



Middlebury

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Ronald D. Liebowitz
President

February 22, 2012

Dr. Barbara Brittingham
Director/President, Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
New England Association of Schools and Colleges
209 Burlington Road
Bedford, MA 01730

Dear Dr. Brittingham,

On behalf of the Middlebury College community, I would like first to offer our thanks to the reaccreditation evaluation team for taking the time to get to know Middlebury and provide us with their helpful insights. We especially appreciate the effort required to visit not only the undergraduate college in Middlebury, Vermont, but also the Language Schools, the Bread Loaf School of English, the C.V. Starr-Middlebury School in Spain, and the Monterey Institute of International Studies. The team's charge – to review all of Middlebury's programs – was a broad and challenging one, and we are greatly appreciative of the time and effort expended. We are particularly indebted to Dr. Larry Bacow, chair of the review team, for so generously sharing his insights and experience and coordinating the review team's work so effectively.

This review differed from previous reaccreditation evaluations in that we used this opportunity to consider and evaluate all of the College's programs as part of our self study. We benefitted from thoroughly considering all these programs together, and from articulating who we are as an institution and how we will move forward into the future. In response to its review of our self study and the visits to each program, the report acknowledges review team members' new-found awareness of and "appreciation for the complexity of Middlebury College." The team recognizes our simultaneous commitment to the traditional liberal arts and to innovation in education, and highlights the unique contributions of each program to the College's overall mission. The report also encourages us to "develop further synergies" across the College's locations and programs that will benefit students and faculty, and we fully intend to do so. Given that previous reviews have focused primarily on the undergraduate college, we look forward especially to hearing from the Commission about particular areas of strength and opportunities for improvement in our graduate programs and schools abroad.

The evaluation team identified a number of specific areas of strength and concerns throughout their report that are deserving of the College's attention in the coming years. I would like to take the opportunity to respond to a few of its observations and recommendations.

- The team notes that Middlebury’s organizational structure does not yet reflect many of the recent changes that the institution has undergone. Specifically, the report highlights the absence of a single academic officer who has oversight of all the College’s academic programs. We recognize the value of a more integrated institutional structure at the highest administrative level, and are considering how best to transition toward this goal in the coming years.
- The report notes that the team heard faculty concerns about governance at the institution. Some changes have already been made to address these concerns, following specific recommendations from the review team; these include greater collaboration with the Faculty Council regarding agenda setting for monthly faculty meetings, and the creation of a new Budget and Priorities Committee, which will allow for greater faculty input with respect to resource allocation and institutional priorities. Finally, we are working with the Faculty Council to determine how to ensure that faculty committees are fulfilling their mandated functions.
- The review team acknowledged assessment efforts at the undergraduate college and the Monterey Institute. We have made significant progress since the last reaccreditation review in assessing student learning outcomes for all of the College’s programs, and are committed to making further progress and better coordinating our assessment efforts across program boundaries. We have recently devoted additional staffing resources to assessment, and we look forward to sharing the results of our progress in our fifth-year report.
- The team notes the deferred maintenance at the Bread Loaf campus in Ripton, Vermont and suggests that there is no plan to address the issue. We have, however, committed to an allocation of at least \$1M each year to address the most pressing maintenance and renovation needs, and have spent, even in these more challenging economic times, more than \$1.5M the past three years. We acknowledge that more significant resources will be needed to accomplish all needed upgrades in a reasonable time period, and are working to develop a plan to address this gap.
- The team also notes a concern that the College is “at its limit for debt capacity at its current Aa2 Moody’s rating level,” and suggests that any new capital expenditures be funded by gifts. We generally agree with this recommendation, and have no immediate plans to borrow more. Moreover, we will be refinancing debt in the near future to help reduce our debt burden.

In addition, there are a few specific corrections to points made in the review team’s report that I would like to address here to preserve the accuracy of the record. (These corrections also were offered to the team prior to their submission of the final report.)

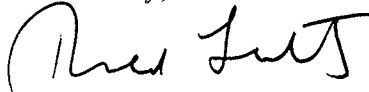
- In its reference to the faculty standard (Standard 5), the team suggests that “financial pressures of the past three years have resulted in some requests for tenure-track faculty appointments to be approved as term appointments.” As we indicated to the team, the conversion of a small number of faculty positions that were requested as tenure-track to term appointments had nothing to do with financial pressures. Those decisions were made on the basis of particular departmental situations and curricula, not on the basis of any financial consideration.

- In the section of their report focusing on students (Standard 6), the team suggests that the number of African American students reported by the College is “slightly inflated by the institutional practice of allowing students to identify themselves as members of more than one race to a single racial category.” However, this is not the practice at Middlebury. Students may identify either as African American or as belonging to more than one racial group, and these latter students are not included in the 4% figure. Thus, the value we report (4%) is the actual number of students who identify themselves as solely African American.
- In the Library and Information Resources section of the report (Standard 7), the team indicates that “there has been a 5 percent decrease in budget allocation for library resources...” While the 5 percent figure was reported in our self study, that number did not refer only to funding for library resources. Institution-wide staffing reductions were taking place during this period, so some of this reduction was tied to salaries being removed from the budget. When controlling for the decrease in the salary budget resulting from reduced staffing, the actual library resource budget was reduced 3.5 percent, rather than 5 percent. (In addition, there was a significant increase to this budget in the current fiscal year.)
- Finally, in reference to the integrity standard (Standard 11), the team noted that Middlebury “has obtained the requisite legal certifications to operate in each of the many locations inside the U.S.” As we noted to the team, we are actually in the process of obtaining certification in New Mexico and North Carolina, so we have not yet officially obtained all certifications.

We offer one last correction to the information submitted to the team and the Commission. We have identified one value reported on the Preface page to the team’s report that was incorrect (this error was ours, not the review team’s). Specifically, the number of faculty FTE in the summer Language Schools programs provided in response to item number 5 was incorrect. The corrected version of the Preface page is attached to this response. We apologize for the error.

Once again, I would like to express the College’s appreciation for the work of the evaluation team and for their valuable insights and suggestions. We know we will benefit from its work as we plan for Middlebury’s future. I look forward to joining Dr. Bacow at the upcoming meeting with the Commission.

Sincerely,



Ronald D. Liebowitz
President

COMMISSION ON INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION
New England Association of Schools and Colleges
Preface Page to the Team Report

Please complete **during the team visit** and include with the report prepared by the visiting team

Date form completed: October 30, 2011

Name of Institution Middlebury College

1. History Year chartered or authorized 1800 Year first degrees awarded 1802

2. Type of control: State City Other; specify:
 Private, not-for-profit Religious Group; specify:
 Proprietary Other; specify:

3. Degree level:
 Associate Baccalaureate Masters Professional Doctorate

4. Enrollment in Degree Programs (Use figures from fall semester of most recent year):

	Full-time	Part-time	FTE	Retention ^a	Graduation	# Degrees ^e
Fall 2011 Undergrad. Coll.	2,480	27	2,489	95%	90% ^b	689
Fall 2011 MIIS	703	77	739	95%	84% ^c	361
Fall 2011 SA	342	0	342	n/a	n/a	n/a
Summer 2011 LS	1,514	0	1,514	n/a	83% ^b	142
Summer 2011 BL	452	0	452	n/a	59% ^d	92

(a) full-time 1st to 2nd year (b) 6 year graduation rate (c) 3 year graduation rate (d) 7.5 year graduation rate
(e) number of degrees awarded most recent year

Note: MIIS=Monterey Institute of International Studies, SA=Schoools Abroad, LS=Language Schools, BL=Bread Loaf School of English

5. Number of current faculty:

Fall 2011 Undergraduate College	Full time 267	Part-time 56	FTE: 286
Fall 2011 MIIS	Full time 73	Part-time 83 ¹	FTE: 101
Fall 2011 SA	Full time 0	Part-time 196 ²	FTE: 65
Summer 2011 LS	Full time 0	Part-time 286	FTE: 95
Summer 2011 BL	Full time 30	Part-time 21	FTE: 37

¹ Includes many adjunct faculty that are not active during MIIS official faculty count in December.

² Faculty include those teaching courses, independent studies, tutorials, as well as overseeing academic internships and thesis.
Note: MIIS=Monterey Institute of International Studies, SA=Schoools Abroad, LS=Language Schools, BL=Bread Loaf School of English

6. Current fund data for most recently completed fiscal year: (Specify year: FY2011)
 (Double click in any cell to enter spreadsheet. Enter dollars in millions; e.g., \$1,456,200 = \$1.456)

Revenues

Tuition	\$180.201
Gov't Appropriations	\$0.000
Gifts/Grants/Endowment	\$77.020
Auxiliary Enterprises	\$6.972
Other	\$6.747
Total	\$270.940

Expenditures

Instruction ¹	\$75.003
Research	\$9.706
General ²	\$141.044
Auxiliary Enterprises	\$7.585
Other ³	\$37.602
Total	\$270.940

¹ Instruction & Academic Support ² LIS, Student Services, Financial Aid, Institutional Support, M&O and Initiative ³ Equipment Depreciation, RRR, Debt Service, Restructuring, Reserve

7. Number of off-campus locations:

In-state 1 Other U.S. 4 International 36 Total 41

8. Number of degrees and certificates offered electronically:

Programs offered entirely on-line 0 Programs offered 50-99% on-line 0

9. Is instruction offered through a contractual relationship?

X No Yes; specify program(s):

10. Other characteristics: