



## Middle States Commission on Higher Education

3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104-2680. Tel: 267-284-5000. Fax: 215-662-5501  
www.msche.org

June 24, 2016

Dr. James Helis  
Superintendent  
United States Merchant Marine Academy  
300 Steamboat Road  
Kings Point, NY 11024-1699

Dear Dr. Helis:

At its session on June 23, 2016, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education acted:

To warn the institution that its accreditation may be in jeopardy because of insufficient evidence that the institution is currently in compliance with Requirement of Affiliation 7 (Institutional Planning), Standard 2 (Planning, Resources, and Institutional Renewal), Standard 3 (Institutional Resources), Standard 4 (Leadership and Governance), Standard 5 (Administration), and Standard 9 (Student Support Services). To note that the institution remains accredited while on warning. To request a monitoring report, due March 1, 2017, documenting evidence that the institution has achieved and can sustain compliance with Requirement of Affiliation 7 and Standards 2, 3, 4, 5, and 9, including but not limited to evidence of (1) institutional planning that (a) integrates plans for academic, personnel, information resources and technologies, learning resources, and financial development; (b) includes goals and objectives, both institution-wide and for all individual units, that are clearly stated, reflect conclusions drawn from assessment results, are linked to mission and goal achievement, and are used for planning and resource allocation at the institutional and unit levels; and (c) includes planning and improvement processes that are clearly communicated, provide for constituent participation, and incorporate the use of assessment results; (Requirement of Affiliation 7 and Standard 2); (2) resource allocation procedures that include (a) strategies to measure and assess the level of, and efficient utilization of, institutional resources required to support the institution's mission and goals; (b) rational and consistent policies and procedures in place to determine allocation of assets; (c) a financial planning and budgeting process that provides for an annual budget and multi-year budget projections, both institution-wide and among departments; utilizes planning and assessment documents; and addresses resource acquisition and allocation for the institution; and (d) adequate institutional controls to deal with financial, administrative and auxiliary operations (Standard 3); (3) a governance structure that includes an active



governing body with sufficient autonomy to assure institutional integrity and to fulfill its responsibilities of policy and resource development, consistent with the mission of the institution (Standard 4); (4) an administration characterized by (a) a chief executive whose primary responsibility is to lead the institution toward the achievement of its goals and with responsibility for administration of the institution; (b) administrative leaders with appropriate skills, degrees and training to carry out their responsibilities and functions; (c) qualified staffing appropriate to the goals, type, size, and complexity of the institution; and (d) adequate information and decision-making systems to support the work of administrative leaders (Standard 5); and (5) steps taken to build a climate of mutual trust and respect on campus and during the Sea Year (Standard 9). To further request that the monitoring report also document (6) further development and implementation of an organized and sustained institutional assessment process, including evidence that assessment results are shared and discussed with appropriate constituents and used in planning, resource allocation, and renewal at all levels (Standard 7). A small team visit will follow submission of the monitoring report. To direct a prompt Commission liaison guidance visit to discuss the Commission's expectations. The date of the next accreditation review will be established when accreditation is reaffirmed.

This action is a non-compliance action and includes a request for a monitoring report and a visit. An explanation of this type of action is provided in the Commission's policy *Accreditation Actions*.

For more information on submitting a follow-up report, please see Commission guidelines *Follow-up Reports and Visits*. The institution is obligated to make a full and honest disclosure in its reports.

If the request for a follow-up report includes Standard 3, the Commission requires that you include in or submit with the report the following data for the three most recent years: Title IV cohort default rates; USDE Financial Responsibility Composite Scores; and the status with regard to Heightened Cash Management with USDE.

If the request for a follow-up report includes Standard 14, the Commission requires that you include in or submit with the report the following data for the three most recent years: 100%, 150%, and 200% normal time to completion graduation rates. For graduate-only institutions, please provide appropriate data on student outcomes such as normal time to completion rates.

Enclosed is a copy of the institution's Statement of Accreditation Status (SAS) for your review. If any of the factual information is incorrect, please contact the Commission as soon as possible.

A Public Disclosure Statement (PDS) has also been developed, consistent with the Commission's policy on *Public Communication in the Accrediting Process*. The statement provides an explanation of the nature of the institutional accreditation action that has been taken by the Commission. The PDS will accompany the institution's SAS and will be made available on the Middle States Commission on Higher Education website. In accordance with federal regulation, both documents will be made available to the public. If any of the factual information in these documents is incorrect, please contact the Commission as soon as possible. Also in accordance with federal regulation, your institution is invited to submit an official statement. The statement may be linked to the PDS from your institution's website or the Commission may include a web reference to your institution's website.

In accordance with the policy *Advertising, Student Recruitment, and Representation of Accredited Status*, the accreditation status of the institution must be accurately represented. Please ensure that published references to your institution's candidate status or accredited status (catalog, other publications, web page) are accurate and include the full name, address, and telephone number of the accrediting agency, and the effective date (month and year) when status was granted. Candidate for Accreditation is a status with the Commission that indicates that an institution has achieved membership and is progressing toward, but is not assured of, accreditation.

Please be assured of the continuing interest of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education in the well-being of United States Merchant Marine Academy. If any further clarification is needed regarding the SAS or other items in this letter, please feel free to contact Dr. Robert A. Schneider, Senior Vice President for Accreditation Relations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'George A. Pruitt', with a stylized flourish at the end.

George A. Pruitt, Ph.D.  
Chair





## **MIDDLE STATES COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION**

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### **STATEMENT OF ACCREDITATION STATUS**

#### **UNITED STATES MERCHANT MARINE ACADEMY**

**300 Steamboat Road**

**Kings Point, NY 11024-1699**

**Phone: (516) 726-5800; Fax: (516) 773-5509**

**[www.usmma.edu](http://www.usmma.edu)**

**Chief Executive Officer:** Dr. James Helis, Superintendent

#### **INSTITUTIONAL INFORMATION**

**Enrollment (Headcount):** 904 Undergraduate ; 23 Graduate

**Control:** Public

**Affiliation:** Government-Federal - None

**2015 Carnegie Classification:** Baccalaureate Colleges - Diverse Fields

**Approved Degree Levels:** Bachelor's, Master's;

**Distance Education Programs:** Approved (Master of Marine Engineering)

**Accreditors Recognized by U.S. Secretary of Education:** n/a

**Other Accreditors:** Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology

#### **Instructional Locations**

**Branch Campuses:** None

**Additional Locations:** None

**Other Instructional Sites:** None

#### **ACCREDITATION INFORMATION**

**Status:** Member since 1949

**Last Reaffirmed:** November 17, 2011

#### **Most Recent Commission Action:**

June 23, 2016: To warn the institution that its accreditation may be in jeopardy because of insufficient evidence that the institution is currently in compliance

with Requirement of Affiliation 7 (Institutional Planning), Standard 2 (Planning, Resources, and Institutional Renewal), Standard 3 (Institutional Resources), Standard 4 (Leadership and Governance), Standard 5 (Administration), and Standard 9 (Student Support Services). To note that the institution remains accredited while on warning. To request a monitoring report, due March 1, 2017, documenting evidence that the institution has achieved and can sustain compliance with Requirement of Affiliation 7 and Standards 2, 3, 4, 5, and 9, including but not limited to evidence of (1) institutional planning that (a) integrates plans for academic, personnel, information resources and technologies, learning resources, and financial development; (b) includes goals and objectives, both institution-wide and for all individual units, that are clearly stated, reflect conclusions drawn from assessment results, are linked to mission and goal achievement, and are used for planning and resource allocation at the institutional and unit levels; and (c) includes planning and improvement processes that are clearly communicated, provide for constituent participation, and incorporate the use of assessment results; (Requirement of Affiliation 7 and Standard 2); (2) resource allocation procedures that include (a) strategies to measure and assess the level of, and efficient utilization of, institutional resources required to support the institution's mission and goals; (b) rational and consistent policies and procedures in place to determine allocation of assets; (c) a financial planning and budgeting process that provides for an annual budget and multi-year budget projections, both institution-wide and among departments; utilizes planning and assessment documents; and addresses resource acquisition and allocation for the institution; and (d) adequate institutional controls to deal with financial, administrative and auxiliary operations (Standard 3); (3) a governance structure that includes an active governing body with sufficient autonomy to assure institutional integrity and to fulfill its responsibilities of policy and resource development, consistent with the mission of the institution (Standard 4); (4) an administration characterized by (a) a chief executive whose primary responsibility is to lead the institution toward the achievement of its goals and with responsibility for administration of the institution; (b) administrative leaders with appropriate skills, degrees and training to carry out their responsibilities and functions; (c) qualified staffing appropriate to the goals, type, size, and complexity of the institution; and (d) adequate information and decision-making systems to support the work of administrative leaders (Standard 5); and (5) steps taken to build a climate of mutual trust and respect on campus and during the Sea Year (Standard 9). To further request that the monitoring report also document (6) further development and implementation of an organized and sustained institutional assessment process, including evidence that assessment results are shared and discussed with appropriate constituents and used in planning, resource allocation, and renewal at all levels (Standard 7). A



small team visit will follow submission of the monitoring report. To direct a prompt Commission liaison guidance visit to discuss the Commission's expectations. The date of the next accreditation review will be established when accreditation is reaffirmed.

**Brief History Since Last Comprehensive Evaluation:**

November 17, 2011: To accept the Periodic Review Report and to reaffirm accreditation. The next evaluation visit is scheduled for 2015-2016.

**Next Self-Study Evaluation:** n/a

**Date Printed:** June 24, 2016

**DEFINITIONS**

**Branch Campus** - A location of an institution that is geographically apart and independent of the main campus of the institution. The location is independent if the location: offers courses in educational programs leading to a degree, certificate, or other recognized educational credential; has its own faculty and administrative or supervisory organization; and has its own budgetary and hiring authority.

**Additional Location** - A location, other than a branch campus, that is geographically apart from the main campus and at which the institution offers at least 50 percent of an educational program. **ANYA** ("Approved but Not Yet Active") indicates that the location is included within the scope of accreditation but has not yet begun to offer courses. This designation is removed after the Commission receives notification that courses have begun at this location.

**Other Instructional Sites** - A location, other than a branch campus or additional location, at which the institution offers one or more courses for credit.

**Distance Education Programs** - Fully Approved, Approved (one program approved) or Not Approved indicates whether or not the institution has been approved to offer diploma/certificate/degree programs via distance education (programs for which students could meet 50% or more of the requirements of the program by taking distance education courses). Per the Commission's Substantive Change policy, Commission approval of the first two Distance Education programs is required to be "Fully Approved." If only one program is approved by the Commission, the specific name of the program will be listed in parentheses after "Approved."

Commission actions are explained in the policy *Accreditation Actions*.



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## Public Disclosure Statement

United States Merchant Marine Academy

June 23, 2016

By the Middle States Commission on Higher Education

This statement has been developed for use in responding to public inquiries, consistent with the Commission's policies on Public Communication in the Accrediting Process, Accreditation Actions, and Standardized Language for Commission Actions on Accreditation. It should be read in conjunction with the *Statement of Accreditation Status* for the United States Merchant Marine Academy. The policies listed above explain what information the Commission makes public regarding its member institutions and what information remains confidential, describe the various accreditation actions the Commission can take, and define the terms used in the Commission's actions.

The United States Merchant Marine Academy, located in Kings Point, New York, is a federal institution. The Academy has been accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education since 1949. The United States Merchant Marine Academy offers Bachelor's and Master's degrees. A summary of the most recent Commission actions relative to the institution's accreditation follows.

### Current Accreditation Status

On June 23, 2016, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education acted to warn the institution that its accreditation may be in jeopardy because of insufficient evidence that the institution is currently in compliance with Requirement of Affiliation 7 (Institutional Planning), Standard 2 (Planning, Resources, and Institutional Renewal), Standard 3 (Institutional Resources), Standard 4 (Leadership and Governance), Standard 5 (Administration), and Standard 9 (Student Support Services). The full text of the Commission's action is provided below. The Commission's accreditation standards are available online at <http://www.msche.org/publications/CHX-2011-WEB.pdf>.

***The United States Merchant Marine Academy remains accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education while on warning.***

The Commission places an institution on warning when, in the Commission's judgment, the institution is not in compliance with one or more Commission accreditation standards. When the Commission warns an institution, it believes that, although the institution is out of compliance, the institution has the capacity both to make appropriate improvements within a reasonable period and to sustain itself in the long term. A follow-up report, called a monitoring report, is



required to demonstrate that the institution has made appropriate improvements to bring itself into compliance. A small team visit also is conducted to verify institutional status and progress.

## **Summary of Recent Commission Actions**

At least every ten years, all accredited institutions engage in an 18-24 month period of self-study intended to demonstrate institutional compliance with accreditation standards and to promote institutional improvement. The United States Merchant Marine Academy completed its self-study process and hosted an evaluation team visit during the 2015-16 academic year.

On June 23, 2016, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education acted as follows:

To warn the institution that its accreditation may be in jeopardy because of insufficient evidence that the institution is currently in compliance with Requirement of Affiliation 7 (Institutional Planning), Standard 2 (Planning, Resources, and Institutional Renewal), Standard 3 (Institutional Resources), Standard 4 (Leadership and Governance), Standard 5 (Administration), and Standard 9 (Student Support Services). To note that the institution remains accredited while on warning. To request a monitoring report, due March 1, 2017, documenting evidence that the institution has achieved and can sustain compliance with Requirement of Affiliation 7 and Standards 2, 3, 4, 5, and 9, including but not limited to evidence of (1) institutional planning that (a) integrates plans for academic, personnel, information resources and technologies, learning resources, and financial development; (b) includes goals and objectives, both institution-wide and for all individual units, that are clearly stated, reflect conclusions drawn from assessment results, are linked to mission and goal achievement, and are used for planning and resource allocation at the institutional and unit levels; and (c) includes planning and improvement processes that are clearly communicated, provide for constituent participation, and incorporate the use of assessment results (Requirement of Affiliation 7 and Standard 2); (2) resource allocation procedures that include (a) strategies to measure and assess the level of, and efficient utilization of, institutional resources required to support the institution's mission and goals; (b) rational and consistent policies and procedures in place to determine allocation of assets; (c) a financial planning and budgeting process that provides for an annual budget and multi-year budget projections, both institution-wide and among departments; utilizes planning and assessment documents; and addresses resource acquisition and allocation for the institution; and (d) adequate institutional controls to deal with financial, administrative and auxiliary operations (Standard 3); (3) a governance structure that includes an active governing body with sufficient autonomy to assure institutional integrity and to fulfill its responsibilities of policy and resource development, consistent with the mission of the institution (Standard 4); (4) an administration characterized by (a) a chief executive whose primary responsibility is to lead the institution toward the achievement of its goals and with responsibility for administration of the institution; (b) administrative leaders with appropriate skills, degrees and training to carry out their responsibilities and functions; (c) qualified staffing appropriate to the goals, type, size, and complexity of the institution; and (d) adequate information and decision-making systems to support the work of administrative leaders (Standard 5); and (5) steps taken to build a climate of



mutual trust and respect on campus and during the Sea Year (Standard 9). To further request that the monitoring report also document (6) further development and implementation of an organized and sustained institutional assessment process, including evidence that assessment results are shared and discussed with appropriate constituents and used in planning, resource allocation, and renewal at all levels (Standard 7). A small team visit will follow submission of the monitoring report. To direct a prompt Commission liaison guidance visit to discuss the Commission's expectations. The date of the next accreditation review will be established when accreditation is reaffirmed.

## **Current Status and Expected Activities**

*The United States Merchant Marine Academy remains accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education while on warning.*

Following submission of a monitoring report on March 1, 2017, the Commission will conduct a small team visit to assess the institution's compliance with the Commission's standards. Following the on-site visit, a report by the visiting team will be completed. The monitoring report, the small team report and the institutional response to the small team report will be considered by the Committee on Follow-Up Activities, and then by the Commission.

Following review by the Committee on Follow-up Activities, the Commission will take further action, in accordance with the Commission's policy, *Accreditation Actions* (available at <http://www.msche.org/documents/P2.3-AccreditationActions.pdf>). If, based on the monitoring report and small team report, the Commission determines that the United States Merchant Marine Academy has made appropriate progress in addressing the cited concerns, the Commission may act to remove the warning and reaffirm accreditation. If the Commission determines that progress sufficient to demonstrate compliance with its accreditation standards has not been made, the Commission may take further action as allowed under *Accreditation Actions*.

## **For More Information**

The following resources provide additional information that may be helpful in understanding the Commission's actions and the United States Merchant Marine Academy's accreditation status:

*Statement of Accreditation Status* for the United States Merchant Marine Academy ([http://www.msche.org/institutions\\_directory.asp](http://www.msche.org/institutions_directory.asp)) provides factual information about the United States Merchant Marine Academy and the full text of the Commission's recent actions regarding the institution.

*Media Backgrounder* (<http://www.msche.org/documents/MediaBackgrounder2016.pdf>) answers questions about accreditation such as "What is accreditation?" and "What is the Middle States Commission on Higher Education?"

*Informing the Public about Accreditation* ([www.chea.org/public\\_info/index.asp](http://www.chea.org/public_info/index.asp)), published by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation, provides additional information on the nature and value of accreditation.