

## SUMMARY CERTIFICATION REPORT

Institution Name: Teachers College, Columbia University (NY)

Team Chair: Dr. Alan Mathios, Dean of College of Human Ecology  
Cornell University  
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New York University-Steinhardt

Generalist Evaluators: Dr. Charles Caramello, Associate Provost and Dean  
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Documentation Review: November 12-13, 2015

### **Summary Overview**

- The documents examined demonstrate compliance with the applicable standards and indicate the presence of a robust program of planning and assessment targeted to ongoing advancement of the Teachers College (TC) mission.
- The Documentation Roadmap and Self-Study Overview is well conceived and executed—a clear and thorough guide through the electronic documents with links to each and PDFs of each. The documents are complete, well organized, and thoughtfully presented. Documents on the TC website are well designed. TC should be commended for this phase of its decennial review.
- Dr. Alexandra Gribovskaya (the TC liaison with the generalist evaluators) and her staff were very helpful throughout the review process—promptly responding to queries and providing additional information when requested.

### **Standard 1: Mission and Goals**

YES, the documentation demonstrates compliance with this standard.

#### Comments/Explanation:

- The Charter of 1889 established TC as “a purely professional school . . . to give instruction in the history, philosophy and science of education, in psychology, in the science and art of teaching.” TC has hewn to those basic principles while evolving to meet the demands of the times. Its current Mission statement indicates “four core areas of expertise: health, education, leadership, and psychology,” and identifies TC’s leadership roles as lying in development and application of educational policy.

- The current President’s vision aligns with the Charter and Mission statement, while also emphasizing linkage between research and practitioner education, commitment to the Harlem community, and international engagement.
- TC’s Assessment Plan for Institutional Effectiveness lays out Primary and Subsidiary Goals, together with major Unit Missions and Goals and an Assessment Process. The goals align with and advance the stated Mission.
- Departmental mission statements align with and add specificity to the overall Mission.
- Full engagement of the campus community in developing the mission and goals is documented.

**Standard 2: Planning, Resource Allocation and Institutional Renewal (also addressed in Self-Study)**

YES, the documentation demonstrates compliance with this standard.

Comments/Explanation:

- TC has a formal planning/assessment process that differentiates between non-academic and academic areas (Institute Plan for Assessment of Institutional Effectiveness and Institute Plan of Student Learning Outcomes). The process entails Presidential goal setting in June/July and related Vice President goal setting in August. Individual units also set goals in this context. The President reports progress on goals at the final Board meeting of the fiscal year.
- Planning and assessment documents indicate that TC’s financial planning and budgeting process aligns with its mission, goals, and plan, and addresses resource acquisition and allocation.
- There are facilities and technology financial plans.
- TC is in the latter stage of a Capital Campaign, whose progress is reported to the board.
- Two quality improvement reports (Financial Aid and Registrar) were conducted by an external consultant and provided with the documentation.

**Standard 3: Institutional Resources**

Yes, the documentation demonstrates compliance with this standard.

Comments/Explanation:

- As noted above, the financial planning and budgeting process aligns with TC’s mission, goals, and plan, and addresses resource acquisition and allocation. The Committee on Business and Finance of the Board of Trustees of TC reviews and monitors the budget, and presents it to the full Board for approval each spring, as evidenced by Board minutes.
- As noted above, there are facilities and technology financial plans.
- As noted above, TC is in the latter stage of a Capital Campaign, whose progress is reported to the Board.
- TC initiated an Enterprise Risk Management process in 2011, and assesses risk management progress annually, as evidenced by reports provided.

- An international accounting firm performs annual independent financial audits; opinions have been unqualified for the past 4 years

**Standard 4: Leadership and Governance**

YES, the documentation demonstrates compliance with this standard.

Comments/Explanation:

- Written governing documents—Trustee By-laws, Faculty Handbook, Student Senate Constitution, and Professional Staff Assembly By-Laws—delineate trustee, officer, faculty, and student roles and responsibilities.
- Policies and procedures are codified in writing and widely available through TC’s website.
- A written Conflict of Interest Policy for trustees, officers, and specified individuals requires annual disclosure.
- There is a Board of Trustees orientation handbook.
- The Board of Trustees Compensation Committee conducts an annual assessment of effectiveness of institutional leadership.
- Campaign progress reports assist the Board assist in identifying and generating resources needed to sustain and improve the College.
- Board minutes indicate an active governing body with sufficient autonomy.

**Standard 5: Administration**

YES, the documentation demonstrates compliance with this standard.

Comments/Explanation:

- TC has an appropriately credentialed chief executive whose primary responsibilities are to lead the College toward achievement of its goals and to administer the College. These responsibilities are articulated in the Trustee Statutes/By-laws.
- Senior staff qualifications appear appropriate to TC’s mission, size, and complexity.
- Lines of college-level organization and authority are articulated in Trustee By-laws.
- TC has a pending initiative to leverage technology for building innovative academic programs. There is no evidence of deficiencies in administrative information systems.
- As previously indicated, a planning process provides for periodic assessment of the effectiveness of administrative structures and services. Each member of the senior leadership group provides progress reports annually to the Board of Trustees.

## **Standard 6: Integrity**

YES, the documentation demonstrates compliance with this standard.

### Comments/Explanation

- The TC Compliance Plan “takes into account the decentralized nature of the College” and “seeks to avoid the creation of new bureaucracy and redundancy of efforts.” It provides a college-wide framework for all compliance issues through a matrix of Compliance Areas, Responsible Senior Staff Members, and Primarily Responsible Staff Members.
- The Policy Library provides a single location for current versions of policies, updated on an ongoing basis. It is thorough and user friendly, as are the Policy on Policies, Grievance Procedures, and Human Resources Policies.
- TC’s commitment to Academic Freedom and relevant guidelines are specified in three separate policy documents. Policies on conflict of interest and commitment are clear and thorough, as are policies on intellectual property and affirmative action.
- TC maintains an appropriately structured and apparently well functioning Institutional Review Board. The webpage Consumer Information and Important Policies for Students provides an extensive list of links to relevant information, and the webpage TC at a Glance gives student demographics along several axes.
- Overall, TC has clear and thorough policies, guidelines, and procedures that are widely disseminated, easy to locate and use, and reflective of a culture that places a high value on integrity.

## **Standard 7: Institutional Assessment (addressed in Self-Study)**

## **Standard 8: Student Admissions and Retention**

YES, the documentation demonstrates compliance with this standard.

### Comments/Explanation:

- Admissions policies, documented on the website, reflect and support the mission of the college and assist prospective students in making informed decisions.
- The website also makes available to prospective and current students: information on college-wide assessment results; accurate and comprehensive information regarding cost of attendance and financial aid options; and policies and procedures regarding transfer credit established by the college.
- TC conducts ongoing assessment of student progress and success, captured through surveys, other student and teacher feedback, retention and graduation outcomes, and so on. TC’s use of data to revise its programs is the basis of its selected topics self-study.
- TC has a mature enrollment management plan and a written strategic plan to enhance enrollment management strategy, both consistent with advancing TC’s mission.

## **Standard 9: Student Support Services**

YES, the documentation demonstrates compliance with this standard.

### Comments/Explanation

- The Academic Catalogue and Student Handbook are thorough, clear, professional in presentation, and easy to locate and use. The Handbook provides students with an excellent overall guide, and the Student button on the TC homepage links to a well conceived and organized landing page.
- Student Affairs is a major division whose units each have a robust web presence and an assessment plan. Each unit provides an annual report.
- TC has well-developed policies and practices for student complaints and grievances and for protection of confidential student information. These include an Ombuds Office and clearly specified FERPA policies.
- Career Counseling is robust, with an excellent website providing extensive career development resources and thorough and transparent Graduate Survey Reports.
- TC appears to provide robust student advising. Advisement policy is given in the Faculty Handbook and on the Admissions Website; information on advisement is provided in program letters to admitted students; and students must be advised before registering for classes. Specific advising models differ by program. TC might want to create a central Student Advising page like its Career Counseling page—this is simply an observation, not a recommendation.
- Overall, TC has robust student support services consistent with its mission and goals and prominent and easy to find on its website.

## **Standard 10: Faculty**

YES, the documentation demonstrates compliance with this standard.

### Comments/Explanation

- TC recruits appropriately prepared and qualified faculty; provides appropriate institutional support for faculty development; assesses faculty quality; disseminates policies and practices regarding faculty affairs; and recognizes faculty achievements.
- TC recognizes, encourages, and rewards linkages between research/scholarship, teaching, and service.
- Faculty members complete an Annual Report Form that is qualitative as well as quantitative, asking for reflection as well as for information. This “best practice” well suits a college of education.
- Many TC policies and policy documents detail the roles and responsibilities of faculty, including policies and procedures for appointment, promotion, and tenure. The Faculty Handbook, organizing and elaborating on these, provides a thorough resource. TC might want to add a Faculty Handbook link to the Faculty dropdown menu on the homepage—this is simply an observation, not a recommendation.

- Although policies and procedures for appointment and reappointment of adjuncts, lecturers, and instructors are more decentralized than those for full-time faculty, the Professional and Instructional Appointment Handbooks specify the roles and responsibilities of these positions and provide a framework for appointment and reappointment.
- Overall, TC has thorough policies for faculty and disseminates them broadly.

**Standard 11: Educational Offerings (addressed in Self-Study)**

**Standard 12: General Education (not applicable to TC)**

**Standard 13: Related Educational Activities**

YES, the documentation demonstrates compliance with this standard.

- The documents and the extended commentary on them in the Roadmap indicate mission appropriate compliance with all fundamental elements regarding basic skills, non-credit offerings and certificate programs, additional locations, and distance learning.
- A graduate institution neither does nor should provide training in basic skills like that offered in an undergraduate institution. TC provides robust training programs in basic skills appropriate for graduate students: writing, information, and technology.
- A graduate institution neither does nor should provide credit for experiential learning in the way that an undergraduate institution does. As detailed in the Roadmap, degree requirements of TC's professional education programs include practical experience outside of classroom and university settings.
- Continuing Professional Studies offers a wide array of well-described non-credit offerings and certificate programs. An Approval Guide specifies that "academic departments are responsible for ensuring that new-non-credit courses are of high academic quality," and various documents provide thorough academic and administrative guidelines for certificates.
- TC maintains two additional locations. Documentation indicates that both are in compliance with MSCHE standards. The program and course approval guidelines for TC's main campus also apply in these locations, and the Substantive Change Proposal for the Summer Principals Academy in New Orleans describes the program as "identical to the program currently offered at [TC]."
- TC currently offers three distance-learning programs and intends to expand its offerings. The program and course approval guidelines for TC's main campus also apply to these programs. Student support programs, as outlined in the document, Resources for Students and Faculty, are appropriate and adequate.
- Overall, TC's related educational activities align with its mission and goals; meet its high academic standards; and provide appropriate and adequate support for students and faculty members alike.

**Standard 14: Assessment of Student Learning (addressed in Self-Study)**