Middle States Association collection, 1949-2012

Repository: Delaware State University Archives;
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Dover, DE 19901
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Creator: Delaware State University

Date: 1949-2012 [bulk dates 2002, 2012]

Location: 13-C

Extent: 13 linear Feet

Language: English

Source of Acquisition: Office of Assessment; Office of the President; unknown

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Abstract:
This collection consists of records pertaining to Delaware State University’s membership in the Middle State Association, an accrediting institution for colleges and universities. In order for DSU to be an accredited university, it must complete a self-evaluation study as well as undergo external review by a committee of Middle States representatives. Records are generated in support of the accrediting process. Specific record types include formal reports created by Delaware State University and the Middle States visiting team, correspondence and memoranda, university policies and procedures, strategic planning records, financial statements, and reports of individual administrative and academic departments.

Scope and Content:
The Middle States collection is comprised of Delaware State University self-study evaluations and evaluations drafted by Middle States Association visiting teams. For later evaluations, primarily those conducted in 2002 and 2012, supporting documents gathered and utilized in the drafting of the self-study evaluation accompany the final reports. Materials found within this collection are dated between 1949 and 2012 with the bulk of items being supporting documents utilized in the 2002 and 2012 evaluations.

As the university grew from a small college of less than 300 students (c. 1957) to a university of over 4,000 students (c. 2012), more comprehensive self-studies became necessary. Therefore, note that moving toward modern day the breadth and depth of the evaluation reports as well as amount of supporting documents increase.

The Middle States evaluation process, which includes DSU’s self-study, examines how the entire institution is carrying out its educational objectives. It does not focus on individual administrative or academic departments. However, supporting documentation created by Delaware State University includes the evaluation of independent units or departments of the university. The departmental records commonly consist of items such as curriculum guides and syllabi which detail information such as graduation requirements and course descriptions, and faculty publications.

The final Middle States reports to Delaware State University are reactions to, and findings from, the university’s the self-study and interviews conducted with faculty,
administrators, and trustees. The Middle States reports feature recommendations for the future, criticisms, and ultimately discuss why or why not the university should continue to be accredited.

The final portion of this collection, Series 2: Correspondence and Ephemera, is comprised of correspondence between Delaware State University and the Middle States Association. The correspondence largely concerns planning for upcoming evaluations and the reporting of evaluation results. The series additionally contains ephemeral questionnaires and guidelines that instruct Middle States member institutions in how to conduct a self-study evaluation.

Arrangement:
This collection is composed of two series: Self-Evaluation and Middle States Reports; and Correspondence and Ephemera. Thereunder, materials are organized into sub-series according to each evaluation period and filed chronologically. Within each subseries the Delaware State University report to the Middle States Commission always appears at the beginning of each subseries followed by the Middle States visiting team’s evaluation. Thereafter, all other associated materials such as follow-up reports may be found.

Biographical History
The Middle States Commission, formerly known as the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools from 1919-2013, is a voluntary, non-governmental, membership association. The Middle States Commission facilitates accreditation reviews for colleges and universities in Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Currently, in order for a college or university to maintain accreditation and membership in the Middle States Commission, the school must be evaluated every five years through the submission of a self-study evaluation and a visitation by a panel of administrators and educators from other Middle States member institutions. Additionally, each Middle States college or university must submit yearly follow-up reports.

A Delaware State University self-study report is a summarization of the actions taken by all administrative and academic departments under the umbrella of the university during the period of time under review. A core committee of administrative leaders and faculty will direct the drafting of the Self-study report; however, all members of the university community make contributions toward the preparation of the report and Middle States visitation by compiling significant documents including the university mission statement, strategic plans, financial reports, academic syllabi, and faculty publications. The Middle States visiting team is responsible for critiquing the self-study report and discerning Delaware State University’s commitment to the assertions it has made within its report.

Delaware State University has not always been an accredited university. DSU first received provisional accreditation in 1945 and almost immediately lost it in 1949. The 1949 Middle States report cited “deficiencies in the physical plant,” and determined that “class instruction in many class was not of college caliber.” Overall, the Middle States visiting team found no sense of direction in the faculty and administration, student instructional and personnel services, or programs of study.

After an extended period of struggle, Delaware State University was able to regain accreditation in 1957 and has continued to maintain its Middle States membership since then.

References

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