



Accreditation Update to Undergraduate Program Directors

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Why this work is important

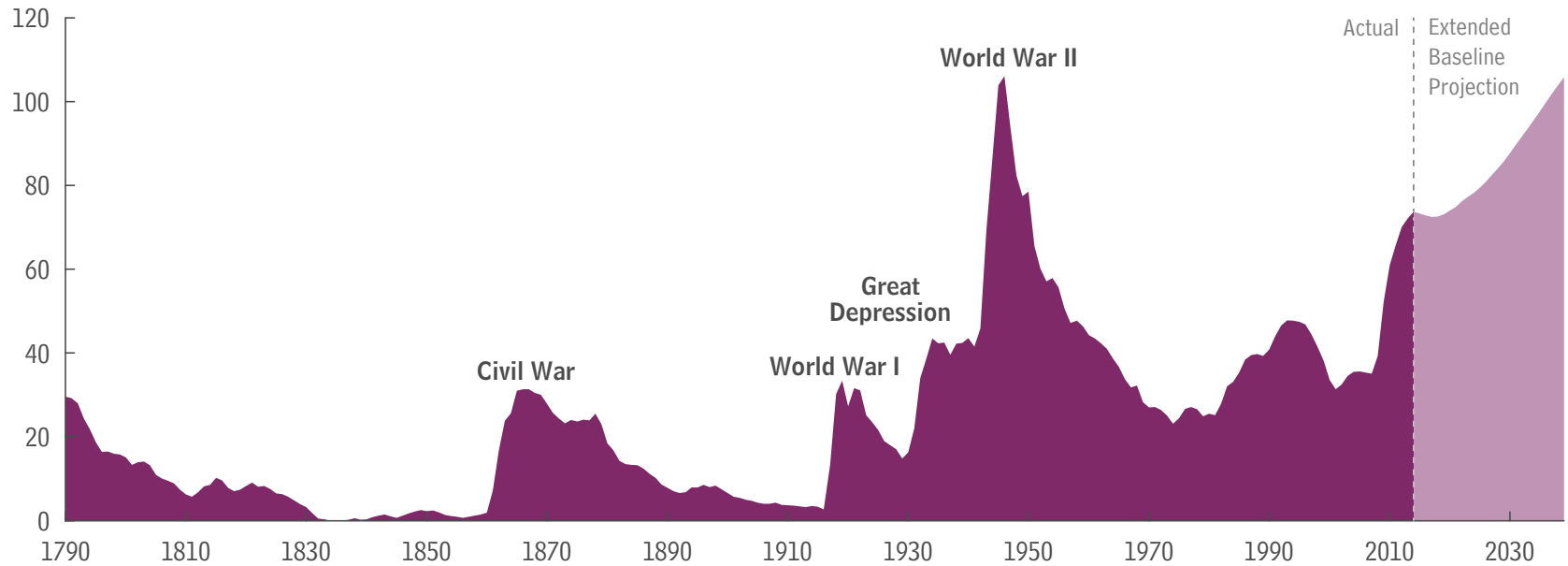
- The fundamentals of higher education, both state and nationwide, are troubled
 - Declining state and federal support
 - Age-based entitlement spending (Social Security and Medicare) is rising
 - Interest payments on the national debt (are going to double)
 - Funding pressure public sector pensions
 - Rising levels of student debt, which are very likely to increase as tuition costs continue to rise
- Accreditation is also vital to the survival of universities, which cannot receive federal grants and student loan dollars without it

Some context

Figure 1-1.

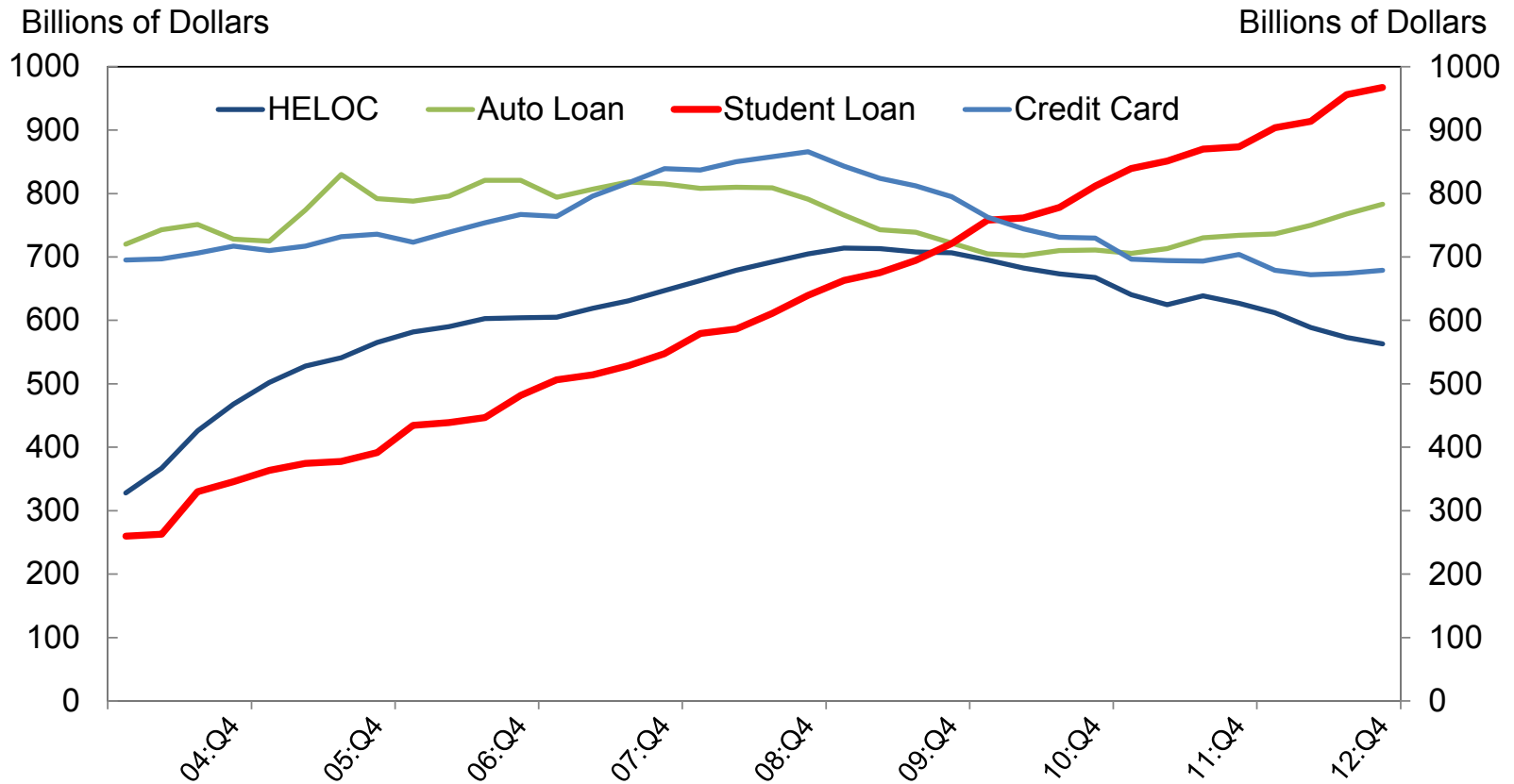
Federal Debt Held by the Public

Percentage of Gross Domestic Product



Source: Congressional Budget Office.

Some context



Source: FRBNY Consumer Credit Panel / Equifax

The critical role of the public university

- Universities play a critical role in social change and the economic ladder
 - It's vital that ladder not be pulled up behind us
 - We all share the need to find ways to provide high quality, maintain access, and maintain affordability
- Good planning and improving our effectiveness means
 - Better outcomes for students
 - Helps us to be good stewards of their tuition dollars and public resources

High level review of process

- Middle States conducts a full review every ten years (ours is scheduled to conclude in Fall 2016)
 - A midpoint review is conducted every five years
- The major steps in the process, which lasts for 3 years, are
 - Assemble a leadership team (Fall 2013)
 - Design a self study and have it approved by Middle States (Fall 2014)
 - The self study design is a detailed project plan
 - **Write and submit the self study to Middle States (2015-2016). Good news! We're on track.**
 - Host a site visit by a team of external reviewers comprised of university faculty and administrators (Fall 2016)
 - Receive a report from the review team
 - Respond to the report, if needed
 - Receive a decision from our accreditor (2017)

Middle States has 14 standards

- Organized around three rough themes
 - The effectiveness of the institution's operation
 - Mission and goals
 - Planning, budgeting, and resource allocation
 - Leadership, governance, and support for the administration and staff
 - The effectiveness of the educational enterprise
 - The admission, support, and retention of students
 - Educational offerings and activities
 - Faculty research and teaching, and support for their activities
 - How we evaluate ourselves
 - 2 main components
 - Institutional assessment
 - Assessment of student learning

Our self study

- Many institutions construct a “comprehensive” self study that addresses all 14 standards
- In recognition of the UMBC’s complex nature, and on our past performance we have been granted permission to conduct a “selected topic” self study
- A selected topics design focuses most intently on a subset of the 14 standards
 - Mission and Goals
 - Planning, Budgeting, and Institutional Resources
 - Institutional Assessment
 - Assessment of Student Learning
- The major theme of our study is covered under the umbrella of “institutional effectiveness”

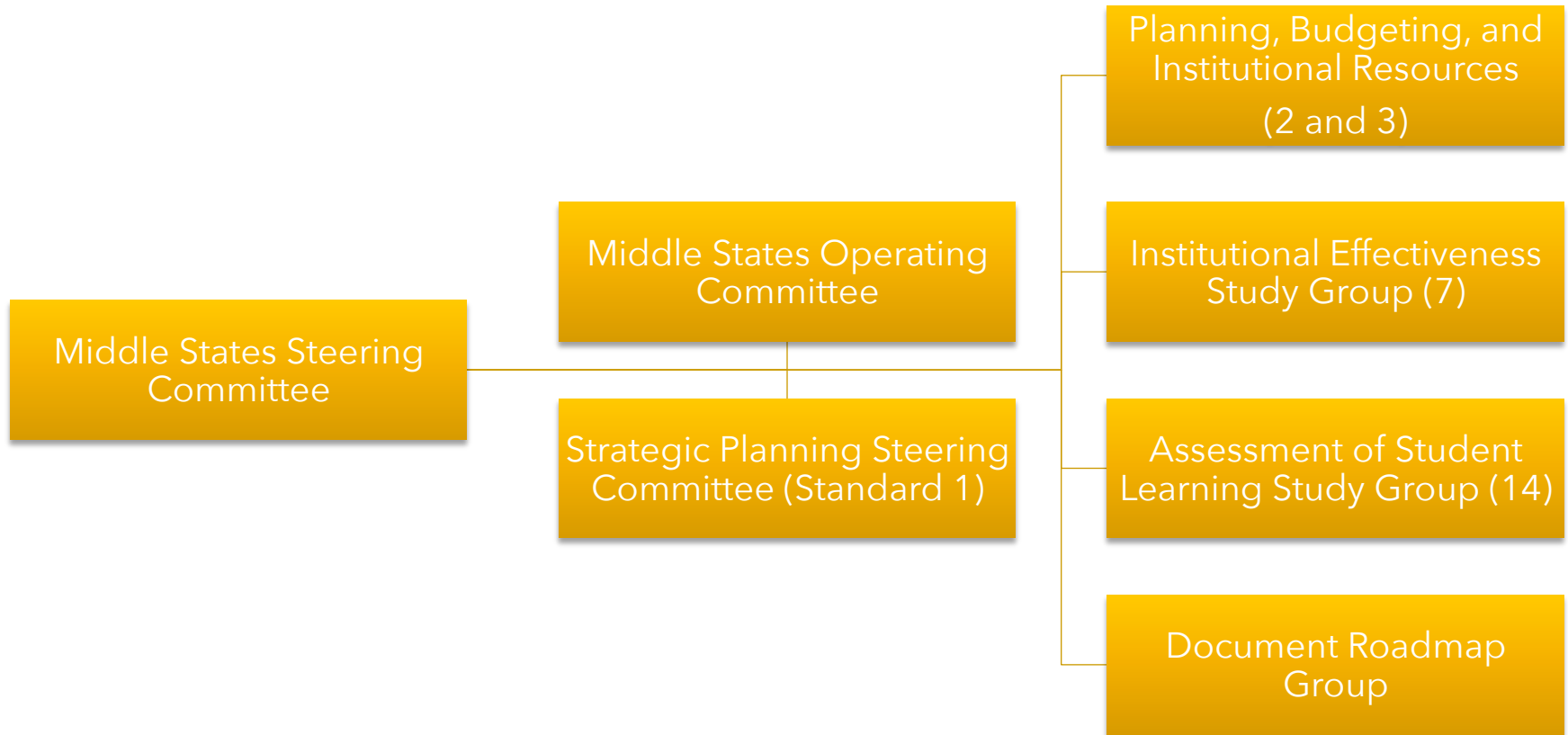
Becoming more effective

- A good institutional effectiveness process makes extensive use of analysis, both qualitative, and quantitative
- We've identified a variety of issues we'd like to address sooner rather than later, and are planning to reach out for help in developing some tools and dash board indicators
- Our initial goals are to help programs manage or increase their capacity and help improve student success (lowering their costs)

How we will organize the work?

- A steering committee
- A small number of study groups
- An smaller “operating committee” that advises the steering committee and coordinates the study groups and construction of the self study

The Middle States organizational chart



Aligning planning and accreditation

- We've been approved to delay our site visit by one semester (to Fall 2016) to better align the work of the self study with the strategic planning process
 - A key task for the Middle States Steering Committee and the Strategic Planning Steering Committee is to leverage our efforts and exploit the complementarities between them (without duplicating efforts)
 - This will make both exercises more meaningful, more useful, and avoid duplication of efforts
 - The alignment of the work is something Middle States is excited about and their approval of a selected topics design along with the adjustment of the timeline reflects confidence in us as an institution

What those linkages look like



What you can expect from us...

- Constructing a self study is a two-year process that involves several dozen people across the campus. Choreographing it will be quite a challenge
- Our goals:
 - To have a clear set of well-defined tasks and waypoints
 - To be transparent with the campus. We have a web site selfstudy.umbc.edu This site will give you access to the self study's key documents, keep you apprised of our progress, and provide a way for the university community to provide comments and guidance
 - To be inclusive
 - Constructing a self study is an opportunity for the campus to thoughtfully reflect upon where it's been over the past 10 years, and where we want to take it (hence the link to strategic planning)
 - The campus will have opportunity to comment on the process and the draft self study through "town halls" and electronic comments
 - To be respectful of your time by coordinating our requests for information

What we need from you...

- Support for our work (especially for the members of the committees taking this on as an additional service commitment)
- Constructive comments on the self study process and the draft documents
- Prompt responses to requests for documents, information, and access to people
- To be engaged in the process so that the final product represents the campus and we get the benefit of your knowledge and experience
- To be available, and to have key members of your programs available, to meet with Middle States representatives and the external evaluation team when they visit campus

Contact us

- **Your best email option is**
 - middlestates@umbc.edu
- Philip Rous (Co-Chair of the Steering Committee)
 - rous@umbc.edu
- Bob Carpenter (Co-Chair of the Steering Committee & Chair of the Operating Committee)
 - bobc@umbc.edu
- Lee Hawthorne (Vice Chair of the Operating Committee)
 - hawthor@umbc.edu