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Middle States Commission on Higher Education

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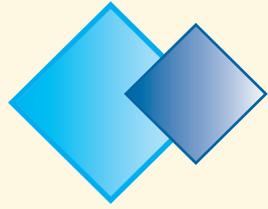
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#### Recommended Citation

on Higher Education, Middle States Commission, "Middle States 90th Anniversary" (2009). *Middle States Information and Publications*. 6.

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90th Anniversary 1919-2009

M I D D L E S T A T E S

COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION

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HIGHLIGHTS  
FROM THE COMMISSION'S  
**FIRST 90 YEARS**

# 1919-2009

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 90-YEAR HISTORY OF THE Middle States Commission on Higher Education

### The Formation of MSCHE

The origins of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education's parent organization, the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools (MSA), can be traced to a meeting of activist college and university presidents in February 1887. The Association created the Commission on Higher Education in



1919, known then and until December 1969, as the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education.

The first 1887 meeting was held to explore “the feasibility of calling a meeting of college authorities, with the objects of establishing closer relationships with one another and of procuring certain legislation in favor of educational

institutions tending to this result.”

The presidents at this meeting chartered themselves as the College Association of Pennsylvania, but soon thereafter the organization was re-named the Association of the Colleges and Preparatory Schools of the Middle States and Maryland. Many of the educational luminaries of the day contributed to the formation of the Association, including the presidents of Swarthmore College, Columbia University, Cornell University, the University of Pennsylvania, and Princeton University, as well as the headmasters of The Friends School (Washington, D.C.) and The Lawrenceville School.

The New England Association of Schools and Colleges was founded in 1885; the North Central Association of Schools and Colleges and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools were both founded in 1895; the Northwest Association of Colleges and Universities was established in 1917, and the Western Association of Schools and Colleges was created in 1924.

The initial objectives of the Middle States Association were to standardize the qualifications required for admission to college; to determine the desired characteristics for college preparatory schools; to recommend courses of study for both colleges and schools; to foster relationships among schools, colleges, and the government; and to study and recommend best practices of organization and governance. During these early years, the Association's discussions on the standardization of academic credentials led to the

on Secondary Schools, formed a new Committee on Institution Wide Accreditation (CIWA) to recommend accreditation actions on schools that span the K-12 continuum.

In 1992, the MSA trustees granted wide ranging autonomy to each of the three Commissions in the areas of finance, policy, and personnel. In 1994, the Association, which had originally been incorporated in the State of New York, was re-incorporated in the State of Delaware. A decade later, in 2002, the Middle

*The Association's discussions on the standardization of academic credentials led to the creation of The College Board and The Carnegie Unit as ways to assure quality of academic offerings and the trustworthiness of the participating institutions.*

creation of The College Board and The Carnegie Unit as ways to assure quality of academic offerings and the trustworthiness of the participating institutions.

As previously noted, MSA formed the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education in 1919. Shortly thereafter, in 1921, it created the Commission on Secondary Schools. In 1978, MSA established a third accreditation unit, the Assembly of Elementary Schools, which 10 years later became the Commission on Elementary Schools. This newest commission, along with the Commission

States Association was re-incorporated again, this time in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

During the formative years, the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education was based at Columbia University in New York City, and later in Newark, New Jersey. The Commission on Secondary Schools was located at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. In 1976, the two Commissions relocated together to the University City Science Center in Philadelphia, where they are still based today.

## Starting Accreditation

Accreditation, the ultimate and current mission of the Middle States Association, was introduced with the formation of the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education in 1919. According to Karl Miller's 73-year *Review of the Association* (1961), the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education was the result of meetings between the late Edward H. Magill, the then-president of Swarthmore College, and other higher education leaders, who wanted to work together on issues of common concern and to influence legislation that would favor educational institutions.

A later report noted that the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education "adopted a definition and standards for the colleges of liberal arts and sciences... The definition and standards adopted are similar in character to those adopted by other regional associations and other bodies interested in the same problems..." The Commission on Institutions of Higher Education and the Commission on Secondary Schools established the concept of peer evaluation in the region and contributed to the evolving collegiality between the two levels of education.



## *58 institutions were on the Commission's initial approval list in 1921.*

After two years of work, the Commission met in Houston Hall at the University of Pennsylvania on October 23, 1921, and approved a list of 58 institutions that were to be recognized as “approved” institutions for the 1921-22 academic year. The list was approved by the Association at its annual meeting in November 1921.

### **The institutions that were on the Commission's initial “approval” list in 1921 were:**

<p>Adelphi University (formerly Adelphi College)            Alfred University            Allegheny College            Barnard College            Bryn Mawr College            Bucknell University            Canisius College            Colgate University            College of Mount St. Vincent (formerly College of Mount St. Vincent-on-the-Hudson)            College of New Rochelle            College of Saint Elizabeth (NJ)            Columbia University            Cornell University            Dickinson College            Elmira College            Fordham University            Franklin and Marshall College            Georgetown University            Gettysburg College (formerly Pennsylvania College of Gettysburg)            Goucher College            Hamilton College            Haverford College            Hobart and William Smith Colleges (formerly Hobart College and William Smith College)            Howard University            Hunter College            Johns Hopkins University            Lafayette College            Lehigh University            Manhattan College</p>	<p>Marywood College            Muhlenberg College            New York University            Pennsylvania State University (formerly Pennsylvania State College)            Princeton University            Rutgers University            Seton Hill College            St. John's University (formerly St. John's College of Brooklyn)            St. Lawrence University            St. Vincent College and Seminary (formerly St. Vincent College)            State University of New York at Buffalo (formerly University of Buffalo)            Swarthmore College            Syracuse University            Temple University            The Catholic University of America            The City College of New York            Trinity College (DC)            Union College (formerly Union University)            University of Delaware            University of Maryland at College Park            University of Pennsylvania            University of Pittsburgh            University of Rochester            Ursinus College            Vassar College            Villanova University (formerly Augustinian College of Villanova)            Washington and Jefferson College            Wells College            Westminster College</p>
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Although statistics alone don't tell the entire story of how the Commission on Higher Education has grown over the past several decades, it is helpful to compare numbers from 1962 with the present. In 1962, the Commission accredited a total of 295 institutions, conducting 35 evaluations and 47 follow-up activities. During that year a total of 306 individuals participated in these evaluations. Forty seven years later, in 2009, the Commission accredits more than 500 institutions, and conducts, on average, nearly 200 evaluations per year involving close to 1,000 volunteers.

## Evolution of Accreditation Standards and Processes

In the early years, institutions “verified” their compliance with accreditation guidelines by completing “definitions and standards” questionnaires and application forms. First issued in 1920, these forms dealt with all facets of an institution and were prescriptive in nature. Equally prescriptive questionnaires were published in 1953 for institutions as a whole and for programs such as teacher education, engineering, library schools, and social work. Questionnaire guides for self-study preparation followed, requesting quantitative data such as the number of volumes, pamphlets, and public documents in a library. In 1978, the

*Handbook for Institutional Self-Study* was first published. It was narrative in form and requested primarily qualitative data.

The prescriptive questionnaires could easily have led, and to a degree did lead, to the homogenization of higher education institutions. During those early years, institutions were added to the approved list following “inspection” visits, usually by a single member of the Commission, who would prepare an “inspection visit” report. On the basis of these reports and discussions, institutions were added to the “approved” list. It was not until 1931 that institutions were referred to as “accredited.” Institutions were denied status for reasons such as unwise investment of funds, unsatisfactory student entrance records, insufficient training of faculty, lack of separation between secondary school and junior college faculties, and a “somewhat” unbalanced curriculum. For the first time in 1943, more than one “inspector” was used to visit institutions for accreditation purposes. In 1945, the Commission reviewed its own policies and practices. Significant proposals were made the following year, intended to shift the emphasis in accrediting procedures from the maintenance of minimal standards to the improvement of institutions of all types and on all levels.

From 1921 until 1946, institutions remained on the accredited/approved list with little, if any, contact with the Commission. Some institutions were required to submit reports on specific issues, but revisits were not then part of the Commission's standard operating procedures. In 1946, members of the Middle States Association voted to direct the CHE to send evaluation teams periodically to all member

more accreditation standards within the self-study report. Today, institutions may also elect to address only "selected topics" in a self-study, and a separate review of existing documents is used to determine compliance with other standards.

Since 1973, Commission review based on a Periodic Review Report (PRR) has been required from each accredited institution in the fifth year following reaffirmation of ac-

*The cycle of revisits began in 1957 and was found to be so stimulating that the Association agreed, without dissent, to have the practice continue on a regular basis at 10-year intervals.*

(accredited) institutions. The cycle of revisits began in 1957 and was found to be so stimulating that the Association agreed, without dissent, to have the practice continue on a regular basis at 10-year intervals.

By July 1971, questionnaire forms for self-evaluation had been withdrawn from circulation and instead institutions were asked to submit a narrative document which is known today as a "comprehensive self-study." An institution was expected to be explicit about mission, goals, students, programs, objectives, faculty, teaching, instructional resources, equipment, organization, administration, and outcomes. Later, changes were implemented that allowed institutions to elect to emphasize one or

creditation. Also, institutions may be asked to report on specific issues at varying times in the 10-year cycle, including advance application for approval of substantive changes. Special visits may follow the self-study, PRR, or Progress Report.

After Jean Morse became the new Executive Director in January 1996, a steering committee undertook the multi-year task of reviewing and revising the Commission's accreditation standards. Following extensive feedback from member institutions and approval by the Commission, the new *Characteristics of Excellence*, including the current 14 accreditation standards, became effective in 2002. Minor revisions to *Characteristics* occurred in 2006, 2008, and 2009.

The new *Characteristics* revised the standards to meet changing higher education needs while preserving commitment to the fundamental values of the Commission. The new standards emphasized the importance of institutional and student learning outcomes by creating a separate standard for student learning and adding new assessment provisions; recognized the importance of resources while modifying the prescriptive requirements for resources; expanded and modernized the scope of “general education;” introduced the concept of “information literacy;” and addressed distance learning and other types of non-traditional delivery of instruction. At the request of members, a clearer format was introduced and more guidance was provided about what type of evidence the Commission expects. The document presents specific elements that are usually satisfied when each standard is met, and it also provides suggestions for possible sources of evidence.

In order to help institutions with the new emphasis on assessment of student learning, the Commission published two books in 2003. *Student Learning Assessment: Options and Resources* provides detailed guidance to institutions for selecting learning goals, assessing learning, and improving. It was supplemented

in 2005 with *Assessing Student Learning and Institutional Effectiveness*, to help institutions understand MSCHE expectations. In 2003, the Commission also published *Developing Research and Communication Skills*, to provide guidelines for integrating information literacy into the curriculum.

The Commission’s existing handbooks were rewritten to help members and evaluators use the new standards and to introduce new



practices. For example, in order to improve the consistency of actions across institutions, teams were required to differentiate among required, recommended, and optional team findings; the Commission was required to take specified types of actions for each type of finding; the format for self-studies and team reports was standardized; and policies were published offering standardized language for similar types of Commission actions.

Before revising its accreditation standards, the Commission considered whether it would be useful to allow members to address improvement and compliance separately. Many members reported in questionnaires and meetings that compliance and improvement should continue to be considered together. In order to create an option for the few institutions that preferred separation, the Commission introduced the “selected topics” self-study. This approach allows each institution to evidence its “compliance” by producing existing documents for separate review before or during the team visit. The self-study itself and the team visit address only the major standards selected by the institution, such as student learning, planning, and resources.

This synopsis would not be complete without at least a passing reference to MSCHE’s controversy with the U.S. Department of Education. Approval of MSCHE’s 1990 application for recognition was delayed until 1992 because the Secretary of Education took issue with the Commission’s principles on equity and diversity. Today, MSCHE applies the same principles of mission-based review to diversity issues that apply to other issues. All three of MSCHE’s applications to USED for recognition since 1996 have been approved for the full time period and without any required follow-up.

## What Types of Institutions May MSCHE Accredite?

In the early days, junior colleges, technical schools, teacher education institutions, and community colleges were not considered institutions of higher education. It was not until 1937 that the Commission accredited its first teacher education institution, Montclair State Teachers College of New Jersey. The Commission found that this public teachers college was good enough to generate debate as to whether it should be identified on the accreditation list as a teachers college or as a liberal arts institution. Another highlight of 1937 was the adoption of revised principles and standards for the accreditation of higher education institutions. These new standards were a marked departure from those originally adopted and there were no substantive revisions for many years. The new standards were largely qualitative, and urged, but did not yet require, self-evaluation of an institution as a whole.

In 1938, the Commission was first approached by institutions whose focus was on narrow, specialized fields of study. These institutions wanted to be included on the “accredited” list. However, their inclusion did not occur for another 16 years.

A significant change in the operation of the Commission occurred in 1953 with the appointment of

F. Taylor Jones as the Commission's first Executive Secretary. He served in that capacity until 1970. Jones brought to the role tact and skill in handling difficult situations. Another noteworthy step taken by the Commission in the early 1950s was the redefinition of the criteria defining eligibility for accredited membership. All higher education institutions, including professional and highly specialized institutions, were now considered eligible for accreditation, effective January 1, 1954.

published. It applied to all institutions of higher education. *Characteristics* set forth the basic approach to the evaluation and accreditation process for all institutions: two-year, four-year, free-standing professional, and upper division. Status was and is sought according to the application of Commission standards in the context of institutional mission, with the requirement that the institution have the appropriate authority to award academic degrees—associate through the doctorate.

*Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education set forth the basic approach to the evaluation and accreditation process for all institutions.*

A major new development occurred in 1952, when the U.S. Department of Education started to make extensive use of lists from accrediting associations to determine “eligibility” for federal funds. In 1968, the U.S. Department of Education created the Division of Accreditation and Institutional Eligibility.

By the early 1950s, community and junior colleges were considered viable and necessary, and a specific set of guidelines was established for them. These guidelines were removed from circulation in 1976, and in 1977, *Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education* was first

Through the 1960s, the Commission was embroiled in a lawsuit with Marjorie Webster Junior College, a proprietary school. Marjorie Webster's leaders sought to force the Commission to accept it as an applicant for evaluation and accreditation, notwithstanding the fact that it was a business corporation and operated for a profit. The Commission had based its vigorous defense on its longstanding principle that an institution run for profit could not fulfill its educational responsibilities. Although the Commission eventually won, the clear implication of the legal decision was that the freedom of a private organization such as the Commission on Higher Education

to determine who was eligible for accreditation was coming to an end. In the 1970s, a group of private educational entrepreneurs challenged the Commission's decision to compel a college to cancel its contractual off-campus program with them.



During the same decade, in New York a court removed a college board of trustees. The Commission moved in a variety of ways to respond to these challenges from government, the courts, and the public. The Commission also responded to public concerns that regional accreditors were secretive and insensitive to the public interest by ushering in a new era of transparency in the accreditation process. As described later in this history, the Commission soon expanded transparency by creating the “Statement of Accreditation Status.”

The “pre-accreditation” status established in the early 1960s for in-

stitutions seeking initial accreditation was instrumental in drastically reducing the number of denials of accreditation and/or deferments. An institution progressed from applicant status to correspondent status, and then became a recognized candidate. The timeline depended on the institution's degree of development and sophistication.

Most recently, this process was revised in 2009 to require that an applicant demonstrate compliance with the accreditation standards earlier in the process. Although ac-

creditors are often asked how many institutions have had their accreditation revoked, the most important “sifting” stage is actually candidacy. Once an institution is accredited, it is hoped that accreditors will catch problems early and help institutions to fix them before they result in termination of accreditation.

In the 1970s, the Commission began to accredit institutions abroad that were incorporated in the Middle States region. In 2002, the Commission instituted a pilot project to accredit institutions located abroad.

Today, regional accreditors oversee the quality of research universities, community colleges, liberal arts

colleges, state colleges and universities, religiously affiliated institutions, special-purpose institutions, military academies, historically Black colleges and universities, tribal colleges, and institutions located outside the United States. Accredited institutions are public and private, non-profit and for-profit, urban and rural, large and small, traditional and non-traditional. They offer degrees ranging from the associate to the doctorate. Accreditation is strengthened by its regional nature, as regional Commissions are close to the conditions, needs and challenges of higher education in various parts of the U.S.

## National Cooperation Among Accreditors

As early as 1959, the Commission executives from the six regions (Middle States, New England, North Central, Northwestern, Southern, and Western) met to discuss issues of common concern and to discuss when, where, and how they might agree on common standards, policies, or processes. The group was initially named the National Committee on Regional Accrediting Agencies (NCRAA). Its first item of business was an agreement to publish a list of accredited institutions of higher education in the United States. The second was to join with the American Council on Education (ACE) in the formula-

tion of philosophy and principles of accreditation. Each regional association was asked to prepare a statement of its accrediting procedures, using the North Central Association's manual as a guide, and indicating points of difference, omissions, and other variations from the NCA guide.

From the roots of the NCRAA evolved the Federation of Regional Accrediting Commissions on Higher Education (FRACHE) in 1970, which included professional agencies as well as regional accreditors. Its successor, the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA), became a legal entity on January 1, 1975, following the merger of FRACHE with the institutional presidents' National Commission on Accrediting (NCA). COPA ceased operations on December 31, 1993, contending the organization was no longer valid. A special committee, the Commission on Recognition of Postsecondary Education (CORPA), was formed to recommend a successor structure to continue COPA's recognition function. The National Policy Board of Higher Education Institutional Accreditation (NPB) was created, comprised of the executive directors of the regional accrediting commissions and the chief executives of the Presidents Policy Assembly of Accreditation, previously part of COPA. In 1996, the Council for Higher Education Ac-

creditation (CHEA) was established following extensive planning by NPB and the recommendations of its Presidents Work Group. CHEA assumed CORPA's recognition function on January 1, 1997.

*The regional accreditors created C-RAC in 1996 to exchange ideas and information, to create joint policies, and to work with Congress, higher education, other organizations, and the public.*

CHEA considers accreditation issues, but it does not accredit institutions or represent accreditors. Therefore, the regional accreditors created the Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions (C-RAC) in 1996 to exchange ideas and information, to create joint policies, and to work with Congress, higher education, other organizations, and the public. Specialized and professional accreditors created the Association of Specialized and Professional Accreditors (ASPA) for similar reasons.

Several policies and guidelines have been created in cooperation with other regional accreditors through C-RAC. *Distance Learning Programs* (2002) offers interregional guidelines for electronically offered degree and certificate programs. *Interregionally Operating Institutions* (2004, revised 2007) and *Separately Accreditable Institutions* (2004) address the needs of institutions operating across regional

borders. *Related Institutions* (2007) deals with the new challenges being created by private and public institutions as authority devolves upon parent corporations and centralized offices.

In 2003, C-RAC adopted its *Principles for Good Practices: Regional Accrediting Commissions*. Endorsed by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education and posted on the Commission website, this document describes what an accrediting commission should reasonably expect of itself and of member institutions, especially with respect to student learning, compilation of evidence, and stakeholder involvement.

The C-RAC document also recommends that regional accreditors not only evaluate and affirm educational quality, but also help institutions build capacity for documenting and improving student learning. The Commission on Higher Education has taken steps in recent years to assist institutions to improve by offering a series of workshops on student outcomes assessment, institutional effectiveness, and other accreditation issues.

In 2002, the Commission addressed the need for regional and specialized accreditors to coordinate their accreditation reviews. The *Handbook for Collaborative Reviews*, published that year and endorsed by ASPA, offered institutions the option of inviting MSCHE and specialized accreditors selected by the institution to use a single self-study, a single visiting team, and a single team report in a tailored and more efficient process created collaboratively by the accreditors. This dif-

tions abroad that are not chartered in the U.S., to measure the benefits and contributions of foreign members to MSCHE, and to test the financial viability of accrediting institutions abroad. The pilot program is no longer accepting new applicants, and the results of data gathered are being assessed. The pilot project supplemented the international accreditation of “U.S.-style” institutions abroad that were incorporated in the Middle States region.

*In 2009, U.S.-based institutions accredited by the Commission currently have 31 approved branch campuses and 379 approved and active additional locations outside the United States.*

fered from a “joint” visit in which all requirements of all accreditors were simply performed together.

## **International Outreach**

The scope of MSCHE international activities has increased as our members have rapidly expanded the number of their locations abroad and their other interactions with institutions and students from other countries.

As globalization advanced, MSCHE decided in 2002 to initiate a “pilot” project to determine whether the Commission’s standards could be applied to institu-

As of Spring 2009, the Commission on Higher Education counts among its accredited or applicant and candidate institutions selected schools from Canada, Chile, Egypt, England, France, Hungary, Italy, Lebanon, Switzerland, Taiwan, and the United Arab Emirates. The many institutions from Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands that are accredited by MSCHE are not considered “international.” In 2009, U.S.-based institutions accredited by the Commission have 31 approved branch campuses and 379 approved and active additional locations outside the United States.

The rapid growth of institutions of higher education and quality assurance agencies in many other countries and regions led MSCHE to participate in two major projects of the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE): drafting international good practices for quality assurance agencies and creating a new international program to give certificates and degrees to quality assurance professionals.

## Into the New Millenium

The Commission's initiatives throughout the 1980s and early 1990s included further development of study abroad evaluations; review of military base programs, which had been introduced in the 1970s; the development of the Commission's own policy on off-campus credit programs; and approval of a position paper, "Working Relations Between State Agencies and the Commission on Higher Education."

In 1988, Howard Simmons was appointed as MSCHE's first African-American Executive Director.

New activities focused on policy development, including more constituent involvement in policy review; greater assistance to member institutions in the form of workshops and conferences; and improvements in the accreditation protocol. The "Statement of Affilia-

tion Status" (known now as the "Statement of *Accreditation Status*"), was created to provide a brief summary of each institution's accreditation history and current status (Each institution's SAS is available on the Commission website, [www.msche.org](http://www.msche.org)). In 1995, the Commission on Higher Education held its first-ever annual conference.



Following the appointment of Jean Avnet Morse as the new Executive Director/President in January 1996, *Characteristics of Excellence* was

completely revised; a new self-study format was introduced to allow institutions to separate "compliance" from "improvement" in their self-study process; institutions were offered the option of a single self-study and team visit for specialized and regional accreditation reviews; new eligibility requirements were created for new applicant institutions; six new publications were created to help institutions with new standards and processes (especially in the areas of distance learning and information literacy); policies for accreditation of institutions abroad were revised and a pilot project was conducted for accreditation of non-U.S. institutions abroad; staff was ex-

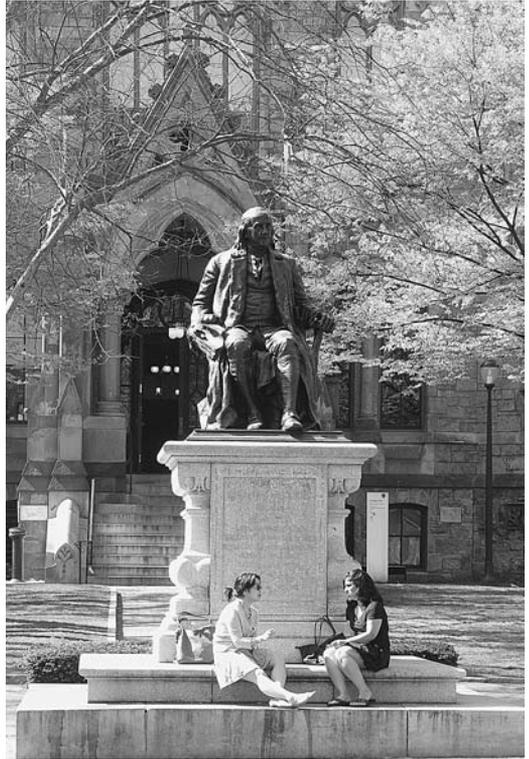
panded to provide more workshops and other support services for members; interregional and cooperative projects were initiated; the MSCHE website was revamped; new policies and processes were introduced to improve consistency in Commission decision-making; new monitoring processes were created; and internal operations were reorganized.

## Challenges and Opportunities

Perhaps the biggest challenge to all U.S. regional accreditors occurred during the recent reauthorization process for the Higher Education Act. The Commission on the Future of Higher Education, appointed by then-Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings, generated considerable opposition from concerned citizens. It suggested more standardization and comparability of institutional and student performance. However, the United States Congress decided to maintain our current system. It approved the new Higher Education Opportunity Act in August 2008 and specifically restricted any further regulation of student achievement by the Secretary of Education.

By preserving the right of individual institutions to define and assess

student learning, Congress has clearly defined the next challenge for MSCHE—to continue to help each of our members meet the appropriate student learning and other goals each sets for itself, consistent



with its own mission. Without clear demonstration of mission-specific learning outcomes, disproportionate stress will be placed on graduation, retention, and job placement rates, and pressure to use standardized tests will increase.

CHAIRS OF THE  
MIDDLE STATES COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION



Adam Leroy Jones

1919-1934



Wilson H. Farrand

1934-1937



David A. Robertson

1937-1946



Frank H. Bowles

1946-1950



E. Kenneth Smiley

1950-1953



Ewald B. Nyquist

1953-1959



Albert E. Meder, Jr.

1959-1967



Frank P. Piskor

1967-1970



Elizabeth J. McCormack

1970-1974



R. Lee Hornbake

1974-1976



Milton G. Bassin

1976-1980

CHAIRS OF THE  
MIDDLE STATES COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION



G. Bruce Dearing

1980-1984



Rose M. Channing

1984-1985



Edward V. Ellis

1985-1987



Sarah R. Blanshei

1987-1990



Robert H. Chambers

1990



Leon M. Goldstein

1990-1993



Stephen M. McClain

1993-1999



William B. DeLauder

2000-2002



Judith Gay

2003-2005



Jessica S. Kozloff

2006-2007



Peter F. Burnham

2008-

## CHIEF EXECUTIVES OF THE MIDDLE STATES COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION



F. Taylor Jones,  
*Executive Secretary*

1953-1970



Robert Kirkwood,  
*Executive Secretary*

1970-1972



Harry W. Porter  
*Executive Secretary*

1973-1975



Dorothy G. Petersen  
*Interim Executive Secretary*

1975



Robert Kirkwood  
*Executive Director*

1976-1987



Howard L. Simmons  
*Executive Director*

1988-1995



Jean Avnet Morse  
*Executive Director/President*

1996-2009

## This 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary History of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education is based on several sources, including:

- **Brief History of the Commission**, written for the Commission's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary by Alice Schell and Dorothy P. Heindel, former assistant directors of the Commission.
- **Life Begins at Forty: A Brief History of the Commission**, by Ewald B. Nyquist, former Chairman of the Commission
- **History of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools**, from the MSA website.
- **The Middle States Association at Age One Hundred, The Last Twenty-five Years: Issues and Challenges, 1887-1987**, by Richard D. Challener
- **Accreditation in the United States: How Did We Get to Where We Are?** by Barbara Brittingham, from *New Directions for Higher Education*, no. 145, Spring 2009, Wiley Periodicals, Inc.
- **U.S. Regional Accreditation: An Overview**, a statement by the Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions, adopted February 6, 2007.
- MSCHE newsletter files
- Interviews with current MSCHE staff

Photos: Pages 1, 10, 15 Courtesy of the University of Pennsylvania

Page 3 (Top) Temple University (by MSCHE staff)

(Bottom) Courtesy of the University of Delaware

Page 7 and 14 Courtesy of Bucks County Community College

To obtain additional copies please contact: Office of Communications and Public Relations, Middle States Commission on Higher Education, 3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104. This document is also available for free download at [www.msche.org](http://www.msche.org).



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