

# SUNY CANTON COLLEGE COUNCIL

## 288<sup>th</sup> MEETING

NOVEMBER 17, 2020

<b>Present:</b>	Grace Burke Joseph Rich	Ronald O'Neill, Chair Jennifer Stevenson	Marie Regan Sidei Clouden
<b>Absent:</b>	Roger Sharlow		
<b>Others:</b>	Peggy De Cooke Travis Smith Lenore VanderZee	Laini Kavaloski Zvi Szafran Michaela Young	Shawn Miller Tracey Thompson

Chairman O'Neill introduced and welcomed Sidei Clouden, SGA President and College Council representative. He noted that Sidei is a Veterinary Technology major.

Chairman asked for a moment of silence for the passing of Mark.

### ***Call to Order***

The meeting was called to order at 9:03 a.m.

### ***Minutes of September 22, 2020, Meeting***

Dr. Burke made a motion to accept the September 22, 2020, minutes. The motion was seconded by Mr. Rich and approved.

### ***New Business***

#### **Middle States Presentation**

Chairman O'Neill invited Dr. De Cooke to present. Information was shared with the group prior to the meeting via email, and it was shared on the screen as well. ***See attached presentation.***

Chairman O'Neill asked when the last accreditation was completed. Dr. De Cooke replied that it was in 2012. Chairman O'Neill asked about the College Council's role in this process. Dr. De Cooke explained that it varies from institution to institution and added that her reason for sharing this information was in hopes that the Council would want to be involved. She further added that if the members are interested she will look for ways for the Council to be involved.

Chairman O'Neill asked if there have been changes from the U.S. Secretary of Education. Dr. De Cooke shared that there have been changes but not to the accreditation process; it has been more to the way the accrediting bodies operate. He followed up by asking if she was aware of any pressure, and she indicated that she was not.

Mr. O'Neill asked if there were any diversity issues. It was explained that Middle States seems to be aware of institutional missions, and diversity would be addressed differently on each campus. She noted that she felt for us it would be central to our mission and something we will

be addressing, and she also felt that Middle States will expect us to address it. Mr. O'Neill added his congratulations to the faculty/staff involved for the great job that they have done in this area.

### ***Old Business***

There was no Old Business.

### ***Chairman's Report***

There was no Chairman's Report.

### ***President's Report***

Dr. Szafran provided the following report and asked others to add to it.

- Hello everyone. When last we met, I reported that our primary focus on campus was keeping our students safe and on delivering a high-quality education. I am pleased to tell you that we have largely been effective in both regards.
- Let me start with safety. I'm sure you've read about the various difficulties that various SUNY colleges and non-SUNY colleges have had, including having to end live instruction for the rest of the semester, having to go online only for one or more two-week pauses, or having to end practice and play for one or more athletic teams. To this point, none of that has happened at SUNY Canton.
- The number of positive COVID cases this semester has been nine, mostly all students (one staff), of which three are currently active and under isolation. This is more or less the same level as the three other colleges in the area. We have the capacity to handle this and are handling it. We've tested almost 6,000 students, faculty, and staff so far, not including those tested yesterday or today, so our positivity rate is less than 0.2%, lower than the state as a whole and our County (0.56%). This provides proof of what I indicated to this group at the last meeting – given our level of testing it would be more likely that our students might get the virus from the local population than vice versa. The students and campus are quite safe.
- We started the term with screening testing and moved to surveillance testing, which consisted of testing about 1/3 of our population each week, as well as effluent wastewater testing. There has been a transition from surveillance testing to exit testing as our students are about to leave campus for Thanksgiving and to finish their term remotely, as we originally planned. Courtney was going to report on this, but she couldn't be here today. Lenore, can you report on exit testing?

Lenore shared that last week all residential students and half of the employees were tested – 1,000 between Monday and Tuesday – with three having a positive result. Those three are isolating on campus. Between yesterday and today, there will be 750 students and employees tested, a slightly smaller number this week due to commuter students' campus access needs. She noted that everything is going smoothly, including volunteer help and compliance.

Chairman O'Neill asked what happens if a student tests positive. It was explained that Upstate sends all of the information to Courtney. If students are involved, she notifies them; if employees are involved, Suzan McDermott notifies them. Anyone testing

positive is immediately placed in self-isolation, and contact tracing procedures begin. He also asked if a student tests positive can they go home on Friday. It was explained that it depends on a lot of factors.

Dr. Szafran noted that this effort is only accomplished with the help and collaboration of everyone on campus, several key community groups, and the area colleges.

- Another change in the way we are testing is that it is now mandatory for almost all of our faculty and staff who come to campus at all for any purpose to also be tested. A change that occurred through union negotiations. Lenore, can you tell us what we'll be doing to finish the semester with employee and student testing?

Lenore shared that they are expecting between 20-50 students to remain on campus through Thanksgiving and until the end of the semester. Those students and on-campus employees will continue with surveillance testing after the break – every two weeks all students and 50% of employees will be tested.

- Our attention is now beginning to shift from closing this semester to preparing for reopening in the spring. With the rise of cases around the country, there is increased scrutiny on how we will be testing as we reopen. SUNY has issued some guidelines about what we need to do, and they largely mimic what we have already been doing. The basic plan will be the same as we had for the fall – a seven-day, self-quarantine by students at home (with an expectation to fill in an online app daily answering standard COVID questions including one about travel, followed by pooled-saliva testing as they return in late January. The start-up date is January 30 with most arriving a few days before that. We will then continue with the pooled-saliva surveillance testing on a weekly basis. The testing process was described again, and it was noted that the turnaround time for us has been about 48 hrs. Upstate has done a great job handling all of this, especially since most SUNYs have joined this testing. We are happy with our partnership with Upstate and Clarkson, and we will continue that, as well as weekly surveillance testing on about 1/3 of our students, faculty, and staff who come to campus. We will also be continuing with the wastewater testing, which has also been useful. Our hope is that circumstances will allow us to open in this manner, and that a vaccine will become available at some point in the term for campus use, which seems possible at this point.

Mr. Rich stated that he was very impressed with all that has been done. He asked if some colleges use the PCR test, and if so, which test is better. Dr. Szafran stated that unfortunately nothing is perfect, but there are less false-negatives with the saliva test. He provided some information regarding the virus, as well as details of how the test works and shared that we have used the PCR tests when confirmation of a positive result is needed.

Mr. Rich asked if any of the positive cases on campus have been hospitalized. The answer was no; six have recovered, and the current three are in isolation.

- Peggy has already reported on another big effort that we're beginning at the College regarding reaffirmation of our accreditation. Peggy, if you could, please also fill the Council in on how teaching has gone this semester and any other things happening in Academic Affairs.

Dr. De Cooke shared that the College's strength in online learning has helped in this situation, as well as faculty's willingness to try new things and the willingness of others to help fix issues that arise.

Dr. De Cooke further shared that students' and faculty experiences are taking longer than normal, even though they are working very hard. A few reasons for this may be connectivity issues and calibration issues (maybe assigning more than they intended). Additionally, she noted that this Chancellor is engaging more with students, and he is looking for campuses to look into doing more face-to-face classes if feasible, as this is what students are asking for. We have been engaged in researching these possibilities.

Mr. O'Neill asked if total class time has been able to remain the same with this drastic change. Dr. De Cooke stated yes and explained that with accreditation we have to maintain and prove that, and she added that some instructors may be exceeding that. Laini Kavaloski shared that from the instructor's side she feels that faculty are going out of their way to create unique ways to reach their students and keep them engaged, which she hopes will add to their experiences. Dr. Szafran added that online and in-person instruction both face similar issues – new approaches need to be tried, some are kept, some are adjusted, and some are left behind – and in order to move things forward, these efforts need to be made.

- One of the biggest challenges that we will be facing is the effect of the pandemic on our budget. I'll be making a budget presentation to the faculty and staff later today, but as a bottom line, we wound up with a deficit of just over \$1M last year, almost entirely due to refunds we had to make for housing due to sending students home in March. COVID continues to impact our operating budget, where we anticipate having spent \$275,000 on testing and other directly-related expenses in Fall alone. Spring will probably be the same. The bigger issue is how this will impact our budget going forward. Shawn, could you tell the Council about the various things impacting our budget this year, what the shortfall might be, and how we've started to address it?

Ms. Miller stated that the biggest issue right now is that State support has not yet been awarded. She went on to report that State support is usually 25% of our total budget, and we have been advised to plan for a 25% reduction. Currently, for the Fall, we have been able to reduce spending by 26%, and she stated that she felt if the cut does come through we will be able to hit our target. She further shared that the decrease in enrollment affects more than just our tuition dollars, with some of the affected areas being significantly hit. This results in forcing us to find ways to reduce expenses as much as possible. Dr. Szafran stated that Shawn is doing an excellent job with this, and he also shared that SUNY is implementing steps to reduce costs as well – hiring freeze (only emergency staffing), significant expenses need to be reviewed and approved first, etc. He

also noted that we are facing some other issues that might impact us – will students return or want to come in the Spring, will the State’s need for us to help in the short term with their cash flow problem be permanent. We are sharing all of this information with the campus, so they understand the issues and risks we face and the reason why we have worked to build and need our reserves.

- Despite tremendous challenges in fundraising in this environment, things are going pretty well in Advancement. Tracey, can you let us know where we are and how some of your new initiatives are doing?

Ms. Thompson shared that her staff’s biggest challenge has been the inability to travel since last March, which has affected securing some potentially large gifts, as many of these need to happen in-person. However, they are utilizing other avenues to fundraise. She went on to report that they have had some successes – naming of the SIMS Hospital in memory of Dr. Caswell, which raised \$150,000 for new state-of-the-art simulation equipment for our nursing programs, helping to make it one of the best in the area. Also, total giving for the year stands at \$1,273,000, not all is cash but all goes towards the fundraising goals.

Ms. Thompson also noted that the scholarship that Zvi set up in Mark’s memory is already fully endowed, with some extra; she thanked Zvi for establishing it.

She reported that the Canton Fund is at \$187,000, which is just under half of their \$380,000 goal. Ms. Thompson went on to mention the Student Emergency Fund and reminded everyone of the successful, fun event from last year that secured \$114,000 for the fund. She remarked on how nice it is to be able to help students with these funds, and she is excited that there is still a significant amount for use in the spring semester. Additionally, they are working on new initiatives with the coaches to lead to better stewardship and extend their reach.

Tracey shared that they held a week’s long virtual set of events for Alumni weekend this year – engaging with 220 people through 23 individual Zoom events – and they had great attendance. They hope to return to a live event next year, but they are confident that they can hold a successful virtual one again.

Dr. Szafran revisited the topic of Mark’s scholarship and its target. He noted that, after speaking with his father, they have decided to increase the target to \$20,000. Tracey will take care of that adjustment. She added that this scholarship will help students who have had to overcome some type of adversity, and it will begin being awarded in the spring for the fall.

- Our faculty are also actively engaged in governance. Laini, can you update us on what’s happening as our SUNY faculty representative?

Laini shared that the first plenary of the year was held virtually in October, and the four main topics were COVID, shared governance issues during times of crisis and budget

crunch, process by which the chancellor was appointed, and social justice issues. Four resolutions were approved at the Plenary, which are being brought before our Faculty Assembly this week for vote. Those resolutions are:

- Racial Equity and Social Justice Curricula – asks campuses in the SUNY system to develop and implement or expand on existing programming or curricula dealing with racial equity and social justice. She noted that SUNY Canton has already been doing this, and she suspects that to continue.
  - A joint statement to the Board of Trustees urging them to do a national search for the new Chancellor, with the process following the shared governance protocols. She noted that this one was initially proposed prior to Jim Malatras's appointment, but it was just voted on at the Plenary.
  - The third was a vote of no confidence in the politically appointed Board of Trustee members due to the way the Board of Trustees appointed Chancellor Malatras without a formal search. She noted that this was not directed towards Chancellor Malatras.
  - The fourth related to the importance of maintaining shared governance practices during the time of COVID and asking the Chancellor to reinforce to campus presidents the importance of supporting shared governance even during times of crisis. It also calls on campus governance leaders to have governance bodies and structures that allow them to respond judiciously when campuses are dealing with emergencies and crises.
- Our Student Government has remained active, and I enjoy meeting with them each month because they're terrific. Sidei, can you give us an update?

Sidei shared that they are making themselves available for students to share their thoughts, however, there have not been many concerns lately. They are working on some initiatives for next semester, and one example is more advocacy for racial issues. SGA will be looking for faculty and staff to help them with that, and they will begin their efforts by asking Chief Al Mulkin to be a speaker for some RA training. Sidei added that she will be meeting with the Board of Trustees today at 3 p.m., as they are providing opportunities for SGA presidents to express their concerns regarding their campuses.

- As usual, we've been in the news a fair bit, and all of it good. Travis, can you update us?

Travis reported that we are receiving daily exposure through the SUNY news clips; we have recently had 7 out of 34 stories, with some including SBDC and their \$22M impact on the community, Kerrie Cooper's and Courtney Rust's State financial aid awards, and Randy in the news for esports. He explained that PR has upped their reporting for promotions and will continue working on those throughout the break. With regards to marketing, they continue to strategically invest the limited resources – targeting TV events – politics, CNN, MSNBC, and a like; live sporting events; social media; NC Now, Newsjunk, digital ads. These efforts have resulted in increased attendance at Admissions events.

Marie commented that Travis and his staff do a great job, and she applauded them for that. She did ask Travis to look into why SUNY Canton is not listed on the SLC government webpage, as the other area colleges are there.

Dr. Szafran added that Pat Massaro and Amanda Crump were also in the SUNY news clips. Our appearance in them usually results in articles in NNY 360 and the Watertown Daily Times as well. Joe commented that the TV ads and marketing are terrific.

Dr. Szafran provided his thanks to everyone who reached out during their time of need.

Lenore was asked to share a report on government relations, and she explained that that area was pretty quiet, as they are interested in how we are keeping our campus and the community safe. We have been keeping several areas/people apprised of the situation – SLC public health, chair of community health, local elected officials, the community – and they have been supportive. There was some concern in the beginning, as no one knew how the situation would go, but overall, we have fared pretty well.

Lenore asked the group if anyone has heard from our local officials. It was noted that reports so far have been positive.

Chairman O'Neill ended the meeting by expressing his appreciation to the faculty for their efforts, and he asked Laini to share that with them. Laini agreed to do that.

Chairman O'Neill took a brief moment to remember Ed Coombs, as he recently passed, and recognize him for his efforts to help the College.

### **Adjournment**

Marie Regan made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:33 a.m. The motion was seconded by Joe Rich and approved.

## **College Council – Middle States Presentation – Dr. De Cooke**

So, this is all about accreditation, or the assurance of quality in our higher education institutions and programs. Accrediting agencies also serve as gatekeepers for Title IV funding and verify compliance with all federal accreditation-relevant regulations and requirements.

Our institutional accrediting body is the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. Since the last time we underwent re-accreditation, there have been some revisions to the accreditation process and to the standards, requirements of affiliation, and federal compliance reporting.

Formerly, Middle States operated on a 10-year cycle. So basically, to maintain accreditation, all institutions conduct an in-depth self-study every 10 years. Midway through that cycle, or at the 5-year point, institutions submitted a Periodic Review Report (PRR). The PRR was not meant to be a mini self-study, but a report that simply and directly:

- Analyzed responses to the evaluator's recommendation in the decennial report; [so if there were requirements that needed to be addressed over the course of the next cycle you would be asked to provide an update on where the institution was in that process]
- Identified current challenges and opportunities;
- Demonstrated evidence of sustained and organized processes to assess institutional effectiveness and student learning; and
- Showed the results of such processes being used to make informed decisions that improve programs and services.

So, basically it was in fact a mini self-study! With 14 standards and federal compliance requirements to address, both reports were laborious and time-consuming to construct.

Middle States has somewhat simplified the process and reporting requirements. There are now three types of reports we submit in an 8-year cycle:

**Annual Institutional Update:** The AIU requires institutions to provide key data indicators on an annual basis, including but not limited to enrollment, financial information, and measures of student achievement. Every year institutions enter or verify institutional data and upload required documentation. [I think what is nice about the AIU, in the way it is setup, is that much of the data is pre-populated in the form or template that we use and are able to upload it and have it pre-populated from other data sources such as IPEDS.] The data submitted from the AIU are aggregated into trends for use in other monitoring and review processes.

**Mid-Point Peer Review:** The Mid-Point Peer Review, or MPPR, is a peer review of the accumulated financial data, student achievement data and responses to Commission recommendations (if requested in a prior Commission action) submitted by institutions through a series of Annual Institutional Updates. [Mid-point through the cycle or after four years, they do an off-site evaluation of the AIUs that we have submitted for the previous four years. There is a team of three evaluators that look at that report; one of whom is a financial expert.] We had our first review early this fall/late summer and came through with flying colors.



I'll talk about the self-study in just a minute. And for those of us who are more visual, here's a graphic of the new cycle. [went over the graphic quickly]

So, the Self-Study. The Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) accreditation is reviewed and reaffirmed through the process of self-study. Over the course of approximately 2 to 2.5 years, the faculty, staff, students, and administration of an institution collectively reflect on the institution's educational quality and success in meeting its mission, and to evaluate how well the institution is doing in meeting the standards and requirements for accreditation. The outcome of this process is captured in a self-study report: a detailed narrative compiling information, evidence-informed analysis, strengths and achievements, and recommendations for innovation and continuous improvement.

In a productive self-study process – which of course is what we want – the self-study document also serves as a foundation for planning into the next eight years, as well as for evaluation. The strategic plan is reflected in the self-study document through the identification of institutional priorities, which serve as a focal point in discussing how the institution meets Middle States standards and requirements.

The self-study report is reviewed by a group of external peer evaluators who make recommendations. Institutions also complete a document detailing their compliance with a number of accreditation-relevant federal regulations. All of this information is reviewed by the Middle States Commission in deciding the institution's accreditation status.

I've referred to standards and requirements a few times – what are these? The Middle States Commission mandates that its member institutions meet rigorous and comprehensive ***Standards***, which are addressed in the context of the mission of each institution and within the culture of ethical practices and institutional integrity expected of accredited institutions. Meeting the standards demonstrates that our students are well served and that there is confidence in our ability to meet our mission and goals, in our performance, and in our shepherding of resources.

Currently, there are 7 standards – down from 14 in the last edition. While I would like to say that the current standards are indeed simpler or more straight-forward, I can't really do that. Just different packaging.

To maintain accreditation, an institution must also meet the ***Requirements of Affiliation***. Compliance must be demonstrated on an ongoing basis, typically at the time of the self-study. Finally, we also complete a document detailing our compliance with a number of accreditation-relevant federal regulations.

As I indicated, the self-study is a 24-30-month process. I've indicated some of the major milestones on this next slide. The self-study and evidence library is submitted 6 weeks prior to the evaluation team visit. While we will get a report from the team at the end of their visit, re-accreditation is not formally conferred until the Middle States Commission reviews and meets on the report. The Commission meets three times a year.

Here's our agenda for the next year.

- We have identified the leadership team. Dr. Szafran has asked me to oversee the process. The Team Co-Chairs are:
  - Dr. Kirk Jones, Chair of the Humanities Department and our Accreditation Liaison Officer. Dr. Jones also chairs the Academic Assessment Committee.
  - Johanna Lee, Director of Tutoring Services. Ms. Lee also chairs the Non-Academic Assessment Committee.
  - Sarah Todd, Director of the Office of Institutional Research, will serve as the Evidence Document Librarian
- The Leadership Team recently completed the Self-Study Institute last week. Due to COVID, this was fully online over a 5-week period. Because the institute was online, we were able to invite more people from campus to participate. The VPs nominated people within each of their divisions -they were invited to attend the institute and to serve as informational contacts about the process.
- We have drafted membership for the Steering Committee – leadership for the working groups that will address each of the standards. We are also working on charges to the committees.
- The next big step is to identify 3-5 institutional priorities that will serve as focal points within the self-study. A good starting point for this discussion will be the major goals of the strategic plan that Dr. Szafran introduced last fall.
- The Self-Study Design document is due next summer. This is a 30-50-page document that serves as a guide for the self-study process and enables the steering committee and working groups to conceptualize and organize relevant tasks.

I'm happy to answer any questions you may have and to make periodic reports on our progress.



# Middle States

UPDATES AND THE SELF-STUDY PROCESS

# Accreditation (Council for Higher Education Association)

- *Accreditation* is review of the quality of higher education institutions and programs. In the United States, accreditation is a major way that students, families, government officials, and the press know that an institution or program provides a quality education.
- Quality Assurance, Institutional Improvement, and Accountability
  - Provides quality assurance for students, parents, and the general public
  - Serves as gatekeeper for Title IV funding
    - US federal student financial aid programs
  - Verifies compliance with all federal accreditation-relevant regulations and requirements

# Middle States Commission on Higher Education Accreditation (MSCHE)

- Our institutional accrediting body, MSCHE, assures students and the public of the educational quality of higher
- MSCHE is recognized by the US Department of Education to accredit degree-granting institutions.
- MSCHE's accreditation process ensures institutional accountability, self-appraisal, improvement, and innovation through peer review and the rigorous application of standards within the context of institutional mission

# Accreditation Review Cycle and Monitoring

- **Annual Institutional Update (AIU)**
  - Requires institutions to provide key data indicators on an annual basis, including enrollment, financial information, and measures of student achievement.
  - Every year, institutions enter or verify institutional data and upload required information.
- **Mid-Point Peer Review (MPPR)**
  - A peer review of the accumulated financial data, student achievement data and response to Commission recommendations (if requested in a prior Commission action) by institutions through a series of AIUs.
- **Self-Study**
  - More on this shortly!





# The Self-Study

- The self-study requires an institution to engage in an in-depth, comprehensive, and reflective assessment process to assess the institution's **educational quality** and **success in meeting its mission**, as well as to identify opportunities for **improvement and innovation**.
- The institution must provide evidence and document compliance with the Commission's standards for accreditation, requirements of affiliation, policies and procedures, and applicable federal compliance regulatory requirements.





# The Self-Study

- A foundation for planning
  - Connecting the strategic plan with the self-study and MSCHE Standards and Requirements of Affiliation
  - Connecting the self-study process with the institutional planning process through the identification of institutional priorities

# Standards for Accreditation

- I. Mission and Goals
- II. Ethics and Integrity
- III. Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience
- IV. Support of the Student Experience
- V. Educational Effectiveness Assessment
- VI. Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement
- VII. Governance, Leadership, and Administration

# Requirements of Affiliation

1. Authorization to operate
2. Institution is operational, with students actively enrolled in degree programs
3. Has graduated at least one class before accreditation
4. Communicates with MSCHE in English
5. Compliance with government policies, regulations, and requirements
6. Compliance with applicable Commission, interregional, and interinstitutional policies
7. Mission statement and related goals
8. Systematic evaluation of all programs

# Requirements of Affiliation

9. Programs characterized by rigor, coherence, and assessment
10. Integrated institutional planning
11. Resources adequate to support educational purposes/programs and to ensure financial stability
12. Governance structure responsible for quality and integrity and accomplishment of mission
13. Governing body adherence to a conflict of interest policy
14. Governance and accurate institutional information
15. Core of faculty and/or other appropriate professionals

# Compliance with Accreditation-Relevant Federal Regulations

- Student identity verification in distance and correspondence education
- Transfer of credit policies and articulation agreements
- Title IV program responsibilities
- Institutional record of student complaints
- Required information for students and the public
- Standing with State and other accrediting agencies
- Written arrangements
- Assignment of credit hours



# Self-Study Milestones: 24-30 Month Process

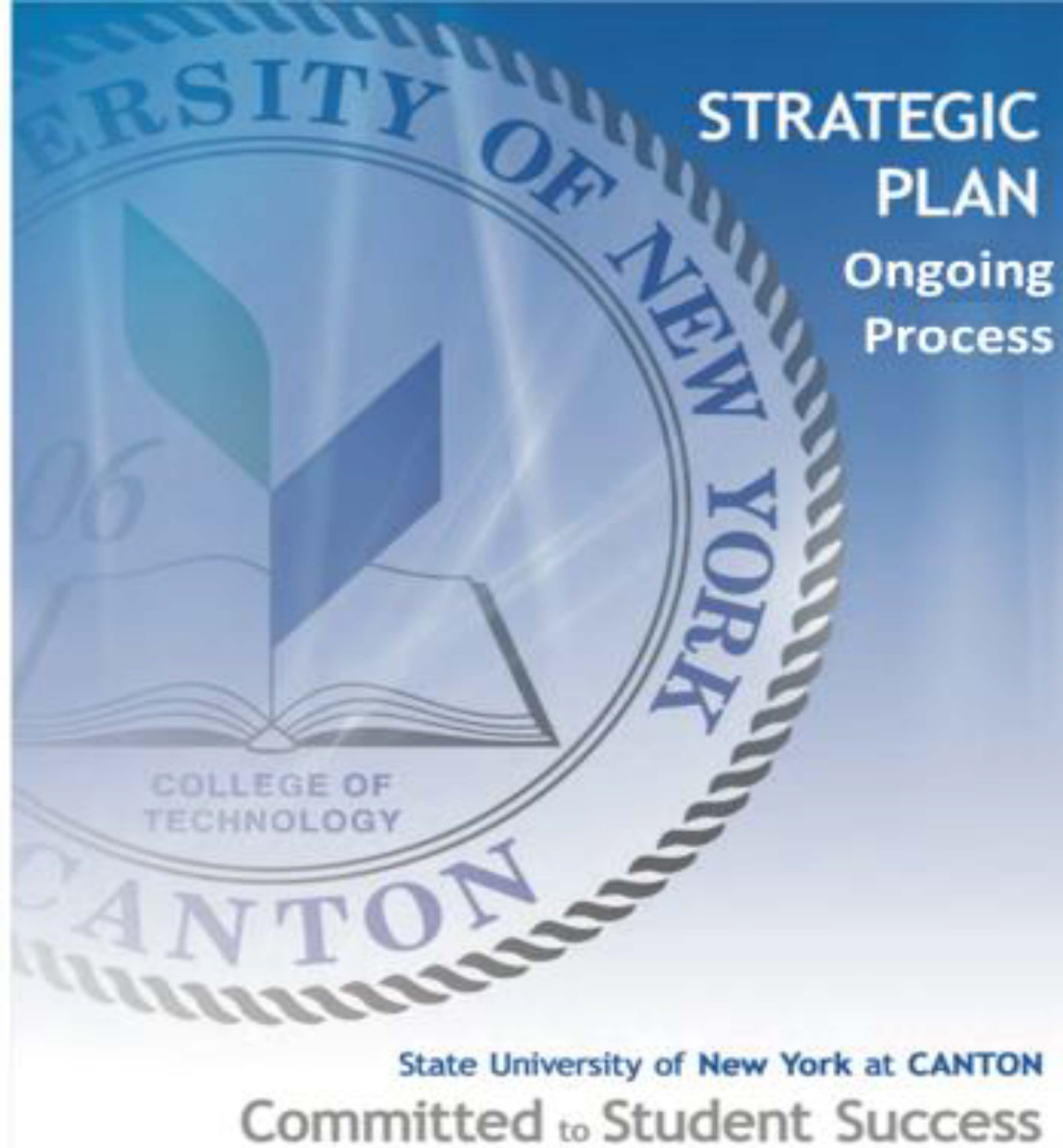
- Self-Study Institute
- Submission of Self-Study Design Document
- Chair's Preliminary Visit and Identification of Evaluation Team
- Submission of Self-Study Document
- *Evaluation Team Visit in 2022-2023 Academic Year*
- Committee on Evaluation Reports
- Commission Meeting
- Commission Action

# Where are we?

- Identification of Self-Study Leadership Team (*September 2020*)
- Team has completed the Self-Study Institute (*September-November 2020*)
- Identification of Institutional Priorities (*November-December 2020*)
- Identification of Working Groups and Charges (*January 2021*)
- Phone/Zoom with VP Liaison (*January 2021*)
- Self-Study Preparation Visit (*February-June 2021*)
- Submission of the Self-Study Design Document (*June-August 2021*)
- *The real work begins!*







2020 →

## Seven Major Goals:

1. Promote Academic Excellence
2. Improve Operational Effectiveness
3. Optimize Enrollment
4. Focus on Sustainability
5. Enhance Diversity & Welcome
6. Create a Robust, Active, and Enriching Campus Life
7. Build Greater Awareness of SUNY Canton