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# MSCHE SITE VISIT PREP SESSIONS

MARCH 2022



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# Site Visit Prep Sessions - Agenda

- Overview of the site visit process
  - Why it is important
  - What to expect
- Practice mini-session
- Final Q&A

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# Why do we do accreditation?

- Institutional (formerly regional) accreditors like MSCHE have been charged by the federal Department of Education with ensuring that all institutions meet a set of quality standards.
  - MSCHE confirms that we meet those standards, therefore making us eligible to award federal financial aid.
- As part of the 8-year process, we are asked to prepare a self-study and then participate in the site visit process to earn reaccreditation.

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# Site Visit Overview

- The purpose of the site visit is to ***confirm and clarify*** what was written in the self-study report.
  - The visiting team members will have already read our self-study report and have an idea about the status of our compliance. This visit helps them be sure they understand what we've submitted.
- It is important that we are able to do just that: confirm what was written in the self-study report and willingly clarify and provide examples that demonstrate our compliance, as requested.

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# What to Expect

- Because of the pandemic, we are hosting a ***Virtual Site Visit***.
  - All meetings are being managed through Zoom.
  - Most group meetings will be small – 10-12 participants.
  - At least 1-2 members of the visiting team will be in each meeting.
  - Meetings are scheduled for 1 hour, but the visiting team may decide to end them early if they choose.

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# How to Prepare

- Read the self-study
  - Most important: the Executive Summary and the Standard that you will be representing
- Reflect on your own unit/area
  - Think of examples from your own area that you can share, and be ready to speak concisely about them.
- Take a breath! 😊
  - Remember that this isn't supposed to be a scary process – it really is a group of our peers who are trying to help us be in compliance.

# What kinds of questions will they ask?

*It's impossible to know for sure exactly what they will ask. However, we can make some educated guesses about the types of questions that will be common ...*

- Clarifying what is in the self-study
  - “I read in Chapter X that ... can you tell me more about that?”
- Asking for additional information
  - “I see that you’ve done X. Can you share a different example of how you ...”
- Checking in on our progress
  - “It says that the school has ... How have you seen that manifested on campus?”
- Talking about future goals
  - “One of your opportunities for improvement is ... Do you think that’s realistic, and how might it be implemented?”

# What should I say? What should I not say?

- You should tell the truth and provide information that advances the goals of the self study.
  - Provide clarification of what is in the document.
  - Share examples of the great work that your unit is doing.
  - Be honest about where we are continuing to grow. Remember, this is about improvement – we don't have to be perfect, we just have to keep moving forward.



# What should I say? What should I not say?

- You *should not* say things that are untrue and or unnecessary, or that don't align with the goals of the self-study process.

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# It's okay to not know an answer!

- If a question is asked and you do not know the answer, that is okay.
  - Don't try to guess – it's better to just say that you don't know than to make up an answer.
- Some soft ways to respond:
  - “My unit isn't the best place for that question, but maybe someone else in the room knows?” [if you know who should be able to answer it, it's okay to tell them]
  - “That's a great question – I'll need some time to think about it.”
  - “I'll find an answer to that for you.”



# LET'S WORK THROUGH A PRACTICE QUESTION

CAN WE PLEASE SPLIT INTO TWO GROUPS?





**NOW, LET'S DEBRIEF. WHAT DID YOU EXPERIENCE?**

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# Quick Reminders

- Balance the present with the future – remember, this is about *continuous improvement* – don't focus too much on the past.
- Be inclusive of every person and unit represented in your meeting group.
- Be honest, but avoid “airing dirty laundry”
- Remember, Zoom is tough for everyone. Stay engaged, be mindful of body language and distractions, etc.

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# If asked for additional information ...

- If a team member requests additional evidence, please email [ie@Mercyhurst.edu](mailto:ie@Mercyhurst.edu)
  - What was requested (and attach it)
  - What meeting you were in
  - Who requested it
  - A short description of why, if you know it
- We must upload all documents to a special portal, so nothing should be directly sent to any individual!

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# What comes next?

- Each participant will receive information about their meeting
  - A custom email with some specific questions for your standard(s), as well as the meeting time
  - A calendar invite with the Zoom link and meeting details
- Then, we'll meet with the team! April 3-6 (most meetings M-Tu)
  - Afterward, they'll write the report, share it with us, and we have time to respond. The final Commission action won't take place until November.



# Q&A

WHAT QUESTIONS DO YOU HAVE REMAINING?