



Trinity

Office of the President

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April 22, 2016

Dr. Elizabeth Sibolski
President
Middle States Commission on Higher Education
3624 Market Street
Philadelphia, PA 19104

Dear Dr. Sibolski:

This letter provides Trinity's formal institutional response to the report of the evaluation team that visited Trinity on March 20-23, 2016. We thank the members of the team for their devotion of considerable time and expertise to the review of Trinity's self-study and interviews with numerous members of the Trinity community. We appreciate the leadership of Dr. Dorothy Escribano, the team chair.

We appreciate the way in which the report affirms Trinity's intense devotion to mission, and to the myriad ways in which we live that mission in service to our students. We are grateful for the report's many commendations, which are a source of encouragement for our faculty and staff.

We wish to express concern about one specific issue. The team report includes one recommendation under Standard 11 concerning systematic processes for the assessment of academic programs. In fact, Trinity has such systematic processes, and as the rest of the team report indicates, supported by the self-study and voluminous evidence in the [digital document room](#), systematic assessment is a pervasive way of life at Trinity and this includes all academic programs. Academic program reviews at Trinity occur on a published timetable supervised through the University Curriculum and Academic Policy Committee (U-CAP). While Trinity will be the first to acknowledge that not all program reviews are of equal quality, and some faculty need ongoing professional development to improve their ability to conduct excellent and systematic program reviews, we disagree with the overall implication of the team recommendation that such systematic processes do not exist at Trinity, or that evidence of some programs that lag in their execution of the assessment plan means that the entire system is deficient.

Trinity provided the team with the final self-study and access to the digital document room no less than two months prior to the team visit. The digital document room included voluminous assessment materials including the [multi-year program review reports](#) for every single academic program at Trinity. Nevertheless, from the nature of questions posed and demands for documentation immediately prior to and during the visit, it appeared that some team members had not read Trinity's materials thoroughly. Despite the fact that the Middle States standards do not dictate a particular format to demonstrate compliance, a team member with

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specific responsibility to review Standard 11 on Educational Offerings repeatedly demanded that the evidence about program reviews be presented in a certain way according to the format he used at his own institution.

Trinity has developed a robust culture of assessment over the years, and will continue to strive to improve all dimensions of assessment institutionally and academically, including academic program reviews and student learning outcomes assessment. As an institution with a very specific commitment to the education of students who often are on the margins of educational opportunity, and particularly low income women of color, Trinity has long embraced the imperative of demonstrating the effectiveness of its programs through systematic assessment. We will continue to do so, and we look forward to sharing Trinity's continuing progress on assessment in future reports.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Patricia McGuire". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "P" and "M".

Patricia McGuire
President