

## **Community College of Philadelphia: Important Message on Accreditation**

You may have heard that the Middle States Commission on Higher Education recently informed Community College of Philadelphia it would remain accredited, but it was warned that it has not provided sufficient evidence that the institution is in compliance with one of the 14 Characteristics of Excellence.

As part of an ongoing effort to promote transparency, the College is providing this Student Q&A on the accreditation process. In it, you will find a brief history and a plan for moving forward.

We want to assure you that we are fully committed to implementing the changes and recommendations made in our comprehensive Self-Study and by the site team from the Middle States Commission on Higher Education.

### **Student Q&A**

#### **When did the reaccreditation process begin?**

The process, which began in fall 2011, concluded with a visit of the Middle States team in spring 2014. Throughout the review, reports, schedules and other information were posted online on the College's Middle States website ([www.ccp.edu/msche/](http://www.ccp.edu/msche/)).

#### **What is the purpose of reaccreditation?**

The reaccreditation process, which is conducted every 10 years, provides colleges with an opportunity to examine how they are meeting their mission and goals as a college community. Additionally, it gives faculty, students and administrators the opportunity to examine all dimensions of their College and its programs, policies and procedures.

Community College of Philadelphia conducted a comprehensive Self-Study using the 14 Middle States Characteristics of Excellence. In doing so, we were able to look at ourselves from an outside perspective and assess those areas where we are excelling, as well as areas that need improvement, with a particular emphasis on student learning and success. The College then generated recommendations to improve institutional effectiveness and outcomes, and achieve our strategic goals. We invite you to read the full report at [path.ccp.edu/msche/pdfs/Self-StudyReport2014.pdf](http://path.ccp.edu/msche/pdfs/Self-StudyReport2014.pdf)

#### **What are the 14 Middle States Characteristics of Excellence?**

Standard 1: Mission and Goals

Standard 2: Planning & Resource Allocation

Standard 3: Institutional Resources

Standard 4: Leadership & Governance

Standard 5: Administration

Standard 6: Integrity

Standard 7: Institutional Assessment

Standard 8: Student Admissions & Retention

Standard 9: Student Support Services  
Standard 10: Faculty  
Standard 11: Educational Offerings  
Standard 12: General Education  
Standard 13: Related Educational Activities  
Standard 14: Assessment of Student Learning

### **What was the outcome of the review?**

The Middle States Commission on Higher Education has notified Community College of Philadelphia that it will remain accredited while it is warned that it has not provided sufficient evidence the institution is in compliance with one of the 14 Characteristics of Excellence.

The standard in question is the one that pertains to assessment and student learning (Standard 14). The College successfully met the other 13 standards reviewed during the accreditation process and, in fact, received commendations in the visiting team's report. A warning is given when the Commission believes that, though the institution has not provided evidence of compliance, it has the capacity to document compliance within a reasonable period of time.

### **What does "warning" status mean for the College?**

An institution is placed on warning status when the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) believes the institution has not provided sufficient evidence that it is in compliance with one or more of the 14 Characteristics of Excellence, but MSCHE believes it can provide such evidence in two years or less. The College will need to provide a report by March 1, 2015, providing evidence of compliance or steps to come into compliance in that time period. This will be followed by a visit of a small team to validate the report. If needed, the Commission may render further action.

### **What is the College's plan to remedy the warning status?**

Faculty and administrators will begin meetings immediately to discuss how to address the concerns. We are determined to provide evidence to show that we can comply with Standard 14 as we were able to document with the other 13 Characteristics of Excellence.

### **Should students be worried about attending the College?**

No, the College remains fully accredited. The visiting team noted significant accomplishments, significant progress and/or exemplary and innovative practices in a number of key areas. The Commission commended the College for "the communication of and commitment to the mission" and for the Leadership Institute "which seeks to cultivate and develop leadership skills among campus staff." The Commission took note of several innovative student support services, such as the Center for Male Engagement, the Women's Outreach and Advocacy Center and the new, full-service Veterans Resource Center. Even in the area of learning assessment, the visiting team highlighted the fact that "the Office of Academic Assessment and Evaluation effectively

facilitates assessment and reports for faculty use for General Education and Core Competencies.”

**Will this action affect student financial aid?**

As a fully accredited institution, our students are eligible to apply for and receive financial aid.

**Will courses continue to be transferable to colleges and universities?**

The College currently has 236 articulation and dual admissions agreements with regional colleges and universities, and these agreements remain in effect. College courses remain transferrable to colleges and universities.