THE COOPER UNION
FOR THE ADVANCEMENT
OF SCIENCE AND ART

SELF-STUDY DESIGN

MIDDLE STATES COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION | FEBRUARY 14, 2025

This Self-Study Design (SSD) is developed as a guide for The Cooper Union community, setting out how it will organize and engage in the Self-Study process to support its reaffirmation of accreditation. The principal goal is to engage the community in a critical review of our progress on institutional priorities, setting up discussions for improvement and strategic planning well before Cooper Union's Team Visit in Spring 2027.

I. OVERVIEW

HISTORY, MISSION, AND VISION

Founded in 1859 by American inventor, industrialist, entrepreneur, and philanthropist Peter Cooper, The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art is a highly selective, private college located in Manhattan's vibrant East Village. The Cooper Union's primarily undergraduate population numbers 920 students pursuing degrees in art, architecture, or engineering. The three preprofessional schools – The Irwin S. Chanin School of Architecture, the School of Art, and the Albert Nerken School of Engineering – are complemented by a curriculum in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS) that builds upon Peter Cooper's desire for education to serve as a means to improve society. The Cooper Union expands this founding principle by serving an even broader public through outreach programs for youth and adults. With the exception of new first-year students, of which about 70% live in the residence halls, Cooper Union is a non-residential community. Thus, Cooper has a unique set of challenges and opportunities, as a selective albeit commuter campus.

Upon founding, Cooper Union's courses, symposia, library resources, and other educational opportunities were free to the public. Cooper Union maintained this practice by not charging tuition, even as it modernized into an accredited university in 1946, until 2013, when major financial challenges forced the school to introduce tuition for students on a sliding scale based on financial need. All students still receive at minimum a 50% tuition scholarship, valued at $22,575, with more than half of the student body attending on full-tuition scholarships. The school is on track to restore full-tuition scholarships for all undergraduates as part of a 10-year financial plan adopted in 2018. Cooper Union has been able to devote resources toward scholarships rather than rely on tuition revenue because of its unique financial model, which includes 44% of revenue annually from real estate investments. Over the last several years, the institution has diversified investments to mitigate risk, which has become a relevant challenge in the post-pandemic real estate market.

The Cooper Union's small urban campus includes two academic buildings, the Foundation Building and 41 Cooper Square, and one residence hall. Additional classroom and office space is leased nearby. The school embraces its location by using New York City as a lab, exploring critical urban issues and partnering with museums, galleries, research facilities, and other academic institutions to enhance learning experiences. The Great Hall, once the largest public gathering space in Manhattan, is a venerable auditorium located in the Foundation Building and remains the site of dynamic programming and events for the community, most of which are free.

THE COOPER UNION

MISSION Our mission is to sustain The Cooper Union as a free center of learning and civic discourse that inspires inventive, creative, and influential voices in architecture, art, and engineering to address the critical challenges and opportunities of our time.

VISION The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art is dedicated to Peter Cooper's radical commitment to diversity and his founding vision that fair access to an inspiring free education and forums for courageous public discourse foster a just and thriving world.

CONTEXT OF SELF-STUDY PERIOD

The last Self-Study report, published in 2018, noted Cooper Union was in a transitional period. Much had occurred over the two-year Self-Study process: a new president began; revised mission and vision statements were adopted; and improvements were made to governance, transparency, and financial accountability. These transformations occurred on the heels of a tumultuous period for the community following financial and legal challenges relating to the 2013 decision to change the tuition model. This chapter was chronicled in the 2018 report and remains important context for understanding Cooper Union's current state. The upcoming Self-Study report will focus on critical improvements made in the subsequent six years as Cooper Union emerged from this defining period, as well as new challenges and opportunities ahead.

The Cooper Union now approaches this Self-Study during an intermediary phase in its history. In March 2018, shortly after the previous Self-Study report was finalized, the Board of Trustees approved a 10-Year Plan to Return to Full-Tuition Scholarships for all undergraduate students. This plan outlined a financial path to restore and sustain the historic scholarship model through instilling greater fiscal discipline and ambitious revenue generation, alongside values-based decisions to maintain key elements of Cooper Union's high-caliber academic experience. The "Plan," as it is often referred, has served as a roadmap for the community since approval. With the partnership of leadership, faculty, students, alumni, and other supporters, Cooper Union balanced its budget, generating an operating surplus in fiscal year 2018 for the first time in decades, and met increased fundraising goals, all while reinvesting in its physical assets and academic programs and remaining a venerable institution among its peers.

Much of this progress is attributed to the leadership of President Laura Sparks, who joined in January 2017 and led the institution through this important chapter, occurring amid a global pandemic, geopolitical conflict, and macroeconomic uncertainty affecting colleges and universities nationwide. President Laura Sparks brought her time at Cooper to a close and departed the institution in September 2024 for a new opportunity. The institution is now led by Interim President Malcolm King, an alumnus, longtime Trustee, and former Chair of the Board of Trustees, as a Presidential Search Committee seeks the next leader to complete the financial plan, navigate through present challenges, and embark on the next chapter for the storied school. The Self-Study presents an opportunity for reflection and taking stock of the progress made under the previous presidential administration while identifying key considerations for the next leader.

INSTITUTIONAL GOALS AND STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Following the adoption of the financial plan, Cooper Union embarked on a process to articulate a set of institutional goals and strategic priorities. These goals and priorities, approved by the Board of Trustees in December 2018, were the culmination of a collaborative, stakeholder-driven process and built on learnings from internal and external assessments, including feedback from the 2017 Middle States Commission on Higher Education Re-Accreditation process.

INSTITUTIONAL GOALS

- Create an institution of excellence that:
  - engages students in an academic program that is rigorous, supportive, and dynamic
  - fosters a culture of curiosity, agency, compassion, and engagement
  - is tuition-free and financially resilient.
- Prepare students to question and lead in a complex world.
- Develop leading-edge models for higher education that consider the ethical, cultural, and environmental contexts and consequences of technical and creative disciplines.
- Lead by example to promote civil discourse and engagement on important civic issues.
- Advance the fields of Architecture, Art, and Engineering and foster intersections of study and practice among them.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- Fortify our rigorous professional schools.
- Return Cooper Union to full-tuition scholarships.
- Create opportunities for experimentation at the intersections of disciplines.
- Increase diversity of thought, background, and experiences.
- Balance budget, build reserves, instill financial discipline.
- Develop programs, activities, and physical space to increase student engagement and improve student life.
- Set a leading-edge standard for the integration of professional, practice-based education with a humanistic and socio-political education.
- Integrate public service orientation into academics and actively contribute to the betterment of New York.
- Position the Great Hall as a premier forum to advance critical issues of our time.

The set of institutional goals and strategic priorities paved the way for each academic program to undertake its own strategic planning process or assessment of current state and future goals:

- The Irwin S. Chanin School of Architecture recently completed a Self-Study in advance of the re-accreditation visit by the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB) scheduled for Spring 2025. The School established an External Advisory Board in 2025 to annually review and submit recommendations for continuous improvement. The School of Architecture is currently engaged in a search for a dean.
- After the School of Art withdrew membership from the National Accrediting Schools of Art and Design (NASAD) in 2022 citing the decreased relevance of the membership to engage in a "peer review" of stand-alone fine arts schools founded on the pedagogy of the studio ("Conservatory"), an external visiting committee of peer institutions was convened. Its report on the state of the school in Spring 2024 has laid the groundwork for a future strategic planning process. The Visiting Committee report provides priorities for the newly appointed dean.
- The Albert Nerken School of Engineering published Sustaining a Legacy of Innovation, a strategic plan through 2025. The school recently engaged in its Self-Study for reaccreditation by ABET in Fall 2025 and invites an External Advisory Committee to annually review and submit recommendations for continuous improvement.
- In 2022, a visiting committee submitted a report on the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences with recommendations to reimagine the humanities and social sciences and strengthen program offerings.

Reports that advance plans to achieve the 2018 institutional goals and strategic priorities include:

- The Free Education Committee's Plan to Return to Full-Tuition Scholarships (the Plan, January 2018)
- The Diversity and Inclusion Task Force Report (December 2018)
- Visiting Committee Reports in Engineering (2019); HSS (2022); and Art (2024)
- The Anti-Bias/Anti-Discrimination Task Force Report (June 2024)

REFLECTING AND LOOKING FORWARD

Over the last six years, institutional goals and strategic priorities have guided and unified the institution while providing standards against which to track progress. These goals and strategic priorities underly the SSD priorities identified in section II, pages 20 and 21. The financial plan allocated annual investments in academic programs based on meeting fundraising targets, which ensured continued focus on mission fulfillment alongside achieving financial gains. Under these frameworks, Cooper Union has made tremendous progress on these goals with notable accomplishments since the 2017 Middle States Reaccreditation in the areas of academics, the student experience and community engagement, and finances and organizational health.

ACADEMICS

The Cooper Union offers degrees in Architecture, Art, and Engineering. Each school provides an intensive professional course of study, led by creative and distinguished faculty who are both teachers and practitioners. Whether in the classroom, the studio or the lab, learning is a collaborative process of investigation, innovation, invention, and critique. The following is a list of degrees offered by the three schools:

The School of Architecture:

- B.Arch: The degree program includes five years of design, four years of structures, and culminates with a thesis.
- M.Arch: A design research, post-professional degree for applicants with a B.Arch degree.

The School of Art:

- BFA: The degree program includes studies in drawing, film/video, graphic design, painting, photography, printmaking, and sculpture.

The School of Engineering:

- BE: Degree programs in chemical engineering, civil engineering, electrical engineering, and mechanical engineering.
- BS: A degree program in computer science.
- ME: Areas of concentration include: chemical, civil, electrical, and mechanical engineering.

Several enhancements to Cooper Union's academic programs have been introduced, including the first major program updates in more than a decade – the introduction of new minors: bioengineering, chemistry, computer science, and an enriched humanities and social science minor now available for all students. Additionally, the School of Engineering is preparing to admit the first class of students in Fall 2025 for a new computer science major. These expanded academic offerings have been possible in part due to consistent faculty renewal with the aim of bringing in new perspectives and expertise relevant to changing fields.

As Cooper Union remains a small college, new external partnerships with the Flatiron Institute, Museum of Modern Art, Ichan School of Medicine, and Nokia/Bell Labs, among others, are a means for students to gain a practical expansion of knowledge and experience. Across the school, faculty members have revamped learning opportunities by designing labs and multi-year projects which allow deeper exploration into critical issues outside the classroom, including a Mobility and Robotics Lab, Smart Cities Lab, and participation in the US Department of Energy-sponsored collegiate Solar Decathlon.

While Cooper Union's three schools are committed to curricula specified by the disciplines and program-specific accreditors, there are dynamic learning opportunities at the intersection of art, architecture, and engineering that differentiate the Cooper Union learning experience and provide students unique perspectives and competencies upon graduation. A growing appetite for interdisciplinary education was evident after faculty created co-taught courses and other informal interdisciplinary projects emerged. This informed the recommendation by an external Visiting Committee to create the position of Vice President of Academic Affairs. In 2023, following a national search, the incumbent VPAA was hired and charged to steward growth in interdisciplinary efforts and identify and work toward solutions to remove barriers to the design and implementation of interdisciplinary initiatives. As part of this work, new pedagogical models have been implemented to bring students from each of the three schools into new interrogations that unify the disciplines of engineering, art, and architecture. Beyond co-taught courses, interdisciplinary experimentation has also taken the form of new facilities designed to bring students from different schools together, and funding through an internal grant program to support interdisciplinary research and project ideas (83 projects have been funded over the last five years, totaling an investment of $537,000). These include:

- The IDC Foundation Art, Architecture, Construction, and Engineering (AACE) Laboratory, an advanced fabrication space and resource, brings Cooper Union students into creative exploration alongside their peers and facility mentors.
- The Benjamin Menschel Civic Projects Lab is an all-in-one classroom, workspace, and public showcase for inter-disciplinary projects aimed at civic-focused issues. Designed to facilitate engagement with the broader New York City community, the Civic Projects Lab is a dedicated space for the kind of pedagogical undertakings that are foundational to Cooper's mission of inspiring students to address critical societal challenges; a space where experiments happen to advance knowledge; a space where our community of scholars and the community at large intersect to address the issues of our time.
- Co-curricular initiatives like the Benjamin Menschel Fellowship Program to Support Creative Inquiry have evolved to bring students together in cross-cutting interrogations that are national and global.

Core to Peter Cooper's founding vision, Cooper Union continues to integrate humanistic and sociopolitical studies into the students' education. Building on Visiting Committee recommendations, the HSS curriculum is undergoing a comprehensive revision for the first time in several decades, and students have benefitted from the addition of 36 new electives in the department in recent years.

- Under a Planning Grant from the Teagle Foundation, the Faculty from the Humanities and Social Sciences are framing a proposal to reform the HSS curriculum, centering humanistic learning as an essential element of preprofessional education. The new core curriculum is being designed to activate students' engagements with transformative texts using the "Futures of a Global New York" as an organizing framework. With New York City as a laboratory, and through visits to museums, archives, lectures and social organizations, students will discover how the ideas they study in transformative texts from across history connect to their lives and to the built environment, technologies, and art they live with every day. If awarded, HSS will coordinate with the Schools of Architecture, Art and Engineering to develop a relevant and coherent curriculum.

In direct response to the Middle States recommendation in 2018 to build a culture of assessment, a Planning and Assessment Council (PAC) was formed with cross-faculty representation to define learning outcomes, build assessment approaches relevant to each discipline, and track progress on effectiveness. The PAC has fostered discussions among faculty and staff from all three disciplines, the humanities and social sciences, and administration to seed a community of practice. The Council has centered its work on assessment planning and data-driven approaches to improve the student learning experience.

- Annual reports to MSCHE have been submitted to track the progress of the PAC.

STUDENTS AND COMMUNITY

The change in tuition impacted the overall admission rates and competitiveness of Cooper Union when introduced. However in its strategy to return to free tuition, Cooper Union committed to maintain quality as a critical feature of the plan. By 2024–2025 Cooper Union remains highly selective with an admit rate of 13%. Overall application numbers are trending upward, despite demographic shifts and a nationwide decline in applicants to art schools. Moreover, strengthened definitions of what constitutes a complete application by the Integrated Post-Secondary Education Data System (IPEDS) in 2022 resulted in a decrease in application counts.[1] Nonetheless, in Fall 2024 the observed retention rate was strong at 92%, and the six-year graduation rate was 81%. These metrics reflect a recovery very near the rates observed prior to the change in tuition model. Selectivity, retention, six-year graduation rate, and rankings were among the measures of quality established in FEC planning.

Student demographics are as follows:

- 51% Female, 46% Male, 3% Nonbinary
- Of undergraduate students who are US citizens and residents: 31% are Asian; 6% are Black or African American; 13% are Hispanic/Latino; 27% are White; 7% are Two or More Races; 4% are Unknown; and 12% are US Nonresidents
- 18% First Generation

The Cooper Union remains committed to increasing diversity of thought, background, and experiences among the student body and faculty and staff. Building on Diversity Task Force findings, Cooper Union's application, admission, enrollment, and retention data is tracked along demographic and financial aid categories established in IPEDS and used to recommend outreach strategies. In September 2023, *The New York Times* recognized Cooper Union as among 50 of the country's most selective schools for economic diversity. We believe this supports Cooper Union's strong reputation. For 2025, Cooper Union led the category of 'Best Value Schools' by *U.S. News and World Report.* The publication also ranked Cooper Union #2 in regional colleges in the north and the #8 best undergraduate engineering program. Alumni and faculty have been recognized with 40 Fulbright Scholars in the past 25 years, 15 Rome Prizes, 3 MacArthur Fellowships, a Nobel Prize, and a Pritzker Prize.

[1] Cooper Union's Schools of Architecture and Art require submission of the Studio- and Home Tests respectively. Completion of the additional materials have impacted application completion rates. Data regarding completion rates is tracked.

Cooper Union is primarily a commuter campus; less than 20% of the student body lives in the one residence hall. Therefore, an emphasis has been placed on building a sense of community for students while on campus by refreshing facilities, expanding student activities and clubs, launching a peer mentorship program, and developing an Engineering Student Success Center. During this period, Cooper Union participated in a four-year partnership with JED Campus, a leading organization for college student wellness. The engagement resulted in an assessment of and recommendations for improving student and campus life. Greater mental health resources are now offered, and a Student Care Team operates in an effort to implement holistic attention for students in need from the perspective of both academic and student affairs professionals. The pandemic (2021) created new health and mental health demands that persist.

- A report on adjustments made in response to the pandemic (March 2020) advanced to MSCHE summarizes administrative, information technology, privacy, and health and wellness initiatives implemented. Health and wellness initiatives have been maintained, in response too, to heightened mental health and food insecurity needs.

Beyond Cooper Union's traditional students, emphasis is placed on building community with greater New York City through extensive free programs and civic engagement, as Peter Cooper intended. Thousands of individuals annually participate in outreach programs, continuing education courses, exhibitions, dynamic, and often free programming in the Great Hall or other campus spaces. These offerings have been thoughtfully coordinated to align with Cooper Union's institutional goals over the past few years, advancing access and economic opportunity for low-income and often marginalized community members; while also supporting Cooper Union's financial stability through increased donor support. For example:

- STEM outreach programs engage New York high school students, often low income, in the design process, coding, makerspace and creative technologies, and data visualization/AI, creating opportunity for college access to fields that support economic mobility.
- The Saturday Program (SAT PRO) offers free art programming to New York City low-income high school students, incorporating peer instructors as role models. The Cooper Union Summer Art Intensive (CUSAI) provides a salon-style summer experience, holding scholarships for SAT PRO and low-income students.
- The Retraining Program for Immigrant Engineers, RPIE has offered free upskilling courses to New Americans working in engineering and adjacent fields for more than forty years. In 2023, a New York State grant fully funded the program and provided resources for a strategic expansion to reach more students, boosting the labor force across the state and propelling new groups into a greater socioeconomic status.

These programs not only model civic engagement and mentorship, they also foster community. Undergraduate student instructors and ambassadors engage with peers and managers in support of these mission-driven initiatives.

FINANCES, PHYSICAL PLANT, AND ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH

Cooper Union has owned the ground lease on the Chrysler Building since 1902, when the land was gifted to the institution by Peter Cooper's children. The rent Cooper Union accrues from tenants has historically helped subsidize the tuition-free education it provides students. Ground lease payments have historically helped subsidize student scholarships.

- The ground lessee since 2019 defaulted on the ground lease agreement in 2024, resulting in new financial considerations. However, because Cooper Union built important reserves and surpluses over the last seven years as part of its financial turnaround work and implementation of the Plan to Return to Full-Tuition Scholarship, student scholarships will not be impacted by this development.

Regular, annual reports have been submitted to MSCHE to provide progress on the plan, resource management, and academic planning. After decades of running a deficit, as of fiscal year 2018 Cooper Union balanced its budget and began generating seven straight years of operating surpluses. These operating surpluses have helped build reserves for future financial needs as well as restoring full-tuition scholarships. Reserves have been critically important as the pandemic affected revenue from Cooper Union's real estate assets. The strength of reserves has also allowed Cooper Union to deliver on scholarship-related commitments, steadily increasing scholarship levels according to the Plan. Tuition levels have not been increased in seven years, distinguishing Cooper Union from its peers (according to a 2024 Education Data Project report, tuition increases at a five-year average annual rate of 3.08% among all postsecondary institutions). Instead, scholarship levels have increased consistently according to the Plan; more than half of all undergraduates attend tuition free and, on average, 85% of tuition is covered for the 2024-2025 academic year. Additionally, three generous alumni donors provided gifts in 2024 allowing all seniors to receive a full-tuition scholarship, beginning with the Class of 2025 and continuing through the graduating Class of 2028.

Cooper Union grew its endowment from $150MM to $340MM during this period with a renewed focus on the investment portfolio health and contributions. The fundraising targets in the financial plan required expanding the family of supporters while retaining the base of consistent donors. The increased contributions have totaled approximately $113MM during the Self-Study period. Fundraising goals have been met annually, apart from fiscal year 2020 when the pandemic significantly affected giving trends nationwide. The financial plan included expense management initiatives which have aided in instilling financial discipline across departments, despite the inflationary environment.

Major deferred maintenance projects have been completed or are underway, including the replacement of the roof and full restoration of the façade of the historic Foundation Building, make-safe repairs and preservation of the façade of the Stuyvesant-Fish House, accessibility improvements in the Great Hall, and other critical improvements to the overall health of the physical assets.

In addition to necessary construction, upgrades to academic facilities have been prioritized. Two new interdisciplinary spaces were built with private funding, including the IDC Foundation Architecture, Art, Construction, and Engineering (AACE) Lab – a state-of-the-art interdisciplinary makerspace – and the Benjamin Menschel Civic Projects Lab, a collaborative workspace for incubating projects and coursework with a civic component. Investments have also been made in new student gathering spaces in both academic buildings and the residence hall, including a renovation of the library, home of the new Center for Teaching and Learning.

Senior level administration hires since 2018 included a Vice President for Alumni Affairs and Development, Vice President for Enrollment, Dean of Engineering, Dean of Art, and the inaugural Vice President for Academic Affairs. In addition, technological efficiencies have been introduced, including Slate and Microsoft Teams.

EXISTING AND POTENTIAL CHALLENGES

As these achievements will be highlighted and rightfully applauded in the Self-Study report, Cooper Union will also note current and conceivable challenges facing the institution. Several relate to uncertain outcomes of underway processes, specifically the search for a new President and other open leadership positions and identifying a new ownership/management structure for The Cooper Union's primary real estate investment, the Chrysler Building. Cooper Union has developed strong processes for these important decisions, of which the Self-Study team will seek to document and analyze the effectiveness of as their results are critical to the future of the school.

The Presidential Search formally began in Fall 2025 and is led by a committee of Trustees with faculty and student representation. In addition to the Presidential Search, four departments or schools have interim leadership, including Architecture, Humanities and Social Sciences, Communications, and Student Affairs. The Board of Trustees is seeking new members following the conclusion of Trustee terms and two unanticipated departures. These present opportunities to bring individuals into The Cooper Union with expertise and dedication to mission, quality of the learning enterprise, and completion of the financial plan.

In June 2024, payments contractually due to The Cooper Union by the lessee of the Chrysler Building, under the lease agreement then in force, became past due. The Cooper Union exercised its rights and terminated the lease agreement with the lessee when the period to cure the default by the lessee expired, resulting in all surviving tenant rentals derived from the building becoming payable to The Cooper Union. Following the cancellation of the lease, The Cooper Union became responsible for managing the building and in turn retained a respected property management firm to assume responsibility for and manage the Chrysler Building on its behalf, including collecting all rentals from tenants so that resources are not devoted away from college operations. The full financial impact of the lease termination is presently uncertain, but the financial plan progress currently remains on schedule despite this recent lease termination. The financial plan was strategically designed to build a financial position that enables it to have financial reserves to be able to withstand unexpected expenses, losses, damages to physical plant or cash flow shortages. The positive results to the financial plan to date since the plan's

inception in 2018 have built up operating and capital reserves for the institution which have allowed it to be prepared for such challenges as the recent Pandemic and Chrysler Building development. The Board of Trustees has engaged a strong team of real estate and legal experts to advise on the Chrysler asset so that we can implement within a reasonable time period a long-term plan to improve the tenant experience and maximize the building's value through the repositioning and marketing of the building in a challenging but improving real estate market. If this timeline holds, because of the strong progress in the first several years of the financial plan, Cooper Union will remain on track to restore scholarships as previously scheduled even with this setback. However, the institution is keenly aware other ancillary financial effects may result in challenges to the college (i.e., over the last few years, additional capital expenditures have been approved to tackle deferred maintenance projects based on the positive financial momentum; required capital investment that will continue, requiring management to remain conservative with spending while continuing to invest in programmatic initiatives).` As the financial plan progresses and Cooper Union moves to restore full-tuition scholarships the demands of food and housing insecurity will also need to be addressed.

Considerable time and efforts have also been directed toward responding to the effects of the Middle East conflict on campus, which Cooper Union is not experiencing alone. A student protest on campus in Fall 2023 resulted in a complaint to the Department of Education Office of Civil Rights and a civil lawsuit, the latter of which remains open. The incident raised concerns about harassment and discrimination within the community, particularly in the context of national issues, and an Anti-Bias/Anti-Discrimination Task Force convened to assess the factors contributing to campus climate concerns at Cooper Union. The Task Force's report was recently shared with the community and the recommendations will be the focus of upcoming discussions as Cooper Union determines how to move forward to foster respectful dialogue and engage in respectful and collaborative decision making.

The Task Force Report also focused campus attention on the centrality of academic freedom and freedom of expression rights on the quality of the educational experience. With heightened national attention on speech rights, the community is now grappling with parameters that maintain respectful discourse within and outside of the classroom.

Bigger picture considerations affecting the higher education sector as a whole are also of chief concern. American households are questioning the value of a college degree in greater numbers,[2] especially as the price has surged over the last three decades.[3] This mindset is heightened by interrelated shifts: the disruption of countless industries by the technology sector; the disappearance of college degree requirements for certain jobs; and increased demands from employers and potential students on skills, credentials, and flexible offerings.

[2] Four-in-ten Americans say it is not too or not at all important to have a four-year college degree in order to get a well-paying job in today's economy. (Pew Research Center Report, May 2023)

[3] Over the past 30 years, the cost of college tuition, fees, room, and board has increased 85% at private colleges (Community First Credit Union, April 2022

ROSE AUDITORIUM

These trends underscore how important it is that Cooper Union maintain a selective admission process that is holistic and rigorous in each of its distinct degree programs, even when accounting for the projected demographic cliff in which the number of adults choosing to attend college is expected to decrease. Additionally, as Cooper Union's degree programs interface with professions that are highly dependent on technology, leadership is continuously grappling with how to remain at the forefront of the disciplines while technology rapidly changes the sectors and professions. This is also compounded by the critical importance of a humanistic education in the fields offered at Cooper – architecture, art, and engineering – that impact the lives of people and that will require nimble but deep and considerate innovation.

Financial aid becomes more critical in this context and while Cooper Union's financial aid offerings are strong, remaining competitive in a high-cost city and without sufficient housing resources for students is a challenge. This also impacts Cooper Union's commitment to recruiting students from diverse backgrounds, particularly as all colleges are assessing the impact of the Supreme Court's decision to end race-conscious admissions practices on diversity efforts.

New challenges to diversity, immigration, and gender ideology are being posed in the present moment, creating a fluid environment in higher education. As Cooper Union attends to the potential of new policies and their enforcement, we acknowledge the heightened need to attend to the concerns of the community and create a culture of transparency and resilience. There is a new need to identify those areas of risk and coordinate a coherent response to the scenarios we may encounter. Cooper Union will need to examine its organizational structure, procedural rights, and new chain of command to respond comprehensively.

Traditional pathways for artists, architects, and engineers – much less non-traditional avenues – are difficult to compare using similar metrics, so creative approaches must be developed to track progress. As the institution has united around common goals and built cross-disciplinary communities of practice, longstanding cultural challenges have become more apparent since the three schools have historically operated in silos. A shift to enact effective holistic changes, especially the necessary structural changes to foster interdisciplinary work, is underway and being facilitated by the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

II. INSTITUTIONAL PRIORITIES

In 2018, following the adoption of the financial plan, Cooper Union embarked on a strategic planning process to articulate a set of institutional goals and priorities that support the mission and address the Plan. These goals and priorities, approved by the Board of Trustees in December 2018, were the culmination of a collaborative, stakeholder-driven process and built on learnings from internal and external assessments, including feedback from the 2017 Middle States Commission on Higher Education Re-Accreditation process. In preparation for the Self-Study these goals and priorities were synthesized into four strategic priorities as reflected below. They have been vetted with Cabinet and the Academic Affairs Council to focus the work of the community.

The 2017 goals and priorities that underly each Self-Study priority are also indicated below.
These are pulled from the list provided on page 6 of the SSD.

SELF-STUDY PRIORITIES

1 Sustain Cooper Union's reputation for academic quality

- Fortify Cooper Union's professional schools
- Return Cooper Union for full-tuition scholarships
- Increase diversity of thought, background, and experiences
- Create an institution that is tuition free and financially resilient

2 Create a sustainable future

- Balance budget, build reserves, instill financial discipline
- Return Cooper Union to full-tuition scholarships

3 Create an environment that fosters experimentation and interdisciplinarity

- Create opportunity for experimentation at the intersections of the disciplines
- Set a leading-edge standard for the integration of professional, practice-based education with humanistic and socio-political education
- Increase diversity of thought, background, and experiences
- Position the Great Hall as a premier forum to advance critical issues of our time

4 Empower students to engage and thrive educationally and professionally

- Foster a culture of curiosity, agency, compassion, and engagement
- Develop programs, activities, and physical space to increase student engagement and improve student life
- Return Cooper Union to full-tuition scholarships
- Set a leading-edge standard for the integration of professional, practice-based education with humanistic and socio-political education
- Develop programs, activities, and physical space to increase student engagement and improve student life

These priorities support our mission to sustain The Cooper Union as a free center of learning and civic discourse that inspires inventive, creative, and influential voices in architecture, art, and engineering to address the critical challenges and opportunities of our time. They establish the criticality of diversity and interdisciplinarity to the quality of the educational model at Cooper, and of full-tuition scholarships in supporting equitable opportunity for all students to engage in the educational offerings at Cooper. These priorities center the work of Cooper Union's faculty, staff, and leadership to create an environment that fosters a coherent learning experience.

The strategic priorities are mapped to the Middle States Standards in Table 2 demonstrating Cooper Union's alignment with MSCHE's measures of institutional and educational quality.

TABLE 2: ALIGNMENT OF PRIORITIES WITH MSCHE STANDARDS

COOPER UNION STRATEGIC PRIORITY	MSCHE STANDARD						
	I Mission & Goals	**II Ethics & Integrity**	**III Design & Delivery of Learning**	**IV Support of the Learning**	**V Educational Effectiveness Assessment**	**VI Planning, Resources & Improvement**	**VII Governance, Leadership & Admin**
1. Sustain CU reputation for academic quality	1	1	1		1	1	1
2. Create a sustainable future	1	1	1	2	2	1	1
3. Create an environment that fosters experimentation and interdisciplinarity	1	2	1	1	2		2
4. Empower students to thrive educationally and professionally	1			1	2		

Key:
1 = Primary Focus
2 = Supporting Focus

THECOOPERUNION

III. INTENDED OUTCOMES OF THE SELF-STUDY

The Cooper Union intends to achieve the following outcomes as a result of engaging in the Self-Study review. Outcomes are measurable and observable, suggesting an examination of programs and services that contribute to the intended results.

The following outcomes are prescribed by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education:

- Demonstrate how the institution currently meets the Commission's Standards for Accreditation and Requirements of Affiliation.
- Focus on continuous improvement in the attainment of the institution's mission and its institutional priorities.
- Engage the institutional community in an inclusive and transparent self-appraisal process that actively and deliberately seeks to involve members from all areas of the institutional community.

To address recommendations from the 2018 Reaffirmation of Accreditation and progress toward our mission, Cooper Union has added the outcome:

- Further embed educational effectiveness and overall assessment into the institution's culture of continuous improvement.

In consideration of the upcoming leadership transition, Cooper Union has added the outcome:

- Provide an assessment of Cooper Union's strengths, weaknesses, and vulnerabilities as well as opportunities for improvement for the next strategic plan.

TABLE 3: SELF-STUDY OUTCOMES

1.	Demonstrate how the institution currently meets the Commission's Standards for Accreditation and Requirements of Affiliation.	MSCHE
2.	Focus on continuous improvement in the attainment of the institution's mission and its institutional priorities.	MSCHE
3.	Engage the institutional community in an inclusive and transparent self-appraisal process that actively and deliberately seeks to involve members from all areas of the institutional community.	MSCHE
4.	Further embed educational effectiveness and overall assessment into the institution's culture of continuous improvement.	CU
5.	Provide an assessment of Cooper Union's strengths, weaknesses, and vulnerabilities as well as opportunities for improvement for the next strategic plan.	CU

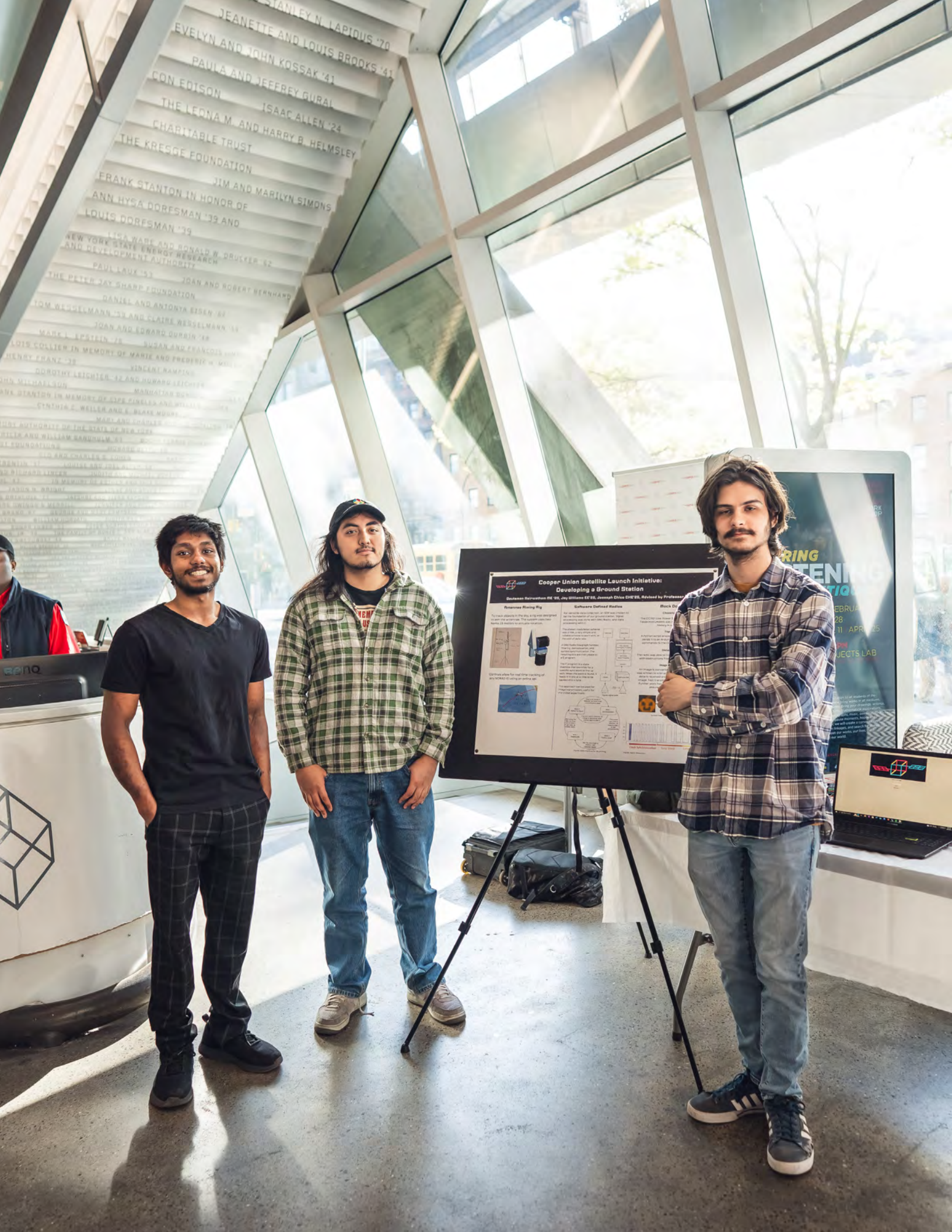
IV. SELF-STUDY APPROACH

Cooper Union is in a period of transition, currently seven years into the 10-year plan to return to full-tuition scholarships and engaging in a presidential search. The 2027 Self-Study and peer review provide a crucial opportunity to explore the strategies undertaken to improve the institution's financial viability and sustainability and the impact of financial decisions and resources on the educational mission, important evidence for the incoming president.

Cooper Union has selected the standards-based approach to conduct its Self-Study.

Seven standards-based working groups will each concentrate their review on Cooper Union's progress on one of seven MSCHE Standards and established criteria. The institutional priorities provided in Table 2 will be used to focus their examination to integrate the college's mission-driven priorities. Working group reviews will assess our progress on the Plan, our effectiveness, and identify opportunities to be addressed in the next strategic plan.

The Requirements of Affiliation will be addressed in the Report by the Planning Committee, which includes the Vice President of Enrollment and Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness and Strategic Initiatives, who are both charged to fulfill these requirements. Therefore, they will steward the response to the Requirements of Affiliation for review and input by the Planning Committee, and vet with the Cabinet. The response and documentation of Requirements of Affiliation will be shared in general documents in the SharePoint Evidence Repository.


Cooper Union Satellite Launch Initiative:
Developing a Ground Station
Antennas Aiming Rig
Software Defined Radios
benq

V. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE STEERING, PLANNING, AND WORKING GROUP COMMITTEES

As an introduction, Cooper Union is a small, lean organization. In response to the financial Plan, faculty, senior administrators, and staff assume broad and deep responsibilities. For this reason, in planning the Self-Study review, Cooper Union has assembled an organizational structure as follows, integrating internal stakeholder groups including Executive Leadership, the Cabinet, the Academic Affairs Council, and the Deans Council. Co-Chairs Dr. Demetrius Eudell, VPAA, and Antoinette Torres, VPIE, coordinate to ensure that Interim President Malcolm King and Chief of Staff Michelle Marsh are updated and integrate reports outs to the Cabinet and Board of Trustees.

STEERING COMMITTEE

A four-member Steering Committee comprised of the Vice President of Academic Affairs (VPAA), the Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness (VPIE), the Interim Dean of Student Affairs, and the Associate Dean for Educational Innovation and Professor of Electrical Engineering has been assembled. The Steering Committee is charged with management oversight to 1) assure that each working group progresses in their charge, meeting deadlines for critical planning and reporting activities, interim reporting to the broader Planning Committee on their interrogations that support review of the standards and priorities, submitting evidence, and supporting communication; 2) facilitate the discussion and progress of the Planning Committee in alignment of their work; 3) meeting the deadlines for communication to the community, leveraging their “assets” to do so.

Steering Committee members sit on institutional committees, including the Executive Leadership Council; the Cabinet; and the Academic and Student Affairs Committee providing the ability to communicate progress on the Self-Study regularly to leadership, and an additional dimension of accountability to the Self-Study process.

TABLE 4: SELF-STUDY STEERING COMMITTEE

Member	Title	Institutional Membership "Assets"
Dr. Demetrius Eudell	VP Academic Affairs	Executive Leadership President's Cabinet Academic & Student Affairs Council, Chair Deans Council Board of Trustees— Academic & Student Affairs Committee
Grace Kendall	Interim Dean of Students	Executive Leadership President's Cabinet Academic and Student Affairs Council
Dr. Lisa Shay	Associate Dean for Innovation and Professor	Dean of Engineering Office Faculty, School of Engineering
Antoinette Torres	VP, Institutional Effectiveness and Strategic Initiatives	President's Cabinet Academic and Student Affairs Council Co-Chair, Planning & Assessment Council MSCHE Liaison Officer

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Steering Committee members sit on the Planning Committee, a broader community of practice that engages in common methods in the collection of evidence, share in and explore data practices and lines of inquiry regarding the Self-Study priorities, review and discuss working group findings, review, and discuss working group report outs, and support coherence in the ultimate Self-Study report (SSR). The Planning Committee is an 11-member committee comprised of senior administrators, faculty, and staff. It will meet at least twice a term where first meetings are to review the charge and engage in goal setting for the term; and second meetings will be to review progress and share findings.

TABLE 5: SELF-STUDY PLANNING COMMITTEE

Member	Title	Institutional Membership "Assets"
Dr. Nada Ayad	Acting Dean, Humanities and Social Sciences	Cabinet Academic and Student Affairs Committee Deans Council Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
Troy Cogburn	VP, Enrollment	Executive Leadership Cabinet Academic and Student Affairs Committee Planning and Assessment Council
Brian Cusack	Director, Campus Enterprise Systems	Instructor Planning and Assessment Council Co-Chair, 2017 MSCHE Self-Study
Dr. Ben Davis	Chair and Professor, Chemical Engineering	Co-Chair, Planning and Assessment Council Faculty, School of Engineering
Dr. Demetrius Eudell	VP, Academic Affairs	Executive Leadership President's Cabinet Academic and Student Affairs Council, Chair Deans Council Board of Trustees—Academic & Student Affairs Committee
Grace Kendall	Interim Dean, Student Affairs	Executive Leadership President's Cabinet Academic and Student Affairs Council
Yuri Masnyj	Assistant Dean, School of Art Adjunct Professor	President's Cabinet Faculty, School of Art

Member	Title	Institutional Membership "Assets"
Lisa Norberg	Director of the Library	Planning and Assessment Council
Keith Stokeld	Controller *Will be intermittent participant until Fall 2025 due to new demands associated with the Chrysler Building*	
Antoinette Torres	VP, Institutional Effectiveness and Strategic Initiatives	President's Cabinet Co-Chair, Planning and Assessment Council MSCHE Liaison Officer
Mersiha Veledar	Acting Assistant Dean, School of Architecture	President's Cabinet Assistant Professor Planning and Assessment Council Faculty, School of Architecture

WORKING GROUPS

Working group chairs have been identified and assigned to one of the seven MSCHE Standards. They are largely drawn from the Planning Committee and will steward the interrogations, analysis, review, and findings associated with the Standard to which they have been assigned. Working Group chairs will begin their work in Spring 2025, to frame the *Review Plan* for their Standard and assemble needed materials as laid out in the charge to Working Group chairs. The Review Plan will include the following materials in order to support the Working Group review.

- Lines of inquiry associated with the four overarching priorities to be addressed throughout the Self-Study that the Working Group will pursue in their review (Table 1)
- Framed statement as to how the Working Group's Self-Study review will support the intended Self-Study Outcomes (Table 2)
- The recommendation of additional Working Group members
- The Evidence Inventory Intake for the Standard and Criteria to which the Work Group is assigned (The Inventory has been preliminarily populated, for review and additional input.)
- Needed data, reports, policies, and practices associated with the Standard and Criteria to which the Work Group is assigned. The Evidence Inventory Intake for the Standard can support this effort
- Standards of Affiliation that are relevant to the Standard
- Materials that will be input into the *Evidence Inventory*

- The names and roles of institutional stakeholders to be included in their Working Group review because they possess information and/or experiences that are relevant to the review. Stakeholders maintain knowledge and experiences that will support the work of the Working Group.
- A proposed Working Group schedule commencing in Fall 2025.
- Maintenance of Working Group minutes including any pre-planning meetings.

Individual meetings are being coordinated with each Working Group and the MSCHE Self-Study Co-Chairs to review the charge and how it can support their draft; review the Evidence Inventory Intake to recommend additional resources that need to be included; and identify additional data they may require to conduct an optimal review. The Director of Institutional Research and VP Institutional Effectiveness are resource staff being made available to support Working Group Chairs and members should they seek data, analysis, or reference materials. Evidence managers will support the Working Groups in assembling needed materials. This is discussed in Section 12 entitled *The Evidence Inventory*.

- Each Working Group is tasked with engaging the community in the process of Self-Study as it applies to their specific standard.
- Their research and data collection is focused through the lens of the institutional mission and goals, and their work should reflect the open and honest responses to the questions that they inquire about.
- Working Groups will collaborate with other Working Group chairs, governance bodies, key offices, and designated staff to address the specific lines of inquiry, identify gaps in the evidence or in processes and procedures, develop strategies addressing these gaps, and to implement these strategies where feasible.
- The findings from this process of community engagement will be summarized by each Working Group's written chapter, which will be included in the overall institutional Self-Study Report.

The pre-planning activities will commence in Spring 2025 and a *Review Plan* will be submitted to the Planning Committee by July 1, 2025.

- The Review Plan will support the Working Groups in their review and analysis. Working Groups will commence their work to draft their assessment of progress against standards in Fall 2025 and continue through the close of Summer 2026.
- The Working Group chairs and inaugural members from the Planning Committee are identified in Table 6.

TABLE 6: SELF-STUDY REVIEW WORKING GROUP CHAIRS

Working Group Chair	Title	Standard
Dr. Demetrius Eudell	Vice President, Academic Affairs	1 Mission and Goals
Dr. Lisa Shay	Associate Dean, Educational Innovation Professor	2 Ethics and Integrity
Antoinette Torres	VP, Institutional Effectiveness and Strategic Initiatives	3 The Design and Delivery of the Learning Experience
Co-Chair Grace Kendall	Interim Dean, Student Affairs	4 Support of the Student Experience— Student Development and Engagement
Co-Chair Lisa Norberg	Director, Cooper Union Library	Co-Curricular Experiences
Co-Chair Dr. Ben Davis*	Chair and Professor Chemical Engineering	5 Educational Effectiveness Assessment
Co-Chair Mersiha Veledar*[4]	Acting Assistant Dean, School of Architecture	
Co-Chair Brian Cusack	Director, Campus Enterprise Systems	6 Planning, Resources and Institutional Effectiveness
Co-Chair Keith Stokeld	Controller	
Troy Cogburn	Vice President, Enrollment	7 Governance

[4] Of note, faculty and non-managerial staff are unionized and compensated for participation. In order to appoint "chairs" and "co-chairs" requires review and negation with one of three unions, the Cooper Union Federation of College Teachers, CUFCT; the Cooper Union Organization of Part-Time faculty, CUOP; and the Union @ Cooper Union for non-managerial staff including clerical, administrative, buildings and grounds, and technical staff.

The organizational plan will foster collective impact to assure broad perspective and input in the review of each standard for a comprehensive assessment of impacts by:

- Including community stakeholders and members in the collaborative either formally, or informally through communication planning;
- Focusing on how data can be used to continuously learn, adapt, and improve;
- Building an assessment culture that fosters relationships, trust, and respect among participants regardless of role at Cooper Union.

There have been four presentations on accreditation and progress on the Self-Study Design to date including Cabinet, the Academic Affairs committee, the Deans Council, and the Planning and Assessment Council. A presentation to the Academic and Student Affairs committee of the Board is scheduled in February 2025 to launch their involvement in the review. Broader campus communication will launch in February 2025.

Critical dates communicated to the Steering and Planning Committees, Cabinet, Academic Affairs Council, and the Deans Council include the following dates:

- The deadline to submit the Self-Study is **February 14, 2025.**
- The Self-Study Planning Visit with the MSCHE VP of Field Relations, Dr Ryan Hartnett, is scheduled for **April 2, 2025**.
- The Self-Study Review Intake is due **July 1, 2025.**
- Writing the Self-Study commences **Fall 2025 through end of Spring 2026.**
  - Team Chair Visit prior to Evaluation and SSR *tbd* (MSCHE)
  - Self-Study Report deadline *tbd* (MSCHE, based on Spring 2027 Evaluation Team Visit)
- The Evaluation Team Visit will occur in **Spring 2027** *(approved 12.09.2024).*

The Self-Study project plan, effective Spring 2025–Spring 2027, has been drafted for review and comment by the Planning Committee at its upcoming meeting.

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The following table provides the Working Group membership by standard.

TABLE 7: WORKING GROUP MEMBERSHIP BY STANDARD

Standard	Chair/Co-Chairs	Members
1. Mission and Goals	Dr. Demetrius Eudell VP, Academic Affairs	Mary Mann, Archives Librarian Jessica Baker, Director, Enrollment, Marketing, and Communications Hayley Eber, Acting Dean, School of Architecture Yuri Masnyj, Assistant Dean and Adjunct, School of Art *Report out and discussion to:* Deans Council in advance of Planning Committee
2. Ethics and Integrity	Dr. Lisa Shay Associate Dean of Innovation and Professor	Brian Cusack, Director of Enterprise Systems and Adjunct Professor, School of Engineering Elizabeth O'Donnell, Distinguished Professor–Adjunct, School of Architecture Noreen Labajo, Benefits Analyst Bill Germano, Professor, HSS Adriana Farmiga, Dean, School of Art and Adjunct Professor
3. Design of the Student Learning Experience	Antoinette Torres VP, Institutional Effectiveness and Strategic Initiatives	Dr. Nada Ayad, Acting Dean, HSS Dr. Fred Fontaine, Chair and Professor, Electrical Engineering Harrison Tyler, Director of the AACE Lab Lisa Norberg, Director of the Library Yuri Masynj, Assistant Dean and Adjunct Professor, School of Art
4. Support of the Student Experience	Lisa Norberg Director of the Library Grace Kendall Interim Dean, Student Affairs	John Lundberg, Associate Director, Center for Writing Alex Fischer, Assistant Dean of Students Dr. Ruben Savizky, Associate Dean, Academic Affairs and Professor Fatema Dalal, Director of Admissions

Standard	Chair/Co-Chairs	Members
5. Educational Effectiveness Assessment	Dr. Ben Davis, Chair and Professor, Chemical Engineering Mersiha Veledar, Acting Assistant Dean and Assistant Professor	Steven Hillyer, Director the SoArch Archive Cristobal Lehyt, Assistant Professor Will Villalongo, Associate Professor Kit Nicholls, Director, Center for Writing and Learning and Instructor, HSS Whitney Oldenburg, Director, Center for Career Development
6. Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement	Brian Cusack, Director Enterprise Systems Keith Stokeld, Controller*	Troy Cogburn, VP, Enrollment Demetrius Eudell, VP, Academic Affairs Mary Ann Nissen, Director of HR Robert Reinckens, CTO *Report out and discussion to:* Deans Council in advance of Planning Committee
7. Governance, Leadership and Administration	Troy Cogburn, VP, Enrollment	Sam Keene, Chair CUFCT, Chair and Professor, Electrical Engineering Robert Topper, Professor of Chemistry Yuri Masnyj, Assistant Dean and Adjunct, School of Art Elizabeth O'Donnell, Distinguished Professor—Adjunct, SoArch *Report out and discussion to:* Deans Council in advance of Planning Committee

The Working Groups will convene to review the MSCHE Review Plan for their standard and analyze data and available evidence and author their assessment of progress against criteria beginning in Fall 2025 through Spring 2026. Because student schedules are fluid term to term, Cooper Union's Planning Committee will open participation to students each term, beginning in Fall 2025. However, in coordination with the Office of Student Affairs, we have identified key student groups (Cooper Union does not have a student senate) to build interest and understanding of accreditation, the process, and critical dates in Spring 2025. The contours of the plan are provided below. The first Ad Chair and Student meetings begin in February 2025.

TABLE 8: STUDENT ENGAGEMENT IN SELF-STUDY— BUILDING UNDERSTANDING OF ACCREDITATION AND ENGAGEMENT IN THE PROCESS

Student Group Entity	Action	Dates
Ad Chairs (9) are administrative chairs in each of the 3 schools	• Present to Ad Chairs as a guest to their meeting • Provide updates to Ad Chairs – beginning with SSD, before SSPV, Review Plan • Recruit Working Group participation	02.10.2025 02.14.2025–07.01.2025 09.03.2025+
Students - All	• Announcement beginning Accreditation Process–the SSD 2 • Reminders Communication Cascade: Cooper Connect message • Orientation	03.10.2025–03.24.2025; 04.02.2025 08.2025, 2026
Student Club leaders	• Distribution list from Student Affairs • Meetings coordinated with Student Affairs and Activities	Spring 2025 Fall 2025 Spring 2026
Ad Chairs and Student Club leaders	• Lunch discussion	03.2025
Residence Hall and Program Assistants	• Meeting presentation annually—End of Spring 2025 and BOT 2026 and 2027	
Student Trustees	Every Term	Spring 2025 Fall 2025 Spring 2026 Fall 2026 Spring 2027
Instagram	• Read Self-Study Design post–with QR code	Spring 2025 Fall 2025
Intro letter	• Alumni Affairs to introduce Self-Study • Follow up information sessions	Spring 2025

• Working Group Collaboration – Facilitating Coherence

Specific Charge to the Seven Working Groups provided in Tables 9 – 15 [*inclusive*]

The following tables provide the institutional priorities that align with each standard. Because there is overlap in the priorities and the criterion associated with each standard, Working Groups with which to collaborate are suggested. This provides a roadmap for collaboration among Working Groups and insight into how Cooper Union works toward its strategic priorities and a coherent learning experience. The coordination among Working Groups around institutional priorities will provide coherence in the Self-Study Report. Assessment information, practices, and policies are being codified in Evidence Inventory Intakes which align each criterion with materials that will support the review. An example of the Evidence Inventory Intake is provided in the Appendix.

TABLE 9: DETAIL TO SUPPORT INTERROGATION OF STANDARD 1– MISSION AND GOALS

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.

Priorities	**Other Working Groups**
1. Sustain reputation for academic quality	Ethics and Integrity Planning, Resources, Improvement Design and Delivery of the Learning Experience
2. Create a sustainable future	Planning, Resources, Improvement
3. Create an environment that fosters experimentation and interdisciplinarity	Design and Delivery of the Learning Experience
4. Empower students to thrive educationally and professionally	Support of the Student Experience
Key Considerations	
Institutional planning Learning outcome priorities Documented financial resources, funding base, and financial development and management plans	The institution has a core of faculty with sufficient responsibility to assure continuity and coherence
Requirements of Affiliation	
1. Cooper Union is authorized to operate and award postsecondary degrees	2. Cooper Union is operational, with students actively enrolled in its degree programs

Questions to Guide Self-Study Review of Standard 1

1. What are the processes by which the constituencies of The Cooper Union participated in the development, implementation and revision of the college's mission, goals, and priorities? By what process did the governing body approve the mission, goals, and priorities?
2. How have the institutional priorities guided academic and resource planning? What procedures are in place to ensure that all major new initiatives are designed to reflect and support the mission? How is experimentation and interdisciplinary learning fostered? Are these models sustainable?
3. How does the institution measure how effectively organizational structures and operations, planning and resource allocation reflect and support the mission? What are the measures that provide evidence of Cooper Union's academic quality?
4. How does Cooper Union's return to free tuition support educational quality? How have financial discipline measures allowed for Cooper Union's ability to plan for continuous improvement and growth?

Assessment Information, Processes, Procedures and Documents

Visiting Committee Reports in Art, Engineering, and the Humanities and Social Sciences | FEC Plan | Annual summary of Progress on Financial Plan and Resources and Improvements to MSCHE | Chrysler Building status report [pending] | Strategic Goals and Priorities | Longitudinal admission data and board memos | Longitudinal Retention and Graduation Rate data and analysis | Placement Data | Civic Projects Lab strategic plan | Economic Impact developed to support Bundy Aid | AACE Lab annual reports | Assessment Plans from each of the Schools and the Humanities and Social Sciences | Learning Outcomes from each of the schools and HSS and crosswalk with Institutional Outcomes | Curriculum Committee Recommendations | Program proposals | Diversity and Inclusion Task Force | Financial Aid data including Debt | New Faculty hire data and profiles | Anti-Bias/ Anti-Discrimination Task Force Report | Academic Freedom policy | Freedom of Speech policy

TABLE 10: DETAIL TO SUPPORT INTERROGATION OF STANDARD 2—ETHICS AND INTEGRITY

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.

Priorities	Other Working Groups
1. Sustain CU reputation for Academic Quality	Mission and Goals Planning, Resources, Improvement
2. Create a sustainable future	Mission and Goals Planning, Resources, and Integrity
4. Empower students to thrive educationally and professionally	Support of the Student Experience
Key Considerations	
Compliance with Federal and State Laws Compliance with Commission policies Disclosure of legally constituted governance structure and responsibility for quality and integrity	Governing body has no conflict/financial conflict of interest Accurate, fair, and complete information on all aspects of the institution
Verification of Compliance	
Title IV Program Responsibilities Transfer of Credit	Institutional Record of Student Complaints Required Information for Students and the Public

Questions to Guide Self-Study Review of Standard 2

1. Describe the policies currently in place regarding academic freedom, freedom of expression, and similar forms of expression, including intellectual property issues. Address how they have been developed and implemented and how these policies sustain academic quality and learning outcomes at Cooper Union.
2. Discuss how Cooper Union's Code of Conduct, policies, governances and faculty and staff union agreements (and processes) foster equity and a climate of respect.
   - How do grievance policies and processes foster accountability in a climate of respect, fairness, and equity? How do policy statements establish that fairness and impartiality are key principles and that complainants concerns will be dealt with promptly and equitably?
   - Are grievance policies transparent and reviewed periodically to assure effectiveness?
   - How does Conflict of Interest policy contribute to equity at Cooper Union?

3. How does Cooper Union create a culture that advances academic quality and supports equity and diversity?
   - Discuss how Cooper Union's admission and financial aid policies foster academic access, equity, and student success.
   - Discuss how Human Resource policies and processes ensure that all hiring, promotion, granting of tenure, termination, retirement, and similar employment issues are fair and impartial. How are diversity objectives addressed while assuring fairness and impartiality?
   - What are the current procedures for promotion and tenure for faculty members? How do these processes uphold academic quality, fairness, and diversity?
4. Provide instances that support transparency and informed decision making. Discuss how Cooper Union enables students to understand funding sources, debt, and value of the degree, and develops financial fluency among students and families.
   - Discuss how Cooper Union is compliant with federal Need to Know requirements including public posting of accreditation status, key data regarding enrollment, retention, and graduation rates, and compliance with the Commission's Federal Compliance requirements.
   - Discuss the assurances to verify accuracy of information provided to the public and efforts to communicate this information.
5. How does Cooper Union conduct periodic assessment of the policies, and implementation practices, that demonstrate the school's commitment to ethics and integrity?

Assessment Information, Processes, Procedures and Documents

Academic Freedom and Freedom of Expression policies and guidance | Anti-Bias/Anti-Discrimination Task Force Report and Disposition of Recommendations | CUFCT, CUOP and UCU Collective Bargaining Agreements | Conflict of Interest policies and data protections | Privacy Policy | Grievance Procedures for students, faculty and staff | Tenure and Promotion policies/processes | Diverse Learning Environment Survey findings | Diversity Task Force Report | Code of Conduct | Student Complaint policies | Consumer Information | Whistleblower policy | Cleary Report | Disability and non-Discrimination policies | Cooper Union IR data and Data Governance Strategy | College Navigator

TABLE 11: DETAIL TO SUPPORT INTERROGATION OF STANDARD 3—DESIGN AND DELIVERY OF THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

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.

Priorities	Other Working Groups
1. Sustain CU reputation for Academic Quality	Ethics and Integrity – Academic Freedom Educational Effectiveness Assessment Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience
2. Create a sustainable future	Planning, Resources, Improvement
3. Create an Environment that fosters experimentation and interdisciplinarity	Support of the Student Experience
Key Considerations	
Institutional and program planning Student learning initiatives Assessment planning	Systematic assessment and evaluation of program and student outcomes Curricular planning Faculty quality
Verification of Compliance	
Required Information for Students and the Public	Assignment of Credit Hours

Questions to Guide Self-Study Review of Standard 3

1. Describe how Cooper Union's degree programs are designed to fulfill accreditor requirements (ABET, NAAB, and MSCHE). How do the degree programs support a coherent learning experience that fosters understanding of critical knowledge and achievement of critical learning outcomes associated with the degree and The Cooper Union?
   - Does the curriculum design support student meaning-making and synthesis of learning over time?
   - Are the degree programs presented in such a way that potential and current students understand how their program requirements prepare them for the future, and that lay out the path for timely degree completion?
   - What are the opportunities that Cooper Union offers its undergraduate and graduate students to conduct research and scholarship that advance their areas of interest? How well is diversity reflected in the scholarly activities promoted at Cooper Union?
2. Describe how the revised mission goals and priorities have been used to guide strategic planning and program initiatives at the program and school level. Are there initiatives and/or programming that demonstrate a commitment to student's academic progression and professional development?

3. What processes are undertaken to review program curriculum to assure it is relevant, appropriate to program level goals, and that it addresses mission driven strategic goals and priorities?
   - In what ways do the degree granting programs/schools coordinate with the Humanities and Social Sciences faculty to engage students in new areas of intellectual experience, and an expanded understanding of cultural and global awareness, to prepare for the ethical, cultural, and environmental contexts and consequences of their professions?
   - How do courses offered by the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences support the institution's revised learning goals and priorities, and the priorities established by school-based accreditors?
   - What assessment is conducted to demonstrate that students have achieved program-specific, professional, and institutional outcomes?
4. To what extent are faculty prepared to design and deliver student learning experiences that are rigorous, relevant, and effective?
   - How are they prepared to assess student learning and achievement of course-level and program level outcomes?
   - How do the faculties ensure that the student learning experiences maintain breadth and depth in their individual curricula? How do the faculties incorporate innovation and other contemporary practices into the curriculum?
   - What practices support the development and effectiveness of faculty. What are the expectations and policies for equitable faculty review and tenure?
   - Does class size/faculty to student ratios support the pedagogies that support student learning?
5. How does Cooper Union assess the effectiveness of its learning model?

Assessment Information, Processes, Procedures and Documents

Strategic Priorities | NAAB and ABET Self-Study Reports | Visiting Committee Reports | Strategic Plans of the Schools and HSS | Assessment Approaches by School | Outcomes Assessment | AACE Lab Reports | Menschel publications | Faculty Accomplishments | Faculty data including diversity data | Faculty vitae | New program and course proposals | Syllabi with clearly stated goals and outcomes | HR hiring policies and processes | Tenure Review process and protocols | Student performance data | Capstone projects | Student Funded Projects Initiatives | Study Abroad participation data | Graduate school and professional placement data.

TABLE 12: DETAIL TO SUPPORT INTERROGATION OF STANDARD 4 – SUPPORT OF THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

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 environment, contributes to the educational experience, and fosters student success.

Priorities	Other Working Groups
1. Sustain reputation for Academic Quality	Mission and Goals
3. Create an environment that fosters experimentation and interdisciplinarity	Design and Delivery of the Learning Experience Planning, Resources, Improvement Ethics and Integrity
4. Empower students to thrive educationally and professionally.	Design and Delivery of the Learning Experience
Key Considerations	
Admission assessment	Compliance with federal and state law including FERPA, Complaint Policy, Need to Know
Increase diversity of background, thought	Assessment of Learning
Student learning programs and initiatives (curricular and co-curricular)	
Verification of Compliance	
Transfer of Credit policy	Institutional Record of Student Complaints

Questions to Guide Self-Study Review of Standard 4

1. Does Cooper Union have clearly stated policies and practices to admit and award student financial aid in a fair and equitable manner?
   - How does Cooper Union ensure that students understand the cost of their education and affordability, and the value a degree at Cooper Union, in their field of study, provides?
   - How are students onboarded to understand their academic programs, cost of their education, supports and opportunities at Cooper Union? How are faculty and campus stakeholders brought into orientation planning?
2. How does Cooper Union create a culture that advances academic quality and supports equity and diversity? Discuss how the admission and enrollment practices in each of the three schools ensure (to the extent possible) that admitted students have the interests, abilities, and goals that are compatible with the degree requirements in their field of study, and provide a reasonable expectation for success. What role do the faculty play in assessing candidates with the potential to succeed?

- Are there processes and programs that support admitted students who may not be adequately prepared for study at the level for which they have been admitted?
- What programming and supports exist to enhance retention and graduation rates? Discuss how Cooper Union's admission and financial aid policies foster academic access, equity, and student success.

3. How has the tuition model impacted application and the quality of the student applicant and admitted pool?
4. What policies and procedures are used to evaluate and accept transfer credit such that there is a reasonable expectation that these students will be successful in the courses into which they are placed?
5. How is data disaggregated and analyzed to support both barriers to student achievement and progression in the degree? Are there examples of co-curricular initiatives that respond to these data? How is such programming assessed? How does faculty advisement support student achievement and progression in the degree?
   - Do advising methods support the needs of all students?
6. Describe how students in academic difficulty identified and supported. What measures are used to identify students in difficulty?
   - Are the academic, interpersonal, disability and wellness services adequate to support students in difficulty?
   - How do campus stakeholders coordinate on behalf of students in difficulty? Are referral protocols established? How are these services reviewed and updated?
   - What programs, services, and resources exist to build awareness of mental health issues among students, as well as faculty and staff? How are third-party counseling services evaluated by The Cooper Union?
7. Describe the co-curricular initiatives that support student learning, post-graduation readiness, and advance experimentation and interdisciplinarity.
8. How does Cooper Union periodically assess the effectiveness of program supports? How is the overall experience of Cooper Union students assessed, from the point of admission to graduation?

Assessment Information, Processes, Procedures and Documents

Admission and Financial Aid Policies | Financial Aid Student Rights Policy | Transfer Policy and Credit Evaluation process | Annual Admission Reports | Longitudinal admission data disaggregated by program with demographic, Pell eligible, first generation data and achievement data | Studio and home test results | Complete Application data | Orientation programming and Reports | Degree Program plans by discipline | Summer Bridge program and data | First year outcomes data | Retention, Persistence and Graduation rate (100%, 150% and 200% completion rates) disaggregated by program and demographics | Annual Census Reports | Career Center Reports | Diverse Learning Environment data | President's Grants program description and data | Senior Survey

TABLE 13: DETAIL TO SUPPORT INTERROGATION OF STANDARD 5—EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS ASSESSMENT

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.

Priorities	Other Working Groups
1. Sustain CU reputation for Academic Quality	Mission and Goals
2. Create a sustainable future	Planning, Resources, Improvement
3. Create an Environment that fosters experimentation and interdisciplinarity	Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience
4. Empower students to thrive educationally and professionally	
Key Considerations	
Systematic Program Assessment, including program specific accreditations, ABET and NAAB	Learning Outcomes at the institutional and program level Institutional Planning

Questions to Guide Self-Study Review of Standard 5

1. What are the Learning Outcomes for the institution and for each school and HSS? What is the process to determine the standards and evidence of outcomes achievement in each of the schools and HSS?
   - How do degree program and institutional-level learning outcomes align such that Cooper Union has the ability to assess the efficacy of its mission, school-based missions, and relevant educational experiences?
   - Do learning outcomes set the standard for a "practice- based education with a humanistic and socio-political education"?
   - Do the educational goals and outcomes demonstrate how students are prepared for successful careers, graduate study, and readiness to question and lead in a complex world?
2. Describe the assessment planning approach developed in each of the schools and among the faculty of HSS. Discuss how assessment plans demonstrate the curriculum achieves degree-program and institutional goals.
   - Are course level goals and outcomes clearly stated to students such that they can develop an understanding of how courses scaffold to deliver on curricular goals; and of how the Cooper Union's mission driven priorities are being accomplished?
   - Describe how student achievement of course level outcomes, is systematically assessed by faculty, and how findings are used to inform curricular and program improvement. Do the faculties of each of the schools engage in loop closing by exploring pre-requisite course level outcomes to recommend and implement curricular improvement?

3. How can learning outcomes data be used to ensure that all students have equitable opportunity for success?
   - How have outcome findings in foundation courses been used to support student retention and persistence?
   - How has data been used to improve student achievement and learning outcomes, and identify opportunities for improvement and educational effectiveness?
   - How can we communicate outcomes achievement to accreditors, community and public?
4. How have Visiting Committee Reports been used to identify opportunity for improvement?

Assessment Information, Processes, Procedures and Documents

Program Assessment Approach models | Institutional Learning Outcomes | Program specific Learning Outcomes | Crosswalk of institutional and program outcomes | Planning and Assessment Council Reports | Critical Course grade analysis and recommendations | Census Reports | Performance Metrics disaggregated by demographics and socio-economic status | FEC Plan performance metrics | Curriculum committee minutes and program change recommendations | Evidence of Learning | Capstones | Visiting Committee Reports

TABLE 14: DETAIL TO SUPPORT INTERROGATION OF STANDARD 6—PLANNING, RESOURCES, AND INSTITUTIONAL IMPROVEMENT

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.

Priorities	Other Working Groups
1. Sustain CU reputation for Academic Quality	Mission and Goals Educational Effectiveness Assessment
2. Create a sustainable future	
Key Considerations	
Systematic assessment and strategic planning	Faculty
Disaggregated retention and graduation rate data	Financial resources and fiscal management
Assessment outcomes and recommendations for improvement	Inclusive strategic planning and decision-making Facilities
Requirements of Affiliation	
The institution is operational	

Questions to Guide Self-Study Review of Standard 6

1. How does the financial planning and budgeting process align with Cooper Union's mission, goals, and strategic priorities?
   - What is the process by which budgets are developed? How has the financial planning process and fiscal management advanced the mission driven goal to return to full-tuition scholarships? Are there opportunity costs associated with the return to free tuition?
   - What are the current procedures for determining the necessary number of staff, faculty, and administrative positions? What evidence is assembled to support new faculty lines?
   - Is the budget process transparent, providing clear perspective as to how institutional and unit level priorities will be considered?
2. Are the financial planning and budgeting processes evidence-based? Does the strategic planning process include assessment of how each unit seeks to achieve program and institutional mission, goals, and priorities?
   - Does the strategic planning process foster attention on the priorities to create an institution of excellence, with "academic programs that are rigorous, supportive and dynamic" and that "advance the fields of Architecture, Art and Engineering," creating opportunities at the intersections of study and practice among them?

- Describe how the budgeting process addresses the strategic priorities as well as identified opportunities to improve student achievement, progress, and performance.
- How does the budgeting process support diversity, access, and equity among students?

3. Describe how assessment outcomes and Visiting Committee Reports have been used in budget and planning for greater effectiveness with regard to student achievement, educational outcomes, and improvements to the learning experience.
4. How has Cooper Union tracked its progress in returning to free tuition? How is it fulfilling objectives laid out in the Free Education Committee (FEC) plan? How does the plan sustain progress to return to free and academic quality?
   - What strategies exist to measure the adequacy and efficient utilization of institutional resources to support the mission and goals?
   - How does Cooper Union demonstrate responsible fiscal management including internal financial controls and potential corrective measures?
   - How are external, environmental conditions factored into fiscal planning?
5. How are strategic plans used to prioritize resource allocation and inform institutional fundraising efforts?
   - Are resources adequate to support academic and research programs and libraries, in order to accomplish the institution's objectives for student learning?
6. How do the financial, human, physical and technologic resources support Cooper Union's educational and administrative operations? Provide evidence that Cooper Union has implemented comprehensive planning for facilities, infrastructure, and technology, including deferred maintenance, as part of its fiscal planning process.
7. Describe how Cooper Union complies with its responsibilities under Title IV and New York State law. Have there been any adverse findings to report?

Assessment Information, Processes, Procedures and Documents

Financial Audit, findings, and management letters | Annual financial management, resources and planning reports to MSCHE | Free Education Committee (FEC) Plan to return to free tuition | CU Strategic Plan | Financial Reports to Board | FEC Annual Reports (10 years) | Academic and administrative strategic plans | Budget templates and process | Facilities plans | Fundraising Reports to Board | Program and project initiatives by year | Audit and Federal Reporting | FISAP submission | Financial Aid planning and | IPEDS reports

TABLE 15: DETAIL TO SUPPORT INTERROGATION OF STANDARD 7– GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND ADMINISTRATION

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 a related entity, the institution has education as its primary purpose, and it operates as an academic institution with appropriate autonomy.

Priorities	Other Workgroup
1. Sustain Cooper Union's Reputation for Quality	Mission and Goals Educational Effectiveness Assessment Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement
2. Create a sustainable future	Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement
Key Considerations	
Mission and Goals	Ethics and Integrity associated with Board operations
Efficacy of the Administration	Effectiveness of Governance

Questions to Guide Self-Study Review of Standard 7

1. Describe the Governance structure including the roles and scope of authority among the governing body, administration, faculty, staff, and students. Describe how (the extent to which) decision making is inclusive, and the practices that provide transparency and integrity in decision making.
   - How is the board apprised of the scope of their influence and decision-making role? Is the board apprised of the principles that uphold good board practice?
   - How are the interests of the community incorporated into board discussions and recommendations?
   - What provisions, policies or processes are in place to mitigate the potential of board members interfering in the day- to-day operations of the institution?
   - How does the board mitigate the potential of conflict of interest such that political, financial, or relationship with a related entity do not impose undue influence in governance recommendations or decisions?
   - Does the governing body meet with enough frequency to fulfill its charge? Are committee meeting agendas developed inclusively, and to address mission driven priorities?
2. Discuss the range of decisions that the Board of Trustees has weighed in on regarding policies and practices particularly those associated with the quality of the academic enterprise and student learning experience, and financial sustainability, financial management and controls. Describe how the governing body is made aware of and addresses mission driven priorities, particularly academic quality, and financial stability.
   - How is the board apprised of the scope of their decision-making role and pressing and strategic considerations? Explore how the Board of Trustees seeks or is provided input from the administration and other constituencies of the institution.

- In particular, how has the board fostered progress on the FEC Plan, financial management, and building of reserves to support the mission driven goal, to return to free tuition. How has the board balanced pressing financial concerns with academic priorities?
- To what extent are board decisions shared with the community?

3. How has the Cooper Union developed a Governance structure that reflects the institution's value for diversity? Are there particular discussions in which the diversity of the board has had relevance on recommendations or decisions?

Leadership

4. What steps are being taken to ensure that the new president has the appropriate credentials and professional experience consistent with the educational and financial objectives of the institution? How has the community been engaged in the presidential search?
   - Is the organizational structure of the institution clearly documented, identifying reporting relationships such that its decision-making authorities are clearly established and support the mission and goals of the academic enterprise?
   - Does the administrative leadership and staff possess the credentials and professional experience consistent with Cooper Union's educational mission, to support the learning experience and diversity of the community?
   - How is the president informed by administrative and academic leadership such that he/she is informed to fulfill his/her role and can comply with all federal, state and commission responsibilities?
5. How has the president engaged with the community?
   - How have administrative units engaged with faculty, staff and with data to fulfill their unit level missions and support of the president?

Governances of the Schools and HSS

6. How do the governances of the Schools of Architecture, Art and Engineering, and the faculty of the Humanities and Social Sciences support their educational mission?

Assessment Information, Processes, Procedures and Documents

Governing Documents: Bylaws as Adopted (2022) | Resolutions Effecting the Consent Decree | Consent Decree and Governing Documents

Policies: Board Membership | Board Agenda and packets | Board Minutes | Board of Trustees Code of Conduct | Board of Trustees Conflict of Interest Policy | Policy on Covered Persons | University Information Policy | Board of Trustees Give Acceptance Policy | Investment Policy Statement | Whistleblower Policy

Committee Membership, Packets and Minutes: Executive; Governance; Finance: Audit; Investment; Academic and Student Affairs; Alumni Affairs; Compensation | Schools of Architecture, Art, and Engineering, and HSS Governances | CUFCT, CUOP and UCU Agreements | Presidential Search posting | Search committee engagement letter | Search Process and Timeline | Presidential Search communication to community to Executive Leadership; to Cabinet; to Deans Council; to Board | Presidential Interview process and schedule; Presidential Appointment | Institutional Organization Chart | Institution Committee Structure and roles and responsibilities

VI. GUIDELINES FOR REPORTING

The final Self-Study Report will be produced based on the inputs from the Co-Chairs, Planning Committee, and the Working Groups.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.

The Co-Chairs will frame the Executive Summary with input from the office of the President.

CHAPTER 1: INSTITUTIONAL OVERVIEW.

The Co-Chairs will frame an introduction and overview of The Cooper Union, providing insight into the history and current state of the institution that includes achievements against the mission, a high-level overview of student data (particularly as it relates to parameters established in the Free Education Committee plan), and current challenges. This will be shared with the Planning Committee membership as a shared document for input and editorial review.

CHAPTER 2–CHAPTER 8: STANDARDS I–VII

The corpus of the Self-Study will be provided by the Working Groups as they address their assigned MSCHE Standard. Each Standard will represent a chapter in the Self-Study Report, addressing the criteria established for their standard and considering the priority questions provided in the prior section (V). The Working Group drafts will be informed by stakeholders that will be identified in their chapter thereby supporting collective impact. The co-chairs will develop a plan to ensure that all draft reports adhere to the same formatting guidelines and timeline for completion. The co-chairs, with the Steering Committee, will also review the final draft to ensure that there is a consistent voice through- out the Self-Study Report but that it accurately reflects the work of the Planning Committee and the Working Groups.

A Review Plan template, developed by the Co-Chairs and approved by the Steering Committee will support chapter formatting and coherence in the development of the Self-Study Report. It will include the Standard, priority questions pursued in drafting their chapter, institutional stakeholders to be engaged in the addressing the Standard, data, analysis, and the evidence relevant to their interrogations, and descriptions and findings that result from their interrogation. A charge to Working Groups Chairs has been developed and shared, to organize the work attendant to the Review Plan document. Working Group chairs will submit their Review Plan by July 1, 2025.

Each Working Group Chapter will include:

1. **Introduction:** Provide a general overview of the Standards and how the Working Group addressed MSCHE criteria in light of the institutional priorities considered.

2. **Analysis and Methods:** Describe the analytic questions developed, and the data that were compiled and analyzed to address the criteria and priorities associated with the Standard. Discuss the institutional stakeholders and their roles in supporting Cooper Union's progress on the Standard.

3. **Discussion:** Discuss Cooper Union's progress in adhering to the criteria and in addressing mission driven priorities. Reference the evidence that guides and supports the narrative. Based on the analysis and the input of stakeholders:
   - Enumerate the strengths associated with the Standard.
   - Identify promising practices.
   - Identify areas for improvement including any areas where compliance is in jeopardy.

Summarize Cooper Union's status regarding the criteria and priorities established for the Standard.

4. **Recommendations:** Synthesize findings and identify major suggestions for how Cooper Union might address the areas for improvement listed above. These recommendations will be assembled by the Steering Committee for consideration and prioritization by the Planning Committee. Key recommendations will then be advanced to Cooper Union's committee structures and governance structures for input and consideration.

The Working Groups will present their findings, conclusions, and recommendations in a balanced and objective manner. Although it will be necessary to describe the current state of each Standard of Accreditation, the analysis of the Self-Study will be stressed. The final Self-Study Report will be objective and factual, with all findings clearly supported by the evidence presented. Each chapter report will be about 10 and no more than 15 pages. Chapter reports will be double spaced, using the Times New Roman 12-point font with one-inch margins. Chapter reports will be advanced to the Co-Chairs who will convene the Steering Committee to assemble the Report Draft. The Report Draft will reflect a review to foster coherence and address redundancies. The Self-Study Report will be produced with Cooper Union's Communication and Design Team.

All members of the Cooper Union community will have the opportunity to review the Self-Study Report through a Communication Plan that includes a website, communication cascade, institutional committee- and student group presentations, including Cabinet, Academic Affairs and Deans Council, Board of Trustees and Student Groups. In addition, a forum will be convened so that all members of the community will have the chance to discuss the document with the Planning Committee.

VII. ORGANIZATION OF THE FINAL SELF-STUDY REPORT

The Self-Study will be organized around the reports from the seven working groups. The following structure is recommended:

1. Table of Contents
2. Executive Summary
3. Institutional Overview
4. Standard I: Mission and Goals
5. Standard II: Ethics and Integrity
6. Standard III: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience
7. Standard IV: Support of the Student Experience
8. Standard V: Educational Effectiveness Assessment
9. Standard VI: Planning, Resources and Institutional Improvement
10. Standard VII: Governance, Leadership, and Administration
11. Opportunities for Improvement and Innovation

VIII. VERIFICATION OF COMPLIANCE STRATEGY

The Verification of Compliance with Accreditation-Relevant Federal Regulations will be assembled by the Vice Presidents of Enrollment and Institutional Effectiveness and Strategic Initiatives and their teams and will be shared with the Planning Committee and Working Groups, as well as institutional governance and committee structures. The Vice President of Enrollment manages the offices of Admissions, Financial Aid and Bursar, and the Registrar. The Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness manages institutional policies and compliance reports to federal and state agencies, and the Commission, the office of Institutional Research. These vice presidents, between them, sit on the Executive Leadership team, the Cabinet, the Academic Affairs Committee and the Academic and Student Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees, and are periodic presenters to the Deans Council.

IX. Self-Study Timetable

See Appendix 1 for Abridged Timeline

IX. Communications Plan

See Appendix 2 for Abridged Communication Plan

X Evaluation Team Profile

The Steering Committee has explored the Evaluation Team profile with the Academic Affairs Committee and Deans Council. It is suggested that members of the evaluation team should have experience in higher education associated with professional disciplines and the humanities and social sciences if possible. This is because the criteria associated with professional accreditation differs from that of a liberal arts education. The priorities of Cooper Union's mission are aimed at the intersection of professional and liberal arts education. If it is true that there are no such peers available, strategic strength in the liberal arts would be sought.

The process of benchmarking Cooper Union (CU) involved identifying higher education institutions that align with its unique characteristics, mission, and academic goals. The objective was to select peer institutions to the extent possible that are comparable in size, selectivity, academic offerings, and reputation, while excluding competitors. Below is an overview of the parameters and rationale for the selection of these institutions.

KEY BENCHMARKING PARAMETERS

1. **Size and Selectivity:**
   - Small Institutions: The selected institutions should be smaller in size, like Cooper Union, which has a relatively small enrollment to maintain a close-knit academic environment.
   - Selective Admissions: Institutions included in the benchmark should have selective admission processes, emphasizing high standards for student entry, akin to Cooper Union's competitive admissions.
2. **Institution Type:**
   - Not Competitors: Institutions that do not directly compete with Cooper Union's core offerings—particularly in engineering and architecture—were considered. This helps to avoid direct overlap, particularly with schools offering similar specialized programs.
   - Non-religious: Institutions that do not have religious affiliations to ensure alignment with CU's secular and mission-driven focus.
3. **Academic Programs:**
   - Interdisciplinary Programs: Institutions offering a blend of arts, design, engineering, and liberal arts programs were selected. This ensures that the diversity of Cooper Union's academic focus is represented in the comparison, particularly considering CU's integration of arts and engineering.
   - Specialization in Arts and Engineering: Some institutions included in the benchmark, like Rhode Island School of Design (RISD), offer strong programs in design, art, and architecture, which align with Cooper Union's unique combination of these disciplines. The inclusion of universities with engineering strengths reflects CU's recent ABET accreditation in engineering.
4. **Geographical Location:**
   - Outside of Manhattan: To ensure diversity in location, only institutions outside of Manhattan were considered, even if they are located within proximity to CU. This allows for a broader, more varied comparison.
5. **Accreditation:**
   - MSCHE Constituent Group: The selected institutions should be accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) to align with Cooper Union's regional accreditation status.

IPEDS data was run against schools of 1000, up to 5000 students as a start; data was linked to the MSCHE membership information. Schools in the New York area were disaggregated due to the MSCHE parameter regarding proximity. Data was shared in the Academic Affairs Committee and Deans Council.

- Cooper Union's largest school is the School of Engineering, about 60% of all enrollment
- Cooper Union's most selective school is the School of Architecture

The following schools have been filtered from a comprehensive list of schools:

- Drexel University, Bard College, Bryn Mawr College, Haverford College, Lehigh, Dusquene, Dickinson, Syracuse, Thomas Jefferson, Swarthmore College, Alfred, and Lafayette.

Cooper Union Peers include:

- Rose Hulman, Rhode Island School of Design, Columbia, Yale School of Art, and Stevens Institute of Technology.

Cooper Union's competitors include:

- Carnegie Mellon, Olin, Rhode Island School of Design, and Pratt.

Areas of experience and / or strength among the Team or in a Team Chair include:

- Academic Leadership (knowledge of presidential transition process, strategic planning, governance and governing boards)
- Finance (experience with scholarships, endowments, fiscal management)
- Faculty (knowledge of faculty unions, faculty recruitment and tenure processes)
- Student Admission and Enrollment (strategics in sustaining selectivity and supporting diversity)
- Student Learning Assessment (knowledge of program assessment practices associated with professional accreditors, relating to studio environments and project-based learning)

EVIDENCE INVENTORY

The Steering Committee will coordinate the integration of key Library staff into the Planning Committee.

Two members of The Cooper Union Library and Archives, along with members of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Information Technology, have been designated as evidence managers.

The following staff have direct responsibility and expertise in the digital management of information repositories and will coordinate and support the work of each Working Group on behalf of the Self-Study evidence requirements. They will build out the Evidence Inventory in SharePoint, a Microsoft collaboration tool with a folder and sub-folder structure; and establish protocols for evidence and archival processes.

- **Brian Cusack, Director Campus Enterprise Applications**
  Will coordinate the development of a SharePoint Collaboration site with file folder and sub-folder system based on input from the Steering Committee and Librarians.
- **Mary Mann, Archives Librarian:**
  Collects, organizes, and preserves the official physical and digital records of The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art
- **Calista Donohoe, Digital Collections and Services Librarian**
  In partnership with the Archives Librarian, determines digitization priorities, drafts associated digital preservation policies, maintains the systems and services required to support new and existing digital collections, and ensures compliance with standards and recommended best practices for the long-term preservation of digital collections.

Mann and Donohoe will be responsible for developing the file structure and naming conventions necessary to keep the evidentiary materials organized and accessible to the Working Groups. They will maintain the Evidence Inventory Intakes and ensure that each document listed in the standard's intake worksheet will be uploaded, titled, and linked appropriately. All file and folder naming conventions will be documented in the style guide.

As the Self-Study narrative is prepared, the contents of the Evidence Inventory will be reviewed, curated, and updated as needed. While abridged evidence will be selected for upload to Middle States with the narrative, the final unabridged version of this virtual repository will be available to the visiting team. Mann and Donohoe will also be responsible for archiving all content related to the Middle States Self-Study.

APPENDIX A

MSCHE SELF-STUDY TIMELINE—ABRIDGED

		Task	Owner	2024		2025		2026		2027	
				From -DD	To- DD	From -DD	To- DD	From -DD	To- DD	From -DD	To- DD
		MSCHE Self Study Review and Report Planning - ABR									
📌		Self-Study Institute	MSCHE	12-Sep	7-Nov						
	A	Pre-Planning for Post SSI Call	Toni Torres, VPIE Demetrius Eudell, VPAA	3-Nov							
📌		Post SSI Call	MSCHE	9-Dec	9-Dec						
	B	Self-Study Design (SSD) - *See below*	MSCHE	29-Oct			14-Feb				
	C	Self-Study Planning Visit (SSPV)	MSCHE	9-Dec			2-Apr				
		Logistics per Request	Toni Torres, VPIE	19-Dec		**14-Feb**					
	D	Develop profile of Team Chair	Toni Torres, VPIE - IR								
		Conduct IPEDS Analysis t based on school specific parameters and MSCHE membership	Toni Torres, VPIE - IR								
		Planning Committee nominations				**5-Feb**					
	E	Confirm Team Visit Term - **Spring 2027**	Toni Torres, VPIE Demetrius Eudell, VPAA Ryan Hartling, VP MSCHE	9-Dec	9-Dec						
	F	Team Chair Preliminary Visit									
		Set Date	Ryan Hartling, VP MSCHE			2-Apr	2-Apr				
	G	Visiting Team Visit									
		Provide List of potential peers from which to draw Team Chair									
		Set Date	Ryan Hartling, VP MSCHE Demetrius Eudell, VPAA Toni Torres, VPIE								
Self-Study Report Planning - Self Study Design (SSD)				**16-Oct**			**14-Feb**				
		Develop the SSD and submit to MSCHE staff liaison for Review and Acceptance	Toni Torres, VPIE Demetrius Eudell, VPAA Planning Committee								
1		**Organizational Structure**	Toni Torres, VPIE Demetrius Eudell, VPAA	16-Oct	17-Nov						
📌	A	Co-Chairs assigned	Toni Torres, VPIE Demetrius Eudell, VPAA	29-Oct	29-Oct						
📌	B	Steering Committee assigned	Toni Torres, VPIE Demetrius Eudell, VPAA	16-Oct	16-Oct						
		Meeting scheduled and conducted-		14-Nov	21-Nov						
📌	C	Planning Committee assigned	Steering Committee	13-Nov	21-Nov						
📌	D	Work Group Chairs assigned	Steering Committee Planning Committee	21-Nov	17-Dec						

		Task	Owner	2024		2025		2026		2027	
				From -DD	To- DD	From -DD	To- DD	From -DD	To- DD	From -DD	To- DD
📌		Work Group (WG) nominations	Planning Committee								
📌		Planning Committee nominations	Planning Committee	17-Dec	31-Jan						
📌	E	Work Group Charge - *Framed*		17-Dec	31-Dec						
📌		Other Assets identfieid - Cabinet, ASA, ASC, Board	Toni Torres, VPIE Demetrius Eudell, VPAA	16-Oct	31-Dec						
2		**Self Study Elements**									
	A	**Develop Institutional Priorities**	Op, Cabinet and Communiity								
📌		Mission Driven Strategic Priorities developed - 2018	Op, Cabinet and Communiity								
📌		Review and Refine potential Institutional Priority Statements- **Cabinet**	Toni Torres, VPIE	12-Dec	17-Dec						
📌		Review and Refine potential Institutional Priority Statements- **Planning Committee**	Toni Torres, VPIE Demetrius Eudell, VPAA	17-Dec							
		Review and Refine potential Institutional Priority Statements-**Schools and FHSS**	Toni Torres, VPIE Demetrius Eudell, VPAA								
		Board Memo for Discussion				Feb-11					
		Review and Refine potential Institutional Priority Statements-**Students**				10-Feb					
	B	**Develop Outcome Statements**	Op, Cabinet and Communiity								
📌		Review and Refine Outcome Statements- **Cabinet**		12-Dec	12-Dec						
		Review and Refine potential Institutional Priority Statements- **Planning Committee**	Toni Torres, VPIE Demetrius Eudell, VPAA	17-Dec	17-Dec						
		Review and Refine Outcome Statements- **Board Memo for Discussion**				11-Feb	11-Feb				
		Review and Refine Outcome Statements-**Students**				10-Feb	1-Jul				
	C	**Work Group Planning for Review and Analysis by Standard and Criteria**	Work Group Chairs Toni Torres, VPIE			13-Jan	1-Jul				
		Work Group Pre-Planning, Spring 2025 - *see Charge*	Toni Torres, VPIE	31-Dec			1-Jul				
		Determine Needed Data and Analysis				13-Jan	1-Jul				
		Develop Evidence Inventory Intake				13-Jan	1-Jul				
	D	**Work Group Pre-Planning Report to Co-Chairs for review aand integration into SSD**	Work Group Chair			13-Jan	4-Feb				
		Self Study Report presented to Community Constituents for Review and Input	Toni Torres, VPIE Demetrius Eudell, VPAA Planning Committee Academic and Stud Affairs Cncl			20-Jan	6-Feb				
		Final Review by VPAA and OP	Toni Torres, VPIE Demetrius Eudell, VPAA			7-Feb	12-Feb				
	E	Submit SSD to MSCHE	Toni Torres, VPIE Demetrius Eudell, VPAA			12-Feb	14-Feb				
Self Study Report											
		Self-Study Report Draft Sent to Team Chair (two weeks before Team Chair Visit)						15-Sep	20-Nov		
		Self-Study Evaluation Team Visit								Feb x	May
		Team Report to Commission and Cooper Union								Feb x	May
		Cooper Union Response									
	F	Commission Meets to Determine Action								June	Nov

APPENDIX B

MSCHE SELF-STUDY COMMUNICATION PLAN DRAFT—ABRIDGED

Task	Communication Collateral	Constituent	2024		2025		2026		2027	
			DD	DD	DD	DD	DD	DD	DD	DD
Establish Charge and Confirm Participation - Assure Broad Input	Letter to file Committee Membership Lists and Roles	Steering Committee Planning Committee Work Group	21-Nov			22-Jan				
Review Charge Work Group and Campus Assets		VPAA,VPIE, HR			13-Jan	22-Jan				
Develop and Refine the Communication Plan for the Cooper Union Community including Constituents	Co-Chairs Communications Team Director, Web Development and Design				3-Jan	Mar 18				
Alert Comms Team as to upcoming SSD and Self-Study Report and need to engage community in understanding	Co-Chairs Planning Committee Communications Team Director, Web Development				26-Nov	26-Nov				
Share data, materials, evidence in a secure, transparent and convenient manner	Develop Evidence Inventory Intake Develop SharePoint Accreditation Channel Develop Protocols to share evidence	Steering Committee Planning Committee Work Group Planning and Assessment Cncl	22-Nov			27-Mar				
	Description and Overview of Criteria and Evidence Intake	Toni Torres, VPIE			13-Mar	27-Mar				
	Charge to Planning Committee Letter Brief on Accreditation	Planning Committee	15-Nov	22-Dec						
	Charge to Work Group -Planning Report Spring 2025	Work Group			1-Jan	15-Jan				
	Charge to Work Group - AY 2025-2026 Report Draft	Work Group			1-Jul	26-Sep				
	Work Group **Planning Report** review and discussion	Planning Committee, Working Group Chairs and Working Groups			13-Jan	1-Jul				
	Review with identified "Assets"	Work Group			27-Mar	16-May				
Update Campus constituents about the Self-Study Process	Develop **Webpage**	Toni Torres, VPIE *incl* Steering Committee	11-Dec			21-Feb				
	Link to Webpage Content	Campus Community -Cooper Connect and Comm Cascadesto Schools and Admin Units Ad Chairs - Refer to Stu Outreach Board Memo Alumni Affairs			24-Feb	6-Mar				

Task	Communication Collateral	Constituent	2024		2025		2026		2027	
			DD	DD	DD	DD	DD	DD	DD	DD
	Provide Brief Overview on Accreditation;	Cabinet incl OP Planning Committee Work Group Post Brief to Webpage Board of Trustees Memo and presentation [2/11] Presentation to Ad Chairs and Stu Org	4-Dec			21-Feb				
	Intro to Accreditation Process presentation -	Cabinet (12/4) Dean's Council (Jan 30) Faculty Meetings	4-Dec			17-Jan				
		All Campus Forum Spr 2025			13-Jan	27-Mar				
	Overview of Self-Study Design Brief and PPT and Self-Study Report process - soft launch with constituents	Steering Committee Planning Committee Work Group & Assets Planning & Assessment Cncl Ad Chairs - See Student Outreach Cooper Connect Campus Forum	22-Nov			26-Nov				
			22-Nov			27-Mar				
					13-Jan	27-Mar				
	Submit Self-Study Design, SSD				14-Feb	14-Feb				
	Update on Self-Study Design [SSD]	Faculty Meeting by School and HSS; Cabinet, Academic and Student Affairs PPT Ad Chairs and Student Orgs Board Q2 meeting			21-Feb	27-Mar				
	SSD priorities review and discussion	Faculty Meeting by School Board	12-Dec			7-Feb				
	Outcomes review and discussion	Faculty Meeting by School Board	12-Dec			7-Feb				
	MSCHE VP Liaison SSPV	Community	19-Dec			2-Apr				
	Brief on VP Liaison Visit and Next Steps	Co-Chairs to Plannig and Working Groups			Aprl 3	10-Apr				
	Approved Self-Study Design	Community Alumni Affairs			2-Apr	30-May				
	Work Group Chairs - Review Charge and Assets Co-Chairs				22-Jan	24-Mar				
	Work Group **Planning Report** [see Spring 2025 Charge]	Faculty Meeting by School Admin Leads Update to Community –			22-Jan	1-Jul				

COMMUNICATION PLAN DRAFT CONTINUED

Task	Communication Collateral	Constituent	2024		2025		2026		2027	
			DD	DD	DD	DD	DD	DD	DD	DD
		Cascade -push communication to assets using Cooper Connect Forum			Q 1 meeting	Q 1 meeting				
	Conduct Forum to Report Out to Community	Faculty, Staff and Students			8-Sep	30-Sep				
	Board of Trustees Memo	Board			2/11/2025 Q2 -Nov	2/11/2025 Q2 - Nov				
Update Campus constituents about Progress on Self-Study Report	Launch: Self-Study Report Drafting Announcement & Status PPT	Cabinet Dean's Council Community - Cooper Connect/ Communication CascadeConvocation Update to WebpageAlumni Affairs comm			8-Sep	30-Sep				
Update Campus on Team Chair Selection							Jan-25	15-May		
Update Campus on Team Chair Visit Date							Jan-25	15-May		
Update on Self-Study Reports by Standard	Fall 2025 **Drafting SSR**- Advise Community on Progress / Collective Impact model Secure input	Cooper Connect - Cascade and Webpage Link Cabinet Dean's Council PAC School and HSS Faculty meeting Admin Unit Mgrs Student Ad Chairs and Orgs Forum			18-Nov	25-Nov				
	Work Group **Report Draft 1 Report Out** and Feedback prior to MSCHE Team chair Visit	Planning Committee & Work Group Rnd Table Cabinet Dean's Council					23-Feb	5-Mar		
	Review and Recommend with Community	Student Leaders Meetings by School					22-Mar	27-Mar		
		Community Roundtable Forum Alumni Affairs Board Memo - Q 1					15-Sep	20-Nov		
	Report Draft 1Revisions Based on Community Input	Planning Committee and Working Groups Communication Cascade to Cabinet, Dean's Council, Student Leaders and Academic and Administrative Units Post to Webpage - link Cooper Connect					23-Nov	15-Dec		
	Self-Study **Report Draft** sent to Team Chair (two weeks before Team Chair Visit)						8-Sep	16-Nov		

Task	Communication Collateral	Constituent	2024		2025		2026		2027	
			DD	DD	DD	DD	DD	DD	DD	DD
	MSCHE Team Chair Visit	Outreach / *Itinerary to* Cabinet Dean's Council Planning Committee Ad Chairs Faculty Alumni News Cooper Connect and Cascade Post Announcement - Webpage Posters and Cascade					8-Sep	16-Nov		
	Report Draft 2 [after MSCHE Team Chair Visit]	Working Group Review Planning Committee Review							22-Jan	
	Report Out to Community - PPT and Report Draft	Cabinet for Review Dean's Council for Review Faculty, Staff and Student Forum Post to Webpage								