INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

SELF-STUDY DESIGN

Presented to the

MIDDLE STATES COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION

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International Institute for Restorative Practices Self-Study Design

As the International Institute for Restorative Practices (the IIRP) commences its Self-Study for reaccreditation, we are excited about this opportunity to learn more about our institution and to further enhance our culture of planning, assessment, and institutional renewal. Our Board of Trustees, faculty, administration, staff, and students will be learning and working in unison to understand how the Characteristics of Excellence and the IIRP's Strategic Plan will guide us in continuing to build a robust and enduring graduate school.

I. Institutional Overview

History

The IIRP, located in the historic district of downtown Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, is the world's first accredited graduate school specializing in restorative practices. At the heart of restorative practices is the understanding that human beings are instilled with the need to connect and grow with each other. The IIRP supports students and community leaders with the tools they need to transform relationships and effect change within their own lives, as well as within public and private K-12 educational institutions, public and private colleges and universities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and community-based organizations (CBOs). Through strong academic offerings combined with a real-life approach to education, the IIRP helps mend harm and makes resilient and meaningful relationships thrive. As the field of restorative practices grows and evolves, we are dedicated to always being on the forefront of exploring and testing new concepts, innovative approaches, and new methods.

The face of higher education is changing rapidly and dramatically around the world. The IIRP has designed its offerings and services to meet the needs of 21st century adult learners and professionals. All that the IIRP offers is mission-driven, rooted in everyday professional practice, and accessible from anywhere in the world through a wide range of flexible learning options.

We are dedicated to the study of building, sustaining, and restoring relationships and social networks, emotional well-being, and civic engagement through participatory learning and decision making. Our faculty and graduate students engage in reflection, scientific inquiry, and academic discussion, drawing on theory and their own professional practice and personal experience. Our entire institution is guided by the premise that people are happier, healthier, more productive, and more likely to make positive changes when we do things **with** them, rather than **to** them or **for** them. With roots in restorative justice, a way of looking at criminal justice that emphasizes repairing the harm done to people and relationships, restorative practices has the broader goal of proactively developing community, managing conflict, building relationships, and increasing social capital.

The establishment of the IIRP Graduate School was the culmination of decades of work in restorative practices by several leaders around the world, among them the IIRP's founders, Ted and Susan Wachtel. On June 23, 2011, the IIRP was accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE), and on June 23, 2016, the IIRP was reaffirmed for accreditation. Ted Wachtel served as the Graduate School's first president until his retirement. In

2015, Dr. John W. Bailie was inaugurated as the IIRP's second president. In 2022, Dr. Linda J. Kligman was named the third president of the IIRP and the first woman to assume this role.

Mission Statement and Institutional Goals

During the IIRP's strategic planning, we began a conversation around revising our mission statement. Based on an accumulation of feedback and collaboration with stakeholders, we decided to clarify our mission so that it could (a) be clearly understood and free of jargon, (b) be easily translatable for our many international and multilingual stakeholders, and (c) encompass our current needs and aspirations. In 2022, the IIRP Board of Trustees voted to approve our new mission statement: *"To strengthen relationships, support communities, influence social change, and broaden the field of restorative practices by partnering with practitioners, students, and scholars."*

Main Programs of Study

The IIRP offers two main programs of study, the Master of Science in Restorative Practices and the Graduate Certificate in Restorative Practices.

Master of Science in Restorative Practices

Graduate students at the IIRP are catalysts for change, putting what they have learned into practice in their own professional settings. The study of restorative practices draws from a range of disciplines, with the goal of understanding how to best address wrongdoing and conflict, support positive behavioral change, build social capital, educate, lead, and foster social change. Within the degree, students have the opportunity to concentrate in specific fields, as well as the option of completing research in this growing field. If a student's vision requires broader focus, the degree allows them to chart their own course with the support of a faculty advisor.

Graduate Certificate in Restorative Practices

This program helps students establish a firm understanding of how restorative practices works to distinguish themselves as a practitioner in their setting. This option is ideal for professionals who already have a degree or who are still deciding to pursue a Master of Science. Students may complete their certificate within a year, and all courses taken for the Certificate can be applied toward a Master of Science degree after completion.

Student Populations Served by the Institution

Since the last Self-Study in AY 2015-2016, the IIRP has seen significant growth in our entering cohort between AY 2016-2017 ($n = 89$) and AY 2019-2020 ($n = 127$) – a 43% increase. Through the COVID-19 pandemic, our entering cohort regressed back to our AY 2016-2017 value in 2022 ($n = 89$) (Table 1). This pattern is reflected a year later in our credit hours (Table 2) and unduplicated headcounts (Table 3). We saw a 71% increase in credit hours from AY 2016-2017 ($n = 1,179$) to AY 2020-2021 ($n = 2,013$). The number of credit hours dipped by 11.6% in AY 2021-2022 to 1,779. Similarly, we saw a 52% increase in our unduplicated headcount, from 191 in AY 2016-2017 to 291 in 2020-2021, followed by a slight decrease to 286 in AY 2021-2022.

We have also observed that our students are registering for more courses per year, from an average of 6.17 ($SD = 3.58$) credits per student in AY 2016-2017 to 6.99 ($SD = 4.16$) credits per student in AY 2021-2022, a 13% increase; this increase helps to explain the more pronounced growth for credit hours than for total students.

Following the pandemic, we expect a decrease in both unduplicated headcount and in credit hour registrations during Academic Year AY 2022-2023. Although we are on track to exceed AY 2016-2017 numbers by the end of the academic year, we have a decrease of 21% in credit hour registrations when compared to this time last year.

Table 1: Entering Cohort, Trend Data AY 2016-2017 – AY 2021-2022

Academic Year	Entering Cohort
AY 2016-2017	89
AY 2017-2018	108
AY 2018-2019	120
AY 2019-2020	127
AY 2020-2021	109
AY 2021-2022	89

Table 2: Credits by Term, Trend Data AY 2016-2017 – AY 2021-2022

Academic Year	Fall	Spring	Summer	Total	FTE*
AY 2016-2017	432	450	297	1,179	49.1
AY 2017-2018	438	426	336	1,200	50.0
AY 2018-2019	501	519	417	1,437	59.9
AY 2019-2020	618	582	618	1,818	75.8
AY 2020-2021	657	633	723	2,013	83.9
AY 2021-2022	609	678	492	1,779	74.1

* FTE (Full Time Equivalency) is calculated by dividing total credits by 24: the equivalent of a full year of full-time enrollment.

Table 3: Unduplicated Headcount, Trend Data AY 2016-2017 – AY 2021-2022

Academic Year	Unduplicated Headcount
AY 2016-2017	191
AY 2017-2018	222
AY 2018-2019	255
AY 2019-2020	277
AY 2020-2021	291
AY 2021-2022	286

During the Academic Year 2021-2022, the IIRP enrolled 286 students. Of these, most were female (73.3%); ages 40-49 years (30.4%); White (61.5%), and non-Pennsylvania United States residents (70.6%), with 8.0% being non-US citizens. The largest segment (35.7) came from careers in teaching. Of the 286 students, 46.9% were enrolled in the Master of Science in Restorative Practices, 39.9% in the Graduate Certificate in Restorative Practices, and 2.8% in both programs; 10.5% were not enrolled in a program while taking courses. Tables 4 through 8 present the trend data for gender, race/ethnicity, occupation, age, and residency between AY 2016-2017 and AY 2021-2022.

Table 4: Unduplicated Headcount by Gender, AY 2016-2017 – AY 2021-2022

Academic Year	AY 2016-2017	AY 2017-2018	AY 2018-2019	AY 2019-2020	AY 2020-2021	AY 2021-2022
Female	143 (74.9%)	161 (72.5%)	193 (75.7%)	205 (74.0%)	210 (72.2%)	210 (73.4%)
Male	48 (25.1%)	45 (20.3%)	42 (16.5%)	47 (17.0%)	58 (20.0%)	65 (22.7%)
Unknown	*	16 (7.2%)	20 (7.9%)	25 (9.0%)	23 (7.9%)	11 (3.9%)

* The IIRP did not begin reporting Unknown gender numbers until AY 2017-18. Before this, numbers reflected those reported to IPEDS, which does not allow for undisclosed/nonbinary gender data.

Table 5: Unduplicated Headcount by Race/Ethnicity, AY 2016-2017 – AY 2021-2022

Academic Year	AY 2016-2017	AY 2017-2018	AY 2018-2019	AY 2019-2020	AY 2020-2021	AY 2021-2022
Non-Resident Alien	25 (13.1%)	25 (9.8%)	30 (11.8%)	28 (10.1%)	30 (10.3%)	23 (8.0%)
Hispanic	2 (1.0%)	1 (0.4%)	2 (0.8%)	8 (2.9%)	9 (3.1%)	13 (4.6%)
American Indian	1 (0.5%)	1 (0.4%)	2 (0.8%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (0.7%)	1 (0.4%)
Asian	1 (0.5%)	1 (0.4%)	1 (0.4%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (0.7%)	2 (0.7%)
Black	21 (11.0%)	35 (13.7%)	33 (12.9%)	32 (11.6%)	42 (14.4%)	38 (13.3%)
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.4%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
White	104 (54.5%)	117 (45.9%)	151 (59.2%)	169 (61.0%)	169 (58.1%)	176 (61.5%)
Other	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Multiple Races	5 (2.6%)	6 (2.4%)	8 (3.1%)	6 (2.2%)	7 (2.4%)	7 (2.5%)
Unspecified	32 (16.8%)	36 (14.1%)	28 (11.0%)	33 (11.9%)	30 (10.3%)	26 (9.0%)

Table 6: Unduplicated Headcount by Occupation, AY 2016-2017 – AY 2021-2022

Academic Year	AY 2016-2017	AY 2017-2018	AY 2018-2019	AY 2019-2020	AY 2020-2021	AY 2021-2022
Conflict Resolution	11 (4.3%)	5 (2.0%)	6 (2.4%)	3 (1.1%)	4 (1.4%)	2 (0.7%)
Counselor	6 (2.4%)	7 (2.8%)	8 (3.1%)	4 (1.4%)	8 (2.8%)	2 (0.7%)
Criminal Justice	4 (1.6%)	5 (2.0%)	3 (1.2%)	4 (1.4%)	7 (2.4%)	7 (2.5%)
Executive Leadership	5 (2.0%)	8 (3.1%)	5 (2.0%)	3 (1.1%)	5 (1.7%)	2 (0.7%)
Human or Social Services	16 (6.3%)	12 (4.7%)	12 (4.7%)	13 (4.7%)	14 (4.8%)	7 (2.5%)
Lawyer / Legal Work	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.4%)	2 (0.7%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Other	61 (23.9%)	66 (25.9%)	62 (24.3%)	77 (27.8%)	88 (30.2%)	92 (32.2%)
Pastoral Work	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.4%)	1 (0.4%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.3%)	0 (0.0%)
School Administrator	27 (10.6%)	31 (12.2%)	37 (14.5%)	39 (14.1%)	53 (18.2%)	49 (17.1%)
School Counselor	18 (7.1%)	20 (7.8%)	23 (9.0%)	23 (8.3%)	20 (6.9%)	19 (6.6%)
Social Worker	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.4%)	2 (0.8%)	1 (0.4%)	1 (0.3%)	1 (0.4%)
Teacher	39 (15.3%)	64 (25.1%)	78 (30.6%)	108 (39.0%)	90 (30.9%)	102 (35.7%)
Youth Worker	4 (1.6%)	2 (0.8%)	17 (6.7%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (0.7%)	3 (1.1%)

Table 7: Unduplicated Headcount by Age, AY 2016-2017 – AY 2021-2022

Academic Year	AY 2016-2017	AY 2017-2018	AY 2018-2019	AY 2019-2020	AY 2020-2021	AY 2021-2022
Under 18	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
18-19	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
20-21	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (0.8%)	2 (0.7%)	2 (0.7%)	0 (0.0%)
22-24	5 (2.6%)	3 (1.2%)	6 (2.4%)	11 (4.0%)	10 (3.4%)	7 (2.5%)
25-29	24 (12.8%)	21 (8.2%)	24 (9.4%)	28 (10.1%)	35 (12.0%)	33 (11.5%)
30-34	22 (11.5%)	26 (10.2%)	30 (11.8%)	29 (10.5%)	34 (11.7%)	34 (11.9%)
35-39	22 (11.5%)	29 (11.4%)	32 (12.6%)	40 (14.4%)	33 (11.3%)	38 (13.3%)
40-49	52 (27.2%)	66 (25.9%)	77 (30.2%)	75 (27.1%)	87 (29.9%)	87 (30.4%)
50-64	52 (27.2%)	67 (26.3%)	78 (30.6%)	84 (30.3%)	80 (27.5%)	75 (26.2%)
65 and Over	9 (4.7%)	5 (2.0%)	5 (2.0%)	6 (2.2%)	9 (3.1%)	11 (3.9%)
Unknown	5 (2.6%)	5 (2.0%)	1 (0.4%)	2 (0.7%)	1 (0.3%)	1 (0.4%)

Table 8: Unduplicated Headcount by Residency, AY 2016-2017 – AY 2021-2022

Academic Year	AY 2016-2017	AY 2017-2018	AY 2018-2019	AY 2019-2020	AY 2020-2021	AY 2021-2022
PA Resident	34 (13.3%)	34 (15.3%)	57 (22.4%)	65 (23.5%)	63 (21.6%)	64 (22.4%)
Out of State	132 (51.8%)	165 (74.3%)	168 (65.9%)	187 (67.5%)	203 (69.8%)	202 (70.6%)
International	25 (9.8%)	23 (10.4%)	30 (11.8%)	25 (9.0%)	25 (8.6%)	20 (7.0%)

Employees and Institutional Culture

The IIRP employs 56 people institution-wide, including six full-time faculty. Appendix A presents the Spring 2023 Organizational Chart.

Our institutional culture is unique. We are guided by the principles of restorative practices – that is, the beliefs that human beings are instilled with the need to connect and grow with each other and that people are happier, healthier, more productive, and more likely to make positive changes when we do things **with** them, rather than **to** them or **for** them. These principles pervade our landscape.

As previously described, we are the world's first accredited graduate school dedicated to exploring restorative practices. Equally important is that we are the world's first institution of higher education intentionally designed from the ground up to model restorative practices. In practicing what we teach, we engage with our faculty, staff, and students to share practices that honor human dignity and focus on improving relationships, responsibility, and respect. Herein lies our uniqueness. When people spend time with us on our campus or online, they can feel what we are all about. Our relational approach is palpable. Our faculty and staff develop competencies in an environment of psychological safety, trust, and courage. Participatory learning and decision making drives our work, and collaboration and co-creation abound. We manage conflict in a healthy manner and solve problems together.

Our institutional culture has often been described as counter to the culture of higher education. By modeling restorative practices, we are tackling the "power paradox," which asserts that as people accumulate power, they become less empathetic and less engaging (Keltner, 2017). We resist this in principle and process. We believe that people in power must still be empathetic, must lead with transparency and humility, must empower colleagues, must foster collaboration, and must invite the engagement, voice, and influence of all within the institution. This intentional and explicit culture demonstrates restorative practices in action for our learners; in turn, they "shape the patterns that make up our families, neighborhoods, and workplaces, as well as the broader patterns of social organization that define societies" (Keltner, 2017).

Our institution's Basic Concepts (Figure 1) serves as the foundation for all our work, and we are dedicated to being at the forefront of new concepts, approaches, and methods for strengthening our culture.

Figure 1: IIRP Basic Concepts
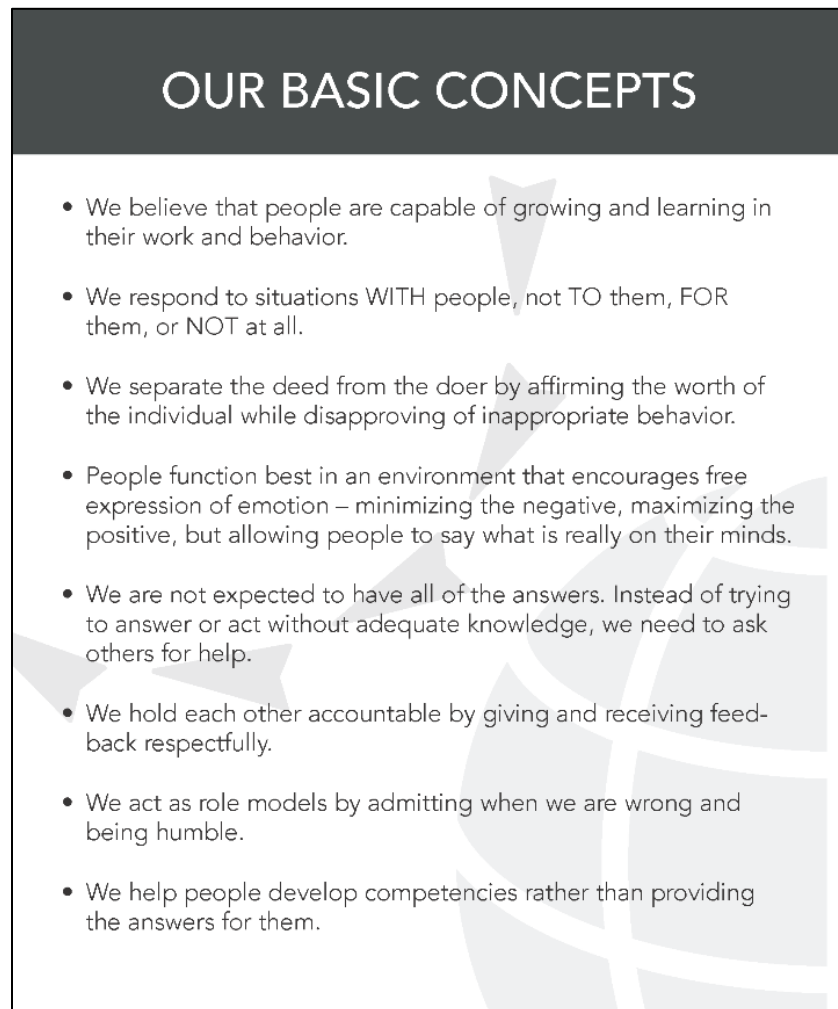
Leadership and Shared Governance

The IIRP is governed by the Committee of the Whole (COW), the IIRP's highest deliberative body. The COW is a form of direct democracy, made possible by the institution's small size, reflecting the IIRP's mission and commitment to shared governance. The COW is composed of the president, provost, all unit leaders, and full-time faculty (including the librarian). All faculty and staff are invited to attend and participate in COW meetings, which occur monthly.

The Board of Trustees has transitioned from a founder's board, has instituted term limits, and is expanding its membership. The trustees have recently revised their bylaws and have created four standing committees: Executive; Education; Finance and Audit; and Governance. Each of these committees consults with the appropriate institutional leaders, as necessary. The trustees are committed to their fiduciary duties while utilizing restorative practices as members of the IIRP community.

The principles and processes that uphold restorative practices are embedded within our personal performance, governance structures, policies, decision-making processes, and the trustee selection process, with defined reciprocal roles and responsibilities for students, staff, faculty, administration, and trustees. There are well-defined channels of communication between trustees and the president, and between trustees and faculty, staff, and administration. Policies and processes are evaluated regularly and updated as needed. Through regular assessment, we know that the president, Board of Trustees, and COW are performing their duties and working together effectively.

Strategic Plan

The IIRP's strategic plan, *International Institute for Restorative Practices 2025: Building Upon Our Foundation for Greater Impact* (International Institute for Restorative Practices [IIRP], n.d.) (Appendix B) is the result of a participatory process that involved stakeholders in designing a future that anchors the IIRP in the world of higher education. We contracted with CCI Consulting to guide us in a Three Horizons Model Strategic Planning process (Baghai et al., 1999), and their proven experience with interactive design was instrumental in teaching us to translate our strategy into an easy-to-communicate roadmap that links today's actions to long-term goals.

The plan includes four strategic goals, which will inform our Self-Study: (1) Education is to be transformational and influential; (2) Deliver consulting processes valued for organizational learning and adaptive change; (3) Create research initiatives that generate new knowledge and spur innovation; and (4) Our work culture explicitly models restorative practices.

The IIRP has adapted a multidimensional organizational model (Ackoff, 1999) (Figure 2). Multidimensional organizations assemble resources around their key outputs, which ties to our strategic goals, to emphasize the dynamic interactions supporting the mission. Figure 3 shows that, unlike hierarchical organizations, oversight of the IIRP is achieved by a collective body of leaders, which can be sourced from our existing governing functions.

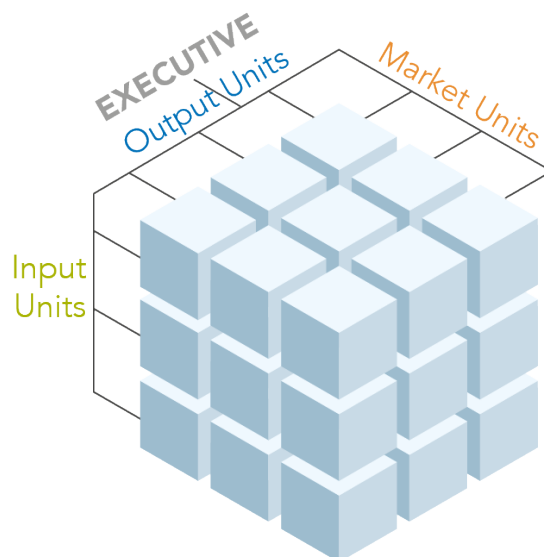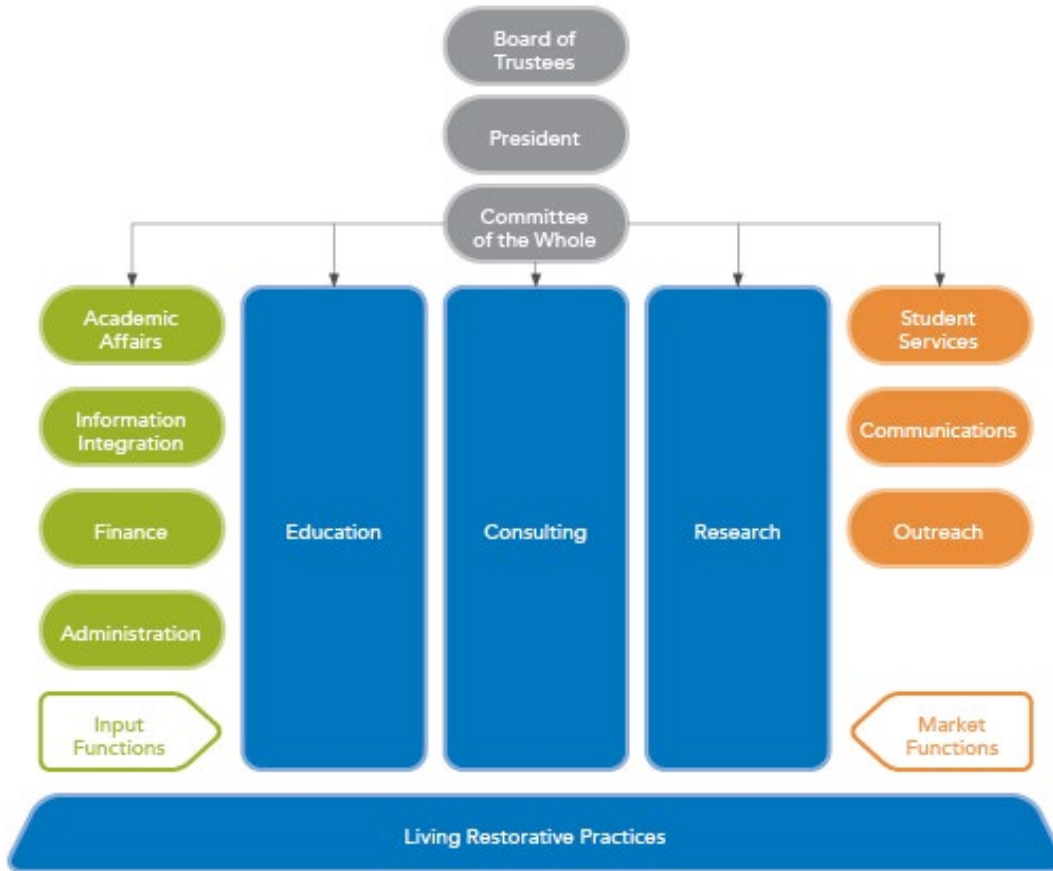*Figure 2: Multidimensional Organization (Ackoff, 1999, p. 228)*

Figure 3: The IIRP's Multidimensional Organizational Chart

Key Environmental Factors

In March 2020, our financial stability was tested when all our non-credit offerings were canceled amidst the global COVID-19 pandemic. Our reliance on these in-person, non-credit offerings to drive our revenue and feed the Graduate School as prerequisite experiences came to a standstill, and we shifted delivery of these experiences to the online learning modality already used in our graduate courses. Whereas most institutions of higher education were unprepared to deliver their courses online, the IIRP was already well-established in online education. Our existing infrastructure and processes allowed us to pivot quickly and seamlessly, which may have contributed to increased enrollment during the pandemic. While proud of our ability to quickly adapt to operating during the global pandemic, we were pained to make the difficult decision to lay off eight employees and reduce the hours of four additional administrative staff (27% of our employees at the time). However, we were able to retain all our faculty as graduate enrollment continued.

Beginning in 2021, a record number of workers in the United States left their jobs after reassessing their lives and what was important to them in a phenomenon known as "the Great Resignation" (Cohen, 2021). This has prompted an increase in people seeking to reskill, upskill,

or change their career paths to better meet their needs and interests, and the IIRP has had to rehire staff and recruit key leadership in this environment. At the same time, the global economy has been poor, characterized by rapid inflation and increasing debt, and people must make difficult choices with less disposable income. The confluence of these factors is leading people to question the return on investment of higher education, particularly degree programs, and seek quicker and cheaper paths to jobs with good salaries (e.g., certificates, apprenticeships). Adult learners are our key student recruitment target area, and most IIRP students maintain family and job responsibilities while completing coursework. Adult learners, maybe more so than typical undergraduate students, are impacted by the economy, which may jeopardize their ability to pursue and persist in academic study.

Since our last Self-Study, we have seen growing societal divisions and racialized violence, more extreme ideology, and a trend toward people existing in their own echo chambers. Social movements have taken center stage and calls for justice, healing, and unification have been abundant. Additionally, the Great Resignation generated an increased demand for more flexible working conditions, more inclusive work settings, and development of soft skills, such as communication, empathy, and conflict management. Restorative practices is designed to address these salient environmental factors, and the IIRP is positioned as a leader in the field of restorative practices, engaging learners in the study of relationships and community and preparing them to influence real change in their communities.

We are proud to have successfully navigated the unprecedented impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, we must continue to think creatively and boldly and draw upon our strengths and opportunities to be successful in the long run.

Financial Health

The IIRP currently stands in a strong financial position. Following the initial dip in income due to the pandemic, annual revenue from continuing education has steadily increased. Aligning to our strategic plan, we've used annual surpluses to direct investments toward programmatic development and re-staffing, while being diligent to ensure retained earnings provide a year's worth of operating reserves. Our short-term liquidity, measured by a Quick Ratio, is over 168. With the assistance of the new Finance and Audit Committee, our investment policy ensures our funds are secured, monitored, and generate reasonable returns.

II. Institutional Priorities to Be Addressed in the Self-Study

We used a four-step participatory process to identify and define Institutional Priorities to be addressed in the Self-Study. This process reflects the IIRP's commitment to model restorative practices in our own behaviors. In our experience, this encourages a diversity of voices, ideas, thoughts, and opinions, resulting in more comprehensive, balanced, and considered input and feedback, as well as typically high levels of staff support for the decisions that are made.

As the first step to defining our Institutional Priorities, the Steering Committee reviewed the IIRP's mission. Using a sequential circle process to give everyone a chance to speak freely, members of the Steering Committee shared their thoughts on the following key questions:

- What aspects of our mission are particularly salient at this point in the IIRP's history?

- As we endeavor to achieve our mission, what are the opportunities for improvement and innovation?

- What mission-related challenges and opportunities are appropriate for Self-Study review?

Second, we solicited input from a wide range of IIRP stakeholders during a regular meeting of the COW. Using a non-sequential circle process, COW attendees provided input on the previously stated key questions.

Third, the Self-Study Co-Chairs used a qualitative data analysis approach to organize the pool of information collected from the Steering Committee and COW meetings. After coding the information and organizing it into topics, the Co-Chairs consulted again with the Steering Committee and refined their notes based on the feedback received.

Fourth, all IIRP faculty, staff, students, and trustees were invited to review and offer feedback on the Institutional Priorities via a Qualtrics Survey. In the survey, stakeholders were invited to read each Institutional Priority and then respond to the following question:

- Thinking about the future of the IIRP, what changes, if any, would you make to this Institutional Priority?

We have selected three Institutional Priorities to be addressed in the MSCHE Self-Study. Tables 9 and 10 show the alignment between the chosen Institutional Priorities and IIRP Strategic Plan Elements and MSCHE Standards, respectively.

The intent of our Institutional Priorities is best considered in the context of the uniqueness of the IIRP and our institutional culture. Like the innovative companies described in Bo Burlingham's *Small Giants: Companies That Choose to Be Great Instead of Big*, we think differently about what it means to be successful as an institution of higher education (Burlingham, 2016). Simply put, we aim to be great at what we do, create a great place to work, and educate learners who will make great contributions to their communities. The three Institutional Priorities reflect our continued maturation as an institution of higher education in these pursuits.

1. Nurturing a Participatory Culture for Learning

In practicing what we teach, the IIRP will fulfill its mission and achieve its goals by fostering a participatory culture with our learners, faculty, staff, trustees, and partners. We will increase learner engagement through experiential projects, praxis, and opportunities to shape the future of the IIRP. We will endeavor to ensure that workplace processes, policies, and norms facilitate participatory learning and decision-making and provide opportunities for faculty and staff to meaningfully contribute to the critical functions and continuous quality improvement of the IIRP. We will convene critical thought, ideas, and action – inviting partners from a wide range of disciplines and communities to engage with us in the joint venture of expanding the research and scholarship to broaden the field of restorative practices.

2. Cultivating Institutional Strength and Growth

The IIRP will be an enduring institution, fiscally sound and ensuring resources to sustain positive gains and facilitate growth. We will develop the capacity to understand enrollment trends for long-range forecasting and multi-year planning. We will become more strategic to navigate challenging social and economic issues and changing population trends that may impact higher education enrollment. We will have appropriate infrastructure and will recruit and retain a diverse pool of talented faculty, staff, administrators, and trustees in support of our learners and institutional mission. We will expand our curriculum so that it is relevant to contemporary social problems and across different sectors of society. We will increase and diversify our faculty to include a greater range of perspectives from different disciplines. We will strengthen our co-curricular offerings, student support services, enrollment management, and alumni development efforts.

3. Promoting the Relevance and Value of the Academic Experience

As an institution of higher education committed to strengthening relationships, supporting community, broadening the field, and influencing social change through restorative practices, the IIRP will endeavor to ensure that our academic experience is relevant to a diverse body of learners and global network of scholars and practitioners. As the field grows and evolves, we will develop and challenge concepts, approaches, and methods, so that people from various cultures and identities will find value and meaning in developing resilient social connections. We will clarify our institutional identity as a place for aspiring change makers from any discipline to immerse themselves in restorative practices and develop their craft. We will confirm the value of our programs — that our excellence as scholars, practitioners, and conveners results in our learners becoming leaders who are influential in their communities worldwide.

Table 9: Alignment of Institutional Priorities and IIRP Strategic Plan Elements

Strategic Plan Elements	Priority 1: Participatory Culture for Learning	Priority 2: Institutional Strength and Growth	Priority 3: Relevant and Valuable Academic Experience
Education is to be transformative and influential	X	X	X
Deliver consulting processes valued for organizational learning and adaptive change		X	
Create research initiatives that generate new knowledge and spur innovation	X	X	X
Our work culture explicitly models restorative practices	X	X	

Table 10: Alignment of Institutional Priorities with MSCHE Standards

MSCHE Standards	Priority 1: Participatory Culture for Learning	Priority 2: Institutional Strength and Growth	Priority 3: Relevant and Valuable Academic Experience
I. Mission and Goals	X	X	X
II. Ethics and Integrity	X	X	X
III. Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience		X	X
IV. Support of the Student Experience	X		X
V. Educational Effectiveness Assessment		X	X
VI. Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement	X	X	X
VII. Governance, Leadership, and Administration	X	X	X

III. Intended Outcomes of the Self-Study

MSCHE expects that institutions will have at least the following three outcomes:

1. Demonstrate how the institution currently meets the Commission's Standards for Accreditation and Requirements of Affiliation.

2. Focus on continuous improvement in the attainment of the institution's mission and its institutional priorities.

3. Engage the institutional community in an inclusive and transparent self-appraisal process that actively and deliberately seeks to involve members from all areas of the institutional community.

The Steering Committee identified the following additional outcomes that we intend to achieve as a result of engaging in the Self-Study process:

1. Identify opportunities to enrich student learning and student support services.

2. Identify opportunities to advance faculty and staff diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging.

3. Refine our data collection processes and data analytics to inform strategically guided decisions and optimize our institutional effectiveness.

IV. Self-Study Approach

We will use the Standards-Based Approach to organize the Self-Study Report; thus, our Self-Study chapters will be organized by standard, for seven chapters. The Self-Study Co-Chairs recommended this approach after attending the MSCHE Self-Study Institute and reviewing the approach used in the institution's 2016 Self-Study. The Steering Committee agreed that the Standards-Based Approach will allow us to conduct a comprehensive, holistic assessment of the institution, with institutional priorities referenced within the chapters as appropriate.

V. Organizational Structure of the Steering Committee and Working Groups

Steering Committee

In the fall of 2022, IIRP President Linda J. Kligman appointed Director of Research & Program Evaluation and Associate Professor Gina Baral Abrams, and Dean of Student Services Jamie Kaintz to co-chair the Self-Study for reaccreditation. Abrams and Kaintz attended the MSCHE Self-Study Institute, along with Melissa Ash, the Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO), and made recommendations for the Steering Committee membership. On December 12, 2022, President Kligman appointed the committee members, which include faculty and staff with experience in institutional governance, academic design, assessment, student services, technology, and communications. This gives a breadth of perspectives while mirroring how we work cross-functionally as an institution. Table 11 lists the Steering Committee members, along with their titles and relevant positions of responsibility.

Table 11: Steering Committee Membership

Name	Title	Relevant Position of Responsibility
Gina Baral Abrams, Dr.P.H.	Director of Research and Program Evaluation and Associate Professor	Self-Study Co-Chair
Craig Adamson, Ph.D.	Provost	Past Self-Study Co-Chair
Melissa Ash, M.S.	Associate Dean of Administration	Accreditation Liaison Officer
Koury Cook, M.S.	Director of Organizational Development	Working Group 2 Chair
John Glasgow, M.B.A.	Director of Technology	Working Group 6 Chair
Mary Jo Hebling, M.S.	Dean of Continuing Education and Lecturer	Working Group 3 Chair
Jamie Kaintz, M.S.	Dean of Student Services	Self-Study Co-Chair
Paul Leese, M.B.A.	Vice President for Strategy and Communications	Working Group 7 Chair
Pam Thompson, M.R.P.Y.C.	Lecturer	Working Group 1 Chair
Courtney Tobin, M.A.	Senior Institutional Analyst	Working Group 5 Chair
Kristen Webber, M.A.T.	Advisor for Student Enrollment	Working Group 4 Chair

The Steering Committee's charges include:

- Establish the general structure and timeline for the Self-Study.
- Create and implement a communication plan.
- Determine the key issues for the Self-Study.
- Develop the lines of inquiry for the Self-Study.
- Complete the Self-Study Design.
- Provide a clear charge for each Working Group and support their efforts.
- Review interim and final reports from each of the Working Groups, and ensure the institutional priorities are addressed therein.
- Use a participatory decision-making process to determine the most important evidence-based recommendations from the Working Group reports and ensure their inclusion in the Self-Study Report.

- Validate the selected evidence-based recommendations with the IIRP Committee of the Whole.
- Arrange for all constituents to review and respond to a Self-Study Report draft.
- Complete and approve the final Self-Study Report, including the refinement of the Evidence Inventory and completion of the Verification of Compliance materials.
- Plan and host the evaluation team visit.
- Foster enthusiasm across the institution throughout the Self-Study.
- Ensure that the timeline is implemented as planned.
- Assess our work as a Steering Committee from a restorative practices perspective.

The Steering Committee met every other week between January 10 and April 4, 2023, to develop the Self-Study Design. Once the Self-Study Design is approved, the Steering Committee will meet monthly to monitor the Self-Study timetable (Table 12) and communication plan (Table 13) and to provide oversight to the Working Groups. During these meetings, the Working Group chairs will provide progress updates and discuss shared areas of inquiry to reduce undue duplication of effort.

Working Groups

At the co-chairs' recommendation, the Steering Committee agreed to organize the Working Groups according to the seven MSCHE standards, plus one for Verification of Compliance and Evidence Inventory. Each Standard-based Working Group has a chair and a deputy to help lead the Working Group, assist with plans, and ensure the work progresses as expected. Each Working Group is chaired by a member of the Steering Committee. This design will help to ensure that the Working Groups' efforts are congruent with the Self-Study Design and the original intent of the lines of inquiry. Most Working Group chairs and deputies were intentionally selected because they are new to IIRP Self-Study, thus building internal leadership capacity and bringing fresh perspectives to the process.

The Self-Study co-chairs invited all IIRP faculty, staff, students, and trustees via email to serve on the Working Groups. Those who volunteered were asked to review the MSCHE Standards for Accreditation and then rank the Standards in order of interest using Microsoft Forms. The Steering Committee considered the list of volunteers and their preferences and made assignments, ensuring each group is adequately staffed. The Working Group members include faculty, staff, students, and trustees who possess a variety of skills, including attention to detail and strategic, critical, and analytical thinking.

The Working Group membership is as follows:

Working Group 1 – Mission and Goals
- Chair: Pam Thompson, M.R.P.Y.C – Lecturer
- Deputy: Sarah Chang – Research Associate

- Lynn Branham, J.D. – Chair, Board of Trustees

- Sydney Davis – Continuing Education Specialist

- Julia Getty, M.S. – Instructor and Implementation Coach

- Keith Hickman, M.S. – Vice President for Partnerships

- Sean Phillips – Client Relations Senior Specialist

- Jim Rippert – Director of Finance

Working Group 2 – Ethics and Integrity

- Chair: Koury Cook, M.S. – Director of Organizational Development

- Deputy: Dana Yurgosky, M.B.A – Marketing Manager

- Kiyaana Cox Jones, M.S. – Instructor and Implementation Coach

- Pamela Cornwall Duncan, M.F.A., M.S., M.A. – Student

- The Honorable Mark A. Ingram – Trustee

- Henry McClendon, Jr. – Director of Community Engagement

- Megan Muller – Staff Accountant

- Paulette Pacitti – Accounts Payable Specialist

- Jennifer Paleczny-Hajkowski. M.A. – Student

- Frida Rundell, Ph.D. – Professor

- Rochelle Sparman-Small – Student

Working Group 3 – Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience

- Chair: Mary Jo Hebling, M.S. – Dean of Continuing Education and Lecturer

- Deputy: Dat Hoang – Senior IT Manager

- Craig Adamson, Ph.D. – Provost

- Jennifer Ball – Student

- Julie Hendry – Student

- Whitney Horwath, Ph.D. – Instructor and Implementation Coach

- Seow Ling Kek, M.S. – Trustee

- Zeau Modig, M.L.S. – Librarian

- Elizabeth Smull, M.R.P.Y.C. – Director of Continuing Education Instruction and Lecturer

- Roger Soweid, M.B.A. – Student

Working Group 4 – Support of the Student Experience

- Chair: Kristen Webber, M.A.T. – Advisor for Student Enrollment
- Deputy: Kaleigh Mrowka, Ph.D. – Associate Director, Collaborative Center for Higher Education
- Michael Azzalina, M.Ed. – Instructor and Implementation Coach
- Lisa Brockhuizen, M.A.P. – Student
- Christian Clark – Application Programmer
- Michelle Collins-Thomas – Student
- Dennis DePaul, M.S. – Vice-Chair, Board of Trustees
- Martha Kelemen – Bookkeeper

Working Group 5 – Educational Effectiveness Assessment

- Chair: Courtney Tobin, M.A. – Senior Institutional Analyst
- Deputy: Ben Wachtel – Information Systems Architect
- Valerie Bloom – Assistant for Graduate Studies
- Michael G. DeAntonio, Ph.D. – Lecturer
- Pat Lewis, M.Ed. – Director of IIRP Canada
- Cassandra Magan – Senior Accountant
- Hayley Walczer, M.A. – Client Relations Senior Specialist

Working Group 6 – Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement

- Chair: John Glasgow, M.B.A – Director of Technology
- Deputy: Ryan Fenderson, Ed.D. – Director of School-Based Implementation
- Steve Grieger – Director of eCommerce
- Melvin Lopez – Technology Specialist
- Trisha Tinsley – Instructor and Implementation Coach
- Ken Tompey – Contract Administrator
- Maura Caitlin Wamsley, M.A. – Student
- Jody Weaver – Director of Human Resources

Working Group 7 – Governance, Leadership, and Administration

- Chair: Paul Leese, M.B.A. – Vice President for Strategy and Communications
- Deputy: Kelsey Elder, M.S. – Planning Administrator

- Stephanie Gutierrez-Vega – Professional Development Specialist
- Matthew Johnson, MPA – Instructor and Implementation Coach
- Kevin Jones, M.S. – Lecturer
- Kim Werner – Administrative Coordinator
- Patience Whitworth, Ph.D. – Trustee

Working Group 8: Verification of Compliance
- Melissa Ash, M.A. – Associate Dean of Administration
- Jessica Bogensberger – Human Resources Generalist
- Nikki Chamblee, Ph.D. – Instructor and Implementation Coach
- Jennifer Hiestand – Instructor and Implementation Coach
- Kristin Oakley – Marketing Specialist

The Working Groups are charged with exploring specific lines of inquiry, developed and assigned by the Steering Committee, within a specific and assigned MSCHE Standard for Accreditation and Requirements of Affiliation and applicable federal regulatory requirements for the Verification of Compliance. Each Working Group will:

- Consider how the institutional priorities and intended outcomes are addressed in the assigned Standard.
- Collect, analyze, and discuss relevant data, processes, and procedures for the assigned Standard.
- Connect and collaborate with other Working Groups, as appropriate.
- Determine the extent to which the institution meets the criteria for the assigned Standard, Requirements of Affiliation, and federal requirements.
- Identify the institution's strengths and challenges.
- Articulate evidence-based recommendations within the Standard and conclusions for institutional action.
- Create a draft report for the Steering Committee that includes citations for data points, is written in accordance with the editorial and style guidelines for the assigned Standard, and is delivered within specified timelines.
- Incorporate feedback from the Steering Committee into a final report, which includes citations for data points, is written in accordance with the editorial and style guidelines for the assigned Standard, and is delivered withing specified timelines.
- The members of each Working Group will prioritize the Working Group meetings and related work to ensure timely submission of reports.
- Assess how the Working Group performed from a restorative practices perspective.

Upon approval of the Self-Study Design, the Working Group chairs will convene their groups and adhere to the Self-Study timetable (Table 12). The chairs and deputies have the freedom to design their own work plans, including meeting frequency and structure, and assignment of roles and tasks within the group. In alignment with the IIRP's institutional culture and norms, Working Group chairs and deputies are expected to apply principles and processes that uphold restorative practices to achieve their work goals and foster a sense of community within the group. The Steering Committee will offer ongoing support and guidance and create a space for the Working Group chairs to share wisdom, process challenges, and identify best practices along the way.

Lines of Inquiry for Each Working Group

The following lines of inquiry will be analyzed by the Working Groups.

Standard I: Mission and Goals

The institution's mission defines its purpose within the context of higher education, the students it serves, and what it intends to accomplish. The institution's stated goals are clearly linked to its mission and specify how the institution fulfills its mission. (Middle States Commission on Higher Education, 2015)

1. How well are our goals aligned with our mission statement?

2. What does the assessment say about the alignment between our educational programs and mission statement?

3. How well do we ensure that the mission and goals are easily accessible to all stakeholders?

4. How effective are our efforts to inform stakeholders when we update our mission and goals?

5. How effective is our process for periodically evaluating our mission and goals?

6. How well do our program materials/website demonstrate alignment to the mission?

7. How well do our credit and non-credit offerings demonstrate alignment to the mission and goals?

8. How well do our pedagogical approaches reflect our mission and goals?

9. How effectively are our mission and goals driving the decision-making and planning process at all levels of the institution?

10. How well do we keep ourselves accountable to our mission and goals?

Standard II: Ethics and Integrity

Ethics and integrity are central, indispensable, and defining hallmarks of effective higher education institutions. In all activities, whether internal or external, an institution must be faithful to its mission, honor its contracts and commitments, adhere to its policies, and represent itself truthfully. (Middle States Commission on Higher Education, 2015)

1. How well do we act with integrity in our interactions with the public and our constituencies?

2. How well do the policies and practices of the IIRP support fidelity to the mission?

3. How well do we assure integrity and fidelity to our mission when developing and implementing marketing and public-relations campaigns?

4. How clear and accessible are our policies, procedures, and communications?

5. How well does the IIRP address grievances from students, staff, and faculty?

6. How well are we carrying out our complaints and grievances procedures using the principles and processes of restorative practices?

7. How effectively do our processes ensure that program learning goals, course objectives, and learning outcomes are clear, accurate, and accessible to students and prospective students?

8. How well are IIRP full-time faculty, adjunct faculty, staff, and instructors selected, oriented, and evaluated to ensure that the institution's instructional, research, and service activities are providing measurable outputs and outcomes?

9. How well does the IIRP faculty observe and implement the principles of academic freedom within the IIRP mission's context?

10. What evidence exists to indicate that we are informing students of educational policies, along with any federally applicable regulations?

Standard III: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience

An institution provides students with learning experiences that are characterized by rigor and coherence at all program, certificate, and degree levels, regardless of instructional modality. All learning experiences, regardless of modality, program pace/schedule, level, and setting are consistent with higher education expectations. (Middle States Commission on Higher Education, 2015)

1. How effectively do the goals of the master's degree program align with our institutional mission and goals?

2. How effectively do the goals of the certificate program align with our institutional mission and goals?

3. How well does the certificate program relate to the degree program?

4. How effectively do non-credit offerings align with the mission and goals of the IIRP? How well do the non-credit offerings align with graduate offerings?

5. How effectively are our existing courses providing purposeful attention to diversity, equity, and inclusion?

6. To what extent are assessment results used in making decisions about and prioritizing institutional planning and resource allocation to improve its effectiveness?

7. How well do existing resources support the development of graduate level study skills that include writing, research, and technology?

8. How effectively does the design and delivery of the student learning experience support institutional sustainability?

Standard IV: Support of the Student Experience

Across all educational experiences, settings, levels, and instructional modalities, the institution recruits and admits students whose interests, abilities, experiences, and goals are congruent with its mission and educational offerings. The institution commits to student retention, persistence, completion, and success through a coherent and effective support system sustained by qualified professionals, which enhances the quality of the learning environment, contributes to the educational experience, and fosters student success. (Middle States Commission on Higher Education, 2015)

1. How well do our student support and engagement strategies align with our mission and vision?

2. How meaningful are our ongoing learning and engagement experiences for our students outside the classroom (advising experiences, onboarding and orientation, career preparation, support for students who are struggling)?

3. How well do we include students in our institutional processes and decisions?

4. How well do we ensure the secure maintenance of student records?

5. How well do we ensure that the Academic Catalog and Student Handbook are clear for students?

6. How well do we ensure students understand our processes and procedures?

7. How effective are our efforts to create a sense of community among our students?

8. How well do we support student wellness?

9. To what extent are our marketing and enrollment plans evolving to meet the priorities and goals of the institution?

10. The IIRP is one of very few graduate schools that do not participate in Title IV, the federal policy authorizing students to use federal loans and grants to fund their education. To what extent does this decision shape the student experience at the IIRP?

Standard V: Educational Effectiveness Assessment

Assessment of student learning and achievement demonstrates that the institution's students have accomplished educational goals consistent with their program of study, degree level, the institution's mission, and appropriate expectations for institutions of higher education. (Middle States Commission on Higher Education, 2015)

1. How well is our infrastructure supporting the assessment of our educational effectiveness?

2. How well does assessment of learning inform curriculum development of for-credit and non-credit offerings?

3. To what degree are our educational experiences relevant to the institution's mission and goals?

4. How well do we ensure that our institutional learning goals and program goals are being met? How well do we ensure that new/emergent programs and specializations are aligned with these goals?

5. How do our programs' content and rigor compare to similar programs at the same level (non-credit offerings, postbaccalaureate certificate, or master's degree) at other institutions?

6. How effective is our pedagogical practice in leading our students to engage in praxis?

Standard VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement

The institution's planning processes, resources, and structures are aligned with each other and are sufficient to fulfill its mission and goals, to continuously assess and improve its programs and services, and to respond effectively to opportunities and challenges. (Middle States Commission on Higher Education, 2015)

1. How effectively are Units resourced to support the IIRP's mission?

2. How well is the IIRP moving forward methodically, such as adhering to procedures and leveraging best practices where applicable? How effectively does the IIRP time its strategic goals and initiatives with each other and with the work toward continual improvement?

3. How well does the IIRP scale its resources to meet demand? How efficiently does the IIRP scale up or down to match market demand in a timely manner?

4. How effectively does the IIRP plan for and utilize resources in a way that meets the objectives of its strategic plan?

5. How well do we mitigate risk as an organization? Is there redundancy in place if there are several key personnel who are no longer accessible to the organization? Are staff adequately trained to reduce their exposure to cyberattacks and social engineering?

6. How well do we mitigate our dependence on the K-12 education market?

7. How well does the IIRP continuously assess improvement?

Standard VII: Governance, Leadership, and Administration

The institution is governed and administered in a manner that allows it to realize its stated mission and goals in a way that effectively benefits the institution, its students, and the other constituencies it serves. Even when supported by or affiliated with governmental, corporate, religious, educational system, or other unaccredited organizations, the institution has education as its primary purpose, and it operates as an academic institution with appropriate autonomy. (Middle States Commission on Higher Education, 2015)

1. What are current IIRP leadership structures strengths/weaknesses that help/hinder the institution's ability to successfully meet the criteria of Middle States' expectations for governance, leadership, and administration?

2. How well does leadership evaluate the changing needs of the IIRP and then resource them accordingly to meet short-term and long-term needs?

3. How effective are our current growth path and succession plans for developing staff, faculty, and administration?

4. How clearly are the role definitions between the board chair and the president expressed to leadership and to the organization?

5. How well does the board ensure alignment with the institution's mission statement, and what oversight do they provide?

6. How effective is the IIRP in onboarding new leaders into the institutional culture?

7. How well is the IIRP assessing its work structures to ensure efficacy and an environment that supports diversity and inclusion practices? At what intervals? To what standards?

8. How effectively does administration support faculty with policies and resources that ensure the continued quality of teaching and academic rigor of the institution's degrees and certificates?

9. How well does the shared governance model guide the institution's decision making and leadership structure, and how do we measure the effectiveness of this model?

10. How well does our leadership support graduate education as the IIRP's primary purpose and provide appropriate autonomy to faculty and staff to operate effectively?

VI. Guidelines for Reporting

The Self-Study co-chairs and ALO will meet every other week to discuss progress, address any issues that arise, and determine appropriate steps to keep the process on schedule. The Steering Committee will meet monthly, at which time the Working Group chairs will provide progress updates. The Working Groups will submit interim and final reports according to the IIRP Self-Study timetable (Table 12).

The Working Group reports will be written in adherence to the prescribed editorial style and format for the preparation of the Self-Study Report (see template in Appendix C) and edited by the Steering Committee co-chairs for inclusion in the final Self-Study Report. The Self-Study Report will reflect our commitment to accessibility and usability, including:

- Images and graphs described via alt-text.

- Tables set up as text with headings for columns and rows.

- Titles and headings formatted using styles.

- Text color alone not relied on to convey meaning.

- Underlined text is avoided unless used for navigation.

VII. Organization of the Final Self-Study Report

The outline below presents the organization of the final Self-Study Report, including information that will be found in the document's introduction and conclusion, and initial indications of the focus of each chapter. Appendix C presents the structure, format, and editorial style for the final Self-Study Report.

- Table of Contents

- Executive Summary: A brief description of the major findings and recommendations of the Self-Study

- Certification Eligibility Statement: The Certification Eligibility Statement will be attached to the Executive Summary

- Introduction: A brief overview of the International Institute for Restorative Practices and description of the Self-Study process

- Standards I-VII
  - A heading indicating standard under consideration

- o Cross-references to relevant materials in other parts of the report and in the Evidence Inventory
- o Analytically based inquiry and reflection
- o Conclusions, including strengths and challenges, with references to appropriate criteria
- o Opportunities for ongoing innovation and improvement

- Conclusion: A summary of the major conclusions and recommendations offered in the report

- References

- Appendices

Strategy for Verification of Compliance with Applicable Federal Regulatory Requirements

A separate Working Group has been created to conduct the Verification of Compliance process and provide evidence to demonstrate that the IIRP meets accreditation-relevant federal regulations. This group will also be responsible for populating and managing the Evidence Inventory. (See Evidence Inventory section later in this Self-Study Design.) Each team member will be responsible for compiling the Institutional Federal Compliance Report and supporting evidence by naming policies, procedures, and specific site links in a single, bookmarked PDF file.

The Verification of Compliance and Evidence Inventory Working Group functions the same way as the standard Working Groups and is expected to submit periodic reports to the Steering Committee. The group's chair is our Accreditation Liaison Officer, who will lead Working Group members in this charge. Units to be consulted for the compilation of evidence include Student Services, Academic Affairs, Administration, Finance, and Information Integration. The Institutional Federal Compliance Report will be included in the final Self-Study Report.

VIII. Self-Study Timetable

Table 12 presents our timeline for every major step in the Self-Study process for a spring 2025 Evaluation Team visit.

Table 12: IIRP Self-Study Timetable, Spring 2025 Visit

Term	Date(s)	Activity/Task
Fall 2022	October – November	Co-Chairs and ALO attend Self-Study Institute
Fall 2022	December 12	IIRP President appoints Steering Committee members at the Committee of the Whole (COW)

Term	Date(s)	Activity/Task
Spring 2023	January 10 – April 4	Steering Committee meets twice a month to discuss and draft Self-Study Design
Spring 2023	March 21 – March 28	Steering Committee solicits feedback on Self-Study Institutional Priorities from faculty, staff, students, and trustees
Spring 2023	April 14	Co-Chairs submit Self-Study Design to MSCHE
Spring 2023	April 28	Site visit with MSCHE Liaison
Spring 2023	May 10 or 24 (depending on receipt of feedback)	Steering Committee meets to discuss feedback from MSCHE Liaison and revise Self-Study Design as needed
Spring 2023	May – June	Upon approval of Self-Study Design, Working Groups convene
Summer 2023	July – August	Working Groups gather and analyze data
Summer 2023	July – August	Steering Committee meets monthly, at which time Working Group chairs provide progress updates
Fall 2023	September – October	Working Groups gather and analyze data
Fall 2023	September – October	Steering Committee meets monthly, at which time Working Group chairs provide progress updates
Fall 2023	November 3	Working Groups' draft reports submitted to Steering Committee
Fall 2023	November 14	Steering Committee meets to discuss draft reports; provides feedback to Working Groups
Spring 2024	January – March	Working Groups revise draft reports and continue to gather and analyze data as needed
Spring 2024	January – March	Steering Committee meets monthly, at which time Working Group chairs provide progress updates
Spring 2024	March 29	Working Groups' final reports submitted to Steering Committee

Term	Date(s)	Activity/Task
Spring 2024	May 31	Steering Committee writes final Self-Study Report in one voice
Summer 2024	June	Steering Committee solicits feedback on Self-Study Report from faculty, staff, and trustees
Summer 2024	July – August	Steering Committee revises/rewrite/proofs the Self-Study Report
Fall 2024	September	Self-Study Report submitted to MSCHE
Fall 2024	TBD	Preparatory site visit of Team Chair
Fall 2024	December	Final Self-Study Report submitted to MSCHE
Spring 2025	TBD	Site visit with MSCHE Team and review of Characteristics of Excellence
Summer 2025	Summer 2025	Reaccredited

IX. Communication Plan

Table 13 presents our Communication Plan with a listing of purposes, intended audiences, communication methods, and timing. This plan will guide the Steering Committee and its Working Groups in gathering feedback from institutional stakeholders and updating them about major developments related to the Self-Study process.

Table 13: IIRP Communication Plan, Spring 2025 Visit

Purpose	Audiences	Methods	Timing
To share data, documents, and research results; communicate in a secure, transparent, and convenient manner; and engage stakeholders	Steering Committee and Working Group members	Middle States Self-Study site	Fall 2023 and Spring 2024
	Students	Middle States Self-Study site; periodic open forums, and/or surveys	Regular updates on the webpage; forums and/or surveys as needed

Purpose	Audiences	Methods	Timing
	Faculty and Staff	Middle States Self-Study site; faculty, staff on the Steering Committee	Continuous updates on the webpage; periodic forums and/or surveys as needed
	Alumni	Middle States Self-Study site; periodic surveys via email	Continuous updates on the webpage; periodic surveys as needed
To update campus constituents about the Self-Study process	Board of Trustees	Middle States Self-Study site; presentations during Board of Trustees meetings	Updates by the President during Board meetings; periodic updates
	Students	Term emails to share updates on Working Group reports	Fall 2023 and Spring 2024
	Faculty and Staff	Middle States Self-Study website; updates provided at COW meetings/Unit Leader Update reports	Continuous updates on the webpage; monthly update to staff and faculty at COW meetings/Unit Leader Update reports
	Alumni	Updates in term emails	Fall, 2023 and Spring 2024
To gather feedback about Working Group reports	Board of Trustees	Feedback from Board members after periodic Working Group reports, draft of Self-Study Report, and updates based on feedback from Team Chair	Spring 2024
	Faculty and Staff	Feedback from faculty and staff after periodic Working Group reports, draft of Self-Study Report, and updates based on feedback from Team Chair	Spring 2024

We hope the following information will be useful for MSCHE to organize an Evaluation Team to evaluate the IIRP's compliance with the Standards for Accreditation, Requirements of Affiliation, policies and procedures, and federal requirements, and provide meaningful feedback relating to our compliance, along with recommendations for our institutional growth.

Team Chair

Preferably, the Team Chair would have experience working at institutions with similar missions and structures, and a knowledge of social science, or at an institution that lives by guiding principles, such as a faith-based institution. This could be a president or senior leader from a small, private college or specialized graduate school who has experience designing a comprehensive online curriculum and expertise with student services and student affairs. The Team Chair could be a part of a growing institution or department and have a growth model like ours.

Team Members

We would also prefer that Team Members have experience working at a small, private college or specialized graduate school in academic affairs, assessment, faculty issues, financial issues, student affairs, and diversity, equity, and inclusion. It would be helpful for Team Members to have experience managing a large continuing education division and engaging adult learners in online education and/or graduate enrollment management.

Peer Institutions

We consider the following institutions to be comparable peers:

- Adler Graduate School (Minnesota)
- Fielding Graduate University (California)
- Southwestern College and New Earth Institute (New Mexico)

We look to the following institutions as aspirational peers:

- Bank Street College of Education (New York)
- Erikson Institute (Illinois)
- Institute of World Politics (Washington, D.C.)

These institutions are primary competitors or have common student recruitment target areas:

- Eastern Mennonite University (Virginia)
- Future Generations University (West Virginia)
- Vermont Law and Graduate School (Vermont)

Evidence Inventory Strategy

Once the Self-Study Design is approved, the Verification of Compliance and Evidence Inventory Working Group will begin to populate and manage the Evidence Inventory, using the MSCHE Self-Study Guide Module Six as a guide. Appendix D presents examples of data sources that we may use as they relate to each Standard.

The Verification of Compliance and Evidence Inventory Working Group will use Microsoft Teams to store and organize the evidence. We have developed a Self-Study Microsoft Team that includes eight channels, one for each of the Working Groups, plus the Steering Committee. Each channel includes a designated folder to store the evidence. Working Group 8 is responsible for the Evidence Inventory, which is a Microsoft List that contains evidence categorized by the Standard it supports and the organizational unit(s) that produce the evidence. The Working Group will determine the most appropriate naming convention for the evidence. This Working Group will meet at least once every other week at first, to frontload the expected evidence for each Standard, and then will meet as needed to obtain additional evidence as requested by the Working Groups.

The Steering Committee will monitor the progress toward completion of the Evidence Inventory and regularly review submitted evidence to ensure the quality of the artifacts and the appropriate analysis. Evidence used in the Self-Study will be readily available for the Evaluation Team's use.

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