FROM THE
OFFICE OF THE PROVOST

February 2013

MIDDLE STATES ACCREDITATION: Standard 14

This seventh and final installment of the Middle States Newsletter focuses on the activities of Working Group 6. Working Group 6 is co-chaired by Gwyneth Price, Associate Professor, Department of Middle and Secondary Education and Educational Leadership, and Elisabeth Joyce, Professor, Department of English and Liberal Studies. This Group examined Standard 14: Assessment of Student Learning to determine if Edinboro University met the key fundamental elements and broader intent of this standard.

As described in the Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education: Requirements of Affiliation and Standards for Accreditation (Middle States Commission on Higher Education, 2006), Standard 14, Assessment of Student Learning, focuses on whether “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 (p. xi).”

The Working Group reviewed the current state of student learning outcomes assessment (SLOA) at the university. It found that we, as an institution, have made consistent progress in the implementation of student learning outcomes assessment over the past several years, and its findings speak to the effort and commitment that academic departments have made to this fundamental practice. The Working Group’s report describes the SLOA process, the organizational structures supporting it, and the outcomes derived from it. This report drew the conclusion that this system “has been established in such a way as to ensure its sustainability and broad use across programs” and has not required extensive resources to do so.

As a result of the Group’s findings, two suggestions were made with regard to Standard 14:

- Once new general education student learning outcomes and goals are established, the SLOA Advisory Board will need to establish links between the SLOA process and these learning goals.
- Definite lines of communication and feedback from the University administration to departments and programs need to be established through the following steps:
- Creating a formal feedback channel for periodic PASSHE Program Reviews
- Clarifying lines of responsibility for all actors in the SLOA process
- Authorizing a single entity to direct the SLOA system

As this brief summary regarding Standard 14 indicates, Edinboro University has made noteworthy progress during the past several years to ensure that student learning outcomes assessment is part of the institutional culture and plays a central role in curricular improvement.

This concludes our series of newsletters highlighting the findings and accomplishments of the six Working Groups. A sincere thank you is extended to the co-chairs and to all the members of the working groups who participated extensively over these past years. You have made a difference.