

INTRODUCTION

Franklin Pierce University developed and implemented a thorough and comprehensive process of self-study in preparation for the October 2008 visit from the Commission of Higher Education (CIHE) of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC). The accompanying Self-Study and its supporting documentation were created through a collaborative and inclusive process and represent an accurate reflection of the Franklin Pierce self-study process.

The Self-Study document is a candid assessment of the institutional journey since the 1998 NEASC visit. This journey is best described as a series of significant transformations at the University, with the reorganization of Academic Affairs to include a new Provost framework, the addition of online and doctoral programming, and the transition to university status. The self-study process has facilitated a focused review of the increasing complexity presented by this transformation. Ultimately, the self-study has resulted in a better understanding of this highly complex organization, and has validated the sense that strategic planning is now decidedly more deliberate and dynamic than in the past. The planning function is now clearly more appropriate to the new institutional complexities.

Preparation of the Self-Study document gave the University permission to take the necessary time to reflect on the successes, failures, strengths, and weaknesses of the last ten years. This reflection has been an invaluable experience, giving the University a renewed appreciation of its accomplishments and a more active recognition of and engagement with the challenges that lie ahead.

The self-study process began in August 2006 with the NEASC confirmation of the proposed dates for the team visit. President George J. Hagerty appointed Provost Michael Bell to lead the self-study process. Dr. Bell created and appointed an Executive Self-Study Committee responsible for developing and coordinating all self-study preparations. Members were chosen from faculty and administration based on a variety of competencies, including institutional experience, organizational ability, experience with NEASC, and ability to marshal faculty and administration support for the self-study process. The final composition of the Committee included:

Raymond V. Van der Riet, Acting Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs (Chair)
Paul M. Kotila, Dean of the College at Rindge
Jane Walter Venzke, Dean of the College of Graduate & Professional Studies
Craig W. Platt, Professor of Psychology
Phyllis S. Zrzavy, Professor of Mass Communication
Joan Epro, Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, The College at Rindge (Editor)
Karen J. Brown, Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs, The College at Rindge

The original composition of the Committee included Michael Bell (Provost), Raymond Van der Riet (VP, Strategic Initiatives), Mary Ledoux (Director of Library Services), Douglas Ley (Associate Professor, History), and Karen Brown (Assistant Dean). A number of changes occurred during the self-study process: Mary Ledoux resigned from the Committee in June 2007 to take a new position; Douglas Ley resigned from the Committee in September 2007 to focus on chairing Standard Four; Phyllis Zrzavy and Craig Platt replaced Mary Ledoux and Douglas Ley on the Committee; Michael Bell resigned from the University in June 2008; Raymond Van der

Riet was appointed as Chair of the Self-Study in June 2008; and Paul Kotila, Jane Venzke, and Joan Epro were added to the Committee in June 2008.

After attending the October 2006 NEASC Self-Study Workshop, the committee began monthly meetings in November 2006. The Committee formulated a timeline for delivery of the Self-Study document and a plan for management of the logistics of the team visit. The early monthly meetings (November 2006–May 2007) focused on developing all organizational elements and defining—and soliciting—all data/information required for a successful self-study. The Self-Study Steering Committee was comprised of all Executive Committee members and the eleven Chairs of the individual Sub-Committees. A listing of the Sub-Committee Chairs follows:

Std 1	Mission	Phyllis Zrzavy, Professor of Mass Communication
Std 2	Planning	Deborah Jameson, Director of Graduate Teacher Ed.
Std 3	Governance	Mary Kelly, Associate Professor of History
Std 4	Academic	Douglas Ley, Associate Professor of History
Std 5	Faculty	Catherine Koning, Professor of Environmental Science
Std 6	Students	Jules Tetreault, Associate Dean of Student Affairs
Std 7	Information Resources	Melissa Stearns, Technical Services Librarian
Std 8	Physical & Tech. Resources	Suleman Hamid, Director of Information Technology
Std 9	Financial Resources	Sandra Quaye, Interim-VP Finance & Administration
Std 10	Public Disclosure	Paul Bush, Associate Professor of Mass Communication
Std 11	Integrity	John Harris, Executive Director, Monadnock Institute

The protocol for the actual writing of the document was also established during the November 2006 – May 2007 period. Using a customized Working Checklist for each Standard, in subsequent months the Sub-Committees identified and collected relevant data/information, synthesized this information and identified issues needing further assessment, completed evaluations of these issues, and developed summaries of the key findings for submission to the Steering Committee. These submissions formed the foundation of the final Self-Study document and were used by the Provost to draft the *Description*, *Appraisal*, and *Projection* sections of each Standard. Despite the resignation of the Provost late in this process, initial and ensuing drafts were reviewed by the Executive Committee, the Chairs of the Individual Sub-Committees, the President, and the Board of Trustees; fully developed drafts were also reviewed by the larger community of faculty and staff at appropriate points in the timeline.

A summary of the most significant points on the self-study timeline follows:

Aug. 2006	NEASC confirms visit dates
Sept. 2006	President appoints Provost to head Self-Study process Self-Study Executive Committee formed
Oct. 2006	Executive Committee attends NEASC Self-Study Workshop
By Dec. 2006	Executive Committee identifies pool of chairs for Sub-Committees
Jan. 2007	Executive Committee extends invitations for volunteers President and Provost announce launch of NEASC preparations to community at semi-annual Staff Seminar Day First meeting of potential Steering Committee, with primary focus on upcoming Workshop (Dr. Froh) and membership of sub-committees
Feb. 2007	Dr. Froh (NEASC) conducts workshop for Steering Committee Provost and Dean discuss NEASC Self-Study at Rindge faculty meeting

Jan.-May 2007	Executive Committee works with Sub-Committee Chairs to develop formal timeline, identify goals and themes, and identify and develop data/information required for self-study
March 2007	Trustees regularly engage in Self-Study process including initial overview, update and discussion (6/07), overview of proposed process (11/07), update and discussion of drafts of selected standards (3/08), discussion of rough draft of Self-Study (6/08) and three opportunities for review and comment (7/08-8/08)
April 2007	Executive Committee formalizes Sub-Committee Chairs and asks them to begin soliciting volunteers for respective standards
May 2007	Chairs begin to develop Sub-Committee schedules/communication protocols Karen Brown appointed as Logistics/Documentation Coordinator
July 2007	NEASC Self-Study webpage created on Provost's intranet site to keep community informed; webpage includes messages from President & Provost, scanned archival documents and NEASC standards and guidelines Self-Study shared folders are created for Steering Committee; used for Sub-Committee communication and as depository for reporting templates, collection of evidence documents and key historical data/information Message of appreciation and encouragement from President and Provost
Aug. 2007	President, Provost, and Executive Committee sponsor kick-off event for all Sub-Committee members
Dec. 2007	Deadline for final Sub-Committee reports
Jan. 2008	Celebration event held for Sub-Committee members
March 2008	Deadline for all Sub-Committee supporting documents
Feb-May 2008	Provost writes initial drafts of Self-Study narrative
Mar-July 2008	Completed drafts reviewed and edited by Self-Study Executive and Sub-Committees
April 2008	Dr. David Angel, Visiting Team Chair, visits Franklin Pierce to meet with President, Provost, Executive Committee
June 2008	Rough draft of Self-Study posted to Trustee webpage President and Acting Provost visit Dr. Angel at Clark University to discuss NEASC visit and recent turnover in senior management
July 2008	Draft of Self-Study sent to Dr. Angel and NEASC Draft of Self-Study posted to internal webpage for community review
Aug. 2008	Faculty and staff forums present Self-Study findings Final version of Self-Study posted to intranet and public website (www.franklinpierce.edu)
Sept. 2008	Self-Study sent to NEASC and Visiting Team Student Government Association holds two sessions for overview and discussion of Self-Study University celebrates completion of Self-Study

More than seventy members of the Franklin Pierce University community played an active role on the Self-Study Committees. The Committees were comprised of faculty and staff, both from the College at Rindge and the College of Graduate and Professional Studies. The community worked diligently for almost two years. While implementation of the process had its challenges, the Franklin Pierce University community can confidently state that the final Self-Study document is a true and accurate reflection of this dynamic and growing institution.