

*Progress Report to the*  
Middle States Commission on Higher Education  
from  
ST. JOHN FISHER COLLEGE  
Rochester, NY 14618

*Dr. Gerald Rooney, President*

*March 31, 2018*

Subject of the Follow-Up Report:

*To reaffirm accreditation and to request a progress report, due April 1, 2018, documenting further development and implementation of administrative and faculty governance roles, responsibilities, and policies. (Standards 4, 5, and 10.) The date for the next accreditation review will be determined by the Commission when it revises the accreditation cycle.*

In its reaffirmation letter and request for a progress report, the Commission listed specific recommendations related to Standards 4, 5, and 10 for the College to address in its Progress Report. In addition, a related recommendation was made in Standard 11 that will be addressed here as well.

1. Standard 4: The team recommends that St. John Fisher: Outline the process and establish a timeline for completing the revision of the Faculty Statutes, the core of the governance structure at St. John Fisher College.
2. Standard 5: The team recommends that St. John Fisher College: Include in its revisions to the Faculty Statutes: 1) Better definition of the role and authority and the Deans, as chief academic officers of their respective schools; and 2) Prominent and distinct definition for faculty workload across schools.
3. Standard 10: The team recommends that St. John Fisher College: Clearly define a detailed timeline and process for completion of the rewritten Faculty Statutes. All relevant stakeholders should be consulted during the writing phase of the process to ensure that the updated Statutes reflect the actual practices at the College.
4. Standard 11: The team recommends that St. John Fisher College: Revise the Faculty Statutes to reflect the current organization of St. John Fisher College, particularly to provide consistent committee structures and processes to address curricular improvement and innovation across schools.

We are happy to report that we have completed a comprehensive review and revision of the St. John Fisher College Faculty Statutes. Though both the faculty and the Board of Trustees will continue to discuss ways to improve the Statutes, a revised and improved document was approved by the faculty on February 20, 2018, and then by the Board of Trustees on March 16, 2018. The revision includes a definition of dean responsibilities and a definition of workload across schools as recommended. Thus, we believe that we have satisfactorily addressed all recommendations given by the Commission.

#### **Addressing 1 and 3 above - Timeline and description of inclusive and iterative revision process.**

**Fall 2015 and Spring 2016:** The faculty at St. John Fisher College determined the composition of a committee whose charge it would be to revise the Faculty Statutes. Based on a resolution passed by the Faculty Assembly, a Faculty Statutes Revision Committee representing all the schools of the College was elected, and a process to approve the eventual revision was established. Based on the same resolution, the provost became a member of the Faculty Statutes Revision Committee; the deans elected a dean to serve as the dean representative; and the President appointed Dr. Kris Green, chair of Faculty Assembly, to serve as the presidential appointee (see Appendix A for the resolution passed at the Faculty Assembly meeting).

**Summer 2016:** The Faculty Statutes Revision Committee began the process to revise the Statutes. The Faculty Statutes Revision Committee's goal was to revise the complete Statutes with a starting focus on the requirements of the Middle States Commission report. It agreed to

meet every two weeks, to develop sub-committees to address specific areas in need of revision, to communicate regularly with all faculty, to request feedback on a regular basis, and to report at Faculty Assembly meetings on specific matters and sections under review (see Appendix B for Faculty Assembly meetings). The four sub-committees formed focused on workload; dean responsibilities; school and college committees; and structure and organization of the entire document.

**Fall 2016:** The work of the sub-committees began by reaching out to constituents across all five schools requesting feedback and suggestions about topics being considered. The Structure and Organization Sub-committee began to review samples of governing documents from other campuses. The Workload Sub-committee got information to identify the faculty workload responsibilities in each of the five St. John Fisher College schools. It was agreed that this information would be included in the Statutes. The sub-committees reported out to the full Faculty Statutes Revision Committee at ongoing bi-weekly meetings, shared the responses received from across campus, and methodically moved toward completing its work.

After Faculty Statutes Revision Committee meetings, someone from the committee was charged with reporting out to the campus community via newsletter. The newsletter format was determined by the Faculty Statutes Revision Committee as a whole, and the bi-weekly communication was a significant way for the Committee to report out on its plans and progress to faculty and staff on a regular basis (see Appendix C for sample newsletters).

**Between Fall 2016 and Spring 2017:** A session was conducted by an outside facilitator to offer further feedback to the Faculty Statutes Revision Committee. That session included the Faculty Council (the executive committee of Faculty Assembly) and the chairs of the current standing committees of Faculty Assembly. This meeting allowed the Faculty Statutes Revision Committee to hear from additional constituents and to further develop priorities for the work ahead. A report was submitted by the facilitator identifying priorities that helped the Faculty Statutes Revision Committee further focus on what needed to get accomplished during the revision process.

**Spring 2017:** The Faculty Statutes Revision Committee regularly presented sections of the revised Statutes to Faculty Assembly and took regular feedback from the faculty through electronic means (see Appendix D for samples of feedback collected). The sub-committees also continued to work, specifically meeting with people across campus to develop descriptions of the work of deans and to review committee structures and responsibilities. The Dean Responsibilities Sub-committee met with department chairs and sitting deans to develop a list of duties and responsibilities. The School and College Committees Sub-committee met with all the chairs of standing committees of Faculty Assembly and took feedback from a variety of people who had served on the committees during their careers. Finally, the Structure and Organization Sub-committee began to develop a structure for the overall revision.

**Summer 2017:** A meeting with the Faculty Statutes Revision Committee and the Academic and Faculty Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees, conducted by an outside facilitator, was held to include that important constituent in the process, to assure alignment with Board expectations, and to confirm commitments to shared governance, academic freedom, and

professional responsibility. The meeting outlined ways in which the business of the faculty and the College would move through a process and become implemented policy.

**Fall 2017:** Versions of completed sections of the Statutes continued to be regularly shared with faculty via electronic means and at Faculty Assembly meetings.

**Spring 2018:** A draft of the entire document was shared with the full faculty during the January 2018 Convocation, and the final version was sent to the administration and put up for a vote in February 2018. The results of the vote was approval of the revised Faculty Statutes on February 20, 2018. Those results were shared with the Board of Trustees for consideration at the March 16, 2018 Board meeting, where the Board approved the document as well.

**Addressing item 2 above –  
Excerpts from the revised Faculty Statutes.**

**Better definition of the role and authority and the Deans, as chief academic officers of their respective schools.**

Section II.C. School Deans.

The School Dean is the academic leader and chief administrative officer of the School and reports directly to the Provost for all aspects of the operation of the School, including its conduct and development as an instructional, research, and service unit. In carrying out responsibilities, the School Dean may consult advisory bodies within the School and outside the School, and College. The Dean is the senior administrative representative of the School working with officers of the College and is responsible for communicating information concerning programs and departments between officers of the College and Chairs within the School. The School Dean is expected to:

1. Oversee the administrative aspects of the School, including but not limited to scheduling, course assignments, budget, and personnel, and lead by taking action and achieving desired results consistent with the goals of the School, the mission of the College, and established policies and procedures.
2. Oversee accreditation and/or program review processes and other accountability measures. Where evidence exists that student learning is insufficient as determined by the assessment plan, the School Dean will identify areas for improvement.
3. Report at required intervals to the Provost and the School's Chairs, Academic Program Directors, faculty, and staff, engaging in and facilitating honest, civil, and open communication.
4. Develop and maintain responsive, cooperative, and mutually beneficial relationships with persons within and outside the School in order to strengthen collaborations to other Schools and College departments as well as organizations in the community.

5. Support the recruitment and retention of diverse faculty, staff, and students and motivate others to peak performance, promoting the success of all.
6. Evaluate faculty and staff yearly to document performance, provide feedback, and support the goals of the School and College.
7. Evaluate administrative faculty, such as Department Chairs and Academic Program Directors according to the School's evaluation criteria and processes.
8. Manage funds and other assets in a manner that is considered productive and in the best interests of the College, the School, and the students we serve.
9. Adjust to changing circumstances, and think creatively to overcome obstacles.
10. Implement the College and School's strategic plans.
11. Uphold College policies and processes articulated in the Catalog, and supervise faculty in their efforts to do the same.
12. Consult faculty and staff when hiring someone to take on a role that has implications over all department or program operations.

**Prominent and distinct definition for faculty workload across schools.**

Section V.H. Workload.

V.H.1. Full-time tenured and tenure-track faculty workload

Faculty will undertake activities in the following four areas: teaching, scholarship, service, and advising/mentoring of students (see VI.H.4.d.). Tenure-track faculty will be supported by their Department Chair and School Dean to adequately develop these four areas.

The major commitment of faculty at St. John Fisher College is excellence in teaching, with an emphasis on close interaction with students. Teaching load varies by School and is summarized in the table below

School	Length of Teaching Obligation	Fall Contact Hours	Spring Contact Hours
Ralph C. Wilson School of Education	9 month	9	9
School of Business	9 month	9	9
School of Arts and Sciences - Natural Science	9 month	12	12
School of Arts and Sciences - Others	9 month	9	9
Wegmans School of Nursing	9 month	12	12
Wegmans School of Nursing - MHC	10 month	9	9
Wegmans School of Pharmacy	12 month	An annual range of 18-30	

Other factors in determining workload include accreditation standards and principles of equity. Variations to the general outline above are discussed and agreed to by the faculty member, their Chair, their Dean, and the Provost. Faculty always have the right to bring concerns to the Faculty Welfare committee.

#### V.H. 2. Full-time Term Workload

The major commitment of term Professors at St. John Fisher College is excellence in teaching, with an emphasis on close interaction with students. Teaching load varies by School and is summarized in the table below. Term Professors are expected to engage primarily in teaching activities.

School	Contact hours per semester
Ralph C. Wilson School of Education	Specified by individual contract
School of Business	12
School of Arts and Sciences - Natural Science	15
School of Arts and Sciences - Others	12
Wegmans School of Nursing	12
Wegmans School of Nursing - MHC	9
Wegmans School of Pharmacy	N/A

**Addressing item 4 above –  
Provide consistent committee structures and processes to address curricular improvement and innovation across schools.**

The School and College Committee Sub-committee, in consultation with faculty across campus, decided not to list school committees in the revision to the Statutes, a recommendation supported by the full Faculty Statutes Revision Committee. During the revision process the School and College Committee Sub-committee recognized that each of the five schools at St. John Fisher College have different histories, different processes, and respond to different accreditation bodies. Thus, the conclusion was to permit schools to decide the exact types and number of committees appropriate for satisfactory governance within the School. That said, it was agreed that each school would develop, if it did not already have them, one committee focused on curriculum development and one committee focused on assessment of student learning.

At present, curriculum review and revision starts at the department level, guided by department chairs and faculty. That process then includes discussion with deans and formulation into proposals for revisions to curriculum, new courses, and new programs. Often, the discussion at this level also includes faculty from other departments and schools in order to explore the impact

that new plans might have on other programs. When complete, all proposals for revisions or new curriculum are submitted either to the Curriculum and Instruction Committee (C&I) for programs at the undergraduate level or the Graduate Program Council (GPC) for programs at the graduate level, the Faculty Assembly bodies charged with official review of all curriculum and with reporting to Faculty Assembly. Faculty Assembly can reject or accept recommendations and reports from C&I or GPC. Once approved by Faculty Assembly, proposals are forwarded to the administration, vetted through the Academic and Faculty Affairs Committee of the Board, and then sent to the full Board of Trustees for consideration and approval.

The campus-wide curriculum development and review cycle is articulated in a document posted on the Provost's website (see Appendix E for the Guidelines for Program Development).

The School and College Committee Sub-committee solidified the language in the Statutes regarding how the work of committees, and resolutions that come from that work, move from committee to Assembly to the administration, and then get implemented into official policy. In addition, the charges of the Budget Analysis Committee, the Strategic Review Committee, and the Enrollment Management Committee did get revised in order to better reflect current institutional practices and the priorities of the faculty at St. John Fisher College.

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In conclusion, St. John Fisher appreciates the careful review by the Middle States Team and the recommendations communicated. We are confident that by addressing these recommendations we are a better institution.

The current approved version of the St. John Fisher College Faculty Statues can be found on the Provost's website:

(<https://www.sjfc.edu/media/about/leadership/provost/documents/FacultyStatutes.pdf>).

To ensure future continued alignment with the College's goals and objectives and compliance with requirements of affiliation, MSCHE standards, and other Commission policies further updates to the Faculty Statues will follow a similar process as outlined above.