Summary Document Review Report
Columbia University
Generalist Evaluator: Ronald J. Paprocki and Karen Froslid Jones

Institution Name: Columbia University

Date of Documentation Review: October 27, 2015

Summary Overview

The review team thanks Columbia University for the extensive array of documents provided on all Fourteen Standards. The comprehensiveness of the roadmap facilitated the document review. The system of organizing the materials simplified the review of the documents and advanced the overall goal, which was to confirm that the university meets Middle States' Characteristics of Excellence

On the basis of our review of documents, the generalist evaluators find Columbia fully compliant with the fourteen accreditation standards. This report contains no suggestions or recommendations.

Standard One: Mission and Goals
Yes, the documentation demonstrates compliance with this standard.

Columbia's mission is clearly articulated and engrained in the University's culture. The mission and broad institutional goals are understood throughout the institution, and they are reflected in planning and evaluation processes at all levels of this decentralized university. In recent years, Columbia has undergone an institution wide process of reflection on its mission in relation to globalization, and the process has been broadly inclusive. An evaluation of Columbia's mission in this light is the focus of its MSCHE self-study.

Standard Two: Planning, Resource Allocation and University Renewal
Yes, the documentation demonstrates compliance with this standard.

The documents give evidence of the University's processes for development of programmatic and financial plans and assessment of the progress of implementation and of the effectiveness of those plans. The documents reveal a culture of planning at all levels of the institution. Due to Columbia's highly decentralized structure, significant planning occurs at the school level. Documents included examples of strategic plans for schools as well as individual departments. At the University level, assessment activities that inform programmatic and financial planning include the annual Strategic Reviews conducted by the Provost, which entail a review of priorities, resources required as well as multiple year financial projections. Comprehensive

reviews of schools and major units are conducted by the Provost at five to seven year intervals. In Columbia's Budget Hearings, the details of the annual budgets being developed by the schools are considered in light of strategic issues and programmatic goals.

Standard Three: Institutional Resources
Yes, the documentation demonstrates compliance with this standard.

Columbia's financial resources are sufficient to sustain its programs in a manner consistent with its mission and goals. At the end of the 2014 fiscal year, Columbia's net assets were $13.1 billion with investments totaling $9.2 billion. Financial statements indicate positive operating margins ($237 million in fiscal year 2014). Credit ratings at the AAA level are indicative of Columbia's solid financial resources and sound financial management. Processes are in place to manage and allocate resources and monitor financial performance. Columbia follows a Responsibility Center budget model and adheres to all funds budgeting. Investments in facilities and infrastructure are guided by a rolling Capital Plan approved by the Trustees. The library system is one of the top five in the country, and a plan guides improvements in information technology infrastructure. The development of Columbia's Manhattanville campus will add more than 6.8 million square feet of space for Columbia's program and will support the University's expansion.

Standard Four: Leadership and Governance
Yes, the documentation demonstrates compliance with this standard.

Columbia's Charter, first enacted in 1787, defines the role of the Trustees and the process for their selection. The University's bylaws define the processes through which the Trustees exercise their fiduciary responsibilities. Chief among Trustee responsibilities is the selection of the University's President and appointment of the senior officers of the University. It is through the Committee structure that the Trustees' exercise their responsibilities for monitoring the budget, supervising investment activities, selection of physical resources and the oversight of appointments.

A prominent feature of Columbia's Governance structure is its practice of shared governance involving all the University constituents. Columbia's Statues define the role of the University Senate. Its membership consists of faculty, students, staff, and administrators. The Senate deals with policies that affect the overall University or more than one school including issues ranging from educational programs to budget priorities and academic policy. Decisions by the Senate require ratification by the Trustees. Documents reviewed confirm the observation made in the Decennial Accreditation Report: "…Columbia's Governance structure ensures key input from its Trustees, senior leaders, and faculty from across the University." (Decennial Accreditation Report: The Globalization of Columbia Education, October 2015, page 5).

Columbia's President is the institution's Chief Executive Officer. The President's performance is assessed annually by the Board of Trustees. Annual assessment of the Provost and other senior leaders reporting to the President is conducted by the President.

Standard Five: Administration
Yes, the documentation demonstrates compliance with this standard.

The document review confirms that Columbia has in place the requisite administrative and academic leaders, structures and processes to support its mission and achieve its goals. The University's administrative structure is typical of those of private research universities with academic health centers. Leadership positions at the central University and divisional levels are filled with qualified individuals. The document review provides evidence of strong presidential leadership and sound management of program, finances, facilities and infrastructure. Relevant services are in place to support the instructional, research and service the missions of the University.

The University's administrative structure, policies and procedures are clearly documented and accessible to the University community. The documents provide evidence of effective administration at all levels of the institution.

Standard Six: Integrity
Documents reviewed provide strong evidence of Columbia's commitment to the highest ethical standards. Section VII of the University's Charter and Statues describes Columbia's "Code of Academic Freedom and Tenure." The commitment to academic freedom is echoed in the Faculty Handbook.

The University Statues contain the "Rules of University Conduct." The University's "Essential Policies" website presents important information on safety, sexual misconduct and other topics aimed at fostering a safe and welcoming environment. Other elements of Columbia's strong emphasis on ethical behavior include University wide Conflict of Interest Policies, compliance training, policies on both academic and professional conduct as well as explicit grievance procedures.

Standard Seven: Institutional Assessment
Yes, the documentation demonstrates compliance with this standard.

Columbia University demonstrates that it has organized and sustained assessment processes that are used to evaluate its overall effectiveness and support the overall mission of the institution. The range of assessment mechanisms is impressive. The document review provides multiple examples of how institutional assessments have led to important initiatives on campus. For

example, a working group on faculty retirement provided recommendations that led to the university modifying its retirement policies. The new Center for Teaching and Learning emerged as a result of an assessment of on-line learning.

An important example of regular assessment highlighted in the documentation is the academic reviews of schools and institutes. The Provost revitalized the policy of conducting comprehensive reviews of schools and institutes three years ago. Every 5-7 years units undergo an in-depth self-study that includes review by a committee of external advisors and a review by an internal faculty advisory committee. The documentation presented demonstrates a very strong process that leads to insights and recommendations. There is sufficient evidence that assessment results are shared, especially in the context of faculty committee meetings.

Standard Eight: Student Admissions and Retention
Yes, the documentation demonstrates compliance with this standard.

Columbia has extensive information on its website to assist potential applicants to the university. There are detailed and clear admissions policies and a very helpful Frequently Asked Questions site to help students navigate the admissions process. Columbia posts clear transfer credit policies on its website.

Columbia is one of the most selective institutions in the country. Students are very successful, especially as evidenced by its retention rates and graduation rates. Graduate schools, such as the Dental School, post class statistics, graduation and licensing statistics. All these data demonstrate congruence among the university's recruitment and retention efforts.

Standard Nine: Student Support Services
YES, the documentation demonstrates compliance with this standard.

Document review provides evidence that Columbia University has excellent student services delivered by highly qualified professionals. The university's services cover all the traditional areas of student support. It has strong academic resources, including tutoring, a writing center, and "help rooms" by department for anyone who wants assistance with a subject. Students also appear to have the support of a strong alumni network.

Almost all undergraduates live on campus. Socially, students can avail themselves of many different offerings. Clubs and social activities are extensive. Overall, student surveys seem to demonstrate student satisfaction with the services on campus.

Standard Ten: Faculty

Yes, the documentation demonstrates compliance with this standard.

As the CVs, biographies and other documentation demonstrate, Columbia University faculty are strong scholars, effective teachers, and leaders in their respective fields. Faculty have full control over the curricula. Faculty and teaching assistants can receive support from the new Center for Teaching and Learning. Teaching is evaluated using course evaluations that include both qualitative and quantitative feedback. The institution has extensive review of tenure-line faculty and the review process and criteria is publically available on the website. Tenured faculty have the opportunity to apply for a leadership fellows program to help develop leadership skills. In terms of hiring, the Provost provides guidance on "Best Practices in Faculty Search and Hiring" via a helpful website.

Standard Eleven: Educational Offerings
Yes, the documentation demonstrates compliance with this standard.

The document review provides clear evidence that Columbia's educational offerings "display academic content, rigor, and coherence that are appropriate to its higher education mission." The programs are designed by faculty. Committees on instruction, curriculum committees, school-level academic planning and review committees, the Provost's Office, and University Senate committees review program proposals and have high standards for approval.

Columbia ensures quality through regular review of the curriculum. For example, all new programs undergo a very extensive 5th year review to assure that "the program objectives described in the original proposal are being achieved and to allow it to assess whether any changes in the plans since then have materially altered the nature of the program."

Curriculum excellence is supported in many ways, including strong library services and technology services. The transfer credit policies seem clear and easy to understand.

The University recently adopted a draft of common learning outcomes for all undergraduates. These draft outcomes, when finalized, will be incorporated with the Core Program (in ways still under discussion) and are likely to strengthen an already strong curriculum.

Standard Twelve: General Education
YES, the documentation demonstrates compliance with this standard.

Columbia's Core Program has a long history. It is grounded in the classics and designed to provide all students "with a common intellectual experience." The documents, including material on Columbia's website, make clear that the program meets Middle States' expectations of being "purposeful, coherent, engaging and rigorous." In line with the Standard, students graduate proficient in oral and written communication, scientific and quantitative reasoning, and

technological competency. The program also incorporates the study of values, ethics, and diverse perspectives.

The Center for the Core Curriculum and the Committee on the Core oversee and assess the Core Curriculum. The university demonstrated that assessments lead to changes. This is evident in the documents that outline the evolution of the Core over its history. The 2012 review of "Frontiers of Science Self-Study" is but one example of how courses are assessed in the program. In many cases, a committee of faculty reviews course syllabi to ensure they meet high standards.

Standard Thirteen: Related Educational Activities
Yes, the documentation demonstrates compliance with this standard.

Columbia offers several types of programs that are covered by this standard. The document review provides evidence that these programs receive adequate oversight and are managed according to standards appropriate for Columbia University. Certificate programs, whether certificates of professional achievement or certificates of attendance require various levels of internal approval including approval of the University Senate. Distance courses offered by the Columbia Video Network, primarily in the science and engineering fields, are evaluated according to the same standards as courses offered on campus.

Columbia Online is a central resource for online courses, programs and initiatives and is designed to share best practices in the use of digital technology to enhance teaching and learning. Online offerings include degree programs, certificate programs and professional development programs. Online degree programs undergo the same approval process as campus offerings including approval by the University Senate. In the report of the Provost's Faculty Advisory Committee on Online Learning in September of 2014 emphasis was placed on program quality and the continuous improvement of teaching and learning. The University's Center for Teaching and Learning has its origins in this report.

Standard Fourteen: Assessment of Student Learning
YES, the documentation demonstrates compliance with this standard.

Columbia University developed learning outcomes and assessment plans in 2010. The plans include specific learning outcomes, methods of assessment, and guidelines for using the results. The university is moving toward integrating plans more fully into regular reviews of programs. For example, the College of Arts and Sciences adopted new guidelines for Academic Review in July 2015 that include questions that ask the program to outline learning expectations, how they are assessed, results, and how results are used.

The decentralized nature of Columbia necessitates that much of the oversight of assessment of student learning is at the program or school level. For this reason, making broad generalizations

about success is difficult because there is variation in procedures. That being said, the university provided examples of how assessments were implemented and used for program improvement. The examples demonstrate that programs use direct measures of assessment, maximize the use of existing data, are of a quality that enables the units to make decisions, and are of sufficient simplicity and ownership to be sustainable.

Assessments such as licensure and graduation rates demonstrate student success. Assessment results are shared with curriculum committees and assessments seem integrated into curriculum decisions.