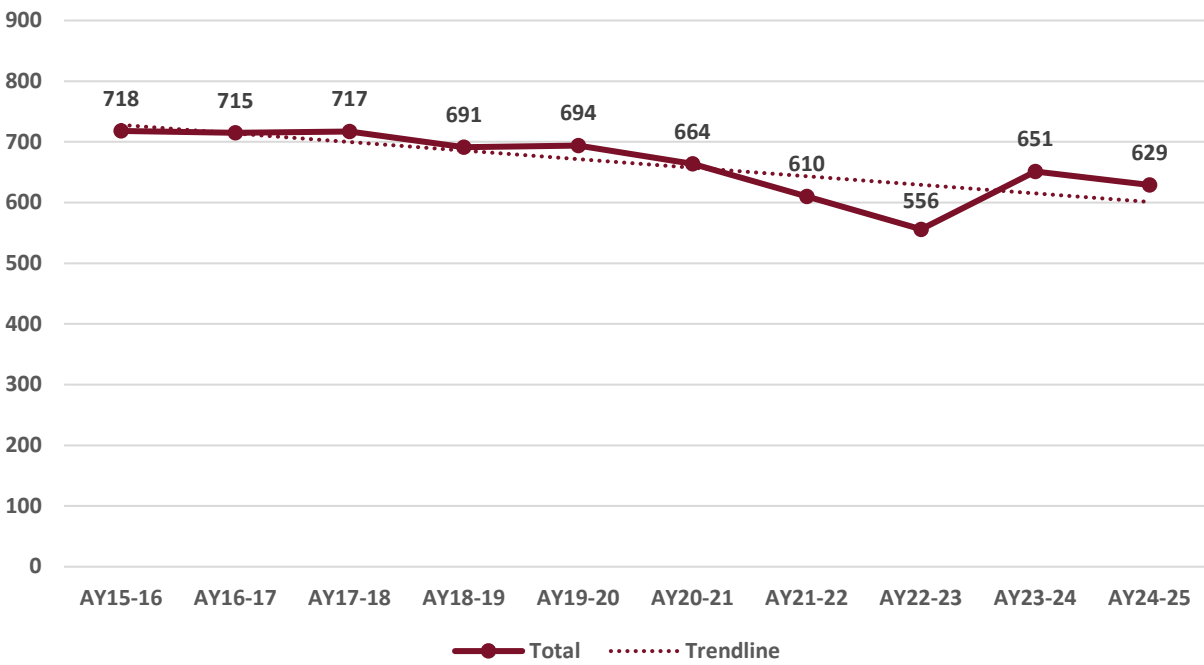
10-Year Trend in Fall, Spring, and Annual Enrollment



Spring Enrollment Trend



Annual (Unduplicated) Enrollment Trend



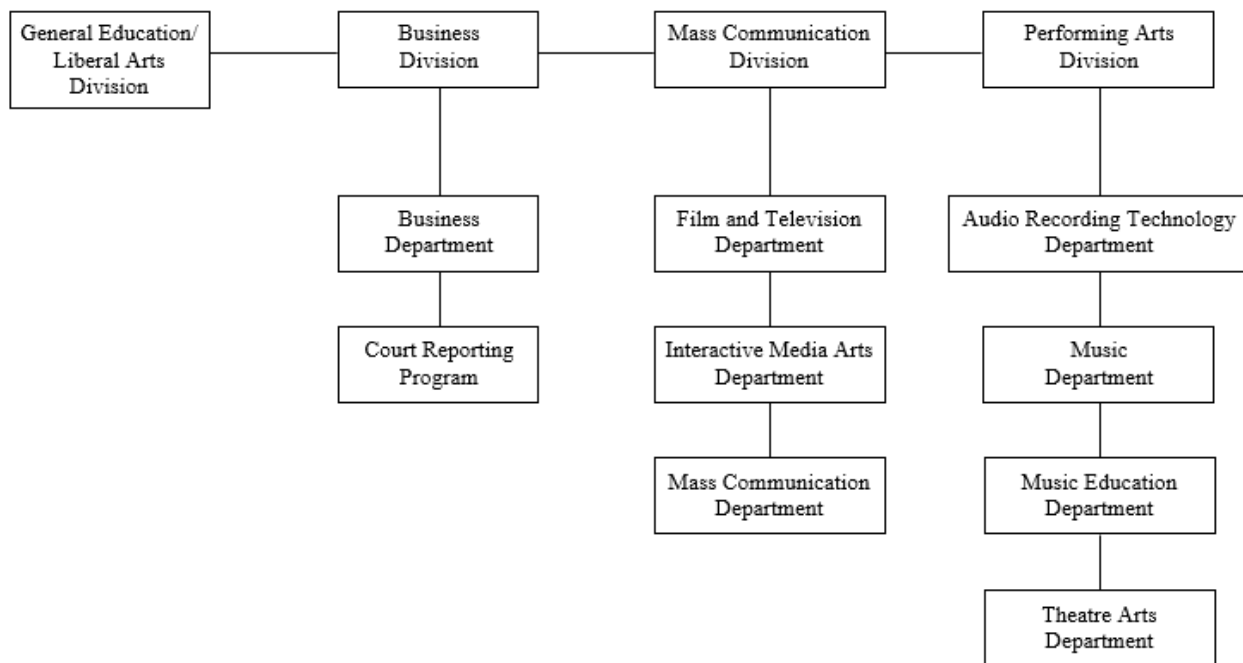
Updates at the College Since the Last Self Study

Since the time of the last Self-Study, the College has continued to evolve – as it has changed from an institution with a primary focus on Music, to a more arts-oriented institution that focuses on technology. For example, since the time of the last Self Study, music enrollment has decreased from 106 students in AY18-19 to 44 students in AY24-25. At the same time, enrollment in Theatre Arts has increased from 51 students in AY19-20 to 65 students in AY24-25, and the institution has earned programmatic accreditation from the National Association of Schools of Theatre.

Since the time of the last Self-Study, the Interactive Computer Graphics programs were updated to Interactive Media Arts, with enrollment growth from 12 students in AY18-19 to 47 students in AY24-25.

Acknowledging the need for a more streamlined approach to academic management, since the time of the last Self Study the College has reorganized its academic structure. The college's academic departments and their associated degree programs are now under the umbrella of four academic divisions. In addition to the stand-alone General Education/Liberal Arts Division, the Business Department and its associated Business and Court Reporting degree programs now make up the Business Division; the Film and Television Department, Interactive Media Arts Department, and Mass Communication Department and their respective degree programs are all now part of the Mass Communication Division; and the Audio Recording Technology Department, the Music Department, Music Education Department, and the Theatre Arts Department and their respective degree programs are all part of the Performing Arts Division (see chart below).

Organization of Academic Divisions and Departments



Since the time of the last Self-Study, all of the graduate programs have been restated and reregistered, and two new graduate programs were added. These are a program in Music Education leading to the M.A.T., and a program in Sound Recording Technology leading to the M.P.S.

Since the time of the last Self-Study, the College earned accreditation by the National Association of Schools of Music and made a strategic decision to sunset the program in Childhood Education and to allow its accreditation by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education to expire without renewal.

Since the time of the last Self-Study, the College made the strategic decision to enter into the para-professional area of law by offering Certificate and Associate in Occupational Studies programs in Court Reporting. While current enrollment in this high-demand field is modest, at the time of the Team Visit, the College projects that approximately 45 students will be enrolled in the Court Reporting programs, thus accounting for nearly 5% of overall student enrollment.

Since the time of the last Self-Study, the College has worked to expand its offerings in intercollegiate athletics and is a charter member of the North American Conference for Intercollegiate Athletics. Today, the College sponsors Men's and Women's Basketball and Soccer, and expects to offer Volleyball by the time of the scheduled Team Visit.

Since the time of the last Self-Study, the Office of Academic Affairs engaged in a successful search for the next Provost with the appointment of Dr. Marsha Pollard in July 2023. Following her appointment, the Institution has been engaged in a restatement of its General Education requirements, and has worked to reform its curriculum by providing students with the opportunity to pursue added major areas of concentrations and academic minors. The first program modifications are expected to be sent to the New York State Education Department for consideration during the 2025-26 academic year and will impact programs in Film and Television, Interactive Media Arts, and Mass Communication.

Since the time of the last Self-Study, the College has worked to improve its outcomes while reducing student debt. Several new support staff have been hired to specifically address student outcomes, including a new Director of Institutional Research and Assessment, an additional First-Year Advisor, and a new Assistant Registrar, while additional resources have been dedicated to our Student Support Center, Library/Learning Resource Center, and Counseling Services. These enhancements have led to an increase in freshman retention from 65% in the Fall 2016 entering cohort to 75% of Fall 2024 freshmen who are re-registered for the upcoming Fall 2025 semester. Similarly, at the time of the last Self-Study, the institutional four-year, 100% graduation rate was 35% (Fall 2014 entering cohort). As of the date of this Self-Study Design, the rate has improved dramatically and is now 46% (Fall 2020 entering cohort), while the six-year, 150% graduation rate (Fall 2018 cohort) is now 55%. As for student debt, according to the White House Scorecard, the average student loan debt decreased from \$35,000 at the time of the last Self-Study to \$21,500 as of the date of this Self-Study Design. At the same time, the institution's reliance on federal funding has been reduced dramatically. At the time of the last Self-Study, the Institution's 90/10 rate was 39.1%. As of the date of this Self-Study Design, the rate is 28.60%.

Most notably, the Institution has managed a very difficult transition from the time of the last Self- Study, where a new administration was seated only to be faced with the daunting challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. At the onset of the pandemic in early 2020, the College established an Online Education Division and appointed a Director of Online Education to help coordinate the College’s efforts to transition all courses online. An online faculty training course was also developed to prepare faculty to effectively develop and deliver fully online courses. In this training, critical differences between on-ground and online courses are discussed, as well as appropriate pedagogical and methodological approaches to address challenges and to successfully achieve student outcomes in an online learning environment.

In coordination with this transition to online learning, the College also adopted a new Student Information System (Campus Café), a new Learning Management System (Canvas), and a video conferencing platform (Microsoft Teams) to better support student learning in online and hybrid modalities. Online faculty were assigned a faculty mentor to monitor course delivery and to assist in course setup on Canvas. Students were also assigned to online mentors, who tracked student progress weekly in order to identify at-risk students and provide support. With the end of the national health emergency and the transition back to on-ground courses, many of the supports and services adopted during the pandemic have been retained to better support student outcomes across all modalities now offered by the college. Since the COVID-19 pandemic lasted for three years during the College’s current Self-Study timeframe, the impacts that the COVID-19 pandemic had on the College’s ability to achieve its mission and goals will be specifically addressed within the context of each of the seven Standards of Accreditation, as applicable.

In the wake of the pandemic, while nearly two dozen institutions of higher education have closed across New York State, including the closure of seven private colleges in Suffolk County alone, Five Towns College faced these challenges, while positioning itself to move forward in a sustainable and healthy manner as Long Island’s Creative College. Today, full-time enrollment continues to rebound, as Long Islanders who prefer a modestly priced small college continue to discover the wonderful learning opportunities available at Five Towns College.

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

Consultative Process with Institutional Stakeholders to Identify Institutional Priorities

Five Towns College held its Fall 2024 Professional Development Day for all faculty and staff on August 28, 2024. This day was focused on a kick-off of the College’s reaffirmation of accreditation with the MSCHE and included a detailed overview of the five Guiding Principles and the seven Standards, as defined in the *Standards for Accreditation and Requirements for Affiliation (Fourteenth Edition)*.

The Five Towns College Fall 2024 Professional Development Day also included a campus-wide kick-off of the College’s strategic planning efforts to set priorities, focus energy and resources, strengthen operations, ensure that employees and other stakeholders are working toward common goals, establish agreement around intended outcomes/results, and assess and adjust the College’s direction in response to a changing environment. The College wanted to engage in a disciplined

effort that produces fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what the College is, who it serves, what it does, and why it does it, with a focus on the future. The College believes that effective strategic planning articulates not only where we are going as an institution and the actions needed to make progress, but also how we will know if we are successful. The aim is to work together to develop a strategic, thoughtful, and long-term plan for our College that is marked by academic quality and integrity, that is based on a holistic and integrative approach to supporting our students, and that has the empowerment and engagement of our faculty and staff at its core.

Every academic and administrative department at the College was tasked with meeting with the faculty and/or staff within their respective area/s to engage in an inclusive and participatory process focused on:

- the development of a vision statement for the College that details our desired long-term aspirations;
- the development of a set of shared core values, which are our fundamental beliefs that guide behavior and decision-making;
- the assessment of the College's current mission statement; and
- the assessment and redefinition of institutional goals, which are the broad, long-term outcomes that the College aims to achieve.

The following is a list of the College's academic and administrative departments that were involved in the aforementioned strategic planning brainstorming activities:

- Admissions Office;
- Athletics Department;
- Audio Department;
- Business Office (Accounts Payable, Bursar);
- Business Division (Business Programs and Court Reporting Programs);
- Campus Life and Residential Life Offices;
- Counseling, Title IX, and Dean of Students Offices;
- Enrollment and Marketing;
- Facilities Department;
- Film Department;
- Financial Aid Office;
- Food Services Department;
- Graduate Music Studies Area;
- Higher Education Opportunity Program Office and Student Access Office;
- Interactive Media Arts Department;
- Information Technology Office;
- Liberal Arts Department, Career Services, and Library/Learning Resource Center Staff;
- Mass Communication Department;
- President's Administrative Council;
- Provost's Academic Council;
- Public Safety Office;
- Registrar and Advisement Office;
- Theatre Arts Department; and the
- Undergraduate Music and Music Education Studies Department.

Institutional Priorities

Based on themes that emerged from the departmental strategic planning brainstorming sessions via an inductive qualitative methodology, the College developed five Institutional Priorities to be addressed during the Self-Study process. In the table below, these Institutional Priorities are listed along with a description of each priority and how each priority maps to the College’s current institutional goals and the seven MSCHE Standards. A separate table describing the College’s four institutional goals is also provided.

Institutional Priorities	Description	Institutional Goals	MSCHE Standards
Elevate the student experience to ensure academic and workforce success	This priority seeks to enhance career-ready skills (both technical and soft skills), provide innovative technology and curriculum, enhance content-specific expertise, develop leadership and ethics in students, promote creativity and innovation, foster collaboration and interdisciplinarity, enhance student support services, and improve student success metrics.	1, 2, 3, 4	I, III, IV, V
Promote a college-wide culture of equity, inclusion, and collaboration	This priority will focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion; foster collaboration and a sense of community on campus; foster community partnerships; and promote student engagement at College functions.	1, 4	I, II, III, IV
Expand community partnerships	This priority seeks to foster community partnerships and engagement, enhance experiential learning opportunities, promote lifelong engagement with Five Towns College and increase alumni engagement.	2, 3, 4	I, III, IV, VI, VII
Ensure operational and organizational excellence	This priority seeks to promote collaboration and improved communication between departments; increase enrollment and the academic profile of entering students; improve student success metrics; enhance campus facilities; promote a culture of continuous improvement and assessment; focus on sustainability; enhance training and professional development opportunities for faculty and staff; promote the fair treatment of students, faculty, and staff; increase faculty and staff engagement with the life of the College; and focus on safety.	1, 2, 3, 4	I, II, IV, V, VI, VII
Grow our institutional reputation	This priority seeks to promote community partnerships and community engagement, create better marketing and signage for the College, increase alumni engagement, expand global opportunities, find more opportunities to engage K-12 students, build school spirit, and promote lifelong engagement with the College.	1, 2, 3, 4	I, II, VI, VII

Current Institutional Goals	
1	To develop in undergraduate students college-level proficiencies in general education
2	To develop in undergraduate students content expertise within the context of specific career objectives
3	To strengthen graduate students' professional-level proficiencies in content-specific areas
4	To engage in strategic planning activities that nurture a culture dedicated to institutional and student learning assessment, and leads to clearly articulated student achievement outcomes

III. INTENDED OUTCOMES OF THE SELF-STUDY

Five Towns College is committed to the accreditation process established by the MSCHE. The College acknowledges the importance of developing a Self-Study Report that analyzes our strengths and identifies opportunities for continued improvement in order to enhance our overall effectiveness as an institution of higher learning. The Self-Study process will enable the institution to engage in a thorough analysis and evaluation of programs and services, governing and supporting structures, resources, and educational outcomes in relation to the institution's mission and goals. Specifically, we aim to achieve the following outcomes:

- Demonstrate how the College currently meets the Commission's *Standards for Accreditation and Requirements of Affiliation (Fourteenth Edition)* and provides evidence by Standard in alignment with the *Evidence Expectations by Standard*.
- Leverage periodic assessment through each Standard, using assessment results for continuous improvement and innovation to ensure levels of quality for constituents and the attainment of the institution's priorities, mission, and goals.
- Engage the College community in an inclusive and transparent self-appraisal process, including analysis of a range of data, including disaggregated data, to ensure students are appropriately served and institutional mission and goals are met.
- To utilize the Self-Study process as an opportunity for institutional renewal, as it will enable us to assess the College's progress on the development of its next five-year strategic plan and will help to further inform the development of institutional core values and a vision statement, as well as the assessment of its current mission and goals. The Self-Study process will support and inform the development of the College's strategic plan and the assessment of strategic initiatives, based on identified areas of strength and opportunities for improvement.

IV. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE AND WORKING GROUPS

Five Towns College has established a Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) Reaffirmation of Accreditation Steering Committee and seven Working Groups, one for each of the seven Standards, to lead and write the Self-Study Report and to prepare for the Spring 2027 team site visit.

Steering Committee

The Steering Committee will be led by Co-Chairs Dr. Marsha Pollard, Provost and Dr. Joshua Dinsman, Director of Institutional Research and Assessment. Dr. Dinsman also serves as the College’s Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO). The Steering Committee is comprised of individuals selected for their experience, expertise in the specific area and/or in accreditation, quality of work, leadership capabilities, and/or to provide individual growth opportunities for those interested in learning more about institutional accreditation. In addition to the Co-Chairs, the Steering Committee will be composed of a member of the College’s Board of Trustees, an undergraduate and graduate student representative, and the Chair and Deputy Chair of each of the seven Working Groups. The table below presents the members of the Steering Committee, along with their roles both on the Steering Committee and within the various Working Groups.

Self-Study Steering Committee				
Role	Name	Title	Division/Department	Working Group Role
Co-Chair	Marsha Pollard, Ph.D.	Provost and Chief Academic Officer	Office of Academic Affairs	Chair, Governance, Leadership, and Administration Working Group (Standard VII)
Co-Chair	Joshua Dinsman, Ph.D.	Director of Institutional Research and Assessment	Office of Academic Affairs	Chair, Educational Effectiveness Assessment Working Group (Standard V)
Member	Joann Mulqueen, Ed.D.	Member, Board of Trustees	Board of Trustees	Liaison to the Board of Trustees, Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience Working Group (Standard III)
Member	Karyn Cernera-Bush, D.M.	Director of Marketing and Digital Engagement	Marketing	Member, Ethics and Integrity Working Group (Standard II)
Member	Thomas Calandrillo, M.A.	Assistant Dean of Institutional Productions and Technology and Chair, Communication Division	Office of Academic Affairs and Communication Division	Chair, Mission and Goals Working Group (Standard I) and Deputy Chair, Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement Working Group (Standard VI)
Member	Krysti O’Rourke, M.P.A.	Director of Career Services	Career Services Office	Deputy Chair, Mission and Goals Working Group (Standard I)
Member	Dana Gioe, J.D.	Title IX Coordinator	Compliance	Chair, Ethics and Integrity Working Group (Standard II)
Member	Janet Kaplan, J.D.	Senior Vice President and Compliance	Compliance and Marketing	Deputy Chair, Ethics and Integrity Working Group (Standard II)

Member	Jennifer Dardzinski, Ph.D.	Assistant Dean of Instruction and Chair, Liberal Arts and Sciences	Office of Academic Affairs	Chair, Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience Working Group (Standard III)
Member	Donna LaTorre, M.B.A.	Associate Professor and Chair, Business Division	Business Division	Deputy Chair, Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience Working Group (Standard III)
Member	Michael Cavalli, M.S.W.	Assistant Dean for Campus Life	Office of Campus Life	Chair, Support of the Student Experience Working Group (Standard IV)
Member	Deseree Wiltshire, Ed.D.	Assistant Dean of Student Services and Student Access and Disabilities Services Director	Student Access Office	Deputy Chair, Support of the Student Experience Working Group (Standard IV)
Member	Kristi Adams, M.A.	Assistant Professor and Chair, Performing Arts Division	Performing Arts Division	Deputy Chair, Educational Effectiveness Assessment Working Group (Standard V)
Member	Hubert Stachura, M.B.A.	Vice President of Finance and Administration	Finance and Administration	Chair, Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement Working Group (Standard VI)
Member	John Vansteen, M.L.S.	Library/Learning Resource Center Director	Library/Learning Resource Center	Deputy Chair, Governance, Leadership, and Administration Working Group (Standard VII)
Member	Ruben Rosario	Undergraduate Student Representative	Undergraduate Student (BFA Interactive Media Arts)	N/A

Responsibilities of the Steering Committee

The Steering Committee will encourage consultation across Working Groups to avoid duplication of effort and to identify linkages among related areas that will be important to the Self-Study process. In its regular meetings, the Steering Committee will identify common areas of inquiry and overlap among the Working Groups and coordinate communication among them. Because the Working Group Chairs and Deputy Chairs also serve as members of the Steering Committee, oversight of the Working Groups is embedded in the organizational structure of the Self-Study process.

The Steering Committee is charged with providing leadership for the 2026/27 Self-Study for Reaffirmation of MSCHE Accreditation. During the next two-and-a-half years, the Steering Committee will have responsibility for preparing the documentation required for reaccreditation, including the Self-Study Design, the Self-Study Report, and the Evidence Inventory. The Steering Committee will also provide oversight of the Working Groups to ensure that they receive appropriate support for the evaluation and assessment of Commission Standards in light of the Institutional Priorities selected for analysis in the Self-Study Report. The Steering Committee will ultimately be responsible for ensuring that the final Self-Study Report analyzes the College's institutional mission, its Institutional Priorities, and the Commission's seven Standards by utilizing the institution's existing evaluation and assessment information.

Specific responsibilities of the Steering Committee will include the following:

- Determine the Steering Committee meeting schedule and facilitate meetings;
- Review and approve the Self-Study Design and timeline;
- Review and approve the charge to the Working Groups;
- Review and approve a schedule and the communication methods to be used by and between the seven Working Groups;
- Provide leadership and guidance to the seven Working Groups and monitor their progress to ensure that all deadlines are met;
- Ensure that the Institutional Priorities are in alignment with the mission and strategic initiatives of the College, as well as the seven Standards and their related criteria;
- Provide guidance and support, including detailed guidelines and timetables, to ensure that the Working Groups fully address the assigned Standards, related Institutional Priorities, and related Requirements of Affiliation;
- Approve the lines of inquiry for each of the seven Standards of Accreditation and Requirements of Affiliation;
- Ensure that the Working Groups effectively build and use the Evidence Inventory and serve as an evidence resource to the Working Groups, as necessary;
- Ensure that the evidence collected supports the specific Standard being assessed;
- Conduct a detailed review of the external reviewers' recommendations/comments from the 2019 Self-Study Report and ensure that they are addressed as part of this Self-Study;
- Ensure that Working Group drafts include areas of strength and opportunities for innovation and/or improvement;
- Review the drafts written by the Working Groups, provide edits/feedback as appropriate, and assist in assembling the final Self-Study Report and Evidence Inventory;
- Assist in the development and support of the Self-Study Communication Plan, ensuring College-wide knowledge of and engagement in the Self-Study process;
- Ensure the Self-Study Report and Evidence Inventory are completed and submitted on time;
- Handle arrangements for, co-develop the schedule with the MSCHE, and coordinate the Evaluation Team site visit; and
- Meet with the site visit team.

Working Groups

To support the Steering Committee, Working Groups are responsible for documenting institutional assessment according to MSCHE's criteria outlined in the seven Standards for Accreditation. Following MSCHE's charge of promoting innovation and continuous improvement, the Working Groups will undertake a methodological examination of each Standard to identify where Five Towns College is meeting or exceeding the Standards. This process relies on the development of research questions/lines of inquiry, the collection of evidence, critical analysis and reflection, and constant communication and collaboration between each Working Group and the Steering Committee. This task is done with a dedication to integrity, transparency, and promoting the College's continuous improvement.

Seven Working Groups were established, each responsible for one of the seven Standards of Accreditation. Section II on the institutional priorities to be addressed in the self-study provides a chart that identifies which institutional priorities will be addressed by each Working Group.

These Working Groups are composed of a diverse mix of professionals from across our community, including faculty (both full-time and adjunct), administrators, non-teaching personnel, members from the College's Board of Trustees, and where appropriate, student representatives. Each Working Group will include a Chair and a Deputy Chair who also serve on the Steering Committee. The Chair and Deputy Chair will be responsible for coordinating the work of the Working Group, submitting drafts of reports on time, and working directly with the Co-Chairs of the Steering Committee to provide communication across the Working Groups and to represent their Group to the campus community when necessary.

General Working Group Charge

To ensure clarity and transparency regarding decision-making processes, roles, and responsibilities, the Working Groups are charged with the following tasks:

- Develop an understanding of the seven Standards of Accreditation and Requirements of Affiliation and of the criteria under the specific Standard assigned to the Working Group;
- Examine the connection between and engage in insightful discussions and analysis about the assigned Standard and the College's institutional priorities, its mission, and its strategic plan;
- Hold regular meetings, which should be documented in meeting minutes that are saved to the Working Group's folder within the Evidence Inventory folder on SharePoint/OneDrive;
- Offer input and feedback to other Working Groups, when appropriate;
- Adhere to the Self-Study timeline and meet deadlines for deliverables as provided by the Steering Committee;
- Identify and collect evidence (e.g., policy documents, analyses, data set, minutes, etc.) that demonstrates compliance with the Group's assigned Standard and that addresses the criteria under the Standard (examples of evidence documentation to be collected for each Standard are provided in Section XI: Evidence Inventory Strategy);
- Store and track all collected evidence in the Group's assigned folder within the Evidence Inventory folder on SharePoint/OneDrive;
- Analyze evidence in relation to the Standard's criteria and the College's institutional priorities;
- Utilize existing assessment and institutional effectiveness data to assess the College's strengths and weaknesses in relation to the Standard;
- Collaborate with other Working Groups and with the Steering Committee to address specific research questions/lines of inquiry, to identify gaps in the evidence or in processes or procedures, and to develop and implement strategies for addressing these gaps where feasible;
- Produce outlines, preliminary drafts, and a final 10–15-page report demonstrating compliance with the relevant Standard assigned to the Working Group. The report should

address each of the criteria listed for the relevant Standard. Demonstrating compliance will involve providing evidence and creating an analytical narrative explaining how these items show that the College meets the given criteria. Based on the evidence collected and analyzed, the report will assess institutional strengths and weaknesses, identify distinction areas, and suggest improvement opportunities. The report should also provide an overview of how the Working Group addressed criteria regarding the institutional priorities they considered in relation to their assigned Standard;

- The Working Group should recognize that their submitted report will be used as source material for the Self-Study document and may or may not appear in its submitted form in the final Self-Study document;
- As the Steering Committee merges the individual Working Group reports into a single, coherent Self-Study document, the Working Group should be available to discuss revisions and answer any questions posed by the Steering Committee; and
- Participate actively in the Spring 2027 site visit.

Working Group Chair and Deputy Chair Charge

In addition to the responsibilities listed above, the Chair and Deputy Chair of each Working Group will also:

- Determine the Working Group meeting schedule and facilitate meetings;
- Develop meeting agendas in consultation with Group members;
- Orient the Working Group members to the Group's charge;
- Ensure minutes are taken at each meeting and are saved in the Group's folder within the Evidence Inventory folder on SharePoint/OneDrive;
- Designate an Evidence Manager for the Group who will be responsible for uploading and tracking all evidence collected by the Group;
- In collaboration with other members of the Working Group, write, revise, and edit documents produced by the Group;
- Ensure submission of all required documents to the Steering Committee in accordance with the established timeline and deadlines provided by the Steering Committee;
- Serve on the Steering Committee as representatives of the Working Group; and
- As part of the Steering Committee, work with Chairs and Deputy Chairs of the other Working Groups to ensure that the Working Group is collaboratively engaging in common areas of inquiry and reducing undue duplication of effort.

Working Group Membership, Evidence Expectations, and Research Questions/Lines of Inquiry

Working Group 1: Standard I

Working Group 1 is tasked with examining Standard I: Mission and Goals, the description of which reads:

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.

Standard I - Mission and Goals			
Role	Name	Title	Division/Department
Chair	Thomas Calandrillo, M.A.	Assistant Dean of Institutional Productions and Technology and Chair, Communication Division	Office of Academic Affairs and Communication Division
Deputy Chair	Krysti O'Rourke, M.P.A.	Director of Career Services	Career Services Office
Member	Carl Kirschner, Ph.D.	Secretary, Board of Trustees	Board of Trustees
Member	David Krasner, Ph.D.	Professor and Chair, Theatre Arts Department	Theatre Arts Department
Member	Jerry Cohen, M.S.	Director of Enrollment Initiatives	Office of Academic Affairs
Member	Scott Ballin, D.M.A.	Adjunct Associate Professor	Music/Music Education Department
Member	Cynthia Catalano, A.A.S.	New Student Advisor	Registrar/Advisement
Member	A'Shya Dawson	Student Representative	Undergraduate Student (BFA Theatre Arts – Musical Theatre)

In focusing its analysis, Working Group 1 will be expected to provide evidence showing:

- The mission accurately defines the purpose of the institution and the students it serves;
- The alignment of the institution’s mission and goals;
- The mission guides planning and resource allocation;
- The mission is publicized and well-known by the institution’s internal stakeholders;
- The institution’s mission and goals are approved and supported by the governing body; and
- The periodic assessment of the relevancy and effectiveness of the institution’s mission and goals.

To ensure that all criteria in Standard I are addressed, the following lines of inquiry will serve as a starting point for the group’s investigation into its Standard. Should changes need to be made to the lines of inquiry in the course of the investigation, the Working Group Chair and Deputy Chair will present any requested changes to the Steering Committee for review and approval.

1. How accessible are the mission & goals throughout the college community?
2. In what ways does the College practice and reinforce the mission and goals in its regular activities and responsibilities?
3. How are the College’s mission and goals meeting the demands and challenges faced in higher education today?
4. In what ways do the mission and goals inform the teaching and learning process and help to identify the services, support, and resources needed for student academic success?
5. In what ways does Standard I align with the goals and priorities of this institution?

6. How did the COVID-19 pandemic impact the College’s ability to achieve its mission and goals as they relate to the criteria required for Standard I?
7. To what extent has the College incorporated the suggestions and recommendations of the 2019 Self-Study Visiting Team?

Working Group 2: Standard II

Working Group 2 is tasked with examining Standard II: Ethics and Integrity, the description of which reads:

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.

Standard II - Ethics and Integrity			
Role	Name	Title	Division/Department
Chair	Dana Gioe, J.D.	Title IX Coordinator	Compliance
Deputy Chair	Janet Kaplan, J.D.	Senior Vice President and Compliance	Compliance and Marketing
Member	Todd Arbesfeld, J.D.	Member, Board of Trustees	Board of Trustees
Member	Angela Jasur, M.S.	Dean of Students	Student Affairs
Member	Karyn Cernera-Bush, D.M.	Director of Marketing and Digital Engagement	Marketing
Member	Barry Heyman, J.D.	Half-Time Assistant Professor	Business Department
Member	Anne Brown, J.D.	Assistant Professor	Business Department

In focusing its analysis, Working Group 2 will be expected to provide evidence showing:

- That institutional policies and procedures are fair and impartial;
- That all publications and communications, in all formats, for internal and external communities, are honest and truthful;
- That the College has documented grievance policies and procedures for all constituencies;
- That the College discloses information related to affordability, accessibility, funding options, and measures of student success;
- That services and programs promote affordability, accessibility, and informed decision-making regarding student debt;
- That the College has a campus climate that fosters respect among all constituencies;

- Compliance with all applicable federal, state, and Commission policies and regulations; and
- Periodic assessment of the effectiveness of all institutional policies and procedures and the manner in which they are implemented.

To ensure that all criteria in Standard II are addressed, the following lines of inquiry will serve as a starting point for the group’s investigation into its Standard. Should changes need to be made to the lines of inquiry in the course of the investigation, the Working Group Chair and Deputy Chair will present any requested changes to the Steering Committee for review and approval.

1. How well do the policies and procedures at Five Towns College comply with applicable state, federal and MSCHE reporting policies, regulations, and requirements?
2. How effective is the College in complying with its policies and procedures that support ethical and honest behavior?
3. How accessible are policies and procedures to constituents as a means of fostering awareness of which practices are deemed ethical and honest at Five Towns College?
4. What is the perception of the Five Towns College community regarding the institution’s ethics and integrity?
5. In what ways does Standard II align with the goals and priorities of this institution?
6. How did the COVID-19 pandemic impact the College’s ability to achieve its mission and goals as they relate to the criteria required for Standard II?
7. To what extent has the College incorporated the suggestions and recommendations of the 2019 Self-Study Visiting Team?

Working Group 3: Standard III

Working Group 3 is tasked with examining Standard III: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience, the description of which reads:

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.

Standard III - Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience			
Role	Name	Title	Division/Department
Chair	Jennifer Dardzinski, Ph.D.	Assistant Dean of Instruction and Chair, Liberal Arts and Sciences	Office of Academic Affairs
Deputy Chair	Donna LaTorre, M.B.A.	Associate Professor and Chair, Business Division	Business Division
Member	Joann Mulqueen, Ed.D.	Member, Board of Trustees	Board of Trustees
Member	John Kelly, M.M.	Associate Professor and Chair, Undergraduate Music Department	Music/Music Education Department

Member	Mitchell Walker, B.F.A.	Assistant Professor	Theatre Arts Department
Member	John Machado, M.M.	Professor and Chair, Audio Recording Technology Department	Audio Recording Technology Department
Member	Colin Hickey, M.F.A.	Assistant Professor and Chair, Film and Television Department	Film and Television Department
Member	Julie Haring, M.A.	Assistant Professor	Interactive Media Arts Department
Member	Brigette Boyle, M.B.A.	Assistant Professor	Mass Communication Department
Member	Michelle Houston, A.O.S.	Instructor and Chair, Court Reporting Department	Court Reporting Department

In focusing its analysis, Working Group 3 will be expected to provide evidence showing:

- That the College offers coherent learning experiences appropriate to the credential levels offered;
- That student learning experiences are designed, delivered, and assessed by appropriately credentialed professionals, sufficient in number, who are effective and rigorous in their teaching;
- That programs are of the appropriate length and rigor and foster a coherent learning experience;
- That faculty and/or other appropriate professionals are regularly and equitably reviewed and provided with opportunities, resources, and support for professional growth and innovation;
- That academic programs and expected outcomes are accurately described and enable students to understand and follow program requirements and time to completion;
- That the College provides sufficient learning opportunities and resources to support students' academic progress through their degree program;
- That the general education program is sufficient in scope and addresses the identified areas;
- That graduate programs provide opportunities for research, scholarship, and independent thinking; and
- That there is periodic assessment of the effectiveness of student learning opportunities.

To ensure that all criteria in Standard III are addressed, the following lines of inquiry will serve as a starting point for the group's investigation into its Standard. Should changes need to be made to the lines of inquiry in the course of the investigation, the Working Group Chair and Deputy Chair will present any requested changes to the Steering Committee for review and approval.

1. How well does Five Towns College ensure that its academic programs have the appropriate length, rigor, and coherence?
2. How qualified and effective are faculty at Five Towns College?
3. To what degree is information on the College's academic programs clear and readily available?

4. Which current support strategies are the most appropriate and effective in closing the achievement gap and increasing retention in our academic programs?
5. How effective are the non-traditional learning opportunities at the College?
6. How effective is the periodic assessment of the academic programs at the College?
7. In what ways does Standard III align with the goals and priorities of this institution?
8. How did the COVID-19 pandemic impact the College’s ability to achieve its mission and goals as they relate to the criteria required for Standard III?
9. To what extent has the College incorporated the suggestions and recommendations of the 2019 Self-Study Visiting Team?

Working Group 4: Standard IV

Working Group 4 is tasked with examining Standard IV: Support of the Student Experience, the description of which reads:

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.

Standard IV - Support of the Student Experience			
Role	Name	Title	Division/Department
Chair	Michael Cavalli, M.S.W.	Assistant Dean for Campus Life	Office of Campus Life
Deputy Chair	Deseree Wiltshire, Ed.D.	Assistant Dean of Student Services and Student Access and Disabilities Services Director	Student Access Office
Member	Edward Martinez, Ed.D.	Member, Board of Trustees	Board of Trustees
Member	Oliver Roach, M.M.	Instructor and Live Sound Director	Audio Recording Technology Department and Production Staff
Member	Jason LaBonte, B.S.	Director of Financial Aid	Office of Financial Aid
Member	Karen Friedrich, B.A.	Bursar	Finance and Administration
Member	Randi Giebel, M.A.	College Counselor	Counseling Center
Member	Anna Nieves, B.B.A.	Registrar	Registrar/Advisement
Member	Derrol Rhodes, M.P.S.	Higher Education Opportunity Program Director	Higher Education Opportunity Program Office

Member	Jordan Morello, M.A.	New Student Advisor	Registrar/Advisement
Member	John Mateyko, M.S.	Athletic Director	Athletics Department
Member	Undergraduate student TBD		Undergraduate Student Government Association

In focusing its analysis, Working Group 4 will be expected to provide evidence showing:

- Clearly stated policies, processes, and programs to admit, retain, and facilitate the success of all students;
- Processes designed to enhance the successful achievement of students’ educational goals
- Improvement of key indicators of student success, including retention and graduation rates;
- Sufficiently qualified professionals to provide effective support systems;
- Policies and procedures used to ensure student identity verification in distance education courses;
- Equitable policies to address the acceptance of credits and other alternative learning experiences;
- Published information regarding student achievement, including student outcome measures;
- The safe and secure maintenance and appropriate release of student information;
- That athletic, student life, and other extracurricular activities are regulated by the same principles and procedures that govern all other programs; and
- Periodic assessment of the effectiveness of student support programs and experiences.

To ensure that all criteria in Standard IV are addressed, the following lines of inquiry will serve as a starting point for the group’s investigation into its Standard. Should changes need to be made to the lines of inquiry in the course of the investigation, the Working Group Chair and Deputy Chair will present any requested changes to the Steering Committee for review and approval.

1. How do the College’s policies and procedures contribute to students’ success?
2. How does the institution validate previous professional and academic experience to ensure students achieve their goals?
3. How are Admissions policies and procedures ethically designed to admit students with demonstrated interest and capability to achieve educational outcomes?
4. How do institutional security measures safeguard students’ records?
5. How do extracurricular and community activities support and develop the student experience?
6. How does the assessment and related changes to support services improve the student experience?
7. In what ways does Standard IV align with the goals and priorities of this institution?
8. How did the COVID-19 pandemic impact the College’s ability to achieve its mission and goals as they relate to the criteria required for Standard IV?
9. To what extent has the College incorporated the suggestions and recommendations of the 2019 Self-Study Visiting Team?

Working Group 5: Standard V

Working Group 5 is tasked with examining Standard V: Educational Effectiveness Assessment, the description of which reads:

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.

Standard V - Educational Effectiveness Assessment			
Role	Name	Title	Division/Department
Chair	Joshua Dinsman, Ph.D.	Director of Institutional Research and Assessment	Office of Academic Affairs
Deputy Chair	Kristi Adams, M.A.	Assistant Professor and Chair, Performing Arts Division	Performing Arts Division
Member (Ex Officio)	David Cohen, J.D.	President	Office of the President
Member	Sharon Ryba-Pertz, B.S.	Assistant Professor and Chair, Interactive Media Arts Department	Interactive Media Arts Department
Member	Holli Haerr, M.S.	Assistant Professor and Chair, Mass Communication Department	Mass Communication Department
Member	Audrey Sumner, A.O.S.	Instructor	Court Reporting Department
Member	Anthony Huttie, M.A.	Director of Residence Life	Office of Residence Life
Member	Keyshawn Evans, M.S.Ed.	Higher Education Opportunity Program Counselor	Higher Education Opportunity Program Office

In focusing its analysis, Working Group 5 will be expected to provide evidence showing:

- Clearly stated institutional and program-level goals which are aligned with each other and with the institution's mission;
- The development and implementation of organized and systematic assessments that evaluate the extent of student achievement in both general education and in their degree program;
- Sufficient support to sustain the assessment of student achievement and to communicate results of assessment to stakeholders;
- Demonstrated and documented use of assessment results to improve educational effectiveness; and
- Periodic assessment of the effectiveness of assessment processes utilized by the institution for the improvement of educational effectiveness.

To ensure that all criteria in Standard V are addressed, the following lines of inquiry will serve as a starting point for the group's investigation into its Standard. Should changes need to be made

to the lines of inquiry in the course of the investigation, the Working Group Chair and Deputy Chair will present any requested changes to the Steering Committee for review and approval.

1. Does the College have clearly stated student learning outcomes at the institutional and degree/program levels, which are interrelated with one another, with relevant educational experiences, and with the Institution’s mission?
2. Does the College have organized systematic assessments, conducted by faculty and/or appropriate professionals, evaluating the extent of student achievement of institutional and degree/program goals?
3. How does the College consider and use disaggregated assessment results for all student populations for the improvement of student learning outcomes, student achievement, and institutional and program-level educational effectiveness?
4. How does the College periodically assess the effectiveness of assessment policies and processes for the improvement of educational effectiveness?
5. In what ways does Standard V align with the goals and priorities of this Institution?
6. How did the COVID-19 pandemic impact the College’s ability to achieve its mission and goals as they relate to the criteria required for Standard V?
7. To what extent has the College incorporated the suggestions and recommendations of the 2019 Self-Study Visiting Team?

Working Group 6: Standard VI

Working Group 6 is tasked with examining Standard VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement, the description of which reads:

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.

Standard VI - Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement			
Role	Name	Title	Division/Department
Chair	Hubert Stachura, M.B.A.	Vice President of Finance and Administration	Finance and Administration
Deputy Chair	Thomas Calandrillo, M.A.	Assistant Dean of Institutional Productions and Technology and Chair, Communication Division	Office of Academic Affairs and Communication Division
Member	Gary Stern, C.P.A.	Member, Board of Trustees	Board of Trustees
Member	JeeYun Lee, M.M.	Associate Professor	Audio Recording Technology Department
Member	Daoning Dai, M.S.Ed.	Director of IT Operations	Office of Information Technology
Member	Michael Peters, M.A.	Instructor and Live Stream Technical Director	Film and Television Department and Production Staff

Member	Lindsay Ramos, B.S.	Staff Accountant	Finance and Administration
Member	Christine Fishlinger, B.A.	Assistant Director of Financial Aid	Office of Financial Aid
Member	Russell Roxburgh, B.S.	Director of Maintenance and Facilities	Maintenance and Facilities

In focusing its analysis, Working Group 6 will be expected to provide evidence showing:

- Clearly stated institutional and unit-level objectives that are linked to the College’s mission and that reflect conclusions drawn from assessment results;
- Clearly documented and communicated planning and improvement processes that provide for constituent participation;
- Comprehensive, long-range planning processes;
- Financial planning and budget processes that are aligned with the College’s mission, goals, and objectives and that are evidence-based;
- Adequate fiscal and human resources, including physical and technical infrastructure, to support operations;
- Clearly defined decision-making processes, with clear assignment of responsibility and accountability;
- Enrollment management planning linked to budget development;
- Demonstrated capacity to support enrollment increases;
- Strategies to address enrollment decline;
- Comprehensive planning for facilities, infrastructure, and technology that include consideration of sustainability and deferred maintenance;
- An annual independent audit confirming financial viability with evidence of follow-up on any cited concerns;
- The assessment of the adequacy and efficient utilization of institutional resources required to support the institution’s mission and goals;
- Sufficient resources to improve student achievement measures;
- The development and implementation of organized and systematic assessment of non-academic units;
- The development and implementation of organized and systematic assessments that evaluate institutional effectiveness; and
- Periodic assessment of the effectiveness of planning, resources allocation, institutional renewal, and availability of resources.

To ensure that all criteria in Standard VI are addressed, the following lines of inquiry will serve as a starting point for the group’s investigation into its Standard. Should changes need to be made to the lines of inquiry in the course of the investigation, the Working Group Chair and Deputy Chair will present any requested changes to the Steering Committee for review and approval.

1. Strategic Planning Processes – How does the Institution develop and implement its strategic plans, and how well do these plans align with its mission and goals?

2. Resource Allocation and Utilization – How are financial, human, and physical resources allocated and used to support the Institution’s mission, goals, and strategic priorities?
3. Institutional Assessment and Improvement – How does the Institution assess its own performance and make improvements based on feedback from internal and external stakeholders?
4. Sustainability and Long-Term Planning – How does the Institution plan for its long-term sustainability, including the management of risks and future growth?
5. In what ways does Standard VI align with the goals and priorities of this Institution?
6. How did the COVID-19 pandemic impact the College’s ability to achieve its mission and goals as they relate to the criteria required for Standard VI?
7. To what extent has the College incorporated the suggestions and recommendations of the 2019 Self-Study Visiting Team?

Working Group 7: Standard VII

Working Group 7 is tasked with examining Standard VII: Governance, Leadership, and Administration, the description of which reads:

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 a related entity, the institution has education as its primary purpose, and it operates as an academic institution with appropriate autonomy.

Standard VII - Governance, Leadership, and Administration			
Role	Name	Title	Division/Department
Chair	Marsha Pollard, Ph.D.	Provost and Chief Academic Officer	Office of Academic Affairs
Deputy Chair	John Vansteen, M.L.S.	Library/Learning Resource Center Director	Library/Learning Resource Center
Member	Rachel Andoscia, M.A.	Chair, Board of Trustees	Board of Trustees
Member	Mary Durcan, B.A.	Career Services Associate	Career Services Office
Member	Julie Martin, M.S.	Assistant Registrar	Registrar/Advisement
Member	Jake Sausa	Student Representative	Undergraduate Student (BBA Business Management – Audio)

In focusing its analysis, Working Group 7 will be expected to provide evidence showing:

- A clearly articulated and transparent governance structure that outlines roles, responsibilities, and accountability for decision-making by each constituency;
- A legally constituted governing body that has sufficient independence and expertise and is responsible for the academic quality, planning, and fiscal well-being of the institution;

- A governing body that provides oversight at the policy level and is informed in all its operations by principles of good practice in board governance;
- The establishment and implementation of written conflict of interest policies;
- A governing board that appoints and regularly evaluates the College President;
- A College President who has appropriate credentials, professional experience, authority, and autonomy required to fulfill the responsibilities of the position;
- Qualified administrators, sufficient in number, to enable the College President to discharge his/her duties effectively;
- A clearly documented administrative structure with members who possess the skills, time, assistance, technology, and expertise to perform their duties;
- An administration with regular engagement with faculty and students to advance the institution's goals and objectives;
- Systematic procedures for evaluating administrative units and for using assessment data to enhance operations; and
- Periodic assessment of the effectiveness of governance, leadership, and administration.

To ensure that all criteria in Standard VII are addressed, the following lines of inquiry will serve as a starting point for the group's investigation into its Standard. Should changes need to be made to the lines of inquiry in the course of the investigation, the Working Group Chair and Deputy Chair will present any requested changes to the Steering Committee for review and approval.

1. How effective are the College's management and administrative practices in meeting its mission and goals?
2. In what manner does the Institution operate with the appropriate autonomy to maintain higher education as its principal purpose?
3. How effective is the organizational structure in maintaining the Institution's governance responsibilities?
4. How does the recent addition of overarching divisional chairpersons in the College's organizational structure benefit the institution and its students? What is the rationale for this change in organizational structure?
5. How accessible, comprehensible, and precise are Institutional policies and procedures to achieve effectiveness and efficiency in its governance, leadership, and administration?
6. How does the College's governance, leadership, and administration support the College community's participation and development?
7. What level of credentials and professional experience do members of governance, leadership, and administration bring to the College?
8. In what ways does Standard VII align with the goals and priorities of this Institution?
9. How did the COVID-19 pandemic impact the College's ability to achieve its mission and goals as they relate to the criteria required for Standard VII?
10. To what extent has the College incorporated the suggestions and recommendations of the 2019 Self-Study Visiting Team?

V. GUIDELINES FOR REPORTING

To guide the efforts of the Working Groups, the Steering Committee – which includes the Chair and Deputy Chair of each Working Group – will meet monthly to receive updates on progress, to offer feedback on preliminary drafts, and to provide guidance on any questions that arise within the Working Groups. The leaders of each Working Group will report back to their Group with any guidance from the Steering Committee and will ensure that their team is in compliance with the master timeline for the Self-Study process.

To ensure that the Self-Study process is consistent, organized, and thorough, the Working Groups are charged with carrying out the tasks and producing the documents listed below:

- Introductory meeting to review lines of inquiry and brainstorm a plan for achieving the objectives of the Working Group
- Hold regular meetings to conduct the business of the Working Group
- Draft and submit an Inquiry Plan
- Collect evidence and save all relevant documentation to the Evidence Inventory on SharePoint/OneDrive
- Construct a detailed outline for the Group’s chapter of the Self-Study Report
- Design data charts, graphs, and tables for the Group’s chapter, where appropriate
- Document data-based decisions aligned with the Standards and Institutional Priorities
- Utilize templates for the generation of reports and make the necessary adjustments as required by the Group’s assigned Standard
- Develop drafts of the Group’s report for the review of the Steering Committee and the community at large

Reporting Timeline

Reporting Item	Due Date
Working Group brainstorming sessions for lines of inquiry	Spring 2025 (February-March)
Working Group submits Inquiry Plan to Steering Committee	Spring 2025 (March)
Steering Committee review and delivery of approved lines of inquiry to Working Groups	Spring 2025 (March-April)
Detailed chapter outline and evidence needed for Standard submitted to Steering Committee for review	Fall 2025 (September)
Steering Committee comments back to Working Group regarding chapter outline	Fall 2025 (October-November)
Preliminary Draft of Working Group Report due to the Steering Committee for review	Spring 2026 (March 13)
Steering Committee comments back to Working Group regarding preliminary draft of Working Group Report	Spring 2026 (March-April)

Working Groups submit revised, final draft of Working Group Reports to the Steering Committee	Summer 2026 (June 30)
Steering Committee drafts and edits full Self-Study Report	Summer 2026 (July-August)
Self-Study Report draft posted for comment to the College community and Board of Trustees	Fall 2026 (September-October)
Steering Committee finalizes Self-Study Report	Fall 2026/Spring 2027 (December-January)

Template for Inquiry Plan

Working Groups will meet early in the Spring 2025 semester to review their assigned Standard considering the Institutional Priorities developed by the College and to review the suggested lines of inquiry established for their Group. In this meeting, Group members should brainstorm additional lines of inquiry along with any proposed revisions to the ones already provided to the Group. The Chair and Deputy Chair of each Working Group will work with the Steering Committee to finalize their Group’s lines of inquiry. Each Working Group will then create a 2–3-page Inquiry Plan which will outline the Group’s strategy for carrying out their investigation of the lines of inquiry and completing their assigned chapter of the Self-Study Report. The Inquiry Plan should follow the following template:

- **Introduction:** Provide a brief introduction listing the Group’s assigned Standard and approved lines of inquiry
- **Meeting Schedule and Timeline:** Provide a proposed meeting schedule for the Group and a timeline for the submission of outlines and drafts to the Steering Committee
- **Group Roles:** Briefly describe the proposed division of labor within the Group, including the designation of an Evidence Manager, along with how the group plans to assign roles for the various tasks required to find evidence, create outlines, and write drafts of the Group’s report
- **Narrative Plan:** The bulk of the Inquiry Plan should include a narrative describing how the Working Group plans to start its investigation of assessing how the College is meeting its Institutional Priorities regarding its assigned Standard. This section should include a reflection on the types of evidence the Group will need to procure to be included in the Evidence Inventory, the types of data (charts, graphs, and tables) that will be needed in the Group’s report, and which individuals/offices/departments across campus the Group will need to work with while gathering evidence and writing its report.

Draft Outline and Template for Working Group Report

Each Working Group will be responsible for completing one chapter of the final Self-Study Report. Before starting work on their chapter, Working Groups should first develop a draft outline of the chapter that accomplishes the following:

- Indicate the lines of inquiry and Institutional Priorities to be addressed in the chapter;
- Analyze the existing evidence based on the criteria for the Group’s assigned Standard;
- Identify any gaps in available evidence;
- Highlight programs, processes, and achievements;
- Identify College strengths, challenges, and opportunities for improvement; and
- Demonstrate periodic assessment of the evidence and how results were used for improvement.

After submitting the draft outline to the Steering Committee for review and receiving feedback, the Working Group will then begin work on a preliminary draft of their chapter. Groups should adhere to the following report template when writing their preliminary drafts and final reports. Bolded bullet points in the template below should serve as main headings within the report, while italicized bullet points should serve as sub-headings.

- **Introduction (1-2 pages):** Provide a general overview of the following:
 - *Overview of Working Group’s Charge* – A brief description of the Standard assigned to the Working Group and its alignment with Institutional Priorities and the mission of the College; and
 - *Description of Lines of Inquiry* – Overview of the lines of inquiry addressed by the Working Group and how these enable the Working Group to fulfill its charge and achieve the Self-Study Intended Outcomes.
- **Method, Evidence, and Analysis (7-10 pages):** This section will provide the analytical narrative and will constitute the largest component of the report and should include:
 - *Collaboration, Connections, and Evidence Inventory Approach* – Overview of the Working Group’s evidence collection process and a list of documentation to be included in the Evidence Inventory. In addition, a description of collaborative discussions with members of other Working Groups and, where needed, strategies for avoiding undue duplication;
 - *Assessment Information Utilized* – Description (or listing) of assessment information utilized to conduct analyses consistent with the lines of inquiry; and
 - *Analytical Report* – Narrative report that addresses the lines in inquiry, citing relevant evidence collected.
- **Summary of Findings (2-3 pages):** This concluding section of the chapter should summarize the College’s compliance with the Standard and provide key observations, including:
 - *Areas of Strength* – Based on the analytical narrative, evidence-based areas of strength consistent with the Working Group’s charge and assigned Standard;
 - *Opportunities for Improvement and Innovation* – Based on the analytical narrative, evidence-based opportunities for improvement and innovation consistent with the Working Group’s charge and assigned Standard; and
 - *Initial Strategies on Continuous Quality Improvement* – Recommended institutional strategies for improvement.

Many self-recommendations will be generated throughout the self-study process. Groups should be mindful that not every self-recommendation will be included in the final version of the Self-Study Report. However, all self-recommendations will be vetted by the Steering Committee and existing governance bodies for appropriate consideration and approval.

In addition to the bulleted points above, draft reports may also include, where appropriate, an addendum describing the Working Group's ongoing activities, sharing project challenges, and identifying common areas of inquiry with other Working Groups.

Drafts of Working Group Reports will be submitted to the Steering Committee for review and approval. The Steering Committee will revise and edit all chapters and will be responsible for compiling all individual Working Group Reports into a final, cohesive Self-Study Report.

Each report should be succinct but contain relevant details and should adhere to the editorial guidelines listed below.

Editorial Style

To maintain consistency across chapters and to aid in the compilation of the final Self-Study Report, all draft reports should adhere to the following editorial guidelines:

- Reports should be written in Microsoft Word with embedded tables, charts, and graphs;
- 10-15 single-spaced pages in length;
- Times New Roman, 12-point font;
- Standard 1-inch margins;
- One space between sentences;
- Indent first line of each paragraph;
- Left-justify all text;
- Main headings in bold, 12-point Times New Roman font, left justified;
- Sub-headings in italics, 12-point Times New Roman font, left justified;
- MLA 8th Edition citation style for in-text citations and references;
- Header (right justified) – Standard #, date of draft;
- Footer (centered) – page number;
- Double number all charts, graphs, and tables using the chapter number first (e.g., Table 2.3 would refer to the third table in Chapter 2). Chapter numbers correspond to the Standard assigned to the Working Group (e.g., Standard II is assigned to Working Group 2, which is responsible for writing Chapter 2 of the Self-Study Report);
- Oxford comma should be used (this is the comma before the word “and” in a series);
- No contractions;
- Active voice; and
- Spell out acronyms when first mentioned and introduce the acronym in parenthesis.

VI. ORGANIZATION OF THE FINAL SELF-STUDY REPORT

Five Towns College’s Self-Study Report will be organized according to the MSCHE Standards of Accreditation. The following tentative outline has been constructed to help ground the assessment process and writing of reports. Following the “Template for Working Group Report” presented in Section V above, the body chapters of the Self-Study Report will address each Standard’s lines of inquiry with data presented to support the criteria for each Standard. Cross-references to other sections of the report will be included where appropriate, and the location of all evidence within the Evidence Inventory will be included. Each chapter will conclude with a summary of the strengths, opportunities for improvement, and strategies for improvement at the College. The final Self-Study Report will also adhere to the editorial style guidelines presented in Section V above.

Self-Study Report Outline

Cover Page

Masthead

Table of Contents

List of Charts, Tables, and Graphs

Glossary

Executive Summary (1-5 pages) – This section provides a brief description of major findings and opportunities for improvement and innovation identified in the self-study

Introduction (1-5 pages) – This section includes:

- A summary of the history, type, size, and student population at the College
- A description of the Institutional Priorities that were addressed in the Self-Study process
- A brief discussion of the processes used to choose the Institutional Priorities
- An outline of how the remaining chapters are organized

Narratives for each of the MSCHE Standards (70-85 pages) – This section will include one chapter for each of the seven Standards of Accreditation. Each chapter will include:

- A heading indicating the Standard under consideration
- Cross-references to relevant materials in other parts of the report and within the Evidence Inventory
- References and analysis to the Institutional Priorities addressed in the chapter
- Analytically-based inquiry and reflection
- Conclusions, including strengths and challenges, with references to the Standard and specific criteria
- Opportunities for ongoing institutional improvement and innovation

Conclusion (1-5 pages) – This section provides a summary of the major conclusions and the institution’s self-identified opportunities for improvement and innovation. The conclusion also outlines initial plans for the institutional initiatives that will address identified opportunities, as well as concluding observations on how this process is being used to continuously improve student achievement and the institution’s mission and goals.

Inventory of Supporting Documents

Appendices

VII. SELF-STUDY TIMELINE

Five Towns College respectfully requests a Spring 2027 On-Site Evaluation Visit. In the lead-up to the College’s 2026/27 reaffirmation of accreditation with the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE), the College has several programmatic accreditation and approval visits scheduled and needs ample time and resources to fully prepare for each of these visits as well as the MSCHE On-Site Evaluation Visit. Please note that the College has a programmatic reaccreditation site visit with the National Association of Schools of Music from April 6 – April 9, 2025, a programmatic approval virtual site visit with the National Court Reporters Association to be scheduled in Fall 2025, and a programmatic reaccreditation visit with the National Association of Schools of Theatre to be scheduled for Spring/Fall 2026. We hope this provides sufficient rationale for requesting a spring evaluation visit and appreciate your consideration.

The following is a list of major activities and the timeframe in which they will take place as part of the Self-Study process.

Term	Dates	Activity
Fall 2024	August 28, 2024	Professional Development Day - kick-off of the College’s reaffirmation of accreditation
	September - October 2024	College-wide departmental meetings to brainstorm a vision statement, core values, revised mission statement, and institutional goals and priorities
	September - December 2024	College representatives attend virtual Self-Study Institute (SSI)
	October - November 2024	Assemble Steering Committee and proposed Working Groups
	December 2024	Begin to draft the Self-Study Design document
	December 5, 2024	Post-SSI Zoom meeting with MSCHE liaison Dr. Terence Peavy

Spring 2025	January 2025	Contact Working Group participants with formal invitation to serve
	January 13, 2025	Confirmation from MSCHE liaison of date for Self-Study Prep Visit in Spring 2025
	February 2025	Finalize Self-Study Design document and submit to Steering Committee for approval
	February-March 2025	Working Group brainstorming sessions for lines of inquiry
	February - March 2025	Working Groups draft Inquiry Plan
	February - May 2025	Working Groups identify existing evidence that supports their assigned Standard and note any gaps in evidence
	February 14, 2025	Submit Self-Study Design to MSCHE liaison
	March 2025	Working Groups submit Inquiry Plan to Steering Committee for review and approval of lines of inquiry
	March - April 2025	Steering Committee review and delivery of approved lines of inquiry to Working Groups
	April 11, 2025	Send draft agenda to MSCHE liaison in preparation for Self-Study Prep Visit
	April 24, 2025	MSCHE liaison Self-Study Prep Visit
Summer 2025	May - August 2025	Data and evidence collection
	June 23, 2025	Submit revised Self-Study Design to MSCHE liaison
Fall 2025	September 2025	Working Groups submit detailed chapter outline and evidence needed for Standard (including any noted gaps in evidence) to Steering Committee for review
	October - November 2025	Steering Committee comments back to Working Groups regarding chapter outline
Fall 2025 / Spring 2026	November 2025 - March 2026	Working Groups work on draft of chapter for each Standard
Spring 2026	Spring 2026	<p>MSCHE selects the Visiting Team Chair and Team members</p> <p>The College confirms there are no conflicts of interest and approves Visiting Team selection</p> <p>Visiting Team Chair and the College select dates for the Team Chair's preliminary visit and for the Visiting Team's On-Site Evaluation Visit</p> <p>College sends a copy of the Self-Study Design Plan to the Team Chair</p>

Spring 2026 (continued)	March 13, 2026	Working Groups submit preliminary draft of chapter on their assigned Standard to the Steering Committee for review
	March - April 2026	Steering Committee comments back to Working Groups regarding preliminary draft of chapter
Summer 2026	June 30, 2026	Working Groups submit revised, final draft of chapter to the Steering Committee for review
	July - August 2026	Steering Committee drafts and edits full Self-Study Report
Fall 2026	September - October 2026	College Community and Board of Trustees review of Self-Study Report
	October - November 2026	Draft Self-Study Report sent to Team Chair (two weeks before visit) Team Chair preliminary visit (by November 30, 2026)
Fall 2026 / Spring 2027	December 2026 - January 2027	Self-Study Report is finalized based on Team Chair feedback and final feedback from College Community and Board of Trustees
Spring 2027	10-weeks prior to Evaluation Team Visit	Upload Self-Study Report and Evidence Inventory
	4 weeks prior to Evaluation Team Visit	Hotel and transportation information sent to Visiting Team members
	April 15, 2027	Evaluation Team visit to be completed by this date
	7 days after visit ends	Team Chair shares draft of Team Report with the institution
	7 days after receiving draft Team Report	Institution provides Team Chair with any corrections of errors of fact in the draft Team Report
	5 days after receiving corrections of errors of fact from institution	Team Chair uploads final Team Report to MSCHE portal
	7 days after receiving final Team Report	Upload institutional response to MSCHE portal
	5 days after receiving institutional response	Team Chair uploads Team Chair's Confidential Briefs to MSCHE portal
Summer 2027	June 2027	Commission meets to determine action

VIII. COMMUNICATION PLAN

The purpose of the communication plan is to ensure that all stakeholders—students, faculty, staff, board members, and external partners—are informed, engaged, and aligned with the goals of the Middle States accreditation process. The plan is designed to:

Educate

- Explain the role and value of Middle States accreditation in maintaining academic integrity, improving institutional effectiveness, and supporting long-term student success.
- Provide clarity on the self-study process and how it drives continuous improvement at the college.

Inform

- Deliver consistent updates on self-study activities, key findings, and upcoming milestones.
- Clearly communicate how the self-study will focus on and reflect progress in five institutional priorities:
 - *Elevating the student experience to ensure academic and workforce success.*
 - *Promoting a college-wide culture of equity, inclusion, and collaboration.*
 - *Expanding community partnerships to enhance opportunities and impact.*
 - *Ensuring operational and organizational excellence through effective systems and processes.*
 - *Growing our institutional reputation locally, regionally, and nationally.*

Engage

- Invite broad participation from across the college community in the self-study process, with special emphasis on contributions that support the five institutional priorities.
- Foster opportunities for dialogue, collaboration, and feedback across all levels of the institution.

Address Concerns

- Establish open, accessible channels for questions, feedback, and concerns.
- Ensure responses are timely, transparent, and reflect the college's commitment to shared governance and community involvement.

Audiences:

Key Communicators:

- **Steering Committee** (*Meets Monthly*)
 - Will review and approve a schedule and the communication methods to be used by and between the seven Working Groups.
- **Working Groups**
 - Will collaborate with other Working Groups and the Steering Committee to produce outlines, preliminary drafts and their respective report demonstrating compliance with the relevant standard assigned to the Working Group.

Recipients of Communication:

- Students
- Faculty and Staff
- Board of Trustees
- Alumni and External Constituencies

Methods:

The communication strategy will be two-fold, ensuring both transparency and timely engagement across the Five Towns College community. It will include:

All-Access Information Centers:

- **Internal SharePoint Drive** - A secure, centralized SharePoint drive is available for internal stakeholders. It will include:
 - Working documents and drafts of the self-study
 - Meeting agendas and minutes
 - Reference materials such as MSCHE standards, rubrics, and past reports
 - Templates, communication toolkits
 - Archived communications and planning documentsThe SharePoint drive will serve as the institutional “home base” for internal collaboration, review, and preparation throughout the accreditation process.
- **FTC Website Hub** - A dedicated section on the Five Towns College website will serve as the public-facing source for accreditation news and updates, and will be presented to the visiting evaluation team for review. It will include:
 - Important announcements about the self-study process
 - List of the five Institutional Priorities
 - List of Steering Committee and Working Group members
 - A calendar of events
 - Draft documents as they become available
 - General information about the accreditation process
 - A comment submission form where members of the College community can submit comments directly to each Working Group or to the Steering Committee

Communication Tools:

- **Email:** Regular updates delivered directly to students, faculty, staff, and other internal audiences, with tailored content based on goals and/or milestones.
- **Canvas Dashboard Announcements:** Integration of key updates, MSCHE Fact Sheet and reminders into the Canvas learning management system, ensuring high visibility for students and faculty who log in daily.
- **School Bulletin Boards:** Digital and physical bulletin boards across campus (in academic buildings, residence halls, and common areas) to display MSCHE Fact Sheet, updates, timelines, and calls to action for those who may not check digital platforms frequently.

- **Social Media:** Engaging posts across platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn (specifically to target alumni and external constituencies) to reach a broader audience and create awareness around important milestones, events, and outcomes.
- **Faculty and Staff Meetings:** Standing agenda items during regular meetings to provide progress updates and discuss implications for teaching, learning, and operations.
- **Student Forums and Town Halls:** Scheduled in-person and virtual sessions offering direct dialogue with leadership and committee members.
- **Professional Development Days and Town Halls:** Scheduled in-person and virtual sessions offering direct dialogue, learning experiences and leadership with faculty and staff.

Timing: (Refer to Table Below)

Purpose	Audience	Methods	Timing
To generally inform and update the Five Towns College community about the Self-Study process	Board of Trustees	Board representatives on Steering Committee and Working Groups, presentations at Board Meetings, Self-Study website	Ongoing
	Faculty	Faculty representatives on Steering Committee and Working Groups, Town Hall meetings, Professional Development Day, emails, Self-Study website	Ongoing
	Staff and Administration	Staff representatives on Steering Committee and Working Groups, Town Hall meetings, Professional Development Day, emails, Self-Study website	Ongoing
	Students	Student Government representatives on Steering Committee and Working Groups, Town Hall meetings, emails, Self-Study website	Ongoing
To gather feedback about institutional priorities	Faculty and Staff	Strategic Planning and Reaffirmation of Accreditation kick-off at Fall 2024 Professional Development Day	August 28, 2024
	Faculty and staff	Unit brainstorming sessions to develop vision statement, core values, assess current mission statement, and define institutional goals and priorities	Fall 2024

To invite community members to participate on Steering Committee and Working Groups	Board of Trustees, Faculty, and Staff	Email	Fall 2024 / Spring 2025
To share data, documents, research results, and communications in a secure, transparent and convenient manner	Steering Committee Members and Working Group Members	Internal SharePoint Drive, Steering Committee and Working Group meetings	Ongoing
To provide guidance and support of Working Group initiatives and feedback on Working Group draft reports	Steering Committee and Working Groups	Working Group representatives on Steering Committee	Ongoing
To update campus constituencies about the Self-Study process	Students	Canvas Dashboard Announcements, Email, MSCHE Fact Sheet, Digital and Hard-copy flyers posted on bulletin boards, Student Town Halls and small workshops	Ongoing
	Faculty, Staff and Administration	Canvas Dashboard Announcements, Email, Digital and Hard-copy flyers posted on bulletin boards, Professional Development Day (Fall 2024, Spring 2025, Fall 2025, Spring 2026)	
	Board of Trustees	Board representatives on Steering Committee and Working Groups, presentations at Board Meetings, Self-Study website	
	Alumni and External Constituencies	FTC LinkedIn Page	
To gather feedback about Working Group reports and the Self-Study Process	Board of Trustees	Draft posted on Self-Study website, feedback solicited via serving on Steering Committee and Working Groups and at Board meetings	Fall 2026
	Faculty, staff, and students	Draft posted on Self-Study website, feedback solicited via email and via feedback submission form on Self-Study website	Fall 2026
To Endorse the final draft of the Self-Study report	Board of Trustees	Final draft posted on Self-Study website, official Board of Trustees meeting to endorse final draft	Spring 2026

IX. EVALUATION TEAM PROFILE

Team Chair Characteristics

Five Towns College would prefer a Team Chair from an institution of comparable scope, complexity, and scale and who has an appreciation of our experiential, hands-on approach to learning. Other desired characteristics of the Team Chair include:

- A sitting President, Chancellor, or Provost of an accredited proprietary institution
- Experience with diverse student populations
- From an institution with bachelors, masters, and doctoral programs
- An appreciation of the present challenges confronting higher education
- Previous experience serving on and/or leading Middle States teams

Team Member Characteristics

Five Towns College would prefer team members with individual expertise in one or more of the following: academic affairs; assessment; finance and operations; strategic planning; and student affairs. Preferred team members will have experience at institutions that exhibit the following characteristics:

- A Finance and Operations team member from a proprietary institution
- A small, suburban campus
- From an institution with programs in the business, performing arts, and visual arts disciplines
- From an institution with bachelors, masters, and doctoral programs
- An appreciation of the present challenges confronting higher education
- From an institution that offers on-site and distance education programs

Peer, Aspirant, Competitor, and Conflict of Interest Institutions

The institutions listed below comprise the official peer groups that Five Towns College uses for benchmarking institutional performance. It is difficult to find institutions that match Five Towns College on all significant characteristics because the College occupies a very distinctive niche in higher education. Salient characteristics of Five Towns College include:

- A distinctive size of enrollment (approximately 500 undergraduates and <50 graduate students), which is smaller than most traditional colleges and is an important scaling factor for institutional complexity
- A focus on both undergraduate and graduate education
- A combination of traditional liberal arts with professional programs in business, film, interactive media arts, mass communication, music, music education, and theatre arts
- Men's and women's athletic programs in the United States Collegiate Athletic Association and the North American Conference for Intercollegiate Athletics

Each peer institution combines some but not all of these key characteristics. The following is a list of comparable peers:

College of Westchester
Berkeley College – New York and New Jersey
IE New York College
LIM College
School of Visual Arts
Culinary Institute of America
North Country Community College
Paul Smith's College
Plaza College
SUNY Adirondack
Webb Institute
Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences

The following is a list of aspirant peers:

Cooper Union
Hartwick College
Pace University
The Julliard School
New York School of Interior Design

The following is a list of competitive peers:

American Academy of Dramatic Arts
New School University – Mannes School of Music
Manhattan School of Music
Berklee School of Music
Ithaca College
Mercy College
CUNY Queens College
Curtis Institute

The following is a list of institutions where there might be a conflict of interest:

New York Institute of Technology
Molloy University
St. Joseph's University (Patchogue and Brooklyn)
Long Island University
Hofstra University
Adelphi University
SUNY Old Westbury
SUNY Farmingdale
SUNY Suffolk County Community College
SUNY Nassau County Community College

Degree Programs by Largest Enrollment

Current Degree Programs by Largest Enrollment	
Degree Program	Enrollment
Certificate Programs	18
Court Reporting, Certification	18
Associate Programs	42
Business Management, AAS	17
Court Reporting, AOS	14
Liberal Arts, AA	5
Interactive Media Arts, AAS	4
Business Administration, AS	2
Performance, AAS	0
Bachelor Programs	441
Business Management, BBA	131
Mass Communication, BS	80
Film and Television, BFA	76
Theatre Arts, BFA	59
Interactive Media Arts, BFA	44
Performance, MusB	36
Music Education, MusB	15
Master Programs	15
Sound Recording Technology, MPS	6
Music Education, MAT	2
Music History, MM	2
Performance, MM	2
Composition, MM	1
Music Education, MM	1
Music Technology, MM	1
Doctoral Programs	30
Music Education, DMA	12
Music Performance, DMA	11
Music History and Literature, DMA	4
Composition and Arranging, DMA	3
Total Degree-Seeking Enrollment	546

X. STRATEGY FOR ADDRESSING ANNUAL INSTITUTIONAL UPDATE INDICATORS AND METRICS

In accordance with the Middle States Commission on Higher Education's (MSCHE) *Evidence Expectations by Standard* guidelines, Five Towns College will incorporate data from the Annual Institutional Update (AIU) into the Self-Study Report. Information including retention rates, graduation rates, transfer rates, annual enrollment-FTE, financial data, annual financial audits, and other relevant IPEDS data will all be analyzed in relevant chapters and included in the Evidence Inventory. Steering Committee and Working Group members will all be provided access to data from the AIUs within the master folder of the Evidence Inventory on SharePoint/OneDrive. In addition, the Director of Institutional Research and Assessment will serve as Co-Chair of the Steering Committee and will be available to disaggregate data included in the AIU and help the Working Groups gain access to additional data that is needed as they conduct their analyses.

XI. EVIDENCE INVENTORY STRATEGY

Overview

Each Working Group is dedicated to a single Standard and will gather evidence of compliance as they address the criteria for their respective Standard. The Steering Committee Co-Chairs will collaborate with the College's Information Technology Department to develop, implement, and maintain an online Evidence Inventory using Microsoft SharePoint/OneDrive. All evidence gathered will be stored in a master folder entitled "Evidence Inventory." Each Working Group will have its own folder within the master folder which can be used to collect evidence, populate evidence forms, house the Group's evidence documentation spreadsheet, save meeting minutes, and collaborate on Working Group draft reports. The Steering Committee will have access to all folders within the Evidence Inventory. Working Group Chairs and Deputy Chairs will upload documentation to the online Evidence Inventory pursuant to an established timeline for evidence collection and will also maintain a spreadsheet to track their evidence documentation.

To help facilitate the evidence gathering process, each Working Group will have access to publicly available Self-Study reports from other institutions, some of which include examples of evidence per Standard. In addition, the Steering Committee Co-Chairs will provide each Working Group with a template to use as a guide for identifying evidence based on the MSCHE *Evidence Expectations by Standard* guidelines. All example Self-Study Reports and the evidence template guide will be accessible in the master Evidence Inventory folder on SharePoint/OneDrive.

Evidence Collection

To begin the evidence collection process, each Working Group will meet for an initial brainstorming session to discuss possible institutional resources and documentation available on their respective Standard. At the end of this brainstorming session, the Working Group

should develop a spreadsheet providing an initial list of proposed documents that will be included in the Evidence Inventory for their respective Standard. This spreadsheet should be shared with the Steering Committee for review and approval. The Working Group should also communicate to the Steering Committee any gaps in evidence that have been identified based on their brainstorming session and the evidence template guide. Once approved, this spreadsheet will be used to catalog and track the actual documentation being uploaded into the Evidence Inventory.

In each Working Group, a designated Evidence Manager will work on behalf of the Group to upload evidence documentation into the Group's designated evidence folder. If the Working Group Evidence Manager cannot locate certain documentation, they should consult with their Group's Chair and Deputy Chair and devise a plan for obtaining the necessary evidence or finding an alternative, suitable form of evidence.

A dedicated Self-Study Evidence Manager will oversee all evidence collection and will work with the Working Group Evidence Managers to identify and coordinate shared evidence. A master evidence spreadsheet will be created to track all evidence across Working Groups. The Self-Study Evidence Manager will meet with the Working Group Evidence Managers on a weekly basis during the primary evidence collection period (and as needed thereafter) in order to identify shared evidence and to decide on a clear naming convention for all documents serving as evidence. At these meetings, Working Group Evidence Managers will present for review any new evidence collected. Once reviewed and approved, all approved evidence will be named, added to the master evidence spreadsheet, and saved in the main Evidence Inventory folder.

Document Control

To maintain version control of all documentation, each document uploaded to the online Evidence Inventory will be provided in PDF format, with the exception of any Excel-based data files that are intended for data analysis.

When evidence is collected and added to a Working Group's designated evidence folder, the Working Group's Evidence Manager will update their respective evidence documentation spreadsheet. Each spreadsheet should contain the following information for each document added to the Evidence Inventory:

- (1) Standard Number
- (2) Evidence Category (i.e., criteria number)
- (3) Evidence Number
- (4) Title of Document
- (5) Document Date or Download Date (if static copy of a webpage)
- (6) Source of Document (website, staff name, file path, etc.)
- (7) Short Description of the document

Additional Documentation

As each Working Group progresses through the Self-Study process, additional evidence may be identified not initially included on the list of proposed documents submitted to and approved by the Steering Committee. Any new documentation identified for inclusion in the Evidence Inventory should be added to the Working Group's documentation tracking spreadsheet, and the inclusion of this additional documentation should be brought to the weekly meeting of the Evidence Managers for review and approval. The Self-Study Evidence Manager, in coordination with the Working Group Evidence Managers, will be responsible for coordinating and consolidating any evidence that possesses a general nature that may be referenced or shared by multiple Working Groups within the context of a Standard's criteria.

Sharing Evidence with MSCHE

As the Self-Study narrative is being prepared, the contents of the Evidence Inventory will be reviewed, curated, and updated as appropriate. The Steering Committee will ensure that all documentation and evidence is transferred from the College's online Evidence Inventory on its SharePoint/OneDrive into MSCHE's virtual evidence inventory if that inventory utilizes a different file sharing system. The referenced evidence will be selected for upload to MSCHE portal with the narrative, and the Evidence Inventory will be available to the visiting team.

The listing below provides a sample of the types of documentation to be included in the Evidence Inventory that will be uploaded to the MSCHE portal and available to the visiting team.

STANDARD I: Mission and Goals

- Mission Statement
- Strategic Planning documentation
- Assessment documentation
- Board minutes
- Bylaws
- Five Towns College website

STANDARD II: Ethics and Integrity

- University policies
- Title IX policies
- Board Conflict of Interest policies
- Hiring Policies and Procedures
- Admissions Policies
- Residence Hall Policies
- Student Handbook
- Faculty Handbook
- Staff Handbook
- Faculty contracts
- Five Towns College website
- Syllabus template in accordance with New York State compliance

STANDARD III: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience

- NYSED Inventory of Registered Programs
- Student Handbook
- Graduation requirements for all degrees
- Student Learning Goals by degree program
- Course Schedules
- Course Syllabi template and examples
- Faculty committee agendas and minutes
- Provost Council agendas and minutes
- Student Handbook
- New program proposal process and procedures

STANDARD IV: Support of the Student Experience

- Student Handbook
- Admissions marketing materials
- Financial Aid policies and procedures
- FERPA policy and procedures
- Library documentation
- Student satisfaction surveys

STANDARD V: Educational Effectiveness Assessment

- Learning Outcomes Assessment Process and Procedures
- Learning Outcomes Assessment Reports
- Academic Program Review Process and Procedures
- Academic Program Review Reports
- Syllabus template
- Course evaluations
- Faculty committee agendas and minutes

STANDARD VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement

- Administrative Unit Outcomes Assessment Process and Procedures
- Administrative Unit Outcomes Assessment Annual Reports
- Financial Statements
- Financial Plans
- Audited Financial Statements
- Financial projections
- Budget linkage to Strategic Plan Goals
- Capital plan
- Master facilities plan
- Process and procedures related to planning, resources, and institutional improvement

STANDARD VII: Governance, Leadership, and Administration

- Board of Trustees Bylaws
- Board of Trustees Members and Bios
- Board of Trustees orientation process
- Board of Trustees self-evaluation
- Board of Trustees minutes and resolutions
- Board of Trustees committees (charges, agenda, minutes, membership)
- College President job description
- College President selection and evaluation by Board of Trustees
- College President biography
- Organizational chart
- Senior leadership biographies
- Student government
- Performance evaluation process
- College policies
- Systematic assessment process of units, academic programs, learning outcomes
- Systematic assessment evidence of units, academic programs, learning outcomes

XII. STRATEGY FOR IDENTIFYING SELF-STUDY SITE VISITS TO BE CONDUCTED

Five Towns College does not have any additional locations that require a self-study site visit at the time of the self-study evaluation. As defined in the MSCHE Substantive Change Guidelines, an additional location is “a domestic or international physical facility or location that is geographically separate from the main campus and within the same ownership structure of the institution, at which the institution will offer at least 50 percent of an educational program that is credit-bearing or Title IV eligible” (p.17). Five Towns College does not have any locations that meet these criteria.