As we begin a new academic year, we wanted to provide an update to the campus regarding the progress we have made on our accreditation self-study and the work that remains to be done this year. We are still very much on schedule, with first drafts completed last spring, as noted in the last issue of this newsletter (Volume 2, No. 2).

During the summer, Accreditation Co-Chairs Erika Lacro, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, and Marcia Roberts-Deutsch, Accreditation Liaison Officer, met for several hours to compare notes on their response to the first drafts submitted by the individual Standard committees. They have compiled a list of all items recommended in those reports as things that need particular attention. These will be shared with members of the Steering Committee (Co-Chairs of the Standards committees and research support from MIR), which will meet for the first time this year on September 9. It is expected that a significantly updated draft should be ready by the end of the Fall semester, as the campus finalizes its reorganization plan and other major initiatives.

Things that have a direct bearing on our status with reference to accreditation include a campus review of the institutional mission; refining our program review, budget, and planning process; addressing the management of our technology resources; and, as noted in the Chancellor's presentation to the campus on August 18, revision and updating of the General Education requirements for our CTE programs to be in full compliance with accreditation standards.

While the preparation of the self-study has to date been the work of a relatively small group of volunteers, it is important to understand that this process belongs to and is important to everyone at the college. General input on various issues will be solicited. One thing to remember is that this process is very much evidence-based, so those involved in the major governance committees as well as those engaged in other forms of campus support should remember to document and communicate the work they are doing.

It is also important to remember that assessment does not pertain only to instruction, nor is it something we do only occasionally. To the extent that we can all step back periodically, regardless of what we are doing, and ask—“What are the results of our work? Is this the best way to achieve what we hope?”—we will be developing and participating in the “culture of assessment” that is a major expectation of our accreditors.