



State University
of New York

Self-Study Design for FIT's 2021-22 Middle States Accreditation

Submitted to the Middle States Commission on Higher Education
May 21, 2020

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I Institutional Overview

The Fashion Institute of Technology is an internationally recognized college for design, fashion, art, communications, and business. FIT was founded in 1944, became the second community college of the State University of New York (SUNY) in 1951, and received Middle States accreditation in 1957.

FIT's mission is as follows: To prepare students for professional excellence in design and business through rigorous and adaptable academic programs, applied learning, and innovative partnerships. A premier public institution in New York City, FIT fosters creativity, career focus, and a global perspective, and educates its students to embrace inclusiveness, sustainability, and a sense of community.

The college's most recent strategic plan, which was approved in 2013 under the leadership of President Joyce F. Brown, outlined the following vision for the college: "The college strives to be globally celebrated as the institution where students, scholars, and teachers cross traditional disciplinary boundaries to stimulate innovation, partner with creative industries worldwide, and develop innovative design and business solutions." To that effect, the strategic plan identified three primary goals:

1. **Academic and Creative Excellence**
FIT will provide a rigorous learning experience built on the highest standards of academic and scholarly excellence; an environment that promotes creativity and experimentation; and diverse experiential learning with a variety of industry partners.
2. **An Innovation Center**
The college will work with industries worldwide to help address key challenges, build an even stronger culture of innovation and entrepreneurship at FIT, and establish collaborations that translate creative ideas into action.
3. **An Empowering Student Community**
FIT will build an inclusive community in which students engage with, learn from, and inspire each other—discovering how their differences and similarities promote creativity, intellectual and personal growth, and understanding.

In 2019 FIT embarked on the process of drafting a new five-year strategic plan, which will be presented to the campus community in Spring 2020. The goals of the new plan will reflect and build upon the goals articulated in the 2013 strategic plan.

A central component of FIT's mission, and woven throughout the college's strategic plan, is a commitment to sustainability, diversity, and civility and the integration of these themes into its curriculum. Through the establishment of various councils, task forces, and committees, President Brown has provided opportunities for members of the FIT community to celebrate and honor cultural diversity, to incorporate sustainability into both operational and curricular activities, and to foster discussion of respectful ways of living and learning in a higher education environment.

Located in Manhattan's Chelsea neighborhood, FIT's campus consists of five academic buildings and four residence halls. This location, at the center of the fashion, advertising, visual arts, design, business, and communications industries, provides students exposure to their fields through internships, field trips, mentorship and industry-sponsored research, and competitions.

FIT is organized into four academic schools:

- The School of Art and Design
- The Jay and Patty Baker School of Business and Technology
- The School of Liberal Arts
- The School of Graduate Studies

The college offers 15 associate, 26 baccalaureate, and seven graduate-level degree programs, as well as 12 credit certificate programs. Art and Design programs are accredited by the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD) and the Council of Interior Design and Accreditation (CIDA), and seven programs in Business and Technology are accredited by the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP). The college's best-known programs are its majors in Fashion Design and Fashion Business Management. Other popular undergraduate programs are Advertising and Marketing Communications, Illustration, and Communication Design (with specializations in Advertising Design, Graphic Design, Packaging Design, and Visual Presentation and Exhibition Design). The college is unique in the country for offering degrees in subjects such as Menswear, Cosmetics and Fragrance Marketing, and was first to offer an accredited bachelor's degree in Toy Design. The college also offers two fully online degree programs in Fashion Business Management and International Trade and Marketing for the Fashion Industries.

Each of the 41 undergraduate programs is built on a strong foundation of liberal arts courses. The School of Liberal Arts itself offers two majors: Art History and Museum Professions and an interdisciplinary program in Film and Media Studies. Students are offered the opportunity to select from a wide array of minors, such as Creative Entrepreneurship, Color Studies, Ethics and Sustainability, International Politics, Mandarin Chinese, and Women and Gender Studies.

FIT's graduate programs focus on the creative industries, and includes MA programs in Art Market: Principles and Practices, Exhibition and Experience Design, and Fashion and Textile Studies: History, Theory, Museum Practice; MPS programs in Cosmetics and Fragrance and Global Fashion Management, and an MFA in Illustration. In 2017 FIT launched a new MFA in Fashion Design, the first such program within the SUNY system.

The Presidential Scholars program, available to academically exceptional students in all disciplines, offers special liberal arts courses, projects, colloquia, extracurricular activities, and off-campus visits designed to broaden horizons and stimulate discourse. Internships are a requirement for most undergraduate programs and are available to all matriculated students.

In addition to a variety of study-abroad options and overseas courses, FIT offers residential programs in Florence and Milan for Fashion Design and Fashion Business Management majors. In 2017 FIT began offering two associate-degree programs, Fashion Design and Fashion Business Management, at SUNY South Korea.

Through its Center for Continuing and Professional Studies, the college offers a vast selection of hundreds of credit and noncredit courses. Moreover, specialized English language studies are offered for international students, including FIT's Intensive English Language program, cosponsored with the School of Liberal Arts.

One of FIT's greatest strengths is its faculty, which includes 1,000 full- and part-time teaching faculty, consisting of traditional academics from the liberal arts, as well as leading industry professionals who are prize-winning artists, designers, authors, entrepreneurs, and industry pioneers. Approximately 75 non-classroom faculty provide key academic and student-support services.

Fall 2019 headcount enrollment totaled 8,726, with female students making up 82% of the total. Approximately 12% of FIT's students are Asian, 9% African American/Black, 21% Hispanic, 4% multiracial, 41% white, and 12% international. Most students come from within New York State: 38% are New York City residents, while 24% are residents of other areas of New York. Residents of other states make up 26% of students, and 12% are international. Eighty-four percent of FIT's undergraduate students are 24 years old or younger; 86% percent of undergraduate and 76% of graduate students attend full-time.

As a result of demographic trends in high school graduation rates within the state, full-time enrollment at FIT has declined in recent years. This, in addition to lower enrollment in non-credit programs, is one of the major challenges the college is currently facing. It has led to a temporary budget shortfall as the college adjusts to these trends. FIT's new strategic plan will provide creative solutions to the challenges and will focus on continuing to foster the culture of innovation that is central to the college's success.

FIT hosted Middle States Vice President Dr. Kushnood Haq on February 26, 2020, for its self-study design visit prior to the Coronavirus pandemic, which severely impacts FIT and all other institutions MSCHE accredits. Dr. Brown announced FIT's move to remote instruction on March 15th. For the remainder of the spring semester virtually all operations have been continuing remotely, and as of mid-May 2020, the time frame for a return to in-person instruction and on-site administrative operations is still undetermined. The Steering Committee and Working Groups had begun meetings prior to Dr. Haq's visit and have continued to meet virtually, beginning to identify evidence and gather documentation. FIT is following the substance of the self-study design drafted and presented in February, while making adjustments as necessary to prepare the self-study virtually.

II Institutional Priorities to be Addressed in the Self-Study

FIT will examine the following institutional priorities in the Self-Study:

1. Build upon FIT’s exceptional professional education by enhancing academic rigor and curricular flexibility.
2. Foster an inclusive, diverse community centered around supporting the student experience.
3. Continue to grow a culture of innovation through partnerships, advancing FIT’s position as public institution both locally and globally.

To create the first iteration of the institutional priorities, the co-Chairs led the Steering Committee through an exercise given to them for the Middle States Self-Study Institute. As part of this exercise, members were provided with and asked to review FIT’s mission, vision, last strategic plan, and goals of the strategic plan currently being formulated. In addition, they were provided with the most recent reports on the NSSE survey and SUNY-wide Student Opinion Survey, to provide broad assessment information. Committee members discussed the themes found in these materials and suggested potential priorities that would also align with Middle States Standards. The Strategic Planning Council at FIT includes broad representation, and several Steering Committee members sit on it; they were able to provide additional insight into the plan under development and to ensure that the Self-Study’s priorities align with it.

Based on the ideas contributed at the Steering Committee meeting, the co-chairs drafted the initial list. The President, the President’s Extended Cabinet, and the Faculty Senate Executive Committee were asked for feedback. The Steering Committee fine-tuned the list further at a subsequent meeting.

The chart below demonstrates the alignment of the institutional priorities with the Middle States Standards.

	Build upon FIT’s exceptional professional education by enhancing academic rigor and curricular flexibility.	Foster an inclusive, diverse community centered around supporting the student experience.	Continue to grow a culture of innovation through partnerships, advancing FIT’s position as a public institution both locally and globally.
Standard I: Mission and Goals	X	X	X
Standard II: Ethics and Integrity		X	
Standard III: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience	X	X	X
Standard IV. Support of the Student Experience		X	

Standard V. Educational Effectiveness Assessment	X	X	
Standard VI. Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement	X	X	X
Standard VII. Governance, Leadership, and Administration		X	

The charge for the Working Group for each Standard specifies which institutional priority or priorities the chapter should address. When a Standard addresses multiple institutional priorities, in some cases, the chapter will focus on the institutional priority that is most strongly connected.

III Intended Outcomes of the Self-Study

FIT intends to accomplish the following as part of the Self-Study process:

1. To demonstrate how FIT meets the MSCHE’s standards for accreditation and requirements of affiliation in the context of its mission.
2. To integrate the self-study with FIT's new strategic plan by evaluating readiness to implement strategic priorities and recommending opportunities for continuous improvement to achieve institutional mission and goals.
3. To engage members from across FIT’s community in an accurate self-evaluation, strengthening the campus community in the process.
4. To further develop a culture of evidence-based decision-making, inclusion, and transparency in communications.

IV Self-Study Approach

FIT has chosen the **standards-based approach** for two primary reasons. The timing of FIT’s strategic planning cycle is such that the institution is presently at the end of its current strategic plan, FIT Beyond 2020, and is in the process of creating the next iteration. The Strategic Planning Council has identified the new goals and is developing the related initiatives this year; the full plan will be released in or by May, 2020. While the Planning Council has shared the goal areas with the Steering Committee so that the Steering Committee can identify self-study institutional priorities that align with the strategic plan, given that the plan is not yet released, it is preferable to select a standards-based approach.

In addition, FIT seeks to use the self-study as an opportunity to become better informed about the recently revised Standards for Accreditation and Requirements of

Affiliation. Using a standards-based approach will help us focus upon the new Standards in our first Self-Study since they were revised.

V Organizational Structure of the Steering Committee and Working Groups

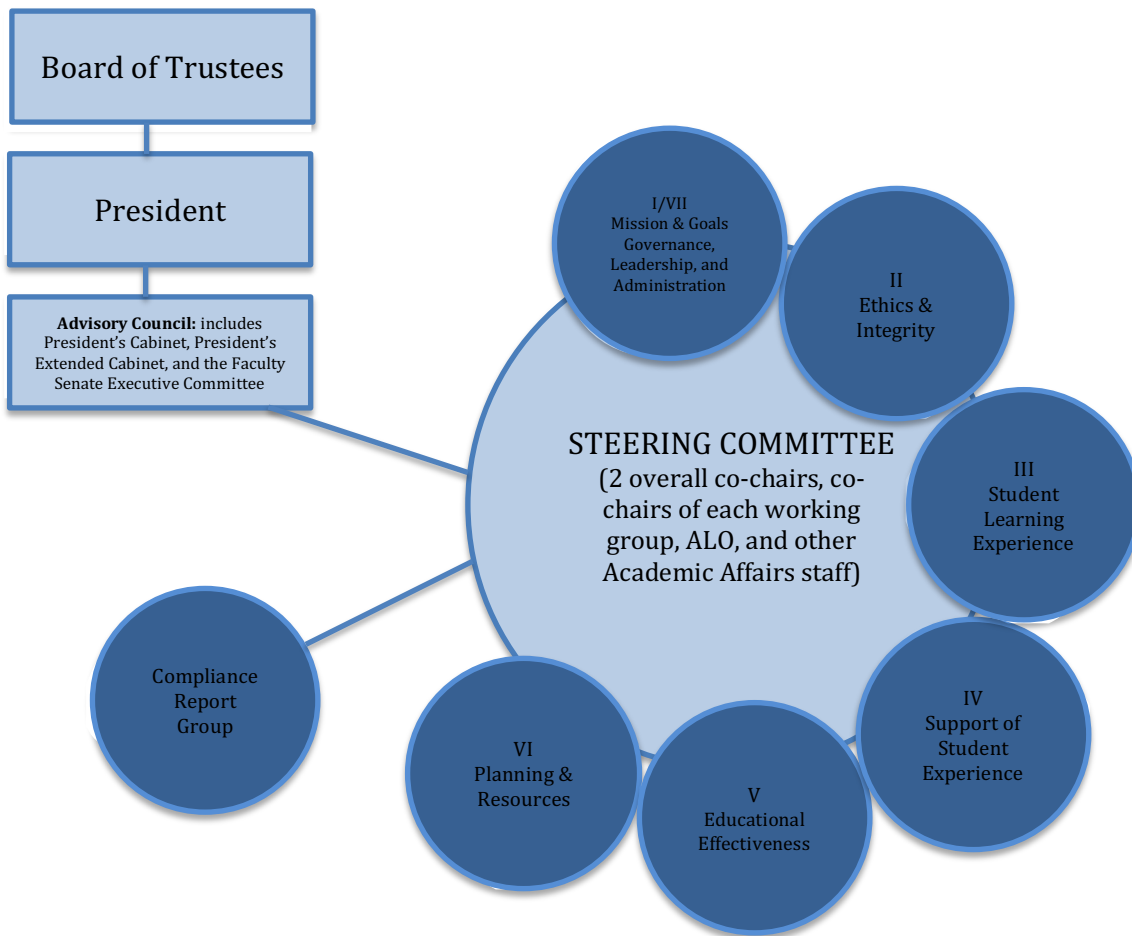
The organizational structure for the Middle States Self-Study process is designed to accomplish several objectives:

- It must allow for participation and involvement from the entire FIT community, including senior administrative leadership, faculty, staff, and students.
- It needs to be efficient in accomplishing its work on a defined timeline.
- It should be effective in collecting and funneling broad community contributions into a self-study document that is succinct, coherent, and provides strong evidence of FIT's compliance with Middle States Standards.

The organizational structure proposed seeks to accomplish this through three primary bodies:

- The Steering Committee is at the center of the process; its role is to oversee the Working Groups and to gather additional community feedback through town halls and web-based communication, in order to develop the Self-Study. It is led by two Self-Study co-Chairs.
- The Working Groups involve a wide range of participants within the FIT community; most Working Groups analyze a particular Middle States Standard, while one group covers two Standards.
- Finally, an Advisory Council provides for oversight and feedback from senior leadership at FIT.

The organizational structure is depicted below, on the next page; additional details about the role of each body follow.



Advisory Council:

The Advisory Council provides for feedback from key senior leaders on the Self-Study Design and the Self-Study Report to ensure that they adequately capture institutional issues. Specifically, the Advisory Council members will:

- Monitor progress of Self-Study through regular updates
- Provide feedback on Self-Study draft at specific, predetermined points in process

Composition: All members of the President's Cabinet, the President's Extended Cabinet, and the Faculty Senate Executive Committee. Some individuals within this group also serve on specific Working Groups and/or the Steering Committee.

At selected points in the process, time at Extended Cabinet meetings and Faculty Senate Executive Committee meetings will be reserved for Middle States updates. In addition, drafts of the Self-Study Design and Self-Study will be shared through email, with an invitation to provide feedback.

Steering Committee:

The Steering Committee plays the central role in the process; its primary charge is to produce a Self-Study draft. The Steering Committee does the following:

- Determines the intended outcomes for Self-Study;
- Develops the design of the Self-Study;
- Aligns the Self-Study process with FIT's Strategic Plan;
- Promotes and communicates the Self-Study process to all College constituencies;
- Establishes, charges, and oversees all Working Groups, coordinating their research;
- Ensures that the timetable is implemented as planned;
- Arranges for institution-wide review and responses to draft of the Self-Study, and responds to feedback; and
- Compiles and edits all chapters from the Working Groups, to create a coherent narrative that documents how FIT meets the Standards for Accreditation, highlighting strengths and opportunities for improvement.

Composition: Consists of Two Self-Study co-Chairs, plus the co-chairs (2) of each Working Group (except for Compliance). The Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO) and Assistant Dean of Institutional Research and Effectiveness serve as consultants.

Steering Committee Co-Chairs and Core Coordinating Group:

The Self-Study co-Chairs are assisted by several administrators from the Office of Academic Affairs, including the ALO. This group was convened to accomplish the preliminary work necessary to initiate the Self-Study process. It supports the co-Chairs by assisting in overall management. The co-Chairs, with assistance from the Core Coordinating Group, are charged with the following tasks:

- Providing a representative to communicate with the President and Advisory Council as to the progress of the Self-Study and the work of the Steering Committee and Working Groups;
- Communicating and scheduling with the MSCHE Liaison and the Evaluation Team, including making arrangements to host the Evaluation Team visit;
- Functioning as the editorial board for the Self-Study Design and Self-Study Report, with responsibility for editing the draft into its final written version;
- Overseeing the Evidence Inventory;
- Supporting Working-Group co-chairs by providing resources, consultation, and attending meetings as requested;
- Coordinating communication within the institution about the Self-Study process; and
- Overseeing the Compliance group and coordinating the Verification of Compliance Report with rest of Self-Study.

	Steering Committee Membership
Self-Study Co-Chairs	Rebecca Bauman, Associate Professor, Modern Languages and Cultures Carolyn Comiskey, Executive Director of Assessment
WG1: Standards I/VII	Patrick Knisley, Dean, School of Liberal Arts Jennifer LoTurco, Deputy to the President Robin Sackin, Professor and Chair, Fashion Business Management, and current President, Faculty Senate
WG2: Standard II	Daniel Benkendorf, Associate Professor, Social Sciences, and chair of Institutional Research Board (IRB) Eric Odin, Associate General Counsel
WG 3: Standard III	Todd Blumenthal, Assistant Professor, Fashion Business Management Deborah Klesenski-Rispoli, Assistant Dean of Curriculum
WG4: Standard IV	Suzanne McGillicuddy, Assistant Dean of Students Devon Vidal, Assistant Professor, and Director, Academic Advisement
WG5: Standard V	Shannon Maher, Assistant Professor and Chair, Home Products Brad Paris, Associate Professor and Chair, Photography
WG 6: Standard VI	Joanne Arbuckle, Deputy to the President for Industry Partnerships & Collaborative Programs Sherry Brabham, Treasurer, and VP for Finance & Administration Brooke Carlson, Associate Professor, Cosmetics and Fragrance Marketing and Management
Consultants	Darrell Glenn, Assistant Dean of Institutional Research & Effectiveness Yasemin Jones, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, ALO

Working Groups:

There are six Working Groups that form a part of the Self-Study structure. Standards 1 and 7 are combined into a single Working Group; all other Working Groups are devoted to a separate Standard. In addition, the Director of Policy and Compliance leads a group to develop the Compliance Report.

The Working Groups:

- Review the criteria for their MSCHE Standard in light of FIT’s mission and strategic priorities;
- Identify sources of information to address the assigned Standard and criteria and the lines of inquiry, such as colleagues, reports, websites and publications, and gather documentation for evidence of adherence to the Standard;
- Examine relevant documentation, processes and procedures related to the Standard under review, analyzing the extent to which FIT meets the Standard and criteria, and forming responses to the inquiry questions outlined in the Design for Self-Study; and
- Suggest opportunities for improvement related to the assigned Standard that will allow the institution to continue on its path of continuous growth and improvement.
- *Each Working Group will produce a final chapter narrative on their Standard, which will be used by the Steering Committee as a Self-Study draft.*

To facilitate coordination between Working Groups, the co-chairs of each group are members of the Steering Committee. The Working Group co-chairs will provide a brief update at each Steering Committee meeting, detailing their progress and sharing key findings and questions. This will enable the Steering Committee to manage redundancies and develop solutions to issues as they arise. Each Working Group will take minutes at each meeting and maintain a list of action items and assignments. The minutes will be sent to the co-chairs for review, so they can ensure the groups are on target and also organize collaboration in related areas.

Working Group co-chairs are asked to develop a work plan each semester, and coordinate and assign tasks to Working Group members, particularly for gathering and reviewing documentation, to ensure that workload is shared and efficient. One person will be named as the point person for providing documentation to the Evidence Inventory. In their first semester, Working Groups are charged with locating and gathering evidence, and submitting a report with an initial evidence list and a gap analysis. This initial report will alert the Steering Committee early to whether the groups have the information they need, and as to the documentation that has been identified.

An administrative coordinator will be assigned to support each Working Group, assisting with room reservations and other logistical support.

This overview of Working Group tasks each semester will help guide their work:

Spring 2020:

There are two key tasks for the initial semester:

1. Fully understand the assigned Standard(s), associated criteria, and the assigned Requirement(s) of Affiliation. Working group members should review resources from Middle States, including the video(s) on their Standard(s). They may also want to review past FIT Middle States reports and sample recent Self-Studies from other institutions. In addition, as the Standards should be interpreted in terms of FIT's institutional context, members should review FIT's Mission and the most recent strategic plan.
2. Determine the nature and location of documented evidence that FIT meets all aspects of the Standards, and gather this evidence. As part of this process:
 - List documents, processes, and procedures in support of each criteria. As appropriate, consult actively with the offices and individuals on campus with direct expertise and experience in the relevant subject area for additional information and documentation.
 - Gather and archive documents, following the Evidence Inventory guidelines. Submit initial evidence inventory by May 1, 2020.
 - Analyze FIT's evidence in terms of the Standard(s), identifying gaps in FIT's evidence, policies and/or practices. Identify areas in which documentation can be enhanced prior to Self-Study and propose plans to address these areas.
 - Submit gap analysis report by May 15, 2020.

Fall 2020

- Continue to collect documentation and information as needed.
- Engage campus communities related to the Standard, where relevant, through methods like attending regular meetings, listening tours and surveys.
- Produce a first draft of the chapter, linking criteria to specific evidence documents and including opportunities for improvement, by December 1, 2021.

Spring 2021

- Responding to feedback from Self-Study co-Chairs, the Steering Committee, and the Advisory Council, rewrite chapter into a final draft, due April 1, 2021.

Fall 2021

- Publicize the process and encourage the FIT community to respond to the Self-Study draft.
- Continue to support the process by attending town halls and being available for questions.

Spring 2022

- Support the Self-Study process by publicizing the MSCHE Team's Visit and being available to meet with team members.

Working Group Members and Specific Charges

Working Groups are comprised of members of the faculty, staff, administration, and student body. Overall, working group members are diverse in terms of college role, institutional longevity, age, race, gender and types of expertise. The specific composition of each Working Group has been determined by the topic of the Standard.

Working Group I and VII: Mission and Goals / Governance, Leadership, and Administration

This group covers two of the shorter standards, which are related. It will investigate and discuss FIT's mission and goals, including how they are developed, approved, publicized, supported and evaluated, as well as examine the system of governance and administration and how it enables FIT to realize its mission and goals.

This group will draft two chapters, for Standard I (6-8 pages) and Standard VII (8-10 pages).

The **Standard I** chapter will address **Requirement of Affiliation 7** and **all three Institutional Priorities**: 1. Build upon FIT's exceptional professional education by enhancing academic rigor and curricular flexibility; 2. Foster an inclusive, diverse community centered around supporting the student experience; and 3. Continue to grow a culture of innovation through partnerships, advancing FIT's position as public institution both locally and globally.

The **Standard VII** chapter will address **Requirement of Affiliation 12 and 13** and **Institutional Priority #2**: Foster an inclusive, diverse community centered around supporting the student experience.

Co-chairs

Patrick Knisley, Dean, School of Liberal Arts
Jennifer LoTurco, Deputy to the President
Robin Sackin, Professor and Chair, Fashion Business Management, and current President, Faculty Senate

Members

Mary Davis, Dean, School of Graduate Studies
Amy Garawitz, Director of Alumni Engagement
Tardis Johnson, Associate Dean, Student Support Services
Loretta Keane, VP for Communication & External Relations
Anne Kong, Associate Professor, Communication Design Pathways
Giacomo Oliva, VP of Academic Affairs
Deirdre Sato, Dean for International Education
Daniel Levinson Wilk, Associate Professor, Social Sciences
Student representative

Inquiry Questions, Standard 1:

What evidence is there that FIT meets the criteria established for Standard 1?

1. How does the mission and strategic plan support student learning, scholarly inquiry, and creative activities as appropriate to an institution such as FIT?
2. How does the recruitment of faculty, staff and administrators support the college's mission?
3. In what ways does the college cultivate innovation, diversity in all its iterations, social responsibility and sustainability, including institutional, economic and environmental sustainability?
4. How does the college engage in the assessment of its mission and goals?

Inquiry Questions, Standard 7

What evidence is there that FIT meets the criteria established for Standard 7?

1. How does the college define the governance structure that outlines the roles, responsibilities, and accountability for the decision making by each of the constituency, which would include the administration, faculty, staff and students?
2. In what ways does the college develop processes and procedures that are effective in fostering collaboration among faculty governance, the United College Employees of FIT and the administration?
3. How does the shared governance of the college promote quality teaching and learning as well as research and creative work?
4. To what extent does the college work to improve the practice of assessment of its governance, leadership and administration?

Working Group II: Ethics and Integrity

Working Group II will investigate and discuss how the institution acts with integrity, by honoring its contracts and commitments, adhering to its policies, and representing itself truthfully. Policies cover academic freedom, freedom of expression, and intellectual property rights; climate fostering respect for diversity; grievance policies and resolution for faculty, staff and students; conflict of interest; hiring, evaluation, and promotion practices; honesty in communications and recruiting/admissions; promotion of affordability and enabling of students to make informed decisions about debt; and compliance with various federal, state, and Commission regulations.

Working Group II will coordinate with the Verification of Compliance Taskforce, so these compliance documents may be appropriately referenced in Standard II, Criterion 8.

Working Group II will address **Institutional Priority #2: Foster an inclusive, diverse community centered around supporting the student experience.**

Co-chairs

Daniel Benkendorf, Associate Professor, Psychology, and chair of IRB
Eric Odin, Associate General Counsel

Members

Mark-Evan Blackman, Assistant Professor, Menswear
Anna Blume, Professor, History of Art
Shawn Carter, Associate Professor, Fashion Business Management
Erika Coble, Senior HR Generalist
Bonnie Duke, Special Assistant to the VP of Enrollment Management and Student Success
Griselda Gonzalez, Director of Policy & Compliance
Ron Milon, Chief Diversity Officer
Lucy Collins Payne, Assistant Professor, Social Sciences
Terrence Peavy, Assistant Vice President, Enrollment Management
Gwendolyn Ferguson Pugh, Executive Director for Academic Affairs Personnel Administration
Jonathan Vatner, Staff Writer, Communications and External Relations

Inquiry Questions, Standard 2

What evidence is there that FIT meets the criteria established for Standard 2?

1. How does FIT promote and protect academic rights and freedoms?
2. How does FIT promote a diverse, inclusive, civil, and safe climate?
3. How does the College engage in and promote transparent and ethical practices?
4. How does the College maintain compliance with governing laws, policies, and guidelines?

Working Group III: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience

Working Group III will investigate and discuss student learning experiences in all modalities, particularly in terms of rigor, coherence, and the role of faculty, and with special attention to essential skills.

Working Group III will collect evidence to document **Requirement of Affiliation 15**. Working Group III will address **Institutional Priority #1**: Build upon FIT's exceptional professional education by enhancing academic rigor and curricular flexibility.

Co-chairs

Todd Blumenthal, Assistant Professor, Fashion Business Management
Deborah Klesenski-Rispoli, Assistant Dean, Curriculum

Members:

Mary Capozzi, Adjunct Assistant Professor, Fashion Design
Brenda Cowan, Associate Professor, Exhibition and Experience Design
Tamara Cupples, Executive Director, Online Learning and Academic Technologies
Brian Fallon, Associate Professor-Director, Writing Studio
Helen Gaudette, Assistant Dean for International Education

Jacqui Jenkins, Acting Executive Director of Strategic Planning and Institutional Effectiveness
Nomi Kleinman, Associate Professor, Textile/Surface Design
Elaine Maldonado, Professor-Director, Faculty Development and the Center for Excellence in Teaching
Michele Nagel, Center for Continuing and Professional Studies
James Pearce, Manager Emerging Technologies
Troy Richards, Dean, School of Art and Design
Carli Spina, Head of Research and Instructional Studies, Gladys Marcus Library
Melissa Tombro, Professor, English and Communication Studies
Student representative

Inquiry Questions, Standard 3

What evidence is there that FIT meets the criteria established for Standard 3?

1. To what extent do FIT degree and credential programs foster coherent and rigorous student learning experiences while preparing students for their future roles as innovative members of the creative industries?
2. What processes are in effect to ensure FIT faculty are well-qualified and equipped to support the design, delivery and assessment of student learning experiences?
3. To what extent are faculty able to maintain and advance their expertise in their fields, and in what ways does the institution provide innovative strategies in support of their professional development?
4. Are our academic policies, procedures, and processes clearly articulated and available to students, faculty and staff, and are appropriate administrative operational systems in place to support this?
5. How well do the linkages between the program review process, curriculum development, FIT's internal governance process and institutional resources support curricular innovation and continuous improvement?
6. Is FIT's General Education program effective in offering sufficient scope to draw students into new areas of intellectual experience, expanding their cultural and global awareness and cultural sensitivity, and preparing them to make well-reasoned judgments outside as well as within their academic field?

Working Group IV: Support of the Student Experience.

This group will investigate and discuss the ways the support system enhances the quality of the learning environment and fosters student success.

Working Group IV will address **Institutional Priority #2: Foster an inclusive, diverse community centered around supporting the student experience.**

Co-chairs

Suzanne McGillicuddy, Assistant Dean of Students
Devon Vidal, Assistant Professor, and Director, Academic Advisement

Members

Frantz Alcindor, Director, Career and Internship Services
Amber Carpenter-Lagattuta, Assistant Director, Registration & Records
Christie Graziano, Counselor, Student Life
Deborah Levine, Coordinator, Academic Skills
Yasemin Levine, Professor, Political Science and Executive Director, Presidential Scholars Program
Jeffrey Manning, Associate Director, Residential Life
Taur Orange, Director, Educational Opportunity Programs
Erika Rohrbach, Professor-Director International Student Services
Ajoy Sarkar, Professor, Textile Development and Management
Student representative

Inquiry Questions, Standard 4

What evidence is there that FIT meets the criteria established for Standard 4?

1. Are FIT's admission and student support policies and processes aligned with its institutional mission and geared towards student success, retention and degree completion?
2. How does FIT identify those students who require additional support and enable them to attain their educational goals?
3. In what ways do FIT academic and student support services enhance student learning, foster student success and provide co-curricular experiences to enhance the overall student experience?
4. How does FIT assess its practices, policies, and programs related to support of the student experience?

Working Group V: Educational Effectiveness Assessment

This group will investigate and discuss the establishment and assessment of educational goals, and the use of assessment results for continuous improvement.

Working Group V will collect evidence regarding **Requirement of Affiliations 8 and 9**. Working Group V will address **Institutional Priority #1**: Build upon FIT's exceptional professional education by enhancing academic rigor and curricular flexibility.

Co-chairs

Shannon Maher, Assistant Professor and Chair, Home Products Development
Brad Paris, Associate Professor and Chair, Photography

Members

Sarah Blazer, Assistant Professor, Writing Center
Eric Daniels, Associate Professor, Interior Design
Christina Diggs, Director of Residential Life
Naomi Gross, Professor and Assistant Chair of Fashion Business Management
Meg Joseph, Associate Professor, Global Fashion Management
Su Ku, Assistant Professor, Fashion Design

Maria Rothenberg, Associate Professor and Instructional Services & Assessment Librarian
Nadean Wilson, Counselor Associate, Academic Advising
Liberal Arts faculty member, TBD

Inquiry Questions, Standard 5

What evidence is there that FIT meets the criteria established for Standard 5?

1. Do student learning outcomes exist at the institutional, program, and course levels, and to what extent do they accurately represent and clearly communicate goals for student learning?
2. Does the college possess, maintain and implement an organized and systematic, faculty-led student learning assessment process that results in the collection of information used to determine the extent to which students are achieving stated learning outcomes?
3. Are the assessment methods used appropriate for the programs at FIT, and do they provide faculty with useful information about student learning? To what extent are assessment results at each level utilized for the purpose of improving student learning?
4. Are assessment results clearly and regularly communicated to internal and external constituents?
5. Is the effectiveness of the assessment processes used to improve educational effectiveness assessed periodically and improved over time?

Working Group VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement

This group will investigate and discuss the planning and the use of fiscal and human resources, as well as physical and technical infrastructure, to support institutional goals.

Working Group VI will collect evidence for **Requirement of Affiliation 10 and 11**. Working Group VI will address **all three Institutional Priorities**: 1. Build upon FIT's exceptional professional education by enhancing academic rigor and curricular flexibility; 2. Foster an inclusive, diverse community centered around supporting the student experience; and 3. Continue to grow a culture of innovation through partnerships, advancing FIT's position as public institution both locally and globally.

Co-chairs

Joanne Arbuckle, Deputy to the President for Industry Partnerships & Collaborative Programs

Sherry Brabham, Treasurer, and VP for Finance & Administration

Brooke Carlson, Associate Professor, Cosmetics and Fragrance Marketing and Management

Members

Laurence Baach, Acting Vice President, Information Technology & CIO

Roberta Elins, Professor, Advertising and Market Communications, President of UCE

Steven Frumkin, Dean at Jay & Patty Baker School of Business and Technology

Darrell Glenn, Assistant Dean, Institutional Research & Effectiveness

Sydney Grimes, Associate Vice President of Academic Operations
Cynthia Glass, Vice President of Human Resource Management and Labor Relations
Bayard King, Acting Associate Vice President for Finance
June Ng, Director, Space Management & Planning
Esther Oliveras, Coordinator of Faculty Services
Emre Ozsoz, Associate Professor, Social Sciences

Inquiry Questions, Standard 6

What evidence is there that FIT meets the criteria established for Standard 6?

1. To what extent does FIT have methods, practices, software systems or other technology, data, and reporting resources in place that are linked to and integrate financial planning, budgeting, and continuous improvements in services and programs across the institution?
2. To what extent are units' and departments' financial planning and budgeting processes aligned with the institution's mission and strategic goals/objectives, and to what extent are resource allocation requests and decisions based on strategic plans, transparency and the results of assessment, especially student learning assessment?
3. Does the college have a comprehensive planning process for facilities, infrastructure, and technology that includes consideration for sustainability and deferred maintenance, and that is linked to strategic and financial planning processes?

Verification of Compliance Group

The group is charged with completing the Institutional Federal Compliance Report and gathering the supporting evidence of compliance in the areas designated by MSCHE. In addition, it will collect evidence for the Requirements of Affiliation 1-6 and 14. The group will coordinate with Standard II to report compliance documents necessary for Standard II, Criterion 8. Specific information and membership is found in the Verification of Compliance Strategy section of the Self-Study Design.

VI Guidelines for Reporting

The primary task for each Working Group is to prepare a draft of a Self-Study chapter, drawing on documentation from the Evidence Inventory. To accomplish this in an organized fashion allowing for evidence gathering and feedback, Working Groups will submit interim reports each semester, due as follows:

May 1, 2020: Initial Evidence Inventory list and documentation

May 15, 2020: Gap analysis report, assessing strength of evidence and suggesting where documentation may need enhancement.

December 1, 2020: First draft of assigned chapter(s).

April 1, 2021: Final draft of assigned chapter(s).

Each drafted chapter should be 10-12 pages and demonstrate, through narrative, examples, and references to documents in the Evidence Inventory, how FIT meets the Standard and associated criteria. In addition, the chapter will analyze institutional strengths and challenges in relationship to the assigned standard. Finally, the chapter will identify Standard-related opportunities for improvement, particularly as they relate to achievement of FIT's mission and strategic goals, as well as the Self-Study institutional priorities, and are supported by assessment evidence. The template below provides guidance for constructing the chapter.

Template for Chapters:

Introduction:

- Summary paragraph describing how the Standard is met and which institutional priorities were addressed

Evidence Inventory and Collaborations

- List of documentation to be included in Evidence Inventory
- Description of collaboration and strategies for avoiding undue duplication

Analytical Report/Findings

- Narrative that clearly and concisely summarizes compliance with the Standard and each associated criterion. Narrative should also specify strengths and challenges that need to be addressed, supported by clear evidence.
- Narrative that highlights campus activities and initiatives that meet the Standard and foster progress towards the Institutional Priorities to be covered in chapter, emphasizing continuous improvement.
- Requirements of Affiliation addressed within section

Conclusions

- Brief overview of findings: compliance with Standard, strengths, and challenges
- Based on analytical report, evidence-based opportunities for improvement and innovation and initial strategies for addressing them. List of **up to three** opportunities for improvement, with suggested actions needed to sustain or enhance strengths as well as meet challenges. These will be substantive in nature and consistent with the Working Group's charge and assigned Standard(s) and institutional priorities.

The Working Group chapters will be gathered by the Steering Committee and edited and revised into a coherent document written in a single voice. It will be revised further as it is shared with the President's Office and the FIT community in the summer and early fall of 2021. The Chair of the Evaluation Team will visit in fall of 2021 and provide further feedback before the final revisions are completed.

Other Guidelines

- Please consider only the 10 year period since FIT’s last self-study, and focus most strongly on the period since FIT’s 2017 PRR.
- Tone should be constructive and forward-looking.
- Although chapters will contain descriptive information, on the whole, the chapter should be analytical and evaluative, and identify specific documents used when making a conclusion or recommendation.
- Avoid FIT jargon when possible.
- The narrative should generally follow order of criteria as listed in the standard.
- Infuse discussion of the institutional priorities relevant to each standard throughout the chapter.
- Use a comma before the word “and” at the end of a series (serial comma/Oxford comma).
- Write out an acronym in full upon first use, indicating the acronym in parentheses. Thereafter, use the acronym, i.e., Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT).
- Write in the third person.
- Use titles or positions in place of individual names
- When listing names, order them alphabetically
- Use APA format for all citations.

Editorial Style and Format for Reports

Word Processing Program

Microsoft Word for text; Microsoft Excel for spreadsheets and graphs, sent as separate files.

Fonts

Times New Roman, 12 Point

Margins

1 ½” left margin; all other margins 1”

Left-justified

Pages

Use page numbers, bottom right-hand side

No indentations for paragraph, put extra space between paragraphs

Bullet lists are acceptable

Spacing

Single spacing

Refer to the editorial style guide of Communications and External Relations for additional guidance: <https://www.fitnyc.edu/cer/toolkit/guides/usage-guide.php>

VII Organization of the Final Self-Study Report

Organization of Final Self-Study Report

1. Table of Contents
2. Executive Summary: Institutional overview, summary of each chapter, summary of opportunities for improvement
3. Introduction: Brief institutional history, institutional overview including mission and strategic goals, description of student population, major changes and recent initiatives and programs, brief outline of self-study scope and process
4. Standard I: Mission and Goals
5. Standard II: Ethics and Integrity
6. Standard III: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience
7. Standard IV: Support of the Student Experience
8. Standard V: Educational Effectiveness Assessment
9. Standard VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement
10. Standard VII: Governance, Leadership, and Administration
11. Conclusion and Summary of Findings and Opportunities for Improvement; synthesis and discussion of institutional strengths as related to MSCHE standards and requirements of affiliation; synthesis and discussion of opportunities for improvement.

Glossary of Terms

Appendices

- Evidence Inventory
- References
- List of Participants

VIII Verification of Compliance Strategy

Griselda Gonzalez, Director of Policy and Compliance, will chair a task force to complete the Verification of Compliance. In addition, she will serve as a member of Working Group II: Ethics and Integrity to help coordinate reporting in this area.

The following individuals will assist her on the task force:

Rita Cammarata, Director of Records and Registration
Tamara Cupples, Executive Director for Online Learning and Academic Technologies
Gwen Ferguson-Pugh, Executive Director for Academic Affairs
Harold Lederman, Internal Auditor
Terence Peavy, Assistant Vice President for Enrollment Services
Shadia Sachedina, Assistant Vice President for Student Services and Dean of Students

The chair and supporting task force is charged to:

1. Complete the Institutional Federal Compliance Report to demonstrate that FIT complies with eight specific federal higher education requirements. The Commission requires verification of institutional compliance in the following areas:
 - Student identity verification in distance and correspondence education
 - Transfer of credit policies and articulation agreements
 - Title IV program responsibilities
 - Institutional records of student complaints
 - Required information for students and the public
 - Standing with State and other accrediting agencies
 - Contractual relationships
 - Assignment of credit hours
2. Gather documentation to demonstrate that FIT meets the Requirements of Affiliation 1-6 and 14.

Timeline:

The task force will meet approximately six times over the course of the self-study. It will meet three times in spring 2020 for planning, and once each subsequent semester (fall 2020, spring 2021, and fall 2021). At the end of each semester, the task force will provide a report to the Steering Committee, as follows:

April 2020: Brief report assessing strength of documentation demonstrating compliance and updating the group on Verification of Compliance activities.

December 2020: Submit draft of compliance template and evidence inventory for assigned Requirements of Affiliation, and provide brief report summarizing current status and outlining remaining work.

May 2021: Submit second draft of template and evidence inventory for assigned requirements.

December 2021: Submit final report to Steering Committee. The Institutional Federal Compliance Report and supporting evidence should be combined into a single, bookmarked PDF file. The Institutional Federal Compliance Report will be uploaded in conjunction with all other self-study materials, no later than six weeks prior to the scheduled on-site Evaluation Visit.

IX Self-Study Timetable

This timetable was designed by the Steering Committee before the COVID-19 pandemic and is currently being followed. Should adjustments be necessary as the situation evolves, FIT will contact MSCHE.

Timeframe	Activity
Summer 2019	MSCHE invites FIT to fall 2019 self-study institute. President appoints self-study co-chairs and Steering Committee.
Fall 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steering Committee begins meeting • Co-Chairs and ALO attend Self-Study Institute, October 28-29th • Steering Committee creates draft of Self-Study Design • Public website and email for process created • Working groups appointed by the President
January 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-Study Design draft shared with President for feedback • Self-Study Design draft submitted to MSCHE VP
Spring 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working Groups begin to meet, gathering initial evidence for their standards. Initial Evidence Inventory due May 1, 2020. • Middle States VP visits to provide feedback on self-study design. Steering Committee will revise and submit to MSCHE for approval • Co-Chairs communicate with locations abroad • Verification of Compliance task force begins meeting; report assessing strength of compliance documentation due April 30, 2020. • Working Groups conduct gap analysis, report due by May 15, 2020.
Summer 2020	Self-study design revised with feedback from MSCHE VP, resubmitted and approved by MSCHE
Fall 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working Groups continue meeting, reaching out to community and gathering any additional evidence needed for chapter, including from locations abroad

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working Groups submit chapter by Dec. 1, 2020 Verification of Compliance task force continues meeting; draft report of compliance template and evidence due Dec. 1, 2020
January 2021	Steering Committee provides feedback on chapter drafts
Spring 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members of Advisory Council provide feedback on selected drafts relevant to their areas Working Groups share drafts with relevant stakeholders for comments Working Groups revise chapters; final draft due April 1, 2021 Middle States selects and confirms Evaluation Team Chair in consultation with FIT Revision of Verification of Compliance Template by April 1, 2021
Summer 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Core Coordinating Group creates draft out of submitted Working Group chapters, rewriting in a single voice and eliminating duplication President reviews Self-Study draft and provides feedback. Core Coordinating Group incorporates presidential feedback. CER begins designing Self-Study document. Draft finalized for posting for community comment by Convocation
Fall 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication to community encouraging comments and feedback Draft presented at town halls and meetings of campus groups Review and audit Evidence Inventory Draft send to Evaluation Team Chair two weeks before fall visit Evaluation Team Chair's Preliminary Visit Completion of Verification of Compliance Report by end of semester
Spring 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final Self-Study, Evidence Inventory, and Verification of Compliance completed six weeks prior to Team visit and uploaded to MSCHE Portal Visit from Evaluation Team in March
June 2022	Commission meets to determine accreditation action

X Communication Plan

The Steering Committee is charged with promoting and communicating with the entire campus community about the Self-Study process and gathering input. The communication plan outlines several strategies for communication, to allow not only for the sharing of important information and updates, but also to foster conversations about FIT. This plan is particularly important to achieve FIT's intended outcomes for the Self-Study, to foster a sense of inclusion among the community by transparently communicating about the institution's successes, challenges, and opportunities for improvement.

Forum/Method	Timing	Communication Method and Audience
Public Website	Ongoing	Linked to FIT's page on accreditation, the Middle States 2022 webpages will provide a fixed space for the public to find information about the Self-Study process. Information will include a timeline, the list of Steering Committee and Working Group members, and updates each semester.
MyFit Website	Ongoing	This space in FIT's intranet will be a vehicle for sharing documents with faculty, staff, and students. The Self-Study Design will be posted here before it has been officially approved by Middle States. The Self-Study draft will be shared for feedback in fall 2021.
MiddleStates2022 e-mail	Each semester	MiddleStates2022@fitnyc.edu has been established and is monitored by the Self-Study co-Chairs. A campus-wide message will be sent out from this address with an update each semester. In addition, this email will be used to collect feedback from campus constituents throughout the process.
Board of Trustees	Each Semester	Each semester, the co-Chairs will provide a brief written update for the President to share with the Board of Trustees.
President's Cabinet	Twice each semester	The Vice President of Academic Affairs will provide brief updates twice a semester.
Extended Cabinet	Each semester	The co-Chairs will provide update to the Extended Cabinet once per semester.
Faculty Senate	Each semester	Update provided to Faculty Senate Executive Committee once each semester. Presentation will be made to Faculty Senate in Fall 2021. Requests for feedback on drafts made through Faculty Senate.
Student Government	Each semester	Beginning in spring 2020, members of the Steering Committee will update Student Government on progress and ask for participation and feedback when appropriate.
Convocation	Each semester	Updates will be given at Convocation, which is attended by faculty, staff, and administrators each term. In fall 2019, President Brown announced the

		beginning of the process.
Town Halls	Fall 2021	Town Hall meetings will be organized in Fall 2021 to discuss the Self-Study draft and gather responses.
FIT Newsroom	Fall 2020 and Fall 2021	The biweekly newsletter for the FIT community will update the community in fall 2020, to report on progress, and in fall 2021, to ask for feedback on the draft self-study.
Working Group Communication	Ongoing	Working Groups are charged with gathering input where needed from campus constituents. Working Groups will use tools such as surveys, interviews, or focus groups, and will communicate with committees or groups related to their assigned Standards.

XI Evaluation Team Profile

FIT would benefit from Evaluation Team members who collectively have experience with:

- Similarly-sized institutions that are a part of large public systems similar to SUNY, such as Pennsylvania or Maryland
- Community colleges that also offer higher level degrees, matching FIT's academic degree profile
- Institutions in urban settings, with a mix of residential and commuter students (particularly for the Student Affairs expert)
- Institutions with a predominantly unionized faculty and staff
- Institutions specializing in career-focused undergraduate education

In addition, it would be useful to have to representation in the following areas:

- Expertise in all aspects of the creative industries (including the business side)
- A liberal arts faculty member who works at an institution where liberal arts supports professional majors
- Experience in advancing innovation in an educational institution
- Familiarity with a range of assessment methods, including methods commonly used in Art & Design and qualitative approaches (for the Assessment reviewer)

Characteristics in the Team Chair

- Senior leadership experience
- Experience with public, unionized institutions
- A broad institutional perspective with experience considering multiple different aspects of the academic and administrative components of higher education

Peers and Competitors:

FIT's unusual profile as a public institution offering professional education for the fashion and creative industries at the associate's, baccalaureate, and master's levels makes it challenging to identify comparable peers. FIT's School of Art & Design is peers with, but also competes with private institutions specializing in art and design or

the fashion business, especially those based in NYC (e.g. The New School/Parsons, Pratt, School of Visual Arts, LIM College), and evaluators from these institutions should be avoided. Broadly speaking, FIT competes with many other institutions in New York City for students.

While FIT cannot list exact aspirational peers, our Self-Study evaluation represents an opportunity to learn from team members from institutions we admire and would like to emulate in some ways. In particular, evaluators from institutions that are leaders in experiential and/or co-op educational models, or with strength in promoting innovation and technology, would align with our mission and strategic goals. Examples of such institutions include Drexel University, RIT, the University of Cincinnati, Carnegie Mellon, and MIT. FIT is open to hosting evaluation team members from outside the Middle States region.

Largest Programs by Enrollment:

FIT’s largest two programs are Fashion Business Management and Advertising Marketing Communications, both in the Jay & Patty Baker School of Business and Technology. The next largest are Fashion Design and Illustration, both in the School of Art and Design. All degrees at FIT, whether in art and design, business, the liberal arts, or graduate studies, are career-focused and related in some ways to what can broadly be called the fashion and creative industries.

Fall 2019 Enrollment, Degree-Seeking Students: Total 8258	
School of Art & Design: 3539 students	
Fashion Design	1168
Illustration	463
Communications Design	332
Interior Design	288
Photography	273
Fine Arts	254
11 additional programs, ranging from 21 to 120 students each	
School of Business & Technology: 4370 students	
Fashion Business Management	2121
Advertising Marketing Communications	1286
International Trade Marketing	316
Production Management Fashion Related Industries	191
Textile Development and Marketing	146
5 additional programs, ranging from 33 to 96 students each	
School of Liberal Arts: 131 students	
Two programs: 48 and 83 students	
School of Graduate Studies: 218 students	
7 programs, ranging from 20-40 students each	

XII Evidence Inventory

To make the process more manageable, certain individuals will take primary responsibility for the Evidence Inventory. Self-Study co-Chair Carolyn Comiskey will serve as overall manager, supported by staff in the Office of Academic Affairs. In addition, each Working Group will name an evidence point person. This small group will be able to work together to avoid multiple requests for the same documentation and multiple copies of the same documents. This group will also coordinate with the co-chairs of the NASAD self-study and the co-chairs of the ACBSP accreditation process.

After consultation with FIT's IT department, a shared Google drive has been established. This will be the location for collecting all of the documents that are identified as potentially supporting the Self-Study. A master inventory spreadsheet has been created, as well as a master evidence folder. The Self-Study co-Chairs and Steering Committee will gather an initial set of documents that multiple groups are likely to rely on, and that FIT is certain to use in the Self-Study, such as the most recent strategic plan, the mission statement, and the catalog, and locate those within the master folder.

The master inventory spreadsheet lists each document, with a document ID, a short title, a quick description, and a notation as to where it can be found (a link to a website or the working group folder where it is located). In addition, the Standards supported by each document are noted in columns on the right. Each Working Group has its own tab on the master inventory spreadsheet, for listing documents gathered by the group and noting which criteria they support.

A folder has been set up for each Working Group to gather evidence. In spring 2020, each Working Group will collect evidence for its Standard in the assigned folder, with the point person listing documents on the spreadsheet tab for the group. The point person is charged with ensuring that documents are named clearly and consistently, with an indication of document date in the file name. When a Working Group seeks documents that cannot be collected by the members themselves, they will email the small evidence coordination group with the request, so that requests to offices can be coordinated and documents can be shared.

As the Self-Study narrative is drafted, the contents of the Evidence Inventory will be reviewed and updated as appropriate. When the Self-Study is drafted in summer 2021, documents will be copied from individual Working Group folders and put in the master Evidence Inventory folder, in preparation for final submission. While abridged and PDF'd evidence will be selected to upload to Middle States, all materials will be kept on file in unabridged versions, in case of requests from the visiting team.