



Community College of Allegheny County
Achieving the Dream Newsletter
Focusing on Student Success

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Self-Study Update: Self Study Preparation Visit May 6, 2015

By Kevin Smay, Assistant Vice President of Strategic Planning

On May 6, CCAC hosted a self-study preparation visit from our Middle States Staff Liaison, Dr. Christy Faison. This visit is the first major milestone in the self-study process. The purpose of Dr. Faison's visit was to build college awareness of the self-study process with key stakeholders and to provide feedback on CCAC's draft self-study design document. Dr. Faison had a full and busy schedule of meetings with Dr. Bullock, faculty and staff serving on self-study working groups, students, the self-study steering committee, representatives of the board of trustees and the self-study co-chairs.

Overall, it was a successful visit. Dr. Faison was supportive of our self-study design and she was impressed by the turn-out for all of her meetings. The self-study steering committee will revise the self-study design to reflect the feedback we received and submit our final design to Middle States by June 30, 2015. The current draft of the design can be found on the [self-study page](#) of the CCAC website along with other details of the process, such as the self-study timeline.

The visit also allowed the steering committee to seek clarification on Middle States' expectations. One important item we learned is that **Middle States expects 100% compliance with annual program assessments**. Dr. Faison explained that since the standards have been in place for 15 years and CCAC will be one of the last institutions to be evaluated by the current set of standards, Middle States has set the bar very high and expects full compliance with all standards but especially Standard 14: Assessment of Student Learning.

The next major milestone will be a workshop for working group members following the August 11, 2015 all-college day. This workshop will provide the working group members with the information and training they will need to be effective members of self-study working groups.

ATD Coaches Visit CCAC

CCAC's Achieving the Dream coaches made their annual visit at the end of April. On Monday, April 27th, Mary Fifield, leadership coach, and Ronald Head, data coach, met with a number of people who are

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actively involved in student success interventions. On Tuesday the 28th, they met with CCAC leadership. The coaches support the continuation of successful interventions including Roadmap, Men of Merit, ALP and Flipped 080, and they encourage consideration of multiple placement test measures and strategies for closing achievement gaps.

The coaches also recognized that the only way for CCAC to achieve greater results is to address issues associated with the ATD principles of Broad Engagement and Culture of Evidence. They have recommended reconfiguring the ATD Core Team to include more campus and faculty representation and a deeper commitment from team members. The coaches also recommended re-instituting the Data Team which should have responsibility for sharing data and helping others interpret the results. These topics will be discussed at the June and July ATD meetings.

A Resource for Academic Success Strategies

In 2012, the ATD Committee purchased [StudentLingo](#), a package of on-demand video workshops covering a range of academic and student support topics. The top five workshops based on viewing frequency are:

1. Understanding and Avoiding Plagiarism
2. **What It Takes to Be a Successful Student**
3. Maximizing Your College Experience
4. Discover Your Learning Style
5. Study Tips and Note-Taking Strategies

Recently, the Registrar asked me to redesign a document titled “Strategies for Academic Success” as a resource for students who are struggling academically. The new [one-page flier](#) is a summary of the *What It Takes to Be a Successful Student* workshop and highlights essential services at CCAC. The file is posted to the [Student Engagement Tool Kit](#) and would be a good resource for Early Intervention, Orientation, a student success course, or a Blackboard site. Please consider adding this new document to your portfolio of helpful resources.

A Special Note of Thanks

I would like to acknowledge and thank the contributors to the spring newsletters for their willingness to share what they've learned about assessment and student learning.

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*Sincerely,
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