Report to the

Faculty, Administration, Trustees, Students of

Teachers College Columbia University

525 West 120th Street, New York, NY 10027

by

An Evaluation Team representing the Middle States Commission on Higher Education

Prepared after study of the institution's selected topics self-study report and a visit to the campus on March 8 – March 11, 2016

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This report represents the views of the evaluation team as interpreted by the Chair, Co-Chair, and members of the site visit team; it goes directly to the institution before being considered by the Commission.

It is a confidential document prepared as an educational service for the benefit of the institution. All comments in the report are made in good faith, in an effort to assist Teacher's College at Columbia University.   This report is based solely on an educational evaluation of the institution and of the manner in which it appears to be carrying out its mission and educational objectives covered by the selected topics addressed in the self-study.

AT THE TIME OF THE VISIT

I. Context and Nature of Visit

- Institutional Overview

Teachers College was founded in 1887 and since its inception it has continued to thrive and expand. The College offers programs in the areas of education, psychology, health and leadership that lead to the degrees of Master of Arts, Master of Science, Master of Education, Doctor of Education, and Doctor of Philosophy. The academic programs are situated within ten departments: Arts and Humanities; Bio-behavioral Sciences; Counseling and Clinical Psychology; Curriculum and Teaching; Education Policy and Social Analysis; Health and Behavior Studies; Human Development; International and Transcultural Studies; Mathematics, Science and Technology; and, Organization and Leadership. These programs are supplemented by centers/institutes that cross department boundaries. The College enrolls and educates approximately 5,120 students in 2014-2015 using the skills of 156 full time faculty (114 of whom are on tenure lines), 55 lecturers, 15 instructors, as well as 350 part time appointments. Faculty engage in significant amounts of research and this research is closely aligned and embedded in the teaching and engagement missions.

- Institutional Information and Scope of Institution at Time of Evaluation

Control:	Private (Non-Profit)
Carnegie Classification:	Research – High Research Activity
Approved Degree Levels:	Master's, Doctor's – Research/Scholarship
Distant Education Programs:	Fully Approved
Branch Campuses:	None
Additional Locations:	National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA
Other Instructional Sites:	Beijing Language and Culture University, China

- Self-Study Process and Report: Selected Topics. The self-study process was overseen by a Steering Committee of 22 members. It was co-chaired by Professor Bill Baldwin (and a former Vice Provost) and Professor A. Lin Goodwin, Vice Dean and Professor. In addition to the co-chairs the steering committee consisted of five faculty, nine administrators and professional staff, two students, three alumni and a trustee. The steering committee organized four major working groups: Documentation and Roadmap Group; Survey Group; Design and Program Review Group; and the Advanced Master's Programs Group.   The groups were assisted by six research assistants.

II. Affirmation of Continued Compliance with Requirements of Affiliation

Based on a review of the selected topics self-study, the Teachers College Summary Certification Report provided by the generalists, interviews, the certification statement supplied by the institution and the other institutional documents made available, the team affirms that the institution continues to meet the requirements of affiliation as described in *Characteristics of Excellence.*

III. Compliance with Federal Requirements; Issues Relative to State Regulatory or Other Accrediting Agency Requirements

Based on the separate verification of compliance with accreditation-relevant provisions of the HEOA 2008, the team affirms that the institution meets all relevant federal and state regulations and the requirements of other Department of Education recognized accreditors.

IV. Overview

Teachers College is among the top graduate programs in education in the country. It aspires to be at the intellectual forefront of issues facing American education. The vision is to use a research-inspired multi-disciplinary approach blending both theory and practice to educate the next generation of teachers, counselors, etc. Such an approach necessitates rapid transformation and responsiveness to emerging societal issues surrounding education. The self-study makes it apparent that Teachers College is aware of the need to navigate and assess the complex and rapidly changing environment facing graduate schools of education. Moreover, rather than simply navigating these changes, it seeks to be a national leader in developing new academic programs, new pedagogy, and new facilities and technology to enhance the quality of the education students receive. The College should be commended for an insightful self-study and for including twenty-four recommendations in the self-study document. These cover a wide scope of activity and are helpful in guiding the College, especially as there is likely to be a transition in leadership in two years from now.

The College has been focused on program innovation and assessment for quite some time. For example, in 2007 the Provost developed an investment fund that provided financial support to selected projects, many of which were focused on the development of new programmatic themes or content. There have also been changes in the organizational structures supporting innovation. While some of these changes have had mixed success they demonstrate a willingness to adapt administrative systems to emerging challenges so as to maximize institutional effectiveness. Most recently technology has been identified as an important catalyst for innovation. In June 2014, the Board of Trustees approved a Technology Investment Plan and it is hoped that embedding new programming within the domain of this plan will lead

to more than incremental change and a variety of new programs and learning opportunities. The recent adoption of the Rapid Prototyping Grant is another example of investments that are well aligned with program innovation and renewal.

Teachers College seeks to more systematically include alumni feedback and other data into its assessment of program effectiveness and to use this feedback to improve programs and the development of new programs. The College's plan is to reduce the proliferation of surveys by centralizing these activities in a way that more efficiently intersects with respondents (so that individual respondents get fewer separate requests to be participants), obtains higher response rates and uses higher quality survey research design methods to enhance the quality of the data one obtains from these surveys. The review team commends the College for this approach and believes that examining data from new students, current students, and alumni combined with the robust assessment culture that exists, will lead to improvements in the academic programs and bring them into better alignment with the local learning goals of each department and the broader goals identified by the College. The review team offers several broad suggestions for further analysis. These are related to and interrelate with the three standards our team has focused on (Standards 7, 11, 14).

Suggestion #1: Identify and Implement Additional Ways to Explore Data.

The analysis of each program's performance, based on the alumni feedback and student feedback, focused on question-by-question evaluation. Almost all of the figures presented in Chapter 3 represent how each of the programs fared on a particular question and the graphs typically order the programs based on performance on each question. There is little analysis of how each specific program fares across the multiple questions. It is natural to expect some programs to fare better on particular questions than others. However, it would be useful to better understand if the survey data identify a particular program that is consistently below or above the average across the multiple questions and goals. One could imagine creating a normalized metric (like a z-score) for each question and then summing such scores across all questions for each program. This summary measure would give one a sense of your highest achieving overall programs and your lowest achieving programs as measured by the alumni feedback. Specific focus could be paid to both of these sides of the performance scale. Best practices might emerge as to what explains why some programs score better on almost all or a multitude of dimensions, and why others are below average on almost all or most dimensions. This may have to do with the type of program leader one has in place, the tenure of the department leader, the amount of research productivity of the faculty within a program, etc. Such an analysis could be used to examine whether research productivity enhances the learning that takes place within a program or distracts from it because of competing time allocation; or vice versa. Overall, the use of the extensive amount of alumni and student feedback data

could be expanded to analyze additional important questions that might lead to program improvement.

Suggestion #2: Expand the Centralization of Data Surveys and Analysis.

The Office of Institutional Studies (OIS) is making good progress on providing data support using surveys, and providing data collection and other administrative assistance. Data are being used to support program assessment and program renewal. It appears that some data such as faculty productivity (teaching loads, publications etc.), Human Resources type data (salaries), sponsored activity data, are under separate governance and not closely linked with the OIS. We suggest that the College examine whether this separation is optimal. Teachers College has a strong culture of shared governance and the decision to share sensitive faculty data with the OIS should be made in consultation with the appropriate governing boards.

Suggestion #3: Develop Processes to Examine Program Synergies.

One of the important limitations of the approach taken in the self-study is that the department/program construct is essentially taken as given. Alumni have graduated from a particular program and bring that particular lens to the answers they provide. Students report that most of their coursework is contained within their programs. Such alumni and student feedback will be useful for engaging in program-to-program comparisons and program level assessment. Innovation, however, often comes not just from changes to existing programs or the development of new programs but rethinking the way in which faculty resources are combined across departments. It is not clear to us how these types of assessments will be made or how alumni and other sources of feedback can address important interdisciplinary or inter-program questions. What should the relationship, for example, be between programs offered by Education Policy and Social Analysis, Human Development, Bio-behavioral Sciences, and Health and Behavior Studies? Program-by-program assessment does not identify synergies or redundancies across curriculums, nor does it necessarily lead to a best practice model that other programs can learn from. While the College is proposing centralization of the survey design and implementation, much of the feedback loop appears to be focused at the program level. How will alumni feedback from graduates of each of these programs inform the debate as to what innovations can come from collaboration, integration, or in the most dramatic case consolidation of programs? We do not have a view on this but do point out that this is an area that might not emerge naturally from the survey design. One of our suggestions is to develop methods to either garner feedback from alumni on whether existing resources and coursework at Teachers College would fill the self-reported gaps they articulate or whether the data as currently collected could be used to identify these synergies. Some of these issues are discussed under the section on Facilitating Cross Program Collaboration (page 73 of the self-

study) but there is no proposition to use the data to identify how programmatic elements of one program can support another.

Suggestion #4: Use the Research/Outreach Funding of Master's Students More Strategically.

During our visit it became clear that many of the students are working collaboratively with faculty on research activity, often with financial support. This is a key advantage - one that distinguishes the College from less research-intensive graduate programs of education.   Given that there are a significant number of funded students it appears that the administration could make commitments up front in the form of financial support in the admission letter without increasing the financial aid budget.   This can provide an enormous benefit in terms of recruiting the top students and increasing yield.   While this might limit the flexibility regarding which students faculty choose to hire (as they would have to hire from the pool of students who were guaranteed the support in the offer letter) it is worth considering this as an enrollment management strategy.

V. Compliance with Specific Accreditation Standards

Standard 7: Assessment of Institutional Effectiveness

The institution has developed and implemented an assessment process that evaluates its overall effectiveness in achieving its mission and goals and its compliance with accreditation standards

In the team's judgment, Teachers College appears to meet this standard.

Summary of Evidence and Findings:

The information from the self-study, the interviews conducted during the site visit, and the extensive information provided in the document roadmap provides evidence of a thoughtful process for assessing institutional effectiveness. The approach to assessment is laid out in an extensive document entitled "Institutional Plan for the Assessment of Institutional Effectiveness." The selected topics self- study overlaps with this plan in several important ways. The assessment plan is focused on six principal activities: Research on the critical issues facing education; preparation of the next generation of leaders for education; education of the current generation of leaders in policy and practice; creation of demonstration projects and institutions modeling effective practice and outcomes; development of public discourse and policy in education; and improvement of practice in educational institutions. Within each of these principles there are subsidiary goals.

Each academic and non-academic unit has its own mission but these appear to be consistent with the overall goals of the College. As stated in the assessment document "each unit is guided by the College's mission and stated goals, supplemented by the goals from the respective Vice Presidents." Teachers College's subsidiary goals become primary goals for individual units and units' subsidiary goals become strategies for achieving the College goals.

For example, within the first principle of focusing on critical issues facing education is the subsidiary goal to build and sustain a vibrant culture of innovation. The self-study document outlines one of these investments, a "Provost Investment fund" program. The Provost has already supported over 100 projects to support such innovation. Based on assessment of these projects some have become sustainable in the longer term and continue to grow and innovate.

Standard 7 requires that there be clearly articulated institutional and unit goals, strategies to meet those goals, assessment against the key goals and using assessment to improve. Teachers College has a well-designed structure for articulating these goals, reporting on these goals, and then aligning administrative functions and budgets to support these goals. For example, the senior staff goals are laid out very clearly in a set of documents on a year-to-year basis. In these reports each senior leader lays out the yearly goals and reports on the progress of previous and ongoing goals. An example is the President's articulation of the goal of changing the way faculty use technology in teaching. This led to the decision to search for a Vice Provost for Digital Learning followed by the hiring of Steve Goss. The 2016 goals include an approach to develop a full strategy and staffing model to support the new Vice Provost position with measurable outcomes and assessment included as part of the plan.

There are extensive assessment and annual reports for the Associate Vice President for School and Community Partnerships, General Counsel, Provost and Dean of the College, Vice President for Development and External Affairs, Vice President for Diversity and Community Affairs, and the Vice President for Finance and Administration. There is an impressive set of goals and institutional assessment plans embedded in each of these reports. However, there is room for improvement leading to the following suggestion:

Suggestion #5: Align and Incorporate the Goals of the Self-study with the Annual Assessment Plan and Annual Report of the Relevant Senior Leadership Offices.

There could be a tighter relationship between the content of the selected topics self-study and the goals of the senior leadership as articulated in their assessment and annual reports. The self-study claims that the leadership of the College has articulated annual goals that reflect the integration of the work in the self-study to support the success of program development and program redesign efforts. It is surprising then that there is little explicit discussion in the Office

of the Provost 2015-2016 Assessment Plan of the alumni feedback survey – which is a major focus of the self-study. Similarly, and most importantly, in the 2015-2016 Assessment Plan and Annual Report for the Office of Institutional Studies there is almost no mention of the data presented in the selected topics self-study, nor is there a focus of this office on supporting program reviews. The 2015-2016 report lays out four strategies for serving the mission of the OIS. It describes surveys of admitted students and current students, monitoring application trends and enrollment management, examining trends at competitor institutions and focusing on rankings and annual IPEDs and NYSED data. There is no mention of alumni surveys, no mention of an explicit focus on assisting in providing data for program review, nor is there a clear statement of the goal of centralization of survey design. There is a statement about cataloging the existing surveys, but nothing similar to the recommendations in Chapter 2 of the self-study. Examining the recommendations of Chapter 2 and the Assessment and Annual Report of OIS indicates a lack of consistency, which can easily be resolved by insisting that the recommendations made by Teachers College in the self-study be incorporated into the annual planning goals of all relevant units. As part of this alignment, it is important to have strong working relationships between the Office of Accreditation and Assessment, the Provost and Dean of the College, and the Office of Institutional Studies.   During our visit it was clear that this is beginning to occur.   In fact, the reason for the lack of alignment is mostly due to the fact that the goals of each unit predated the writing of much of the self-study and the recommendations contained within.

Teachers College seeks to potentially expand its advanced master's programs or invest in new certificate type programs. The Provost appears committed to devoting funds to support faculty who are interested in creating new initiatives and who are willing to seriously engage in program innovation with respect to advanced degrees and certificate programs. It is clear that revenue enhancement is one of the factors driving these initiatives and explicit revenue sharing agreements with departments have been discussed.

Standard 11 – Educational Offerings

The institution's educational offerings display academic content, rigor, and coherence that are appropriate to its higher education mission. The institution identifies student learning goals and objectives, including knowledge and skills, for its educational offerings.

In the team's judgment, Teachers College appears to meet this standard.

Summary of Evidence and Findings:

The Curriculum/Program Development Process

Teachers College remains true to its founding principle of inclusive excellence. This aspiration is defined with clarity by five core competencies at the institutional level: professional practice; inquiry and research; professionalism and lifelong learning; communication, collaboration, and leadership; and, diversity, multiculturalism, and social justice. Within this contextual framework individual academic programs chart curriculum design with attention to unique disciplinary epistemologies and methods, outcome metrics, and external accountability standards like certification and licensure. A fundamental distinction articulated in the self-study is between graduate and professional programs offered at a research intensive, faculty governed institution. Graduation data for the previous five years show that about 2/3 of the College's Ed. M. programs graduates earn the professional degree.   There were 1,332 doctoral students in 2014-2015.

The Teachers College curriculum/program development process is mission-driven, grounded in its core competencies, and supported with evidence from stakeholders, including faculty, staff, students, and licensure/accreditation bodies. Consistent with the goal of continuous improvement two phases of the process are especially noteworthy: First, extensive input from alumni informs decision-making with a focus on competencies and program effectiveness at both the institutional and program level, as well as post-graduation outcomes. Alumni data demonstrate clearly that the majority of professional program graduates are employed full-time in a position related to their field of study.   Alumni of graduate programs are more likely to be continuing their education than alumni of professional programs – an important nuance when reviewing Teachers College alumni feedback. The process has an integrated "feedback loop" that enables program assessment to inform future program planning and the establishment of new programs; thus, innovation is based on evidence.   This feedback loop should be used not only for program refinement or new program development, but to evaluate existing programs and make decisions about them.

The Alumni Feedback has been very useful to assess programs and there are wide ranges in outcomes and scores across many programs. In addition to alumni and student data we offer the following suggestion:

Suggestion #6: Gather and Analyze Data from Stakeholders beyond Alumni.

An environmental scan could include more direct views of student preparation from employers and school districts that employ many of the College graduates, and other relevant groups. Input could also be solicited from representatives of sites used for fieldwork and internships.

Suggestion #7: Consider a Process and Criteria for Deciding Whether Programs Should be Discontinued.

With the significant investments being made in developing new programs, it is likely that the course and program offerings of the College will expand - perhaps dramatically. Teachers College might also consider a process to "phase-out" programs that are not central to the mission and are facing continuous declines in enrollment or market share, due to external factors like changes in state and local licensure and credentialing guidelines and public interest. We heard that the last program removed from the curriculum, dance education, occurred more than ten years ago. There does not appear to be an agreed upon set of criteria, nor process for sun-setting programs. We suggest that the Faculty Executive Committee establish a process for program review in light of programs that no longer effectively serve the mission of College. And while it will be a very rare instance where program elimination is the outcome, having some process seems warranted especially as there are likely to be a number of new experimental programs offered in the next few year. Some of these may need to be ended if not successful.

Over the last decade there have been increases in the size of the faculty. Nevertheless the College needs to ensure that with all of the new program development efforts underway faculty have the time to be engaged in research and work directly with doctoral students. Diverting research-intensive faculty time to service new master's and online programs needs to be carefully reviewed.

Suggestion #8: The Faculty Executive Committee or other Faculty Representatives Should Identify the Full Opportunity Costs of New Program Development on Faculty Effort and Develop and Implement a Method to Evaluate Faculty Workload.

The self-study document makes clear that many of the courses needed to expand programs are already offered in some form – as part of the beginning of the doctoral program or as part of other master's programs. As noted in the report, these new programs potentially provide the College with a tuition revenue stream with relatively little additional investment expenditure. Our review team suggests that the administration take a more expansive view of opportunity costs. One of the distinguishing features of Teachers College is the research portfolio - including the external funds flowing into the College along with the associated indirect costs. While new courses might not be needed to support some of these advanced master's programs or certificate courses, faculty time is used in advising these students. The use of summer salary support for faculty involvement in program development, advising, and support of these new programs is understandable. However, it may entice faculty away from pursuing external funds, especially in an environment where the probability of success in securing these external funds have become lower over time. The level of external funds is an important measure of institutional effectiveness and should be considered a central part of the general equilibrium outcome when investing faculty time in new programs. And many new programs do not

overlap with existing course work, which further exacerbates the workload debate. We also heard concerns that administrative tasks detract from the time available for research faculty to conduct scholarly work or participate in professional work in schools, and provide work for doctoral students, which may diminish their time for research.

Finally, a particular workload concern was in Ph.D. dissertation direction and mentoring.

Suggestion #9: Use Revenue from New Program Development to Help Fully Fund Ph.D. Students and Over Time Reduce the Size of the Ph.D. Programs by Admitting Only those Who are Fully Funded.

Of the 1332 doctoral students; about 60% are in Ed. D. programs, leaving about 400 Ph.D. students. We also note that Columbia University approves the faculty who can supervise Ph.D. dissertations, and that currently 50-60 faculty are approved for that work; the mentoring and advising role of those faculty is essential to training the next generation of scholars for the academy, and we encourage a careful look at how those students are being prepared to enter the academy. We encourage Teachers College faculty and administration to examine the students who are preparing for roles as researchers (as opposed to the practice doctorates) in terms of their research experiences, and their scholarly accomplishments while in graduate school.

Theory and Practice

The self-study, on-site interviews, conversations, and the document road map provide evidence that Teachers College Columbia University has integrated and synthesized theory and practice rooted in multi-disciplinary scholarship and an institutional culture of innovation.

From the alumni perspective the evidence demonstrates learner satisfaction measured against the College's core competencies. Graduates report high competence and effectiveness; however, applying theoretical knowledge to practice was cited as an area for improvement. This is an area in which all research intensive institutions struggle. Teachers College has committed professional staff members (including professors of practice) who also engage in relevant and appropriate scholarship. Tenured and pre-tenured faculty members are also engaged in work in the schools, especially faculty in teacher education programs. The clinics also help bridge the theory-practice gap in the health and professional psychology programs. Some courses are team taught with professionals. Some full time faculty teach in K-12 schools on occasion. Full time faculty are engaged in the clinics. All these endeavors bridge theory and practice. Another important part of the theory to practice continuum is assisting new teachers as they begin their professions.

Suggestion #10: Develop a Plan for Induction and Support of New Teachers.

A plan for induction and support of new teachers is essential to graduates' success and we encourage this work, even knowing how daunting and expensive it is. The faculty in teacher education programs, with leadership from the Office of Teacher Education, is beginning to think about how to support graduates once they have begun to teach. We believe that this effort is important. Likewise, the communication across teacher education faculty housed in different departments needs nurturing so that the questions that are central to improving practice can be systematically and collaboratively researched. We applaud the nascent efforts underway to do this work.

Faculty Use of Feedback and Curricula Review

The faculty's commitment to the academic programs and the thorough review of curriculums at the institutional, Faculty Executive Committee, and program level is commendable. We would expect as faculty use the data more often to revise their curriculums, learn about their students' successes, track graduates over time, the focus of surveys might change. We are encouraged that the Office of Institutional Studies is receiving requests from faculty and chairs for help designing surveys that can answer these kinds of questions.

Suggestion #11: The OIS Should Track Requests Received from Faculty and Chairs and Develop New Broad Strategies for Survey Design Based on These Requests.

We hope that the Office will track these requests so as to see their progress in achieving their goal of meeting the needs of faculty for information about their programs and students, and can report back regularly to the administration and the faculty progress toward this goal.

Post Master's Programs

It is clear that the market, in an historical moment of job insecurity, will continue to require graduates to hold credentials that indicate they have the competencies needed for practice. In many ways much of the self-study is focused on program innovation:

Suggestion #12: Continue to Innovate around Post Master's Programs and Monitor how Changes Affect Faculty Composition Needed to Service these Programs.

The movement towards credential-based programs and certificates could, at times, be in conflict with faculty-driven decision-making, and faculty responsibility for the curriculum. It is however, a reality that will need to be faced. This will also have implications for faculty staffing since professionals in the credentialed field will be needed. Teachers College has begun to address this need through its differentiated staffing and the redesigned role of professors of practice. Teachers College has built the infrastructure to support noncredit program innovation

and incentives are critical. Housing program development and redesign in the Provost's Office indicates non-degree programs and non-credit courses are an institutional priority.

Suggestion #13: Continue to Recognize that All Who Are Involved in Entrepreneurial Work should be Rewarded

Participation by all in the College, academic units, and participating faculty (including tenured and tenure stream) ensures cooperation toward common goals rather than competition. The approach taken by the College integrates faculty participation and the revenue generated into programmatic decision-making, rather than marginalizing it as an ancillary income stream. The model should address an overhead recovery percentage retained by the College to build an on-going investment fund for future program and curriculum development. Scaling compensation to enrollment also will build sustainability.

Teachers College is also re-envisioning and broadening its view of instructional capacity. As the Faculty Executive Committee and administrative staff work through implementation, careful attention should be paid to instructional mode of delivery, class size, course calendar, class enrollment, and external standards. Variation in academic rank and institutional expectations for research and engagement are other considerations. Drawing upon doctoral candidates and professional staff to teach is a creative approach but may have unintended consequences and should be monitored.   Whether teaching in noncredit or credit courses, affiliated instructors should be integrated with the academic unit responsible to prevent either the instructor or the noncredit format from being marginalized. A positive precedent has been set in graduate credit certificate programs.

Suggestion #14: As the College Builds Differentiated Faculty Roles, Ensure that Each Role has a Career Ladder, Clearly Defined and Appropriate Roles, Responsibilities, and Rewards.

As the faculty composition changes it is important that all members of the Teachers College community understand the unique contribution made by tenured/tenure stream faculty, full time professors of practice and lecturers, and full time professional staff.   The Human Resources Division should be involved in any changes needed in descriptions of these roles and responsibilities. Teachers College administration and FEC should review the processes for assigning and reviewing the roles, responsibilities, and rewards for faculty who are tenure/tenure track, the professors of practice, and lecturers, instructors, and adjuncts, and develop a process for reviewing expectations for each faculty role on a regular basis.

Digital Learning

Teachers College has made the technical and human resource investments to strengthen and focus its digital learning including a $2.0 million investment in technology.

Suggestion #15: Continue to Monitor how Digital Learning Fits with the Mission and Goals of Teachers College, Intersects with its Current Students, and Preserves the College's Reputation and Brand.

One key question is whether digital initiatives will be used to serve existing student audiences or to expand a national or global footprint, or both. For example, hybrid courses and online space for shared inquiry such as chat rooms can add to the campus experience. If the decision is to build an international audience beyond campus and other physical locations, a different set of challenges emerge. As with post-master's education in general, the College is entering a competitive market at a mature stage in the life cycle of digital learning. State and federal regulatory mandates, including state authorization for distance learning and employability metrics, further complicate the environment. The protocols are in place to address compliance and regulatory concerns. It was encouraging to see that the Career Services Office is already considering how they can provide services in an on-line way.

The College seems to be in an evaluative stage regarding the place and form of digital learning. Additional evidence through field-based research might clarify the direction. Two sections of the same course–one offered as a hybrid and one exclusively face -to -face –have been assessed against defined competencies and satisfaction measures. A similar comparison could be made between the same degree program delivered in an online compared with face-to-face mode. The role of partners like those identified as part of the Global Competency Certificate, consortia of peer institutions, and corporate sponsored activity all require more analysis. Digital learning is capital intensive and might still be viewed with some concern among research faculty – certainly a consideration at Teachers College.

Suggestion #16: Engage in Extensive Evaluation and Comparison of Programs Offered through Different Delivery Methods.

Teachers College should cultivate strategies to mine its extensive assessment data from faculty reviews and alumni surveys to improve its educational programs. Consider differences in the experience and career paths between graduates of professional compared with graduate (research) programs, cultivating alumni to view Teachers College as their preferred partner for continuous professional development and lifelong learning, and involving alumni as advisors for new and refined program and curriculum development. Faculty and administrators should collaboratively develop a plan for using data from assessments to systematically and continuously improve the curriculum to achieve student-learning objectives; the College should monitor success over time in this endeavor.

Standard 14 – Assessment of Student Learning

Assessment of Student Learning demonstrates that, at graduation, or other appropriate points, the institution's students have knowledge, skills, and competencies consistent with institutional and appropriate higher education goals.

In the team's judgment, Teachers College appears to meet this standard.

Summary of Evidence and Findings:

The self-study narrates program improvements on pages 70-74. Appendix 3F (pp. 89-93) also displays program-by-program efforts to use assessment results as the basis for program changes. The self-study categorizes program changes into five areas: mission, curriculum, learning environment, resources, and a catchall group entitled, "certificates, digital learning, and study abroad." The narrative documents a comprehensive range of recent and planned changes in all five areas. The narrative mentions that five of the 18 participating programs have started or are planning curriculum changes and eight of the programs have made changes to advising, career planning, and/or online education offerings.

During the site visit, faculty told us that learning assessment had become part of the "fabric of the institution." Department chairs and members of the Student Learning Outcomes Advisory committee provided many examples of how results of learning assessment had contributed to important changes in the academic programs. The Statistics faculty developed rubrics for experimental design to uniformly judge the quality of student materials. Responding to the results of these assessments, they added more content on experimental design to courses. Applied Statistics faculty used a rubric to measure improvement in the ability of doctoral students to write for a non-technical audience. Education Policy members learned that students need more feedback on writing to improve their skills. The Educational Leadership program raised key questions about how the work environment has changed for school principals. They have developed proposed adjustments to the delivery and sequencing of courses for the Summer Principals Academy to respond to these questions. Neuroscience faculty differentiated the curriculum into two paths, after finding that some students need more basic science courses and other students needed more advanced science courses. Psychology faculty are in the process of completely revamping their multicultural course, based on student and faculty feedback.

Assessment Reporting and Goal Setting

Teachers College has an organized and sustained process for assessing student learning. This process follows the principles of good practice in assessment developed by the American Association for Higher Education (AAHE), involves academic leadership at the highest levels,

and engages faculty, students, and administrators across the institution. The Provost leads the Student Learning Outcomes Assessment (SLOA) Advisory Committee. The advisory committee determines the overall strategy for learning assessment, coordinates efforts across the College, and reviews assessment documents and reports. Program learning goals are defined for each of five College-wide competency areas and then mapped to learning opportunities in specific courses. New faculty members learn about assessment in orientation and from their mentors. Learning goals are required on course syllabi, as specified by the Faculty Executive Committee.

The Office of Accreditation and Assessment (OAA) coordinates the College's compliance with national, professional, and institutional standards for assessment. OAA was established in 2005 and currently has four staff positions. The Office of Teacher Education, Office of Institutional Studies, and Office of Career Services also contribute to the assessment effort. The assessment plan calls for consolidating institutional surveys under the Office of Institutional Studies, in part to reduce the amount of survey fatigue among various respondent communities.

The self-study documents the extensive use of College-wide surveys that provide assessment data at each key point in the student lifecycle. This survey research program provides information on college choice, student orientation, student satisfaction, residence life, information technology, financial aid, academic advising, career services, and alumni. Student satisfaction surveys have been conducted annually for 14 years. Exit surveys are conducted annually for masters and doctoral students in all programs. Results from three placement surveys of recent graduates are available on the Office of Institutional Studies web site. Graduates are highly satisfied with their education at Teachers College. More than 90% of 2014 graduates believe Teachers College prepared them either "adequately" or "very well" for their career. Over 50% of students in the Ed.D. program have either accepted a job offer or are continuing the position they held while completing their graduate program. Approximately 40% of Ed.D. students were still searching for a job at the time of the survey. Appendix 3F of the self-study outlines changes to each academic program in response to student and alumni feedback.

The self-study provides additional indirect evidence of student learning outcomes based on the current employment status of alumni (Chart 3.20, p. 65), relationship between current job and program of study (Chart 3.22, p. 67), and preparedness for current job (Chart 3.23, p. 69). These outcomes were notably variable across programs (which were specifically named in these charts). The self-study did not comment on what constituted a satisfactory or unsatisfactory level of attainment in the employment-related outcomes.

The self-study described program-by-program response rates on the alumni survey (Appendix 3A, p. 77). Response rates ranged from a low of 13% for the Art and Art Education program to a high of 64% for Sociology and Education. The number of responses varied from n=4 for the Curriculum and Teaching program to a high of n=102 for the Organizational Psychology

program. A minimum n of 10 was used for the presentation of results: this eliminated two programs from reporting (Curriculum and Teaching and Urban Education Leaders Program).

Charts 3.10 through 3.19 show means of self-report data program-by-program and competency-by-competency. The means appear on four point scales where 1.0 has the anchor "low" and 4.0 has the anchor "high." The programs are labeled one through 16, but the program labeling does not persist consistently across all the charts (i.e., Program 1 in Chart 3.10 is probably not Program 1 in Chart 3.11). For each high level competency queried (e.g., recognizing social problems or inequalities), three different constructs appear: the perceived importance of the attribute, the perceived competence possessed by the respondent, and the effectiveness with which the program of study supported acquisition of the competency. The self-study does not comment on what scale-level divides a satisfactory result from an unsatisfactory one, and there is no information in the charts on variability (e.g., standard deviations). Across virtually all attributes and all programs, importance has the highest mean, competence is in the middle, and effectiveness has the lowest mean. The self-study does not comment on this specific finding, but does summarize strengths and opportunities for improvement In Table 3.2 (p. 63).

While building upon the strengths of the data collections described above, the College might benefit from more systematic analysis and use of evidence concerning program performance. This leads to the following suggestion:

Suggestion #17: Benchmark Levels of Performance and Improve the Presentation of Results.

Results from alumni surveys show a range of outcomes across programs and between the importance and effectiveness of particular measures for any given program (e.g. student ability to use current theories or research in your field)*. These differences may be a matter of some concern, or may not, depending upon the specific anchors used in the survey items, the representativeness of the samples, the sample sizes, the standard errors, and other aspects of a survey. The degree to which results from instruments such as the alumni survey are actionable to program faculty depends substantially on whether the faculty can draw firm conclusions about a program's standard on a given construct. Appropriate modifications to instruments, analysis, and reporting could improve the interpretability and usefulness of results.

Reports of the alumni survey in the self-study suggest that opportunities may exist to improve both the measurement of student learning outcomes and the communication of meaningful results to stakeholders. For example, as the Office of Accreditation and Assessment builds up a body of longitudinal results, it ought to be possible for each program to review trends and set goals for subsequent time periods. These goals could be referenced to historical trends for each program or be based on external standards (e.g., licensure pass rates). Each program could

consider student expectations and market conditions in setting program level placement goals for future graduating classes. Having specific improvement goals may help to focus faculty and staff attention on particular program characteristics and processes.

Process Consistency Among Programs

At an institutional level the methods and processes for undertaking student learning assessment are systematic and well documented. Appendix 3E indicates that the academic programs use multiple methods to assess student learning, including a mix of direct examination of student work (course assignments, term papers, test reviews, research projects, clinical interviews, student presentations) and indirect measures from student surveys and teaching evaluations. All programs have access to program-level student satisfaction data, course evaluations, faculty evaluations, employment outcomes, and alumni data.

Because the self-study does not contain detailed program-by-program data on assessment processes, however, it is difficult to judge the extent to which programs use similar or dissimilar processes in organizing, processing, and acting upon these and other assessment data sources. Discussions during the site visit suggest that programs use dissimilar processes as a result of local differences in program goals, faculty experience levels, and student needs. The Office of Accreditation and Assessment meets with each program at least twice a year and provides templates and process suggestions, but does not try to force compliance with a single rigid process. Each department has designated responsibility for learning assessment to a faculty member who is often a tenured/tenure track professor. This approach was a distinct and purposeful shift from the approach used ten years ago when lecturers were responsible for learning assessment during NCATE accreditation.

The table in Appendix 3F suggests meaningful differences in the extent to which individual programs make use of assessment results. Neither the narrative nor the table provides details on how specific forms of feedback on student learning outcomes have driven program changes. While the need to tailor student learning outcomes to specific academic programs is self-evident, the methods that each program uses to implement the four-step cycle of assessment could benefit from additional consistency, simplicity, and standardization. This leads to the following suggestion:

Suggestion #18: Provide Stronger Process Templates to Programs.

Ideally, the Office of Accreditation and Assessment could offer both documentation *and* dashboards that describe, in a straightforward fashion, efficient methods by which each program could implement its student learning assessment cycle. Through its control of key data sources, such as the alumni survey, the Office of Accreditation and Assessment could provide a variety of nudges at different points in the planning process to encourage programs to fit their

methods to the process template. For both CAEP and Middle States accreditation, this strategy would have the potential of meaningfully reducing the amount of work needed both within programs and centrally to implement and document the assessment cycle.

In a similar vein, the contents of the Self Study and the Office of Accreditation and Assessment website suggested that the College may need to strengthen the linkage between student learning assessment results and proposals to make specific changes in some programs. A more standardized set of methods for making use of assessment results and integrating them into program planning activities could be beneficial.

Communication About Assessment

As noted elsewhere, students in all programs at Teachers College receive instruction and are asked to demonstrate achievement in five competency areas. These competency areas also appear on the institution's public Office of Accreditation and Assessment website (e.g., http://www.tc.columbia.edu/oaa/assessment-/student-learning/). Based on feedback during the site visit, students view these competency areas as core strengths of the institution and key elements in their decision to enroll in graduate programs at Teachers College.

All of the programs have these granular student learning outcomes, with between two and six outcomes for each of the high level areas. For the sake of brevity, the self-study did not contain a complete catalog of these granular, program-level outcomes, but a private site (made available to the team) of the Office of Accreditation and Assessment lists student outcomes for each program. Alongside each set of program-level outcomes, this site also shows the courses in which students may achieve those learning outcomes (i.e., curriculum mapping). The site does not show the connection between program level learning outcomes and specific assessment techniques. Appendix 3E (pp. 87-88 of self study) shows the range of types of assessments used by each program but does not connect them to specific competency areas. (Note that page 55 of the self-study incorrectly refers to this as Appendix 3F.)

The site team reviewed both the private assessment site and a substantial sample of program and departmental websites. There is useful information in the private assessment site (e.g., the mapping between program level outcomes and the five high level areas promulgated by Teacher's College) that could beneficially be shared out to a wider community. Faculty members would benefit by having more convenient and frequent access to some of this assessment material, leading to the following suggestion:

Suggestion #19: Publicize More Elements of Assessment Goals, Processes, and Outcomes and Share Results with a Wider Group of Stakeholders.

The College made an important commitment to disclose results as part of the assessment plan for 2016 to 2020. A reasonable next step would be to develop a consensus about how and when it is appropriate to share results for individual programs, both to help programs learn more about how to do assessment and to celebrate their progress. Current students might provide more sophisticated feedback to program coordinators, chairs, and faculty, if armed with a more complete understanding of assessment processes and goals. Finally, prospective students might be drawn to particular programs if they better understood the learning goals that faculty members have articulated for a program of interest.

The self-study provides ample evidence that the College shares student learning assessment results with program faculty and other relevant stakeholders. The self-study itself was shared with the College community. Alumni survey findings, as outlined above, appeared on the website of the Office of Accreditation and Assessment. The self-study notes that few individual programs made follow-up requests for data following publication of survey results; the self-study interprets this as an indicator that the distribution of results did not generate the expected level of interest among program faculty (p. 31). In response, the Design and Program Review Group modified the methods of distributing results to help stakeholders to make sense of and use results to stimulate program modifications. In the future, this will hopefully lead to more robust, widespread, and systematic use of assessment results.

VI. Conclusion

The team again thanks and commends Teachers College for putting together a detailed self-study document, investing seriously in the accreditation process, and working collaboratively with us to organize a well-designed site visit schedule. We hope that the institution will be open to the ideas contained in our team report, all of which are offered in the spirit of collegiality and peer review.   As a reminder, the next steps in the evaluation process are as follows:

Teachers College has an opportunity to suggest changes if there are factual errors in the team report.   The institution must send to the chair, within 10 business days after receipt of the draft team report, its suggested corrections to errors of fact or ambiguous statements.   If the institution does not provide a written response to the chair within the 10 day period, the chair may use the draft without changes. While the chair will seriously consider all proposed corrections of factual errors, the final determination of the content of the team report rests with the chair.

The final team report is then uploaded to the Commission's portal. Teachers College is then given an opportunity to submit a thoughtful written response to the team report before the Commission acts on the report.   If Teachers College has no major disagreement with the overall

report, the response can simply state that they accept the report as written. The response should be submitted in the form of a letter addressed to the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, in care of the President.

The team chair submits a confidential brief to the Commission, summarizing the team report and conveying the team's proposal for accreditation action.

The Commission Staff and the Commission's Committee on Evaluation Reports carefully review the self-study document, the evaluation team report, your institution's formal response, and the chair's brief to formulate a proposed action to the Commission.

The full commission, after considering information gained in the preceding steps, takes formal action and notifies Teachers College.