NEASC Open Forum 1

December 5, 2016


Online audience: 39 viewers

Standards and Mission:

G. Fitzgerald started the Open Forum with a brief synopsis of the NEASC accreditation agency, the NEASC self-study process, steering committee members. G. Fitzgerald went on to describe the standards of accreditation as they relate to our self-study and how we operate as an institution. The purpose of the peer reviewed self-study is to measure how closely CCSU is actually adhering to standards “even when no one is looking”. G. Fitzgerald continued to expand on the NEASC self-study as not only being a referendum on the current status of the university but as an opportunity to actively plan for the future of the university.

The NEASC self-study is built on nine mission-driven standards. For each standard, our committee members will supply a description section, appraisal, and projection. G. Fitzgerald explained the circular relationship between quality assurance and quality improvement that are defining characteristics of the self-study. Accreditation is contingent on how the execution of our university mission aligns with the overall standards of the higher education.

G. Fitzgerald finished the presentation with the CCSU Mission Statement, the Elements of Distinctiveness, and Vision before opening up the floor to questions/comments.

Open Forum:

G. Fitzgerald set the parameters of the open forum discussion with the following questions:

1) Is the mission still current? Does it capture who we currently are?

2) Do the elements of distinctiveness align with the mission? (For example, does international education enrich liberal arts education?)

3) What are our strengths as an institution?

4) What are some things which we can do better?

Some of the concerns and comments from the assembly are as listed below:

- Co-curricular activity is not well-articulated. How are they aligned with the mission?
Citizenship is prominent in our mission statement. Can we demonstrate with data that we instill that in students?

- How do we demonstrate that we are producing professionals if we are not keeping track?

G. Fitzgerald iterated that we need to be able to provide evidence of everything we say we do in our mission for our self-study. G. Fitzgerald then encouraged discussion around the strengths of the institution and how we display that in our self-study.

- Individualization of education is a strength. CCSU gives students the option of customizing their education within the parameters of what constitutes a good liberal arts education. “We meet you where you are”- S. Pease

- Given this strength, the issue was raised about the standards expecting us to know who our students are. “Can we quantify what we are doing to benefit students if we do not know who we are serving?”- S. Cohen

G. Fitzgerald stated that we should consider “All students. All locations, All modalities.”

- Assessment was identified as an area in which we can improve. “We have to put our money where our mouth is”- C. Lovitt

- Another area in which we can improve is in streamlining communication/goals among departments

G. Fitzgerald ended the open forum by directing the participants to the NEASC portion of the CCSU website which details what is next in the self-study process.