

Handout for Faculty Senate meeting of 13 Sept. 2018
FAQ NEASC Reaccreditation

- **When is the Site Visit?**

The site visitors will be on campus on October 21-24. There will also be a site visit by the team chair, Dr. Susan Hunter, to the Mt Ida campus on September 18.

- **What happens at the Site Visit?**

The site visit team will be ascertaining that the campus meets each of the standards outlined by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC), based on the information provided in the self-study, information available on the campus website along with other documents provided, and through discussions with relevant constituents during the site visit. A team of nine administrators and faculty from public institutions in the US will be visiting the campus. Each will have responsibility for at least one of the nine standards. The evaluators will break out into different meetings to explore the various areas of interest, meeting with faculty, students, administrators, trustees, and other relevant groups. Those in attendance should be prepared to answer questions from the evaluation team so that they can verify what is described in the self-study and explore issues related to the standard. Each meeting will last approximately 30 min to 1 hour, and there will be multiple simultaneous meetings so that the reviewers can learn about the myriad aspects of a complex campus in a short period of time.

- **Who should attend with the Site Visit team meetings and when are they scheduled?**

A draft meeting schedule has been outlined, with relevant individuals identified and save-the-date emails distributed. This could change once the team chair has reviewed it and we revise it to prevent conflicts. In the fall, there is time to identify additional UMass participants to attend the various meetings, select student representatives, etc. For now, deans will be meeting with the team Tuesday, 10/23 @ 10 AM, chairs on Monday, 10/22 @ 2:10 PM, and all are invited to the open exit interview on 10/24 @ 11 AM. Open meetings for faculty, staff and students are scheduled for Monday 10/22 @ 4:15 PM. Further information on the schedules will be posted on the www.umass.edu/planning/neasc site when they are finalized.

- **How can I prepare for the Site Visit?**

Attendees should be prepared to discuss their aspect of the meeting and how they apply the standards in their setting. While one should be familiar with the entire document, it would be particularly useful to read thoroughly the chapter for the standard that the meeting represents. We can let attendees know which one that is when the visit schedule is finalized. Attendees do not need to bring data with them. Reviewers are there to learn more about the campus, and not to find “gotcha” moments. They will want to verify that what we say in the self-study is the case. They may also wish to know how we use the evaluation data or other evidence in making decisions, how we involve students or other communities of interest in our programs, whether we have learning objectives for our students, and how we know that they have achieved these objectives. They may wish to know about special programs, such as online programs, off-site programs, etc. They may also be interested in budget and finance information. They may find a need for more data or artifacts (syllabi, handbooks, etc) from the discussion; if so, we should provide it asap before their visit concludes.

- **Do we need to provide any further documentation required for the self-study?**

The self-study team has been gathering documentation for the past six months, including information submitted by departments from the Educational Effectiveness Plans (EEPs). One form requires information on accreditations and their outcome, such as key issues identified in the accreditation letter. We have requested that departments with accreditations provide information if it was not available on the web. We are also showing select graduate and undergraduate course syllabi, especially those that look at multiple sections for one course and those that use alternate formats such as online or off-campus. Departments have also provided us with data on outcomes of their graduates and answered questions on some data available; we are all set with this information at this time. It is important for units to update their websites if possible early in September to reflect new policies or programs and to remove dead links.

- **When and where can I see the self-study?**

The self-study should be complete by the first week of September. We will post it at <https://www.umass.edu/planning/neasc>. For now, the draft is posted, along with a link to all the standards.

- **I am part of a specialized study (Shorelight, Springfield, Mt Ida): What do I need to do?**

Evaluation team members will be visiting the Springfield campus, Mt Ida campus, and Shorelight courses during the self-study. They will wish to speak with faculty and students, and understand further how the program operates with respect to each standard. We will be contacting relevant program administrators to identify participants for the various site visit meetings.

- **Who are the site visitors?**

The Commissions on Institutions of Higher Education of NEASC looks for reviewers in a similar institutional environment with expertise related to each of the nine standards. The following team members comprise the evaluation team:

<p><i>Team Chair:</i> Dr. Susan J. Hunter President Emerita University of Maine</p>	<p>Dr. Gene E. Harkless Associate Professor, Nursing University of New Hampshire</p>	<p>Dr. Beth Mintz Professor, Sociology University of Vermont</p>
<p>Mr. Bruce A. Bollinger Vice President for Finance and Administration North Dakota State University</p>	<p>Dr. Kent E. Holsinger Vice Provost for Graduate Education University of Connecticut</p>	<p>Ms. Judy Ouimet Senior Assistant Vice Provost University of Indiana Bloomington</p>
<p>Dr. Susan Fritz Executive Vice President and Provost University of Nebraska</p>	<p>Dr. Felicia McGinty Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Rutgers University</p>	<p>Dr. Raymond M. Wright Dean, College of Engineering University of Rhode Island</p>

- **Did I hear that NEASC has a new name? What is it and why the change?**

The university is accredited by the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education (CIHE), a unit of NEASC. There is a federal requirement that accrediting bodies are separate and independent from other organizations, so CIHE separated from NEASC, and became a 501(c)(3) with the new name, *New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE)*. NECHE will share space and some functions with NEASC; the standards for accreditation and commission policies will remain the same.