



Nov. 16, 2018

To the Upstate community:

Earlier this week, from Sunday through Wednesday, Upstate hosted a nine-member Site Visit Team representing the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, the regional accrediting organization for the university. Middle States requires periodic Self-Study and Site Visits to ensure its member organizations are compliant with their accreditation standards, requirements of affiliation, and federal requirements as higher education institutions. Chancellor Kristina Johnson joined us for the opening reception, evidence of the importance of this process.

This visit was informed by two years of work on a Self-Study by faculty, students and staff from across the university, including deans and educational program leaders; clinical and research administration; student affairs; the offices of strategic affairs, diversity and inclusion, accreditation, evaluation and assessment, ethics and compliance, internal audit, finance and administration; faculty and student governance, and many others. There were more than 250 participants.

At the closing presentation, Dr. Jay Perman, President of the University of Maryland, Baltimore, and chair of the Site Visit Team, read a summary of the team findings which they will submit to the Commission, which will ultimately make a decision about our compliance in spring 2019. It is expected that a preliminary report will be sent to us later this month.

We were delighted to hear Dr. Perman say that the Site Visit Team found us to be in compliance with all standards. They lauded several unique accomplishments, including the strategic plan process, capstone projects in the College of Nursing, efforts to recruit Native-American students, the infrastructure to support student success, and the resilience and commitment to the university during leadership transition. They offered several suggestions, including some regarding the strategic plan and long-term financial planning. They had no recommendations which would require follow-up reports.

In the spirit of giving thanks, we wish to recognize and appreciate everyone who participated in this work. It was a collaborative and critical self-reflection. It reinforced the strength of the strategic plan we developed together and reaffirmed the strength of our infrastructure of ethics and integrity. It recognized the excellence of our educational programs, the knowledge and skills of our graduates, and the infrastructure to support the student experience. It demonstrated our commitment to

diversity and inclusion, and to continuous institutional improvement. This outcome would not have been possible without student and faculty input from across the university.

I am most especially grateful to the work of Steering Committee co-chairs Lynn Cleary, MD, vice president for university academic affairs, and Jay Brenner, MD, associate professor of emergency medicine and chair of the Faculty Council.

Our Middle States Site Visit Team found a university passionate about its mission and dedicated to its vision and values. Thank you for all you do every day for our students, staff and patients.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Danielle', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Danielle Laraque-Arena, MD, FAAP
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