



Self-Study Design

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Antillean Adventist University Self-Study Design

Institutional Overview

This document presents the design for the 2022-2023 Self Study at Antillean Adventist University (AAU) in preparation for the re-accreditation by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE). A summary of facts about the Institution is presented below, followed by the specific sections for the design of the Self Study, as described in the MSCHE *Self Study Guide*.

Antillean Adventist University (AAU), is a non-profit privately owned institution supported by the membership of the Seventh-day Adventist Church through the Puerto Rican Union of Seventh-day Adventists. Further accredited by the Board of Post-Secondary Institutions of Puerto Rico previously known as the Puerto Rico Council of Education. In 1978, MSCHE, granted initial accreditation and the last reaffirmation in 2013 complied with all 14 Characteristics of Excellence. In addition, AAU is accredited by the Adventist Accrediting Association.

Its roots are traced back to the first Adventist educational institution in Aibonito, Puerto Rico in 1920. College level degrees, in a Liberal Arts framework, for young people seeking an Adventist education, were first offered in Cuba. Due to the political situation in that island in 1961, the “Colegio de las Antillas” was relocated to the facilities of the “Colegio Adventista Puertorriqueño” in Mayagüez, Puerto Rico with the purpose of serving the needs of the Antillean region (PR, Cuba, and Dominican Republic). Initially only baccalaureate degrees in Theology and Education were offered. A year later (1962), as a result of the fusion of these two schools, and the addition of new areas of study, the new institution received the name of Antillean College. In 1989, the Puerto Rico Council for Higher Education approved the current name: “Antillean Adventist University”, referred to as AAU throughout this document.

Located near the heart of the city of Mayagüez, AAU serves approximately 1,057 students of which 96% are Hispanic from Puerto Rico, the Mainland, the Caribbean, and South and Central America, representing 23 nationalities and more than 10 different religious groups. The student population also includes approximately 40% of students who are first generation and a high percent of low income. During the fall 2020 semester 91% of students received federal aid. Nearly 30% of students are 25 years or older. These characteristics of the student population at AAU are an engine that leads us to increasingly promote diversity and inclusiveness, both in the services offered and within the students.

AAU is committed to provide high quality innovative education that integrates methods adapted to new educational trends. The institution is focused on providing highly qualified and competent human resources and efficiency in support services. Therefore, the institution offers activities of professional development to faculty members, in relation to integration of technology in the face-to-face and distance learning modality, teaching strategies, new trends in education, among others topics related to their functions and responsibilities. Faculty Professional Development Plan cycle runs on a biannual basis. A professional portfolio is completed by faculty with all the evidence of the compliance of the Faculty Professional

Development Plan and the 360 evaluation schedule. The evaluation of the faculty portfolios for the period 2016-2019 was 94% of compliance.

The student's faculty evaluation is done every semester to assess their perceptions of the quality of the teaching and learning process. The results are provided to faculty and program administrators to identify areas of improvement and are discussed in the annual faculty evaluation.

The institution participates in the National Survey of Student Engagement Survey to assess our student experience in our institution since 2018. Student engagement represents two critical features of collegiate quality. The first, is the amount of time and effort students put into their studies and other educationally purposeful activities. The second, is how institutional resources, courses, and other learning opportunities facilitate student participation in activities that matter to student learning. The institution uses the National Survey of Student Engagement as a resource to collect data of undergraduate students in their first and final years to assess their levels of engagement and other information related to their learning experience at our institution and compare it with other institutions.

In 2019, the institution was evaluated by the Adventist Association Accreditation for the years 2014-2019. The results of the evaluation were a reinstatement of the accreditation status with some recommendations. Two major recommendations were related to the teaching and learning process are the following:

1. To prepare and implement a systematic research program for teachers and students.

To comply with this recommendation a Research Plan 2019-2022 was developed and approved by the Board of Trustees to include the development of research projects that contribute to the mission and vision of the Institution and also integrate research methodology in the curricula. In the academic year 2020-2021 a total of eight faculty members took part in the plan by taking a course in a collaboration with Universidad Adventista de Colombia to train them in the integration of research as teaching strategy.

2. To develop and implement a pedagogy model.

To comply with this recommendation the institution should develop a pedagogy model that states the teaching strategies that framework the institutional teaching and learning process. The pedagogy model will be focused on the active and experiential learning strategies that the institution envision aligned to its mission and vision. The institutional pedagogy model will set the framework for a cohesive and comprehensive effort to provide to all students an active learning environment.

The institution has been working toward improving the teaching and learning experience by increasing the use of educational technology and distance/hybrid offering. In 2018, AAU developed a Distance Education Department (DED) that helped the institution to increase the amount of courses offered online/hybrid modality providing more flexibility and accessibility to the academic programs. Also the DE Department increased professional development to faculty and staff in relation to the integration of technology in teaching face-to-face and online. During this pandemic COVID 19, DE Department, Vice-presidency of Academic Affairs, Vice-presidency of Finance and the Vice-presidency of Students Affairs increased the services, protocols and procedures to facilitate emergency remote teaching for all the academic programs providing the necessary infrastructure. The following student support services are being offered virtually:

library, admission, financial aid, registrar, students finance, among others. All these services are offered virtually and also face-to-face by appointment following all the safety protocols.

New technology was purchased to convert some teaching spaces to virtual classrooms using the federal funds of Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economy Security Act (2020). In this fiscal year 2020-21, the Institution received a second federal grant Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (2021) that is being used to increase online teaching and learning technology and offer virtual student support services.

In order to increase and improve active and experiential learning in our health related programs the institution participated in a Title V competition. A grant was approved in 2015, for the years 2015-2020 of a proposal submitted to the United States Department of Education Title V for the project titled *Expanding and Strengthening Health Sciences Degree Programs*. The project was designed to:

- Revise Nursing and Respiratory Care curriculum for inclusion of high-definition simulation technology,
- Expand access of Health Sciences Programs (HSP) via conversion to online/hybrid delivery,
- Enhance infrastructure to support instruction via creation of a state-of-the-art Simulation Lab,
- Improve foundational skills in Math and English proficiency by developing a Math Resource Center, an English for HSP course and acquire instructional resources,
- Engage in Respiratory Care curriculum and program evaluation to complete Committee on Accreditation for Respiratory Care (CoARC) accreditation.

The AAU's Title V Part A grant: "*Expanding Capacity and Strengthening Health Sciences Degree Programs*" was committed to fulfilling the goals of the Title V legislation with the purpose of expanding opportunities for and improving the academic attainment of Hispanic students. In accordance with the project initiatives, one of the major emphasis of our Title V project was the renovation of an existing building to house the new healthcare simulation laboratory and Math Resource Center. The AAU has successfully completed the project in September 2020, despite the external factors that have affected higher education in Puerto Rico.

At the core of the AAU philosophy is the goal to provide a high quality Christian education within the context of the Seventh-day Adventist faith. It does not discriminate based on race, sex, nationality, creed or social position. Although the AAU has a significant number of Adventist students, the majority, 65%, belong to different religious affiliations and creeds. The institution opens its doors and welcomes them, challenging them to develop the physical, mental and spiritual dimensions of their character.

Although various data related to spiritual development activities are collected, in 2019 information was collected with specific aspects about the impact that the spiritual program, as such, has on employees and students. The survey of graduating students, for example, showed that 70% of them perceived that their professors taught them how Christian faith and ethics relate to their field of study and 68% understood that the AAU had prepared them well to have a personal relationship with God. On the other hand, the findings showed that 60% of students and staff had been integrated into some spiritual development activity outside of classrooms; 49% acknowledged that the AAU spiritual program had played an important role in their spiritual development and 58% said they had grown spiritually at AAU. The institution has proposed to increase these results in the coming years.

The results of this assessment have made it possible to identify aspects that should be strengthened in order to influence a greater number of students, as well as to draw up action plans to improve this important aspect of the institutional mission. Some of the actions that has been taken during the last two years are: Develop a more uniform strategy for the effective integration of Christian faith and values across courses and programs, integrating some strategies aimed at increasing the number of students who are impacted by the spiritual program and integrating new co-curricular activities for commuter students, who represent the largest student population.

AAU also emphasizes the integration of community service as one of its priorities. For this reason, the Vice-presidencies carry out various community service projects annually. In this community services projects; staff, faculty, and students worked together to promote an altruistic culture and civic commitment. During the years 2015-2019, 35 social activities have been carried out such as meal distribution, building a roof of a house, maintenance and repair of Sabana Grande's Adventist Academy, provided worship activities in an elderly home, offered orientations about employment opportunities, cleaning community yards, cleaned beaches, and delivered hygiene items to people in need, among others. Also, after the disaster caused by Hurricane María, the institution supported the community by offering water and meals to those in need, health assistance was provided, and emotional support was given in shelters, among others community services.

During the past four years, around eight new collaborative agreements have been established between entities and academic programs to guarantee students an effective development of their knowledge, skills and abilities according to their study fields. These collaborative agreements facilitate active learning in real scenarios.

On the other hand, the graduate profile is based on educational principles that are essential to achieve comprehensive human development, including service. Therefore, each student performed at least 10 hours of community service individually or in group projects as part of the HUSO 100-Service Philosophy course. This initiative prepares students to identify human needs and help promote better life quality. However, students in our different health programs, carry out around 120 hours of community service during the semester by performing activities like conducting health clinics, providing assistance in vaccination centers, educating communities about health promotion and prevention of diseases, among other health related activities.

For this reason, AAU is prioritizes community service activities within the curriculum in order to help develop our student's leadership, charisma, humanity, skills and values to prepare them to become competent professionals that are able to use their knowledge and skills acquired to be able to accomplish our institution's mission to serve God and humanity.

AAU programs and curriculum are recognized by the Veteran's Administration and the Department of Health and Human Services of the United States of America. The University is also a member of the Association of Colleges and Universities of Puerto Rico, and the American Council on Education.

Actually, the Institution offers baccalaureate degrees in 28 concentrations, and six associate degrees. It offers a Master's Degree (MA) in Education (with concentrations in Administration & Supervision, Curriculum & Instruction, and Teaching Elementary & Secondary Schools with a specialization in English as a Second Language, Biology, History,

School Health, and Spanish) approved by the Board of Post-Secondary Institutions of PR, and accredited by MSCHE. It also offers the Master's Degree in Nursing with three specializations in Critical Care, Care for Elderly People and Anesthesia.

On the other hand, the Institution has several professional programs that have obtained their accreditation from other regulatory agencies. The Bachelor of Science in Nursing program is accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE). Also, the Bachelor of Science in Cardiopulmonary program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Respiratory Care (CoARC) being the only accredited program in the Island ([find-an-accredited-program](#)), and the Baccalaureate Program in Pastoral Theology is accredited by the General Conference Adventist Accreditation Association (AAA).

Furthermore, to offer its programs and services, the AAU has a faculty consisting of 42 full-time and 65 part-time professors, in addition to 117 full-time and 37 part-time employees. General enrollment is distributed between two schools and three departments as follows: Department of Business Sciences with 58 students, Department of Science and Technology with 160 students, School of Education, Humanities and Psychology with 180 students, Department of Religion with 50 students and School of Sciences of Health with 598 students.

Educational Philosophy

AAU is a Christian institution that believes in the revelation of God through His Word and His Son Jesus Christ. The Holy Bible establishes that the human being is the supreme creation of God and that he/she depends on the Creator for his/her development and the full realization of his/her capacities. Because of this position every person should be treated with equality, without distinction of age, sex, sexual identity, race, nationality, creed, or social position. Founded on the beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, the University offers education as a holistic process which covers all the facets of human character: spiritual, moral, intellectual, physical, and social. This will prepare the individual for the present and the life to come.

The University's curriculum, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities endeavor to strengthen a belief in God, and to foster Christian faith as the major source of wisdom, knowledge and truth. This belief empowers the individual to submit to the will of the Creator through obedience to God's Word and teachings.

As an educational institution, we also understand that education and training must respond to social change. This understanding motivates faculty and staff to contribute to the mission of the institution with excellence in all areas of responsibilities and to prepare the student to become an agent of positive change. We believe that students guided by Christian values will become facilitators and problem-solvers in a complex world. Therefore, the opportunity to acquire knowledge in all areas and develop critical thinking skills is essential to our changing world.

Within this philosophy, a Christian teacher will not only be a catalyst of knowledge, but also a communicator of the Truth of God. His goal will be to develop a balanced human being capable of serving God and his fellow man.

All individuals interested in developing a fuller understanding of Adventist educational philosophy, seeking to study in a Christian environment, and desiring to prepare for services as competent professionals, are welcomed and accepted as students.

Mission

Antillean Adventist University promotes the integral formation of competent professionals, committed to serving God and humanity.

Vision

Antillean Adventist University will be recognized for spirituality, excellence, and service.

Institutional Pillars

The institutional pillars of spirituality, excellence and service framework the Institutional Strategic Planning process. These pillars are operationalized through the following core aspects on which the strategic plan is established.

Spirituality

- Living the Adventist Christian principles and values
- Biblical foundation in the curriculum
- Christocentric programs and activities

Excellence

- Highly qualified and competent human resource
- Efficiency in support services
- High quality educational opportunities oriented to market needs
- Sustainable campus with high technology integration
- High-quality innovative education that integrates teaching methods adapted to new educational trends.
- Research aimed at problem solving, development and innovation
- Efficient Administrative processes
- Internationalization initiatives
- Highly competent graduates

Service

- Leaders committed to God
- Foster a culture of service
- Development of community service initiatives
- Mission programs

Institutional Goals

1. Provide an environment in which every student and employee has the opportunity to live and share Adventist Christian principles and values.
2. Attract and retain students from different socio-economic levels, cultures and nations, through innovative student support services, in tune with the needs of the student and oriented towards their academic success.
3. Maintain and expand the educational offer in various modalities that responds to quality standards, market demands, and student needs, framed in a culture of accountability, evidence and teaching scholarship.
4. Encourage research and its application in the work of the academic community.

5. Apply generally accepted best administrative practices for each unit.
6. Increase the strategies that provide opportunities for participation and integration in the community, through community and missionary service.

Environmental Factors

During the last five years, Puerto Rico has been submerged in a deep and growing economic, political, and social crisis that has led higher education institutions to modify their promotion, recruitment, study programs, and job hiring strategies.

The hurricanes Irma (September/2017) and María (September/2017), add to the long list of factors that aggravated the situation on the island, making recovery even more difficult. Specifically, Hurricane Maria was devastating. However, with many difficulties and challenges, and with God's help, Antillean Adventist University was the first to open its doors in all of Puerto Rico, just two weeks after the disaster, but experiencing a decrease in enrollment of 95 students.

Less than three years after the hurricanes and still not recovering well from their effects, the year 2020 began with a series of earthquakes that, in addition to causing panic in the entire population, hindered and affected educational efforts throughout the island. As if that was not enough, the Covid-19 pandemic arrived, dramatically changed the teaching processes and still continues to affect educational services worldwide, they have not returned to normal.

Although AAU, like all higher education institutions in Puerto Rico, has felt the ravages of these phenomena, between 2015 and 2019 it has experienced the greatest development in its 55-year history. The Institution has grown physically-spatially, has managed to solidify his financial position and has developed academically, providing students with an excellent education and a beautiful and welcoming environment as a home study.

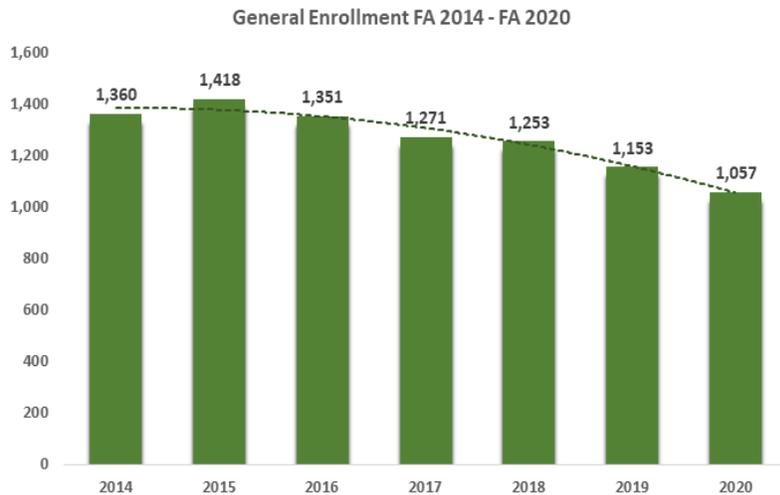
The AAU maintained financial stability during the last five years, but in the year 2019-2020 the institution received the effect of the reduction in general enrollment. In order to handle this situation, an institutional restructuring was carried out, where the personnel distribution was analyzed to make some reductions and redistribute the budgets to maintain efficiency and effectiveness. Thanks to these changes, the institution maintained students' support services and quality in education.

Overall enrollment has faced a decline since 2014 as shown in the Graphic 1, however retention and graduation rates have increased. For the fall 2020 the retention rate was 78% and the graduation rate was 47%.

Given all the trends and challenges faced by the Puerto Rican population and the exodus caused by natural and environmental phenomena, the university is reinforcing its promotional strategies to attract a greater number of international students, as well as Hispanics residing in the United States, in order to increase enrollment rates. Fostering diversity, strengthening distance services and programs, and becoming stronger in educational technology are all means of maintaining the relevance of our services, while meeting the needs of the educational population.

Graphic 1

Institutional Enrollment 2014-2020



Institutional Priorities to be addressed in the Self-Study

Spirituality, Excellence and Service are the essence of the institutional priorities and are the focus of work for the Self Study Design. The Institutional Priorities are aligned within the Institutional Strategic Plan 2017-2022, and the institutional mission. The Institutional Priorities were developed to an inclusive process with the participation of the stakeholders as represented in the following representative bodies: MSCHE Steering Committee, President' Executive Committee, University Administrative Council and the Governing Board. In all these stages the above mentioned institutional stakeholders had the opportunity to review and recommend changes to the Institutional Priorities. Final approval of the Institutional Priorities was done in the Governing Board meeting of April 2021.

The Self Study Report will be organized around the MSCHE's standards and criteria, requirements of affiliation and verification of compliance aligned to the institutional priorities. Institutional stakeholders were consulted in identifying the institutional priorities that will frame the self-study process. The Institutional Priorities are also aligned to the Institutional Strategic Plan and reflect the mission, vision and goals. AAU has gone through an engaging process to identify the priorities that better represent opportunities for improvement and innovation to respond to the present and future needs and trends in higher education.

The approved Institutional Priorities are as follows:

A. Strengthen student learning through active and experiential learning methodologies

Challenge students through engaging active and experiential learning methodologies that develop specific competencies, characteristics and commitments that portrait student's excellent professional performance.

1. Development of a teaching and learning model based in active and experiential learning.
2. Improve faculty professional development and performance on active and experiential learning methodologies.
3. Increase the integration of educational technology in the classroom.

B. Restructure academic and support services

Provide a strong infrastructure of student and academic support services to strengthen the teaching and learning process.

1. Innovate academic support services.
2. Innovate students' support services.

C. Increase the impact of the spiritual program initiatives on students and staff

Encourage the spiritual development of students through intentional strategies of integration of faith and values in the curriculum of each academic program, as well as providing a co-curricular environment in which the entire university community has the opportunity to live and share Christian values.

1. Integration of faith and values in the teaching and learning process within the classroom through intentional and consistent connections between course content and Christian and biblical values.
2. Development of co-curricular activities aimed at meeting spiritual needs of diverse populations of students and staff.
3. Evidence of the impact of the spiritual program initiatives on students and staff.

D. Emphasize the integration of community service experiences

Promote an altruistic culture and civic commitment to contribute to the economic and social development of Puerto Rico through engaging in curricular, co-curricular and extracurricular learning opportunities. For that reason, the curriculum integrates service activities where students and employees participate in community and missionary service projects, allowing them to contribute to the improvement of our society and church. Collaborative agreements increase educational opportunities that allow students to develop their skills, knowledge, and abilities in real work scenarios. Strengthen connections between graduate students and professional community members to give us the necessary feedback to improve the academic programs that will allow us to continue developing competent professionals committed to serving society and God.

1. Increase participation in community and mission service projects.
2. Establish collaborative agreements with the community representatives.
3. Integrate in the curriculum community service experiences.

The following tables shows the alignment of the institutional priorities the Standards of Accreditation, Accreditation Requirements and Verification Compliance:

Table 1*Institutional Priorities*

Standards	Institutional Priority A Strengthen student learning through active and experiential learning methodologies	Institutional Priority B Restructure academic and support services	Institutional Priority C Increase the impact of the spiritual program initiatives on students and staff	Institutional Priority D Emphasize the integration of community service experiences
I. Mission and goal			X	
II. Ethic and integrity				X
III. Design and Delivery of Students Learning Experience	X	X	X	X
IV. Support of the Student Experience		X		
V. Educational Effectiveness Assessment	X		X	
VI. Planning, Resources and Institutional Improvement	X	X		
VII. Government, Leadership and Administration				X

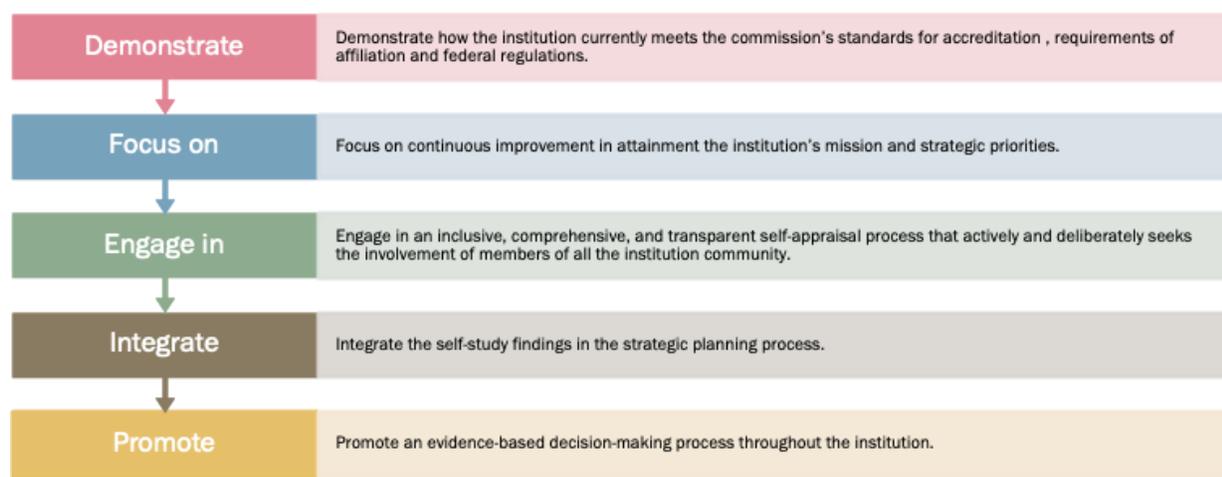
Intended Outcomes of the Self-Study

AAU, understands the self-study process as one of great value to our institution, enabling it to demonstrate it meets the Commission’s expectations. Furthermore, the process engages our institutional community in a thoughtful analysis of the institutional priorities that were selected to identify missions-related opportunities for strategic actions, improvement, innovation, and aligned to the current Strategic Plan. This process will enable the Institution to respond effectively to the challenges in higher education in Puerto Rico, and contribute to serve our students and society.

The self-study process will provide the opportunity for a comprehensive reflection and evaluation of the accomplishments done over the past years, challenges faced and also will give direction for the future path of continuous growth.

Graphic 2

Major Intended Self-Study Outcomes



Self-Study Approach

The Institution chose the *Standards Based Approach* to facilitate the development of the self-study and its evaluation. The selected approach provides a framework for the evaluation of the extent of institution accomplishments toward the standards and criteria, and an honest portrait of the challenges, and aspects of improvement in each one. This approach will help the Institution to review the compliance of the standards in the context of the institutional mission, vision, goals and priorities. Also, this approach may facilitate the integration of Institutional Effectiveness measures to demonstrate the degree to which AAU is achieving its mission.

Organizational Structure of the Steering Committee and Working Groups

AAU self-study is being guided by the Steering Committee that was appointed by the President Executive Committee to lead the Self Study process. This Committee also appointed the Steering Committee members and seven working groups. Membership will be composed of the chairs of the Working Groups aligned by standard. The Steering Committee includes representatives with institutional responsibilities who will keep others informed of the progress of the self-study and will offer valuable input.

The Steering Committee and Working Groups selection process was done by an inclusive and consultative process that allowed a representation of the institutional stakeholders: students, staff, faculty and administration. Also external stakeholders are part of the Self Study development as collaborators.

The following table include the names and job titles of chairpersons of the Steering Committee and Working Groups members:

Table 2*MSCHE Self-Study Steering Committee Members*

Responsibility	Names
Chair	Dr. Zilma E. Santiago, Vice President of Academic Affairs
Co-Chairs	Dr. Digna Williams, Director, Institutional Research Department Prof. Yolanda Pérez, Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs
Evidence Inventory Coordinator	Dr. Digna Williams, Director, Institutional Research Department
Data Entry – Supervision Dr. Digna Williams	Students- support to and participation in the working groups
Editors	Dr. Myrna Colón, External Collaborators
Translation	Prof. Daniel Peña, External Collaborator
External Evaluator	Dr. Myrna Colón, External Collaborator
Graphic Design	Prof. Eduardo Acosta, Professor, Graphic Design Program
Data Analysis SPSS	Prof. Héctor Cosme, Professor, Mathematics Prof. Javier Cruz, Professor, Physical Education Prof. Jeffrey Malavé, Professor, Mathematics
AAU's President	Dr. Obed Jiménez
Vice-Presidents	Dr. Sigfredo Morales, Vice President of Student Affairs Prof. Luis Acobe, Vice President of Financial Affairs Dr. Jaime López, Vice President of Planning and Development

The following table shows the Chair of each working groups.

Table 3

Steering Committee Working Groups Chairs

Standard	Member Responsible
I. Mission and Goals	Dr. Pedro Canales, Director and Professor, Department of Theology
II. Ethics and Integrity	Dr. Franklin Marti, Professor, Department of Theology
III. Design and Delivery of Students Learning Experience	Prof. Israel Torres, Professor, Social Sciences
IV. Support of the Student Experience	Mrs. Johanna Rodríguez, Associate Vice President of Student Affairs
V. Educational Effectiveness Assessment	Prof. Luis Guadalupe, Department of Theology Professor and White Center Director
VI. Planning, Resources and Institutional Improvement	Prof. Omar Reyes, Professor, Mathematics
VII. Government, Leadership and Administration	Dr. Javier Ruiz, Professor, History

Steering Committee Charges

- Provide support to working groups, as well as guidance and information needed.
- Review the activities of the working groups.
- Approving Working Group’s outlines and drafts.
- Identifying gaps in processes and documentations.
- Develop and implement the communication plan.
- Develop the self-study design.
- Establish the timelines of the process and ensure compliance.
- Inform the institutional community about progress.
- Selecting the final recommendations to be included in the Self-Study Report.
- Prepare the final draft of the self-study.

- Coordination of the three visits that are an integral part of the process: self-study preparation visit, team chair’s preliminary visit, and on-site evaluation team visit.
- Collaborate in crafting the institutional response, once the on-site visit evaluation team report has been received.

The strategies that the Steering Committee will use to encourage Working Groups to interact with one another in the interest of engaging in common areas of inquiry and reducing undue duplication of effort will include monthly meetings for sharing documents and reports; and also individual meetings of the Working Groups. Documents are shared in Google Drive to encourage collaboration.

In order to provide oversight to ensure that Working Groups will receive appropriate support for evaluation and assessment of Commission Standards and the priorities selected for analysis in the self-study document, the Chair and Co-chairs had assigned Working Groups to follow their activities prior the Steering Committee monthly meeting to assure the progress of their work and share information. Also a Communication Plan was developed to facilitate the process.

Working Groups Charges

The general charge of the working groups is to demonstrate, through an evidence-based process, that AAU meets the MSCHE standards and affiliation requirements. The working groups share their findings with one another and make collaborative efforts in the search, evaluation and analysis of information and data to present a final report to the Steering Committee.

The specific functions of the working groups are as follows:

- Collect data and documents that are relevant to the standard and for analysis and evaluation of information.
- Integrate the institutional mission, the priorities and the research questions, as well as meet to the affiliation requirements and the verification of compliance corresponding to its standard.
- Follow the dates established for meetings and for delivery of drafts.
- Participate in working groups meetings to interact with one another and joint meetings with the Steering Committee as established.
- Submit a research/chapter outline.
- Submit draft reports prior to the submission of the final report.
- Identify gaps in policies, procedures or structures.
- Identify opportunities for improvement and innovation.
- Deliver a final report to the Steering Committee.

Working Group 1: Mission and Goals

Names	Titles	Position
Dr. Pedro Canales	Steering Committee	Director and Professor, Department of Theology
Prof. Erick Mendieta	Member	Professor, Department of Theology
Prof. Magda Hernández	Member	Professor, Spanish

Names	Titles	Position
Mrs. Ruth Lizardo	Member	Chaplain

Specific Standard and Criteria, Priority and Questions

Standard and Criteria	Priority	Lines of Inquiring
<p>I-Mission and Goals</p> <p>The institution’s mission defines its purpose within the context of higher education, the students it serves, and what it intends to accomplish. The institution’s stated goals are clearly linked to its mission and specify how the institution fulfills its mission.</p> <p>An accredited institution possesses and demonstrates the following attributes or activities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. clearly defined mission and goals that: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. are developed through appropriate collaborative participation by all who facilitate or are otherwise responsible for institutional development and improvement; b. address external as well as internal contexts and constituencies; c. are approved and supported by the governing body; d. guide faculty, administration, staff, and governing structures in making decisions related to planning, resource allocation, program and curricular development, and the definition of institutional and educational outcomes; e. include support of scholarly inquiry and creative activity, at levels and of the type appropriate to the institution; f. are publicized and widely known by the institution’s internal stakeholders; 	<p>C. 2 Development of co-curricular activities aimed at meeting spiritual needs of diverse populations of students and staff.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How are the major themes of the mission reflected in AAU’s goals? 2. Are the goals of AAU clearly aligned on the mission statement? 3. How does AAU determine whether it is achieving each aspect of its mission? 4. What procedures does AAU have to integrate the participation and integration of all groups in the development, review and update of the mission and objectives, as well as in their fulfillment? 5. Analyze how the mission is linked to the Strategic Plan and the process used in developing the Strategic Plan? 6. Provide evidence of how the mission guides the decision making and governing process with particular reference to planning, resource allocation, program and curricular development and the definition of institutional and educational outcomes.

Standard and Criteria	Priority	Lines of Inquiring
<p>g. are periodically evaluated;</p> <p>2. institutional goals that are realistic, appropriate to higher education, and consistent with mission;</p> <p>3. goals that focus on student learning and related outcomes and on institutional improvement; are supported by administrative, educational, and student support programs and services; and are consistent with institutional mission; and</p> <p>4. Periodic assessment of mission and goals to ensure they are relevant and achievable.</p>		

Working Group 2: Ethic and Integrity

Names	Titles	Position
Dr. Franklin Marti	Steering Committee	Professor, Department of Theology
Mrs. Awilda Matos	Member	Director, Office of Student Aid Assistance
Miss Fabiola Falto	Member	Director, TRIO SSS

Specific Standard and Criteria, Priority, Questions and Evidences

Standard	Priority	Lines of Inquiring
<p>II-Ethics and Integrity</p> <p>Ethics and integrity are central, indispensable, and defining hallmarks of effective higher education institutions in all activities, whether internal or external, an institution must be faithful to its mission, honor its contracts and commitments, adhere to its policies, and represent itself truthfully.</p> <p>An accredited institution possesses and demonstrates the following attributes or activities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a commitment to academic freedom, intellectual freedom, freedom of expression, and respect for intellectual property rights; a climate that fosters respect among students, faculty, staff, and administration from a range of diverse backgrounds, ideas, and perspectives; 	<p>D.1 Increase participation in community and mission service projects.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> How consistently does AAU follow through on its stated policies in communicating with students, faculty and staff? What evidence is there that AAU adheres to principles of academic freedom? When there have been challenges to academic freedom principles, how has AAU responded? What has been the outcomes or resolution? How are the needs of all the constituencies of AAU considered in terms of curricular improvement? Explain the procedures and the policy does AAU use to address student and staff grievances. How does the institution integrate ethics and integrity into its policies, procedures and activities as it innovates planning for a technological future?

Standard	Priority	Lines of Inquiring
<p>3. a grievance policy that is documented and disseminated to address complaints or grievances raised by students, faculty, or staff. The institution's policies and procedures are fair and impartial, and assure that grievances are addressed promptly, appropriately, and equitably;</p> <p>4. the avoidance of conflict of interest or the appearance of such conflict in all activities and among all constituents;</p> <p>5. fair and impartial practices in the hiring, evaluation, promotion, discipline, and separation of employees;</p> <p>6. honesty and truthfulness in public relations announcements, advertisements, recruiting and admissions materials and practices, as well as in internal communications;</p> <p>7. as appropriate to its mission, services or programs in place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. to promote affordability and accessibility; b. to enable students to understand funding sources and options, value received for cost, and methods to make informed decisions about incurring debt; <p>8. compliance with all applicable federal, state, and Commission reporting policies, regulations, and requirements to include reporting regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. the full disclosure of information on institution-wide assessments, graduation, retention, certification and licensure or licensing board pass rates; b. the institution's compliance with the Commission's Requirements of Affiliation; c. substantive changes affecting institutional mission, goals, programs, operations, sites, and other material issues which must be disclosed in a timely and accurate fashion; d. the institution's compliance with the Commission's policies; and 		<p>6. Provide evidence does the AAU have to demonstrate its commitment to practices and policies related to hiring, evaluation, promotion, grievances, discipline and separation, and personnel practices that are fair, impartial, avoid conflict of interest or its appearance and allow for prompt and equitable action?</p>

Standard	Priority	Lines of Inquiring
9. Periodic assessment of ethics and integrity as evidenced in institutional policies, processes, practices, and the manner in which these are implemented.		

Working Group 3: Design and Delivery of Student Learning

Names	Titles	Position
Prof. Israel Torres	Steering Committee	Professor, Social Sciences
Prof. Mayra Soto	Member	Director, Department of Distance Learning
Dr. Maritza Lamboy	Member	Dean, School of Education, Humanities and Psychology
Prof. Yanitza Olivencia	Member	Professor, Office Administration
Prof. Héctor González	Member	Director, Department of Nursing

Specific Standard and Criteria, Priority, Questions and Evidences

Standard	Priority	Lines of Inquiring
<p>III-Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience</p> <p>An institution provides students with learning experiences that are characterized by rigor and coherence at all program, certificate, and degree levels, regardless of instructional modality. All learning experiences, regardless of modality, program pace/schedule, level, and setting are consistent with higher education expectations.</p> <p>An accredited institution possesses and demonstrates the following attributes or activities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. certificate, undergraduate, graduate, and/or professional programs leading to a degree or other recognized higher education credential, of a length appropriate to the objectives of the degree or other credential, designed to foster a coherent student learning experience and to promote synthesis of learning; 2. student learning experiences that are designed, delivered, and assessed by faculty (full-time or part-time) and/or other appropriate professionals who are: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. rigorous and effective in teaching, assessment of student learning, scholarly inquiry, and service, as appropriate to the 	<p>C.1 Integration of faith and values in the teaching and learning process within the classroom through intentional and consistent connections between course content and Christian and biblical values.</p> <p>A.1 Development of a teaching and learning model based in active and experiential learning.</p> <p>B.1 Innovate academic support services.</p> <p>D.3 Integrate in the curriculum community service experiences.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How do the student learning experiences integrate the service to our community in a meaningful way? 2. In what ways is the faculty rigorous and effective in teaching, learning assessment, research, and service, and how the institution supports their professional development? 3. How the AAU can demonstrate that it applies a teacher evaluation process that is equitable, meaningful and continuous, oriented to academic rigor. 4. What are the resources and learning opportunities that the AAU has to facilitate continued academic progress for students? 5. How AAU demonstrates that the general education curriculum is consistent with mission and contributes to the student integral development and success. 6. To what extent sub graduate and graduate programs offer opportunities for research and creative work. 7. What assessment practices and processes the institution and programs have established to assess student learning in an effective way?

Standard	Priority	Lines of Inquiring
<p>institution's mission, goals, and policies;</p> <p>b. qualified for the positions they hold and the work they do;</p> <p>c. sufficient in number;</p> <p>d. provided with and utilize sufficient opportunities, resources, and support for professional growth and innovation;</p> <p>e. reviewed regularly and equitably based on written, disseminated, clear, and fair criteria, expectations, policies, and procedures;</p> <p>3. academic programs of study that are clearly and accurately described in official publications of the institution in a way that students are able to understand and follow degree and program requirements and expected time to completion;</p> <p>4. sufficient learning opportunities and resources to support both the institution's programs of study and students' academic progress;</p> <p>5. at institutions that offer undergraduate education, a general education program, free standing or integrated into academic disciplines, that:</p> <p>a. offers a sufficient scope to draw students into new areas of intellectual experience, expanding their cultural and global awareness and cultural sensitivity, and preparing them to make well-reasoned judgments outside as well as within their academic field;</p> <p>b. offers a curriculum designed so that students acquire and demonstrate essential skills including at least oral and written communication, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis and reasoning, technological competency, and information literacy. Consistent with mission, the general education program also includes the</p>		

Standard	Priority	Lines of Inquiring
<p>study of values, ethics, and diverse perspectives; and</p> <p>c. in non-US institutions that do not include general education, provides evidence that students can demonstrate general education skills;</p> <p>6. in institutions that offer graduate and professional education, opportunities for the development of research, scholarship, and independent thinking, provided by faculty and/or other professionals with credentials appropriate to graduate-level curricula;</p> <p>7. adequate and appropriate institutional review and approval on any student learning opportunities designed, delivered, or assessed by third-party providers; and</p> <p>8. periodic assessment of the effectiveness of programs providing student learning opportunities.</p>		

Working Group 4: Support of the Student Experience

Names	Titles	Position
Mrs. Johanna Rodríguez	Steering Committee	Associate Vice President of Student Affairs
Mrs. Lynn Madera	Member	Administrative Assistant, Vice President of Student Affairs
Mrs. Ivette Santiago	Member	Professor, School of Nursing
Miss Mirialis Andino	Member	Financial Aid Official

Specific Standard and Criteria, Priority, Questions and Evidences

Standard	Priority	Lines of Inquiring
<p>IV-Support of the Student Experience</p> <p>Across all educational experiences, settings, levels, and instructional modalities, the institution recruits and admits students whose interests, abilities, experiences, and goals are congruent with its mission and educational offerings. The institution commits to student retention, persistence, completion, and success through a coherent and effective support system sustained by qualified professionals, which enhances the quality of the learning</p>	<p>B.2 Innovate students' support services.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> How are the institution's admission policies and criteria, and financial aid information conveyed so that prospective students can make informed decisions about applying to, and enrolling in, Antillean University? How might the functions and impacts of the following student support services best be described: registration, orientation, academic advising, career development, counseling, tutoring, student conduct policies and procedures, health services,

Standard	Priority	Lines of Inquiring
<p>environment, contributes to the educational experience, and fosters student success</p> <p>An accredited institution possesses and demonstrates the following attributes or activities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Clearly stated, ethical policies and processes to admit, retain, and facilitate the success of students whose interests, abilities, experiences, and goals provide a reasonable expectation for success and are compatible with institutional mission, including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. accurate and comprehensive information regarding expenses, financial aid, scholarships, grants, loans, repayment, and refunds; b. a process by which students who are not adequately prepared for study at the level for which they have been admitted are identified, placed, and supported in attaining appropriate educational goals; c. orientation, advisement, and counseling programs to enhance retention and guide students throughout their educational experience; d. processes designed to enhance the successful achievement of students' educational goals including certificate and degree completion, transfer to other institutions, and post-completion placement; 2. policies and procedures regarding evaluation and acceptance of transfer credits, and credits awarded through experiential learning, prior non-academic learning, competency-based assessment, and other alternative learning approaches; 3. policies and procedures for the safe and secure maintenance and appropriate release of student information and records; 4. if offered, athletic, student life, and other extracurricular activities that are regulated by the same academic, fiscal, and administrative principles and procedures that govern all other programs; 5. if applicable, adequate and appropriate institutional review and approval of student support services designed, delivered, or assessed by third-party providers; and 		<p>housing, student organizations and activities, diversity programming? What metrics are used to assess these impacts?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. In what ways does the institution's commit to student retention, persistence, completion, and success through a coherent and effective support system? 4. To what degree does the support of the student learning experiences reflect service which enhances the quality of the learning environment, contributes to the educational experience, and fosters student success?

Standard	Priority	Lines of Inquiring
6. Periodic assessment of the effectiveness of programs supporting the student experience.		

Working Group V: Educational Effectiveness Assessment

Names	Titles	Position
Pr. Luis Guadalupe	Steering Committee	Professor, Department of Theology
Prof. Javier Cruz	Member	Professor, Physical Education
Prof. Lizaira Rodríguez	Member	Director and Professor, Teacher Preparation Program
Prof. Efraín González	Member	Director and Professor, Cardiopulmonary Program

Specific Standard and Criteria, Priority, Questions and Evidences

Standard	Priority	Lines of Inquiring
<p>V-Educational Effectiveness Assessment</p> <p>Assessment of student learning and achievement demonstrates that the institution's students have accomplished educational goals consistent with their program of study, degree level, the institution's mission, and appropriate expectations for institutions of higher education.</p> <p>An accredited institution possesses and demonstrates the following attributes or activities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> clearly stated educational goals at the institution and degree/program levels, which are interrelated with one another, with relevant educational experiences, and with the institution's mission; organized and systematic assessments, conducted by faculty and/or appropriate professionals, evaluating the extent of student achievement of institutional and degree/ program goals. Institutions should: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> define meaningful curricular goals with defensible standards for evaluating whether students are achieving those goals; articulate how they prepare students in a manner consistent with their mission for successful careers, meaningful lives, and, 	<p>C.3 Evidence of the impact of the spiritual program initiatives on students and staff.</p> <p>A.2 Improve faculty professional development and performance on active and experiential learning methodologies.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> How AAU educational institutional goals aligned with all academic programs and degrees supporting educational experiences and their mission? How are the AAU goals interrelated/reflected with programs, educational experiences, and mission? How does AAU provide an assessment system that shows the degree of fulfillment with the curricular objectives aligned with the mission of each academic program and of the institution and share their results with stakeholders? How do assessment results inform and guide the strategic planning process at AAU and what mechanisms does AAU ensure that assessment results translate to improvements in curriculum, pedagogy, programming, and associated administrative processes? (Aligned to criterion 3) What are the mechanisms that AAU uses to assess their assessment process and how effective are the policies and procedures of AAU that guide the assessment process?

Standard	Priority	Lines of Inquiring
<p>where appropriate, further education. They should collect and provide data on the extent to which they are meeting these goals;</p> <p>c. support and sustain assessment of student achievement and communicate the results of this assessment to stakeholders;</p> <p>3. consideration and use of assessment results for the improvement of educational effectiveness. Consistent with the institution's mission, such uses include some combination of the following:</p> <p>a. assisting students in improving their learning;</p> <p>b. improving pedagogy and curriculum;</p> <p>c. reviewing and revising academic programs and support services;</p> <p>d. planning, conducting, and supporting a range of professional development activities;</p> <p>e. planning and budgeting for the provision of academic programs and services;</p> <p>f. informing appropriate constituents about the institution and its programs;</p> <p>g. improving key indicators of student success, such as retention, graduation, transfer, and placement rates;</p> <p>h. implementing other processes and procedures designed to improve educational programs and services;</p> <p>4. if applicable, adequate and appropriate institutional review and approval of assessment services designed, delivered, or assessed by third-party providers; and</p> <p>5. Periodic assessment of the effectiveness of assessment processes utilized by the institution for the improvement of educational effectiveness.</p>		

Working Group VI: Planning, Resources and Institutional Improvement

Names	Titles	Position
Prof. Omar Reyes Professor, Sciences	Steering Committee	Professor, Sciences
Mrs. Aixa Vega,	Member	Director, Library
Mrs. Giselle Rivera	Member	Director, Office of Student Finances
Dr. Ileanex Pérez	Member	Professor, Psychology
Mrs. Legna Varela	Member	Director, Environmental Affairs

Specific Standard and Criteria, Priority, Questions and Evidences

Standard	Priority	Lines of Inquiring
<p>VI-Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement</p> <p>The institution's planning processes, resources, and structures are aligned with each other and are sufficient to fulfill its mission and goals, to continuously assess and improve its programs and services, and to respond effectively to opportunities and challenges.</p> <p>An accredited institution possesses and demonstrates the following attributes or activities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. institutional objectives, both institution-wide and for individual units, that are clearly stated, assessed appropriately, linked to mission and goal achievement, reflect conclusions drawn from assessment results, and are used for planning and resource allocation; 2. clearly documented and communicated planning and improvement processes that provide for constituent participation, and incorporate the use of assessment results; 3. a financial planning and budgeting process that is aligned with the institution's mission and goals, evidence-based, and clearly linked to the institution's and units' strategic plans/ objectives; 4. fiscal and human resources as well as the physical and technical infrastructure adequate to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered; 5. well-defined decision-making processes and clear assignment of responsibility and accountability; 	<p>A.3 Increase the integration of educational technology in the classroom.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In what way does the institution allocate the budget distribution aligned to the needs and future projections of the different academic and non-academic dependencies? 2. What type of audit and periodic assessment are carried out to demonstrate the effectiveness in planning, resource allocation, institutional renewal processes, and availability of resources? 3. What are the major challenges facing the University related to the location of resources for technology, resources for the physical plant, as well as human resources? What process (s) has or will be used to address these challenges? 4. How the financial planning and budgeting process is aligned to the institution mission and goals, strategic plan and objectives with evidence based decision making? 5. What processes does AAU have to communicate planning and improvement processes that provide participation and incorporate the use of assessment results?

Standard	Priority	Lines of Inquiring
<p>6. comprehensive planning for facilities, infrastructure, and technology that includes consideration of sustainability and deferred maintenance and is linked to the institution's strategic and financial planning processes;</p> <p>7. an annual independent audit confirming financial viability with evidence of follow-up on any concerns cited in the audit's accompanying management letter;</p> <p>8. strategies to measure and assess the adequacy and efficient utilization of institutional resources required to support the institution's mission and goals; and</p> <p>9. Periodic assessment of the effectiveness of planning, resource allocation, institutional renewal processes, and availability of resources.</p>		

Working Group VII: Government, Leadership and Administration

Names	Titles	Position
Dr. José J. Ruiz	Steering Committee	Professor, Social Sciences
Mrs. Rhode Suriano	Member	Librarian
Mrs. Frances Izquierdo	Member	Director, Office of Human Resources
Dr. Silvia Schimpf	Member	Director, Academic Research Department

Specific Standard and Criteria, Priority, Questions and Evidences

Standard	Priority	Lines of Inquiring
<p>VII-Governance, Leadership, and Administration</p> <p>The institution is governed and administered in a manner that allows it to realize its stated mission and goals in a way that effectively benefits the institution, its students, and the other constituencies it serves. Even when supported by or affiliated with governmental, corporate, religious, educational system, or other unaccredited organizations, the institution has education as its primary purpose, and it operates as an academic institution with appropriate autonomy.</p>	<p>D.2 Establish collaborative agreements with the community representatives.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What organizational structure does the University have and how are effective communication and decision making policies visualized according to its mission? 2. How is the existing AAU administrative structure utilized in decision making policy? 3. How effective have changes in recent reorganization, staffing patterns and reporting lines been at AAU during the past years. 4. What might improve institutional governance?

Standard	Priority	Lines of Inquiring
<p>An accredited institution possesses and demonstrates the following attributes or activities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. a clearly articulated and transparent governance structure that outlines roles, responsibilities, and accountability for decision making by each constituency, including governing body, administration, faculty, staff and students; 2. a legally constituted governing body that: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. serves the public interest, ensures that the institution clearly states and fulfills its mission and goals, has fiduciary responsibility for the institution, and is ultimately accountable for the academic quality, planning, and fiscal well-being of the institution; b. has sufficient independence and expertise to ensure the integrity of the institution. Members must have primary responsibility to the accredited institution and not allow political, financial, or other influences to interfere with their governing responsibilities; c. ensures that neither the governing body nor its individual members interferes in the day-to-day operations of the institution; d. oversees at the policy level the quality of teaching and learning, the approval of degree programs and the awarding of degrees, the establishment of personnel policies and procedures, the approval of policies and by-laws, and the assurance of strong fiscal management; e. plays a basic policy-making role in financial affairs to ensure integrity and strong financial management. This may include a timely review of audited financial statements and/or other documents related to the 		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. How can we be assured that current administrative structures facilitate academic excellence and fosters institutional support?

Standard	Priority	Lines of Inquiring
<p>fiscal viability of the institution;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> f. appoints and regularly evaluates the performance of the Chief Executive Officer; g. is informed in all its operations by principles of good practice in board governance; h. establishes and complies with a written conflict of interest policy designed to ensure the impartiality of the governing body by addressing matters such as payment for services, contractual relationships, employment, and family, financial or other interests that could pose or be perceived as conflicts of interest; i. supports the Chief Executive Officer in maintaining the autonomy of the institution; <p>3. Chief Executive Officer who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. is appointed by, evaluated by, and reports to the governing body and shall not chair the governing body; b. has appropriate credentials and professional experience consistent with the mission of the organization; c. has the authority and autonomy required to fulfill the responsibilities of the position, including developing and implementing institutional plans, staffing the organization, identifying and allocating resources, and directing the institution toward attaining the goals and objectives set forth in its mission; d. has the assistance of qualified administrators, sufficient in number, to enable the Chief Executive Officer to discharge his/her duties effectively; and is responsible for establishing 		

Standard	Priority	Lines of Inquiring
<p>procedures for assessing the organization's efficiency and effectiveness;</p> <p>4. an administration possessing or demonstrating:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. an organizational structure that is clearly documented and that clearly defines reporting relationships; b. an appropriate size and with relevant experience to assist the Chief Executive Officer in fulfilling his/her roles and responsibilities; c. members with credentials and professional experience consistent with the mission of the organization and their functional roles; d. skills, time, assistance, technology, and information systems expertise required to perform their duties; e. regular engagement with faculty and students in advancing the institution's goals and objectives; f. systematic procedures for evaluating administrative units and for using assessment data to enhance operations; and <p>5. Periodic assessment of the effectiveness of governance, leadership, and administration.</p>		

Guidelines for Reporting

The Steering Committee and the Working Groups will follow the Self-Study and accreditation timeline as approved by the AAU University Administrative Council. The timeline was discussed and agreed upon. Each Working Group will develop their internal timeline to comply with the Institutional. They will schedule monthly meetings to discuss their progress and give feedback to each other in the compliance of their goals. Each Working Group will work an outline of their report, analyze the evidence needed and report back to the Steering Committee any challenges or progress in their work. In the monthly meetings of the Steering Committee each Chair of the Working Group will provide feedback of their progress and challenges on gathering and analyzing the information.

The Steering Committee will revise the first draft of the Reports of each Working Group and the key constituencies of the wider community. The final recommendations will be submitted to the AAU University Administrative Council and to the President for final approval of the Self-Study.

Organization of the Final Self-Study Report

The Steering Committee is responsible for the organization of the Self-Study Report. This includes coordinating the Self-Study Design, initial and secondary drafts, and the final report that will be submitted to MSCHE. Also, the Steering Committee is responsible for reviewing the working groups' reports, and then, creating a concise, draft document that must be reviewed by the campus community. The Steering Committee reserves the right to make editorial changes, in order to guarantee coherence and uniformity to the document.

The Self-Study will be structured as follows:

- Cover Page
- Table of Contents
- List of Figures and Tables
- Names of Members of Steering Committee and Working Groups
- Executive summary-brief description of the major findings and opportunities for improvement.
- Introduction-brief history and description of the institution that includes student population, institutional priorities, Self-Study approach, and how chapters are organized.
- Each chapter will include the respective standard aligned with priorities including the following information:
 - Heading
 - Assessment data that evidence standard is met
 - Analysis of data that is consistent with questions used in gathering data
 - Cross-references that align with other chapters and evidence inventory
 - Reflection on how assessment data has led to data-driven decisions
 - Conclusion that includes strengths, areas for improvement
 - Opportunities for continuous improvement with suggested strategies implementation
 - Appendices

Length and Format

Working groups should prepare their chapter drafts according to the following style and formatting guidelines:

- Microsoft Word processing format
- Do not exceed 15 pages, single-spaced
- Use Georgia 11-point font
- Use standard 1-inch margins
- Use double space between paragraphs
- Do not indent the first line of each paragraph
- Follow APA 7th edition formatting for the report including tables

Verification of Compliance Strategy

AAU provides a description of several strategies in order to ensure a completion of a Verification of Compliance (VOC) process. These include:

- Identification of institutional personnel/office responsible for assisting in providing relevant information to the Steering Committee Members.
- Create a table to align the areas and people/offices responsible.
- Research and request documentation required for VOC.
- Review, analysis, and cross-references of documentation submitted by personnel.
- Continuous communication and feedback between Steering Committee members and institutional personnel.

Table 4

Areas and Office Responsible

Verification of Compliance Area	AAU Office Responsible	Personnel & Steering Committee
1. Student identity verification in distance and correspondence education	Distance Education Department Registrar's Office	Distance Education Director Registrar VP Academic Affairs Steering Committee-Dr. Franklin Martí
2. Transfer of credit policies and articulation agreements	Registrar's Office VP Academic Affairs	Registrar VP Academic Affairs Steering Committee-Prof. Israel Torres
3. Title IV program responsibilities	Financial Aid Office	Financial Aid Director Steering Committee-Prof. Johanna Rodríguez
4. Institutional Records of student complaints	Student Affairs Office	Steering Committee-Prof. Johanna Rodríguez
5. Required information for students and the public	Academic Affairs Office Students Affairs Office	VP Academic Affairs VP Student Affairs Steering Committee-Prof. Johanna Rodríguez
6. Standing with State and other accrediting agencies	Academic Affairs Office	VP Academic Affairs Steering Committee-Dr. Franklin Marti
7. Contractual relationships	President Office	AAU President

Verification of Compliance Area	AAU Office Responsible	Personnel & Steering Committee
8. Assignment of credit hours	Registrar's Office Academic Affairs Office	Registrar VP Academic Affairs Steering Committee-Prof. Israel Torres

Self-Study Timetable

Following is the tentative schedule for Working Groups and meetings:

Antillean Adventist University <i>Timetable for Spring 2023 Evaluation Visit</i>		
MSCHE Time Frame	Date	Activity/Task
2020		
September 2020	September 2020	1. Self-Study Institute September
December 2020	December 9, 2020	1. Approval of Institutional Priorities - Presidential Executive Committee 2. Approval of MSCHE Accreditation Calendar
2021		
January 2021		1. Assemble Steering Committee 2. Remote meeting with Commission staff liaison begin to draft SSD
February – April 2021	March 17, 2021	1. Assemble working groups 2. Submit draft SSD by April 2021
March – September 2021	June 23, 2021 September 2, 2021 - 10:30 am	1. Submit 2nd SSD draft 2. Submission of agenda of Self Study Virtual Visit

Antillean Adventist University
Timetable for Spring 2023 Evaluation Visit

MSCHE Time Frame	Date	Activity/Task
	September 21, 2021	3. Commission staff liaison Self-Study Preparation Virtual Visit
June – September 2021	<p>Revisions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ST- August 12, 2021 ● PEC- August 18, 2021 ● CAU- August 20, 2021 <p>Submit final SSD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● September 2, 2021 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Revisions of final SSD <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Steering Committee - August ○ Presidential Executive Committee ○ University Administrative Council 2. Submit final SSD- September 2, 2021
September – December 2021	<p>Working Groups Meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● First and third Thursday of each month <p>Steering Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Last Thursday of each month 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Working Groups gather and analyze data 2. Submit progress reports to Steering Committee
2022		
January – May 2022	<p>First Draft of SS- April 21, 2022</p> <p>First Draft of SS shared to campus</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Self-Study Evaluation Team Chair chosen 2. Visit dates chosen 3. Accepted SSD sent to Chair

Antillean Adventist University
Timetable for Spring 2023 Evaluation Visit

MSCHE Time Frame	Date	Activity/Task
	community April 21, 2022	4. Self-Study drafted and shared with campus community
May – September 2022	Due date- September 22, 2022	1. Self-Study revisions and campus review
September – November 2022	SS First draft sent to Team Chair - October 6, 2022 Team Chair's Preliminary Visit- November 14- 18, 2022	1. Self-Study Report draft sent to Team Chair (two weeks before visit) 2. Team Chair's Preliminary Visit
2023		
December 22 – January 2023	January 26, 2023	1. Self-Study Report finalized based on Team Chair feedback and shared with campus
February – March 2023	Final SSR- February 9, 2023	1. Final Self-Study Report/ Verification of Compliance/Evidence Inventory uploaded to MSCHE portal (six weeks before team visit)
February – May 2023	SS Team Visit March 20-24, 2023	1. Self-Study Evaluation Team Visit 2. Team Report 3. Institutional Response
June/November 2023	November 2023	1. Commission meets to determine action 2. Visits conducted after April 15 are acted on by the Commission at the November meeting

Communication Plan

AAU understands that the Self-Study should be one that permits the inclusion of all stakeholders in a transparent and equitable process. A Communication Plan was developed to facilitate the process of maintaining up to date information to all stakeholders. The following plan was developed and approved by the University Administrative Council. The plan includes the dissemination of information through the following methods:

Table 5

Communication Plan

Communication Plan				
Purpose	Audiences	Methods	Timings	Person Responsible
To share data, documents and research results and communicate in a secure, transparent and convenient manner	Steering Committee Members Working Group Members	Middle States Self-Study Site AAU Share O Steering Committee MSCHE Self Study Webpage	Spring year 2021- Fall 2022	SC Members WG Members
To update campus constituencies about the Self-Study process	Students	SCCC Middle States Self-Study Webpage Student open forum Presentations to Student Council; include representative on Steering Committee;	Continuous updates to the webpage; Reports to SGA each academic term; Periodic forums	SC Chair and members President President of Student Council

Communication Plan

Purpose	Audiences	Methods	Timings	Person Responsible
		President's monthly newsletter Monthly email updates		
	Alumni and community members	SCCC Middle States Self-Study Webpage; Alumni and community representatives on Steering Committee; Updates in alumni newsletter and emails; Advisory committee reports	Continuous updates to webpage; Alumni newsletter: periodic updates	SC Chair and members President Alumni Association President or representative

Communication Plan

Purpose	Audiences	Methods	Timings	Person Responsible
	Faculty	SCCC Middle States Self-Study Webpage; Open forums; Faculty representatives on Steering Committee; Updates at Faculty meetings; President’s monthly newsletter; Monthly email updates	Continuous updates to webpage; Reporting of faculty representatives to divisions; Monthly updates at Faculty Senate meetings	SC Chair President VPAA Academic directors/deans
	Board of Trustees	SCCC Middle States Self-Study Webpage; Presentations at Board of Trustees meeting	Monthly updates by the President; periodic updates at Board of Trustees meetings by Self-Study co-chairs	SC Chair President
	Administration and Staff	SCCC Middle States Self Study Webpage; Open forums; President’s monthly newsletter; Monthly email updates	Continuous updates to webpage; President’s Weekly Newsletter: periodic updates	SC Chair and members President

Communication Plan

Purpose	Audiences	Methods	Timings	Person Responsible
To gather feedback about Working Group reports	Students	Feedback from Student Council representative on Steering committee after sharing updates on Working Group reports; Feedback from open forums; Monthly email updates;	Fall, 2022	
	Alumni and community members	Feedback by alumni and community representatives on steering committee; Updates in alumni newsletter and emails; Advisory committee reports	Fall, 2022	

Communication Plan

Purpose	Audiences	Methods	Timings	Person Responsible
	Faculty	Feedback by Faculty serving on Steering Committee after sharing relevant Working Group reports; Feedback after sharing updates at Faculty Senate meetings; Feedback from open forums; Monthly email updates;	Fall, 2022	
	Board of Trustees	Feedback from board members after periodic reports	Fall, 2022	
	Administration and Staff	Feedback about relevant Working Group reports by administrative and staff representatives on Steering Committee; Feedback from open forums; Monthly email updates;	Fall, 2022	

Evaluation Team Profile

The following information is provided to facilitate the organization of an Evaluation Team who have the following characteristics:

- The Chair of the Evaluation Team should be an experienced team chair, and from a peer institution with a mission and goals similar to those of AAU.
- The Chair as well as the majority of the team members should understand cultural diversity and particularly Hispanic culture.
- Some members should come from nonprofit and denominational institutions or have experience in this context.
- Some of the Evaluation Team members should preferably from institutions with programmatic offerings at the undergraduate and graduate level similar to those offered at AAU.
- Members should have experience with distance education programs.
- Some team members should be bilingual (English and Spanish).
- It would be helpful if some team members are acquainted with the political and cultural circumstances of Puerto Rico.

Peer Institutions outside Puerto Rico

- Wilson College (Chambersburg, PA)
- Rochester College (Rochester Hills, MI)
- Texas Lutheran University (Seguin, TX)
- Central Methodist University (Fayette, MO)
- Chowan University (Murfreesboro, NC)

Evidence Inventory

The goal of the Evidence Inventory is to organize and arrange evidence supporting the AAU Self Study. The Self Study will be an evidence based document. The Working Groups will analyze the standards and its criteria, verification of compliance and requirements of affiliation to identify the needed evidence of compliance. The data and documents used as evidence should be accurate, effective, complete and comprehensive showing the best portrait of the institution compliance.

To manage the evidence inventory, a team was appointed, made up of an administrative assistant as Evidence Inventory Manager, an Information Technology Department staff and the Steering Committee Co-Chair/Institutional Effectiveness Director. The institution has an internal evidence inventory and all members of the steering Committee can access the inventory and view the documents.

The evidence is organized by standards and as the self-study progresses, it will be evaluated by the Steering Committee, according to its relevance and quality to represent the standard. After this analysis, the evidence will or will not be added to the final inventory that will be uploaded to the Middle States portal before the evaluation team visit.