

Executive Summary

Teachers College was founded in 1887 to provide a new kind of schooling for the teachers of poor, immigrant children in New York City. It became affiliated with Columbia University in 1898, but remains a legally and financially independent institution with its own President and Board of Trustees. At present, Teachers College offers a variety of master's and doctoral graduate and professional programs in the areas of education, psychology, and health.

The mission of the College is to empower committed learners and leaders to build a smarter, healthier, more just and equitable world through multidisciplinary knowledge creation, policy engagement, and practice innovations across education, psychology and health. Teachers College's five Strategic Priorities were developed by the leadership of the College in consultation with students, faculty, staff, trustees, and other constituencies. The College's progress on each of the Priorities and Initiatives is highlighted in the Teachers College Self-Study Report to the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE). The Self-Study Report is organized by MSCHE standards. Below is a summary of each chapter of the Self-Study Report including key findings and recommendations.

Standard I: Mission and Goals

Teachers College is committed to fulfilling its mission to empower committed learners and leaders to build a smarter, healthier, more just and equitable world. The five Strategic Priorities form the basis for the goals and action plans documented in the TC Commitments, the Public Good Initiative, and the Advancing Community Together Initiative. Strategic Priorities are understood, advanced, and supported by the TC community. The Cabinet, all administrative units, and academic departments and programs regularly review and assess their progress toward achieving locally determined goals that advance the Strategic Priorities. The College engages in a cycle of continuous improvement that includes voices of all stakeholder groups and supports the College's ability to fulfill its mission.

Recommendations:

- Develop a communication strategy to present the metrics and data collected annually to a wider TC community in a timely and concise manner;
- Strengthen TC's ability to tell impact stories, including TC's impact on research, practice and policy, and on student lives.

Standard II: Ethics and Integrity

Teachers College has an extensive and comprehensive set of policies related to promoting a sense of community and belonging, disclosing and managing conflicts of interest, engaging in ethical communication, and filing grievances. The policies and procedures are routinely evaluated and revised as needed. The College demonstrates a strong commitment to ethics and integrity and to proactive continuous improvement of policies governing ethical behavior.

Recommendations:

- Enhance systems and internal controls for the major compliance areas and other risks facing the College;

- Establish policies and procedures for a periodic review and assessment of contractual agreements, including expiration, standards, creation and updating of contract templates.

Standard III: Design and Delivery of Student Learning Experience

Teachers College provides rigorous and coherent learning experiences across different programs and modalities. These experiences are designed and supported by highly qualified and engaged faculty. Students acquire and apply their research skills in a variety of curricular and extracurricular settings as well as in their post-graduation careers. The College recognizes the need for innovation and flexibility in order to maintain relevance in addressing current issues.

Recommendations:

- Ensure that innovation and flexibility are hallmarks of the student experience through providing opportunities for optimal course offerings and delivery methods, and signature student experiences across campus;
- Design and implement innovative noncredit professional studies offerings and online programs.

Standard IV: Student Support Services

Teachers College is committed to student retention, persistence, completion, and success through a coherent and effective support system. A number of improvements were implemented to academic policies and processes aimed at supporting student development, academic progress, and success. The College also introduced several technologies to enhance student services and significant changes have been made to facilitate timely ongoing communications among students and support services.

Recommendations:

- Support strategies and systems that enable the College to maintain its dynamic and talented student body from around the nation and the world;
- Improve financial aid programming to further increase transparency, clarity, equity and responsiveness to student needs;
- Deliver comprehensive and cohesive student-facing support services through a central physical space.

Standard V: Educational Effectiveness Assessment

Teachers College has policies and processes to engage in regular and systematic assessment of student learning and the educational effectiveness. Guided by the four institutional learning goals and their disciplinary and professional values, program faculty are continuously engaged in assessment of learning outcomes in all courses, educational activities, and degree programs. Course and programmatic improvements based on the assessment results directly impact teaching and learning, faculty professional development, and student support services.

Recommendations:

- Continue to implement the recommendations of the Taskforce on Learning Goals and Assessment. In doing so, all degree programs will have explicitly identified educational goals that are organized and published, regularly assessed, reviewed annually by the faculty, and addressed in the Annual Program Update.

Standard VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement

Teachers College's planning processes, resources, and structures are aligned with each other and sufficient to fulfill its mission and Strategic Priorities and to continuously assess its programs and services. The College's administrative structure and its inclusive budget development process are well-defined and demonstrate clear assignments of responsibility and accountability. The College manages its restricted and non-restricted funds effectively. Increased capital and facilities renewal projects have enhanced the campus environment. The College has made significant improvements in its research infrastructure.

Recommendations:

- Strengthen opportunities for staff onboarding, professional development, performance review, stretch goals and recognition of outstanding performance
- Continue to strengthen TC infrastructure to promote research funding through professional development, mentoring, and expanded administrative support;
- Promote digital innovation so that TC courses, research projects and programs are using the latest technologies and TC faculty and students are fully equipped to work and learn effectively in the evolving digital age; and
- Continue to assess and evaluate opportunities for revenue diversification and responsible and prudent fiscal management approaches to effectively control operating costs.

Standard VII: Governance, Leadership, and Administration

The College is committed to shared governance among faculty, administration, students, staff, and the Board of Trustees. The College's governing structure and processes are clearly defined and appropriate to its mission. The President and the Cabinet have sufficient experience and support to carry out their roles and work together to sustain and improve the institution.

Recommendations:

- Create more opportunities for communication and community building across roles and units of the College;
- Continue to implement a formalized approach to succession planning with documented guidance to ensure continuity of operations and a smooth transition upon employee turnover;
- Continue to refine the culture of assessment and continuous improvement, allowing for comprehensive and systematic assessments of all College's governance structures and processes;
- Use Annual Board of Trustees meetings to involve the Board and the College's senior leaders in formulating strategies to meet the challenges facing the College.