



CONCLUSION



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The University recognized and embraced the principle that its decennial evaluation is intended to strengthen and sustain UMB as a pre-eminent institution of higher education worthy of the state's and public's confidence and investment. To that end, the University chose the Comprehensive Report Reordering the Standards design for its Self-Study to highlight its robust culture of planning and accreditation. This Self-Study design also allowed UMB to appraise every aspect of its programs and services, governing and supporting structures, resources, and educational outcomes in relation to the institution's mission and goals while simultaneously focusing on its strategic priorities. Further, the selected design allowed the University the best opportunity to address the standards in a manner that reflects the unique nature and culture of the institution.

The Steering Committee agreed on five themes for the Self-Study and elected to establish the working groups around these themes. To explore these themes, the working groups were assigned specific standards and research questions. The themes were Educational Innovation and Transformation; Research, Scholarship, and Entrepreneurship; Student Life, Career Development, and Support Services; Institutional Effectiveness; and Community Engagement. The major outcomes expected from the Self-Study were articulated as follows for each of the working groups: to engage in an inclusive and transparent self-appraisal process

that actively and deliberately seeks to involve members of the University community from every corner of the campus; to produce a Self-Study report that demonstrates compliance with the Middle States Commission on Higher Education accreditation standards; and to develop forward-looking recommendations to move the institution further along its quest for excellence in graduate and professional education, research, clinical care, and service for the public good.

The University recognized that community involvement was vital in the reaccreditation process and, therefore, allowed each of the working groups the latitude to fashion the method and approach by which it sought input and active participation from among the various constituents in the University community. At every step of the process, faculty, staff, and students were encouraged to stay informed about the Middle States process through frequent communications from the Office of the President and the Steering Committee; volunteer to participate in a working group; respond to surveys, focus groups, and questionnaires prepared by the working groups; provide feedback via the UMB Middle States website; and to attend town halls and other information sessions to become familiar with and offer feedback on the working group findings.

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After a comprehensive review of the fundamental elements associated with each of the standards, and after a careful examination and assessment of those elements in the context of the University's teaching, research, clinical care, and service missions, each of the five working groups concluded that the University was in full compliance with the standards assigned to the group. In addition, the working groups examined a combined total of 17 theme-based research questions and proposed six areas of focus for consideration under the University's next strategic plan. The themes in the proposed areas of focus included:

- enhancing faculty excellence and innovation in teaching, learning, and instructional design
- ensuring that UMB's academic offerings remain affordable and accessible to Maryland residents from a diverse range of ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds
- valuing non-traditional sources of research funding, research collaboration, and ethics and integrity in the University's appointment, promotion, and tenure policies
- enhancing career and professional development opportunities for students
- establishing institutional metrics to assess administrative and academic effectiveness in key strategic areas
- and institutionalizing the University's commitment to community engagement

One of the University's major objectives throughout this 2 ½-year self-appraisal was to create a "living document" that would inform and guide its strategic and other planning activities well after the Middle States evaluation team concluded its visit. The University believes that it has achieved this objective.