

STUDENT LEARNING COMMITTEE

Thursday, April 21, 2011

3:30-4:30 pm

Room T-2070

Minutes

Present:

- Counseling: Rodney Bullock
- Culinary Arts: Anne Gean
- English: Mari Johnson,
- Fine Arts: Clay Kirkland
- Soc. & Behavioral Sciences: Margot Underwood
- Technical: Scott Boudreau
- Mathematics: Linda Blanco
- Nat. Science & PE: Kueiming "Max" Lee
- Nursing & Allied Health: Lynn Noell
- World Languages: Beth Petree
- Assessment Coordinator: Kristin Ciesemier

Absent:

- Ag-Hort-Vet Tech: Greg Pierceall
- Business: Wayne Gawlik, Chair
- CIOS: Bill Stroud
- Library: Catherine Suchy

Call to Order: The meeting was convened at 3:30 pm by Kristin Ciesemier.

Approval of Minutes

The motion to approve the March 31, 2011 meeting minutes was made by Lynn Noell, seconded by Clay Kirkland and unanimously approved by voice vote.

Old Business

1. AQI Eureka Pilot Project update. The critical thinking rubric is being tested using the LiveText data system. Data from the writing and speaking rubrics is being collected using an Excel spreadsheet. Results will be available after the fourth/last AQI workshop. The task force appreciates the excellent response it received from faculty and staff.
 - a. Margot used LiveText to record critical thinking scores for her classes and it was quick and easy to use. (Two other psychology instructors also provided scores.)
 - b. Clay provided scores for the oral communication rubric.
2. Data System update. Webinars will be recorded and made available for viewing

New Business

1. HLC Assessment Academy intention to continue. The decision was made to extend participation for an additional year and finish in Spring 2013. At that time we will produce an impact report and present a round table session and poster session at the HLC Academy and Conference respectively.
2. HLC conference: Max and Lynn attended. Max's report is attached.

Lynn reported that the HLC is adopting new criteria and will have a new accreditation program – the Open Pathway. As we review data systems we should consider their compatibility with HLC's new online reporting

system. The new HLC criteria #3 describes student learning and teaching. It states: "The organization provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission." A core component for this criterion includes: the organizations goals for student learning outcomes are clearly state for each educational program and make effective assessment possible. Other core components under criteria three:

- the organization values and support effective teaching
- creates effective learning environments
- the organizations student resources support student learning and effective teaching

Lynn indicated that the HLC criteria are similar to the Baldrige quality criteria. The PDCA (Plan, Do Check, Act) process was also referred to and she is familiar with that from her experience in healthcare. The institution's portfolio describes how an institution aligns with the criteria. (Roxanne Munch is currently responsible for JJC's AQIP portfolio however a new liaison will be selected prior to the next accreditation review in 2014.) The action projects are an important part of the portfolio. (JJC's are Gen Ed Assessment, Governance and Professional Learning Center) A hospital example included the same improvement process that we use with our students and the gen. ed. project. The process includes: defining the goal, conducting an assessment, identifying key indicators, measured, developed strategies, implemented improvements and re-measured. Through this experience the hospital also learned how to improve which includes:

- bringing diverse people from different areas together
- being innovative
- engaging people
- empowering people
- motivating and inspiring people

Lynn also went to the Academy Learning Exchange (presented by members of the Assessment Academy) where the focus is on: What do students learn? How do they learn? and What is the student able to do after graduation?

The Open Pathway will include quality improvement and quality assurance; assessment arguments which are explain the institution's actions; peer reviews which are made public online; the portfolio is a cumulative file which is revised and updated. Other insights gleaned:

- QI looks different at each institutions
- Data should be used not just collected.
- Culture, faculty and support from administration can impact the ability of an institution to make improvements
- Common outcomes across many areas need to be identified
- Engagement across an institution is a struggle for many
- Don't worry about data – focus on processes. If something doesn't work, regroup and start again.
- Barriers include faculty resistance, time, money, people, conflicting schedules, finding new approaches.

Book recommendation: *Good to Great*. (Academically Adrift is another book to be considered.) Give constant attention to the assessment projects, try different approaches; ask faculty what their stumbling blocks are; use survey Monkey to keep it simple and survey a lot of people.

The quality of the displays for the assessment projects varied.

Information regarding the new HLC Criteria is attached.

(JJC is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association. JJC maintains its accreditation through HLC's Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP). Programs may also receive program accreditation through professional organizations.)

SLC/Assessment Coordinator should do more to orient new faculty regarding accreditation and assessment

3. SLC Newsletter. What the SLC has learned this year (attached) will be developed into a newsletter.
4. Departmental Assessment – The Math department is assessing 094 during a three project. It is broad-based and involves full and part-time instructors across a number of campuses. The 3-year project can be incorporated into the five-year ICCB report. (Program reviews are submitted every five years to ICCB and can also serve as documentation of HLC accreditation.) Assessments reports from departments will be added to the SLC web site whenever they are submitted.

Adjourn The meeting was adjourned at 4:24 pm.

Max Lee's HLC 2011 conference report

- 4/9 1:30 The future of the Academy as a pathway to Accreditation
- Introduce "Open Pathway" 10 yr cycle (4th and 10th): Quality improvement and Quality assurance; Write Argument (25k words) and update.
- 4/9 2:15- Panel Discussion: 3 Academy completers explain how to succeed
- Ashland Univ- A structure change
- Creighton Univ- Systematic Gen Ed, Culture innovation include citizenship, Critical thinking
- Drake Univ- collaboration, break down silos, articulation, time is a problem
- What get most from Academy? Seminar at Lyol; resources; invite mentor to campus
- 4/9 3:30- Gearing up for Gen Ed Outcome
- Courage to see the ugly duckling before the change
- Outcome rubrics- one outcome per semester
- Email to Taiebeh Hosseinali (Lincoln Land C C)
- Create Bookmarks on Gen Ed outcomes and distribute
- 4/9 3:30-Student Learning Outcomes
- Project I: compare old vs new curricula; Assess SL & personal Development Outcomes; Evaluate new capstone project; National tests (bribe 100 students with \$50), ETS math & writing (MAPP) test data
- Project II: Construct validity of NSU- culture, global learning, student personal development Model- Chronbach & Meehl's Nomological Network (1955): look for consistency ; a video tape process not a snap shot
- Enhance stakeholder, everybody on board; faculty driven (ownership)
- 4/9 4:30- Clarifying Roles and Responsibilities- Rubrics to define and assess Engagement
- Faculty creates rubric for each outcome and on engagement (see handout)
- 4/10 8:30 Ashland Univ- Creating a positive culture of Assessment to focus on SL
- Federal model structure but localization at lower level
- 7 outcomes
- Assessment Handbook – plans (key concepts and cycle) and annual reports submission
- Excel and Word are used only (check Ashelly@ashland.edu)
- Tie to strategic plan to academic quality
- Exploring LiveText and Taskstream.
- (See handout)
- 4/10 9:30- From Mission to GE
- GE at least as important as major
- All students, whole faculty are responsible for GE
- Integrating 3Q (?) Begin with the END
- 4/10 9:30 Faculty Engagement in the Processes of SLA and Program Evaluation

Academic review annual cycle: SLA plan-Data collection(May)-review(June)-develop program (Fall)-program review (Jan)-Campus review (march)
Institutional goals-program competencies-program learning objectives-course learning objectives-assessment instruments-Formative/summative assessments

- 4/10 10:30- Teaching Generation NeXt: methods and techniques for today's learners;
Pandemic of workplace un-readiness
John Tagg: Academically Adrift
iBrain (Surviving the tech alternation of the modern mind)
last generation- free range, this generation-digital
Marc Prensky (Digital natives)
Knowing vs. finding
A nation of overwhelmed : k12 push them thru
Pedagogy for today's learners: Move content out of class(too much time is spent on transmission of information, class time should work on skills/drills, don't burn class time to do lecture), shift to "learners-centered process"- Don't teach students, shove them into the future-they inspire to become
What skills does that person need- better understanding of future roles and expectations, interview with practitioners.
If lecture available outside of class, why attend class? They should bring outside class info into the classroom. Do students prepare for your satisfaction? If they need, they'll bring in. Preparation 15-25% grade, class activity 15-25% grade.
Convenience your students class time is important thru their peers, not instructor.
Non-voluntary participation, pick someone to answer by random. Move away content assessment to more skill & value. Best Practices.
Visit Mark Taylor website: www.taylorprograms.com
- 4/10 11:45- Integrated Strategic Planning- WEAVEOnline
Suggestion from audience: training administrators 6 months before training faculty members; open to HLC audit 90 days before campus visiting.
- 4/10 2:15 Data Dumped to Data Driven
Began NSSE, FSSE admin
Develop 5 individual benchmark summaries
Check those difference between students and faculty by more than 20%
Not to do- any value judgment ; If we do more X or Y, what if ?
Service learning, culture competency, tech integration
- 4/10 4:15 Climbing the Mountain –Assess SL in Gen Ed.
Problem-lack of assessment, gold-plated Mercedes,
Under the hood: complex, lack cohesive, uneven quality, confusing, lack of accountability, absence of outcomes, lack of continuity
GE has a weight problem
Complain or work for change? Weren't given opportunity to stop change, but offering opportunity to participate
No deadline pressure (Fall 2007)
Broad-based committee, best practice, gather historical data, conducted forms, surveys, engage councilors, constituent feedback, consensus

Move "If" to "What"

Foundational Studies: AAC&U learning outcomes
CLA administered 2009-2010
Data Summary to Faculty Spring 2011
Drawing inference between 2 data sets
NSSE process helped us prioritize.

Commission Releases Beta Version of Criteria Revision Initiative: Welcomes Further Comments

Background

It is good practice for an accrediting body such as ours to undertake a review of its criteria every five years. In the fall of 2009 we began this process with surveys of our peer corps and of institutions that had recently undergone review for reaffirmation. In December 2009 the HLC Board of Trustees devoted a seminar to the subject, informed by the survey responses. The Board concluded that the strength of our Criteria is in their breadth and flexibility, so that they can be useful for the highly diverse institutions in our membership. But the Board also found that five years of experience indicated a need for greater specificity. The Board directed the staff to work on what it called an “overlay,” to create that specificity.

In late spring of 2010, the U.S. Department of Education issued a report in effect demanding that the Commission define minimum expectations to undergird its Criteria. We responded with a set of provisions contained in “Documenting Fundamental Understandings: Minimum Expectations within the Criteria for Accreditation.” We believed these minima were not new, but rather articulations of what have long been tacit understandings within the higher education and accreditation community. Institutions and peer reviewers verified that belief by showing no concern about any of the specified expectations.

We then proceeded to absorb the requirement from the Department of Education into the directive from the Commission Board. We examined the Criteria not only for points

where what has been tacit might become explicit, but for points where we believe the community would be better served by explicit expectations beyond what we have hitherto required, absolutes where hitherto we have been, by some accounts flexible, by others vague. We looked further at the Obligations of Affiliation with the same view and at our process for candidacy. We sought preliminary reaction to our early draft from members of our peer corps and met with perhaps surprising encouragement to keep going.

And thus the “overlay” recommended by the Board in December 2009 became the “Minimum Expectations.” In places where no statement of minimum is appropriate but more specificity seemed wanted, sub-components were added to the Core Components. Several of the Core Components were revised. And at the top level, the Criteria themselves were reorganized: Criterion 1 was divided into separate criteria on Mission and Integrity, and what had been Criterion 5 was moved primarily into new Core Components for the revised Criterion 1, Mission. The Obligations of Affiliation were expanded.

Progress to Date

That was the alpha version of the new documents, Criteria for Accreditation and Obligations of Affiliation. It served as the basis for discussions during March and April of this year, in particular at the Annual Conference. We received a great many very helpful comments, and from them undertook a series of revisions that

now appear in this, the **beta version**. Perhaps the best sign of the value of these comments is the fact that the revisions were considerably more extensive than we had anticipated. The Criteria themselves are reorganized again—with Criterion 3 now focused on academic quality, resources, and support; Criterion 4 on evaluation and improvement of academic offerings; and Criterion 5 on resources and planning—but perhaps more significant are dozens of additions, deletions, and adjustments to the Core Components, sub-components, and Minimum Expectations. We are very grateful to all who responded.

The Obligations of Affiliation received much less comment; the changes in the beta version are simply a decision to reference as obligations three existing policies.

We aren’t done yet, however. During the summer we will host seven regional forums and launch an online

BETA VERSION
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Post comments online.
Attend a Regional Forum.

survey to seek comment on this beta version. Based on what we learn then, we will revise once more to create the version that will come before the Commission Board on first reading in November. We will publish that version after the Board action, seeking yet more comment towards the final version that will be acted on by the Board in February 2012. And then the new Criteria and Obligations will be phased in over the subsequent 18 months.

These revisions are too large and too important for any staff to undertake or any Board to approve on its own. Please help us continue to find what we left out, where we missed the mark, where we can improve the language. Our goal is by 2012 to have a set of documents truly owned by the collective membership that is, in fact, the Higher Learning Commission.

1

The Proposed Criteria for Accreditation: An Overview

In its review of institutions, the Higher Learning Commission seeks a culture of aspiration and continual improvement rather than satisfaction of minimum requirements. It also seeks to acknowledge the great diversity of its institutions. For these reasons it uses the term “criteria” rather than “standards.”

Prior to admission to candidacy for accreditation, an institution demon-

strates that it meets the Commission’s Eligibility Requirements. The accreditation process itself is governed by the Criteria for Accreditation. Within the Criteria there are Criterion Statements, Core Components, and Minimum Expectations that ensure institutional effectiveness. For admission to candidacy, the Eligibility Requirements and Minimum Expectations must be fully met.

For status as an accredited institution, the expectations for performance include the Eligibility Requirements and Minimum Expectations but move beyond them to include the Core Components and fulfillment of each of the Criteria, and the emphasis of the Commission’s review shifts accordingly. Finally, the Commission articulates Obligations of Affiliation, which are behavioral requirements for its member institutions, including the requirement that they abide by Commission Policies.

Eligibility Requirements:

Pre-conditions

The Eligibility Requirements are pre-conditions for the Commission’s consideration of an institution’s application for candidacy. An institution submits preliminary evidence regarding these requirements and the Commission reviews that evidence prior to granting a Pre-Application Interview. Before an institution is admitted to candidacy it must document that it meets these requirements fully. The concepts in the Eligibility Requirements are repeated in the Criteria for Accreditation. In addition, the Eligibility Requirements as stated are reassessed in connection with the approval of any Change of Control, Structure, or Organization.

The Eligibility Requirements and Process for Seeking Status are available in a separate document.

Criteria for Accreditation and Core Components:

Improvement, aspiration, best practices

The Criteria for Accreditation are broad statements of the areas of fundamental interest to the Commission. The Criteria are applied not to define minimum qualifications but to seek evidence of continual improvement, aspiration, and best practices; minimum standards are not enough to meet the Criteria.

The Core Components identify areas of particular focus within each Criterion. Some of these Core Components are further elaborated in sub-components. The sub-components are not comprehensive: they elaborate certain aspects of the Core Component that the Commission seeks to ensure are not overlooked, but they do not fully constitute the Component.

It is possible that an institution could meet all the sub-components but still fail to meet the Core Component in full. Some of the Core Components do not have sub-components because such elaboration has not appeared necessary.

In preparation for accreditation and reaffirmation of accreditation, an institution provides evidence that it meets all the Criteria and all the Core Components. The distinctiveness of an institution’s mission may condition the strategies it adopts and the evidence it provides that it meets each Core Component. The Commission will review the institution against the Criteria and Core Components and determine whether

- the Criterion is met:
 - a) the Criterion is solidly met—the institution meets or exceeds the expectations embodied in the Criterion; or
 - b) the Criterion is minimally met—the institution demonstrates the characteristics

expected by the Criterion, but performance in relation to some Core Components of the Criterion must be improved; or

- the Criterion is not met—the institution fails to meet the Criterion in its entirety or is so deficient in one or more Core Components of the Criterion that the Criterion is judged not to be met.

The Commission will grant or continue (with or without conditions or sanctions), deny, or withdraw accreditation based on the outcome of this review.

Minimum Expectations:

Necessary but far from sufficient

Minimum Expectations are public articulations that establish a clear and consistent explanation of the most basic elements required for accreditation. These expectations state what has been inherent to the peer review process for decades but that grew necessary to make explicit in order to ensure a calibrated understanding of those expectations within a rapidly-changing environment and to provide the public information about basic accreditation expectations.

The Minimum Expectations constitute a minimum that is *necessary but far from sufficient* for achieving and maintaining accredited status. They are the most basic and identifiable of the elements needed to meet the Criteria for Accreditation, which are considerably more far-reaching. As such, the Minimum Expectations are the most readily understood thresholds that can be communicated to an audience of individuals with differing levels of familiarity with higher education. In practical terms, the Minimum Expectations are 1) used to train peer reviewers so that they have a clear and consistent understanding about the most basic of elements that an institution must demonstrate for accreditation and 2) shared with the public to provide better understand-

ing of the professional judgments that result in accreditation decisions.

The Minimum Expectations apply to every affiliated institution and cannot be suspended, modified, or interpreted for individual institutions.

The Commission requires that institutions seeking candidacy address these minimums fully and explicitly in their self-studies. An institution once in candidacy that fails to meet any of the Minimum Expectations is subject to a requirement for immediate remedy or withdrawal of candidate status.

For initial accreditation, the institution must again address explicitly all the Minimum Expectations as well as demonstrate how it fulfills the Core Components of the Criteria.

Because the Commission expects that all accredited institutions meet and exceed these Minimum Expectations, however, it does not expect that an institution applying for reaffirmation of accreditation will address them explicitly or that a review team will address them unless the team finds a matter of concern. In the reaffirmation process the Minimum Expectations function as a reference for reviewers if a question arises as to whether an institution meets a minimum threshold with regard to one of the Criteria.

An accredited institution that finds it is in danger of not meeting one or more of the Minimum Expectations should take immediate steps to correct the deficiency. If the Commission determines that an accredited institution does not meet one or more of the Minimum Expectations, the Commission may impose a requirement for immediate remedy, apply a sanction, or, in extreme cases, withdraw accreditation.

The Minimum Expectations are organized by the Criteria, but not by the Core Components. In some

cases there are several statements for a single component, in others none. The purpose is not to offer something for every Core Component but to create explicit statements of Minimum Expectations where they are needed.

Obligations of Affiliation and Commission Policies:

The meaning of membership

The Obligations of Affiliation describe behavioral requirements on the part of member institutions, including the requirement to abide by Commission policies. Among those policies, the Obligations draw particular attention to the requirements for transparency as to specified outcomes of the Commission's reviews for accreditation. While the Commission makes information about these reviews public, this information concerns the accreditation relationship of institutions; hence institutions have an obligation to accept such publication and also have an obligation to represent this information accurately. The Obligations of Affiliation are absolute and the Commission may take immediate administrative action in the event that an institution fails to meet any of them.

Commission Policies Related to the Federal Requirements for Recognition of Accrediting Agencies

The Commission has a number of policies regarding the institutions it accredits that are mandated by virtue of its recognition by the U.S. Department of Education as a qualified accreditor for the purposes of eligibility for Title IV funds. While these requirements are outside the Criteria for Accreditation, the Commission will review institutions in the context of all its comprehensive reviews to assure compliance with the requirements outlined in the Commission's Federal Compliance Program.

2

The Proposed Criteria for Accreditation

Criterion One: Mission

The institution's mission is clear, articulated publicly, and appropriate to an institution of higher education.

Core Components

1.A. The institution's mission documents are clear and its mission guides its operations.

1. The institution has statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, and institutional priorities that together clearly define its mission.
2. The mission documents are current and delineate the institution's responsibilities for the transmission, discovery, creation, and application of knowledge.
3. The institution's academic programs, services, and enrollment coincide with its mission statements.
4. The institution's planning and budgeting priorities coincide with and support the mission.

1.B. The institution addresses the diversity of its learners, its other constituencies, and the greater society it serves.

1. The mission documents address the institution's role in a multi-cultural society.
2. The institution's processes and activities reflect attention to diversity as appropriate within the mission and for the constituencies served.

1.C. The institution demonstrates commitment to broad public interests.

1. Actions and decisions reflect an understanding that in its educational role the institution serves the public, not solely the institution, and thus entails a public obligation.
2. The institution identifies and engages with its external constituencies and communities. It responds to their needs and expectations within its capacity.

Minimum Expectations

1-1. The mission documents are clear and precise regarding the nature and scope of the higher education programs and services the institution provides and whom these activities serve.

1-2. The mission and vision statements are developed through a broad process and are adopted by the governing board.

1-3. The mission statements and the institution's current capacity are aligned. The vision is realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources, and opportunities.

1-4. Aspects of the institution's mission beyond its educational purposes—such as pure and applied research, public service, religious and spiritual activities, economic development of the region, creation of financial returns for investors, etc.—do not compromise its educational responsibilities and focus.

Criterion Two: Integrity

The institution fulfills its mission ethically and responsibly.

Core Components

2.A. The institution establishes and follows policies for fair and ethical practice pertaining to its financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions.

2.B. The institution presents itself clearly and completely to the public with regard to its programs, requirements, costs to students, faculty and staff, control,* and accreditation relationships.

** Note: "Control" refers to the institution's status as public, private not-for-profit, or private-for-profit and in the latter instances, to the institution's ownership and the board's power to direct.*

2.C. The governing board of the institution is sufficiently autonomous from any superordinate or related entity to allow it to make decisions in the best interest of the institution and to assure the integrity of the institution.

1. The governing board considers the need to preserve and enhance the institution for the longer term.
2. The governing board considers the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies.
3. The governing board and administration preserve their independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, and other external parties.

4. The governing board delegates day-to-day management and leadership of the institution to the administration and academic matters to the faculty.

2.D. The institution has disseminated statements supporting academic freedom for the institution's students, faculty, and staff, and honors those statements in practice.

2.E. The institution ensures that faculty, students, and staff acquire, discover, and apply knowledge responsibly.

1. The institution has processes to provide effective oversight and support services to ensure the integrity of research and practice conducted by its faculty, staff, and students.
2. Students have access to guidance in the ethical use of research and information resources.
3. The institution has and enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

2.F. The institution ensures that its contractual partners behave ethically and responsibly in relation to any action taken on behalf of the institution.

Minimum Expectations

2-1. *The institution has and enforces a conflict of interest policy that ensures that the governing board and the senior administrative personnel act in the best interest of the institution.*

2-2. *The institution has ethics policies regarding nepotism, conflict of interest, recruitment and admissions, financial aid, and contracting.*

2-3. *The institution provides its students, administrators, faculty, and staff with policies and procedures informing them of their rights and responsibilities within the institution.*

2-4. *The institution provides clear*

information regarding its procedures for receiving complaints and grievances from students and other constituencies, responds to them in a timely manner, and analyzes them to ensure improved practice.

2-5. *The institution makes public its statements of mission, vision, and values.*

2-6. *The institution makes readily available to the public clear and complete information:*

a. The institution publicly discloses full descriptions of the requirements for its programs, including all preparatory courses.

b. The institution publicly discloses its requirements for admission both to the institution and to particular programs or majors.

c. The institution publicly discloses its policies on acceptance of transfer credit, including how credit is applied to degree requirements. The institution makes no promises to prospective students regarding the acceptance of credit awarded by examination, credit for prior learning, or credit for transfer unless and until an evaluation has been conducted.

d. The institution publicly discloses clear and accurate information on all student costs, including tuition, fees, training, and incidentals; its financial aid policies, practices and requirements; and its policy on refunds.

e. The institution publicly discloses its policies regarding academic good standing, probation, and dismissal.

f. The institution publicly discloses a full listing of its faculty members and their academic credentials.

g. If the institution has residency requirements, they are stated publicly.

h. The institution makes clear to current and prospective students and others its relationship with any corporate parent and any external provider of its instruction.

i. If the institution reports findings on student achievement of learning, it does so fully and accurately.

j. If the institution makes public

information on student persistence and completion, it does so fully and accurately.

2-7. *The institution portrays clearly and accurately to the public its current status with the Commission and with specialized, national, and professional accreditation agencies.*

a. An institution offering programs that require specialized accreditation or recognition in order for its students to be certified or sit for licensing examinations either has the appropriate accreditation or discloses publicly and clearly the consequences to the students of the lack thereof. The institution makes clear to students the distinction between regional and specialized or program accreditation and the relationships between licensure and the various types of accreditation.

b. An institution offering programs eligible for specialized accreditation at multiple locations discloses the accreditation status of the program at each location.

c. An institution that advertises a program as a way to pass a licensure examination publicly discloses its licensure pass rate on that examination.

2-8. *The governing Board and the executive committee include members who represent the interests of the public and students. Such public members have no significant administrative position or any ownership interest in any of the following: the institution itself; a company that does substantial business with the institution; a company or organization with which the institution has a substantial partnership; a parent, ultimate parent, affiliate, or subsidiary; an investment group or firm substantially involved with one of the above organizations.**

2-9. *The governing board approves the annual budget and has the authority to hire and fire the chief executive officer.**

2-10. *The institution documents outsourcing of services in written agreements, including agreements with parent or affiliated organizations.*

** Note: Institutions operating under federal control and authorized by Congress are exempt from these requirements. These institutions must have a public board that includes representation by individuals who do not have a current or previous employment or other relationship with the federal government or any military entity. This public board has a significant role in setting policy, reviewing the institution's finances, reviewing and approving major institutional priorities, and overseeing the academic programs of the institution.*

Criterion Three: Academic Programs—Quality, Resources, and Support

The institution provides high quality academic programs, wherever and however its offerings are delivered (on the main campus, at additional locations, by distance delivery, as dual credit, through contractual or consortial arrangements).

Core Components

3.A. The institution's programs are appropriate for higher education.

1. Courses and programs are current and require levels of performance by students appropriate to the degree awarded.
2. The institution clearly differentiates its learning goals for undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, and certificate programs.
3. The institution's programs are consistent in content and

requirements across all modes of delivery and all locations.

3.B. The institution demonstrates that the exercise of intellectual inquiry and the acquisition, application, and integration of broad learning and skills are integral to its educational programs.

1. The general education provided is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings, and degree levels of the institution.
2. The institution clearly articulates the purposes, goals, and content of its undergraduate general education program or requirements.
3. Every degree program offered by the institution engages students in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information; in mastering modes of inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptive to changing environments.
4. The institution's curriculum reflects the diversity of the world in which its students will live and work.
5. The faculty and students, as called for by the institution's mission, advance scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of new knowledge.

3.C. The institution has the faculty and staff resources to fulfill its mission.

1. The institution has sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty members and effective structures to carry out the non-teaching roles of faculty.
2. Faculty members are appropriately qualified, including instructors in dual credit, contractual, and consortial programs.
3. The institution has processes and programs for assuring that

faculty members remain current in their disciplines.

4. Faculty members are evaluated regularly in accordance with established policies and procedures.
5. Faculty members are accessible for student inquiry and mentoring.
6. Staff providing student support services are appropriately qualified.
7. The institution supports professional growth opportunities for its faculty and staff.

3.D. The institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching.

1. The institution provides support services commensurate with the needs of students admitted.
2. The institution has a process for placing entering students in the courses and programs for which the students are adequately prepared.
3. The institution provides learning support and instruction as called for by the academic needs of its students.
4. The institution provides academic advising suited to its programs and the needs of its students.
5. Students and faculty have access to the infrastructure necessary to support learning and teaching (e.g., technological infrastructure, scientific laboratories, libraries, performance spaces, clinical practice sites, museum collections) and those resources are sufficient to support the institution's mission and programs.
6. Students have access to guidance in the use of research and information resources.

Minimum Expectations

3-1. Programs, Courses, and Credits

a. The institution conforms to commonly accepted minimum program length: 60 semester credits for associate's degrees, 120 semester credits for bachelor's degrees, and 30 semester credits beyond the bachelor's for master's degrees. Any exception to these minima must be explained and justified.

b. The institution requires that 30 of the final 60 credits earned for a bachelor's degree that the institution awards and 15 of the final 30 for an associate's degree it awards be credits earned at the institution.* Any exception to these minima must be explained and justified. (Approved consortial arrangements are considered explained and justified.)

* Note: For example, for a bachelor's degree requiring 120 credits, the institution accepts no more than 90 credits in total through transfer or other assessment of prior learning, and the remaining 30 must fall within the final 60 credits awarded the student.

c. The institution meets the federal requirements for credit ascription described in the Commission's Federal Compliance Program.

d. The institution adheres to policies on student academic load per term that reflect reasonable expectations for successful learning and course completion.

e. Courses that carry academic credit toward college-level credentials have content and rigor appropriate to higher education. Courses that are comparable in content, rigor, and goals to secondary school curricula do not carry academic credit applicable to college-level credentials.

f. The institution has a process ensuring that all courses transferred and applied toward degree requirements demonstrate equivalence with its own courses required for that degree or serve as electives of equivalent rigor.

g. The institution has a clear policy

on the maximum allowable credit for prior learning as a reasonable proportion of the credits required to complete the student's program. Credit awarded for prior learning is documented, evaluated, and based upon courses offered by the institution or comparable institutions for credit towards the same degree or certificate.

h. The institution's policy and practice assure that at least 50% of courses applied to a graduate program are courses designed for graduate work, rather than undergraduate courses credited toward a graduate degree.

3-2. General Education

a. The institution maintains a minimum requirement for general education for all of its undergraduate programs whether through a traditional practice of distributed curricula (15 semester credits for AAS degrees, 24 for AS or AA degrees, and 30 for bachelor's degrees) or through integrated, embedded, inter-disciplinary, or other accepted models that demonstrate a minimum requirement equivalent to the distributed model. Any exceptions are explained and justified.

b. The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts common knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess. The institution clearly and publicly articulates the purposes, content, and intended learning outcomes of its general education program.

3-3. Faculty Roles and Qualifications

a. Faculty members possess an academic degree at least one level above the level at which they teach, except in programs for terminal degrees or when equivalent experience is established. In terminal degree programs, faculty members possess the same level of degree. When faculty members are employed based on equivalent experience, the institution defines a minimum threshold of experience and an evaluation process.

b. Faculty members teaching at the doctoral level have a record of recognized scholarship, creative endeavor, or achievement in practice commensurate with doctoral expectations.

c. Faculty participate substantially in:

1. oversight of the curriculum—its development and implementation, academic substance, currency, and relevance for internal and external constituencies;

2. assurance of consistency in the level and quality of instruction and in the expectations of student performance;

3. establishment of the academic qualifications for instructional personnel;

4. analysis of data and appropriate action on assessment of student learning and program completion.

3-4. Support Services

a. The institution monitors and acts upon student indebtedness, default rates, and repayment of student loans as a matter of the welfare of its students.

b. Financial aid advising clearly and comprehensively reviews students' eligibility for financial assistance and assists students in a full understanding of their debt and its consequences.

c. The institution maintains timely and accurate transcript and records services.

Criterion Four: Academic Programs— Evaluation and Improvement

The institution assures the quality of its academic programs and evaluates their

effectiveness through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

Core Components

4.A. The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its programs.

1. The institution maintains a practice of regular review and evaluation of its academic programs.
2. The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it accepts in transfer or awards for other forms of prior learning. The institution refrains from the transcription of credit that it will not apply to its own programs.
3. The institution ascertains that programs designed to prepare students for advanced study or employment in fact accomplish these purposes.
4. The institution maintains specialized accreditation as appropriate to its educational purposes.
5. The institution assures that any dual credit courses or programs for high school students it offers are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to the higher education curriculum.

4.B. The institution's goals for student learning are clearly stated and processes of assessment are in effect.

1. The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through the assessment of student learning.
2. The institution assesses the learning goals that it claims for its programs.
3. The institution uses the information gained from assessment

to improve student learning.

4. Assessment methodologies and processes reflect good practice.

4.C. The institution's goals for student persistence and completion of academic programs are clearly stated and appropriate to its mission, student populations, and educational offerings.

1. The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through attention to its persistence and completion rates.
2. The institution collects information on student persistence and completion of programs.
3. The institution uses information on student persistence and completion of programs to address deficiencies in its persistence and completion rates as warranted.
4. Processes and methodologies for gathering and analyzing information on student persistence and completion of programs reflect good practice. (Institutions are not required to use IPEDS definitions in their determination of persistence or completion rates. Institutions are encouraged to use measures that are suitable to their student populations, but institutions are accountable for the validity of their measures.)

Minimum Expectations

4-1. *Faculty members have the authority for the assignment of grades.*

4-2. *The institution has formal and current written agreements for managing internships and clinical placements.*

4-3. *A predominantly or solely single-purpose institution in fields that require licensure for practice is also accredited by or is actively in the process of applying to a recognized specialized accred-*

iting agency for each field, if such agency exists.

4-4. *Faculty members communicate course requirements to students through syllabi.*

4-5. *Faculty members have significant involvement in the institution's processes for assessment of student learning.*

4-6. *The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for its dual credit programs.*

Criterion Five: Resources and Planning

The institution's resources are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

Core Components

5.A. The institution's resource base supports its current educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.

1. The institution has financial resources, personnel, and physical and technological infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.
2. The institution has a well-developed budgeting process.

5.B. The institution's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes.

1. The institution's governance and administrative structures appropriately engage its internal constituencies, including the governing board, administration, faculty, staff, and students.
 2. The governing board is knowledgeable of and accountable for the institution's finances and its academic and business operations.
 3. The governing board understands and meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities to the institution.
 4. The governing board functions effectively as a board.
- 5.C. Allocation of resources is aligned with the institution's mission and enhances its capacity to fulfill that mission.
1. The institution's planning processes are linked with its budgeting process.
 2. The institution evaluates its operations.
 3. The institution ensures that the priority for its unrestricted revenue is to sustain the quality of the institution and its academic programs, ahead of other institutional claims or disbursement to any superordinate entity.
- 5.D. The institution engages in systematic planning.
1. Current good practice informs the institution's attention to organizational and educational improvement.
 2. The planning process gathers input from all constituent groups.
 3. All levels of planning align with the institution's mission and enhance its capacity to fulfill that mission.
4. The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity.
 5. Institutional planning takes into account emerging factors such as technology, demographic shifts, and globalization.
 6. The planning process addresses the possible impact of fluctuations in enrollment, the economy, and state support or other major sources of institutional revenue.
- 5.E. The institution works systematically to improve its performance.
1. The institution delivers programs and activities of demonstrable value to its students and stakeholders. Documented evidence of performance routinely informs the institution's processes for evaluation, planning, and improvement.
 2. The institution increases its institutional effectiveness, capabilities, and sustainability, overall and in its component parts.
 3. The institution derives learning and knowledge, both organizational and individual, from its operational experience.

Minimum Expectations

5-1. The institution is able to meet its current financial obligations.

5-2. The institution has a prepared budget for the current year and the capacity to compare it with budgets and actual results of previous years.

5-3. The institution maintains systems for collecting, analyzing, and using institutional information.

*5-4. The accredited entity undergoes an external financial audit by a certified public accountant or a public audit agency. For private institutions the audit is annual; for public institutions it is at least every two years.**

**Note: Institutions under federal control are exempted provided that they have other reliable information to document the institution's fiscal resources and management.*

5-5. The institution's administrative structure includes a chief executive officer, chief financial officer, and chief academic officer (titles may vary) with appropriate credentials and experience and sufficient focus on the institution to ensure appropriate leadership and oversight.

3

The Proposed Obligations of Affiliation

Higher education institutions that seek or maintain affiliation with the Commission agree to support the Commission's mission, "Serving the common good by assuring and advancing the quality of higher learning." They commit to the betterment of higher education by the application of a common set of criteria, processes that assure quality and encourage improvement, the concept of self-regulation, and acceptance of the judgment of peers.

1. The institution meets obligations set forth by the Commission, including periodic evaluation through the structures and mechanisms set forth in Commission policies, submission of reports as requested by the Commission, filing of the Annual Institutional Data Update, and any other requirements set forth in its policies.

2. The institution is candid, transparent, and forthcoming in its dealings with the Commission, including in its responses to any special inquiries or requests for information from the Commission. The institution agrees not to enter into any agreement that limits the nature or scope of its communications with the Commission or requires that a third party review and approve those communications prior to their transmission to the Commission.
3. The institution notifies the Commission of any condition or situation that has the potential to affect the institution's status with the Commission, such as a significant unanticipated reduction in program offerings or serious legal investigation. (A fuller list of such conditions or situations is included in the Commission's policy on special monitoring.)
4. The institution informs the Commission of its relationship with any related entity wherein institutional decision-making is controlled by that entity and of any changes in that relationship that may affect the institution's compliance with Commission accreditation requirements. (Definitions and process requirements are contained in the Commission's policy on institutions with related entities.)
5. The institution describes itself in identical terms to the Commission and to any other institutional accrediting body with which it holds or seeks affiliation and notifies the Commission when it receives an adverse action from or has been placed on sanction by any other accrediting agency.
6. The institution assures its employees and students that it will consider fairly all complaints and third-party comments and not engage in retaliatory action against any who have submitted such information.
7. The institution accepts that the Commission will publish outcomes from its accreditation process.
8. The institution portrays its accreditation status with the Commission clearly to the public, including the status of its branch campuses and related entities. The institution posts the electronic version of the Commission's Mark of Affiliation on at least one place on its Web site, linking users directly to the institution's status on the Commission's Web site.
9. The institution communicates to its constituencies and applicants any Public Disclosure Notice it receives from the Higher Learning Commission.
10. The institution maintains prominently on its Web site a telephone number that includes an option for both current students and the public to speak with a representative of the institution.
11. The institution submits timely payment of dues and fees and accepts the fact of surcharges for late payment.
12. The institution agrees to accept binding arbitration in the event of an action by the Commission's Board of Trustees that the institution disputes and is not able to resolve through the Commission's processes. This agreement follows procedures developed and published by the Commission.

— end of proposed changes —

4

The Proposed Criteria for Accreditation: Core Values

The Higher Learning Commission's Criteria for Accreditation reflect a set of **core values**. The Commission articulates these core values so as to offer a better understanding of the Criteria and the intentions that underlie them.

- Focus on student learning
- Education as a public purpose
- Education for a diverse, technological, globally connected world
- A culture of continuous improvement
- Evidence-based institutional learning and self-presentation
- Integrity, transparency, and ethical behavior or practice
- Governance for the well-being of the institution and its stakeholders
- Planning and management of resources to ensure institutional sustainability
- Mission-centered evaluation
- Accreditation through peer review

1. Focus on student learning

For the purpose of accreditation, the Higher Learning Commission regards the teaching mission of any institution as primary. Institutions will have other missions, such as research, healthcare and public service, and these other missions may have a shaping and highly valuable effect on the education that the institution provides. In the accreditation process, these missions should be recognized and considered in relation to the teaching mission.

A focus on student learning encompasses every aspect of students' experience at an institution: how they are recruited and admitted; costs they are charged and how they are supported by financial aid; how well they are informed and guided before and through their work at the institution; the breadth, depth, currency, and relevance of the learning they are offered; the effectiveness of their programs; what happens to them after they leave the institution.

2. Education as a public purpose

Every educational institution serves a public purpose. Public or state-supported institutions make that assumption readily. Not-for-profit institutions receive their tax-exempt status on the basis of an assumption that they serve a public purpose. And although it may appear that a for-profit institution does not require a public purpose, because education is a public good its provision serves a public purpose and entails societal obligations. Furthermore, the provision of higher education requires a more complex standard of care than, for instance, the provision of dry cleaning services. What the students buy, with money, time and effort, is not merely a good, like a credential, but experiences that have the potential to transform lives,

or to harm them. What institutions do constitutes a solemn responsibility for which they should hold themselves accountable.

3. Education for a diverse, technological, globally connected world

A contemporary education must recognize contemporary circumstances: the diversity of American society, the diversity of the world in which students live, and the centrality of technology and the global dynamic to life in the 21st century. More than ever, students should be prepared for life-long learning and for the likelihood that no job or occupation will last a lifetime. Even for the most technical qualification, students need the civic learning and broader intellectual capabilities that underlie success in the workforce. The Commission distinguishes higher education in part on the basis of its reach beyond narrow vocational training to a broader intellectual and social context.

4. A culture of continuous improvement

Continuous improvement is the alternative to stagnation. Minimum standards are necessary but far from sufficient to achieve acceptable quality in higher education, and the strongest institutions will stay strong through ongoing aspiration. The Commission embeds improvement as one of two major strands in all its pathways, the other being assurance that institutions meet the Criteria and the federal requirements.

A process of assessment is essential to continuous improvement and therefore a commitment to assessment should be deeply embedded in an institution's activities. Assessment applies not only to student learning and educational outcomes but to an institution's approach to improvement of institutional effectiveness.

For student learning, a commitment to assessment would mean assessment at the program level that proceeds from clear goals, involves faculty at all points in the process, and analyzes the assessment results; it would also mean that the institution improves its programs or ancillary services or other operations on the basis of those analyses. Institutions committed to improvement review their programs regularly and seek external judgment, advice, or benchmarks in their assessments. Because in recent years the issues of persistence and completion have become central to public concern about higher education, the current Criteria direct attention to them as possible indicators of quality and foci for improvement, without prescribing either the measures or outcomes.

Innovation is essential in a time of rapid change and challenge; through its Criteria and processes the Commission seeks to support innovation.

5. Evidence-based institutional learning and self-presentation

Assessment and the processes an institution learns from should be well-grounded in evidence. Statements of belief and intention have important roles in an institution's presentation of itself, but for the quality assurance function of accreditation, evidence is critical. Institutions should be able to select evidence based on their particular purposes and circumstances. At the same time, many of the Minimum Expectations within the Criteria require certain specified evidence.

6. Integrity, transparency, and ethical behavior or practice

The Commission understands integrity broadly, including wholeness and coherence at one end of the spectrum and ethical behavior at the other.

Integrity means doing what the mission calls for but not doing what it does not call for; governance systems that are freely, independently, and rigorously focused on the welfare of the institution and its students; scrupulous avoidance of misleading statements or practices; full disclosure of information to students before students make any commitment to the institution, even a commitment to receive more information; clear, explicit requirements for ethical practice by all members of the institutional community in all its activities.

7. Governance for the well-being of the institution

The well-being of an institution requires that its governing board place that well-being above the interests of its own members and the interests of any other entity. Because the Commission accredits the educational institution itself, and not the state system, religious organization, corporation, medical center, or other entity that may own it, it holds the governing board of an institution accountable for the key aspects of the institution's operations. The governing board must have the independent authority for such accountability and must also hold itself independent of undue influence from individuals, be

they donors, elected officials, supporters of athletics, shareholders, or others with personal or political interests.

Governance of a quality institution of higher education will include a significant role for faculty, in particular with regard to currency and sufficiency of the curriculum, expectations for student performance, qualifications of the instructional staff, and adequacy of resources for instructional support.

8. Planning and management of resources to ensure institutional sustainability

The Commission does not privilege wealth. Students do expect, however, that an institution will be in operation for the duration of their degree programs. Therefore, the Commission is obliged to seek information regarding an institution's sustainability and, to that end, wise management of its resources. The Commission also watches for signs that an institution's financial challenges are eroding the quality of its programs to the point of endangering the institution's ability to meet the Criteria for Accreditation. Careful mid- and long-range planning must undergird an institution's budgetary and financial decisions.

9. Mission-centered evaluation

The Commission understands and values deeply the diversity of its institutions, which begins from the diversity of their missions. Accordingly, mission in some degree governs each of the Criteria. The Commission holds many expectations for all institutions, regardless of mission, but it expects that differences in mission will shape wide differences in how the expectations are addressed and met.

10. Accreditation through peer review

Peer review is the defining characteristic of accreditation and essential for a judgment-based process in a highly complex field. But self-regulation can be met with public skepticism. Therefore, peer review for accreditation must: (1) be collegial, in the sense of absolute openness in the relationship between an institution and the peer reviewers assigned to it as well as between the institution and the Commission; (2) be relentless in maintaining high standards, not mistaking leniency for kindness or inclusiveness; and (3) be cognizant of the dual role of peer reviewers in both assuring and advancing institutional quality.

Appendix A: Current Criteria for Accreditation

The current Criteria were adopted February 2003 and became effective on January 1, 2005. The proposed Criteria will replace this version.

Criterion One: Mission and Integrity

The organization operates with integrity to ensure the fulfillment of its mission through structures and processes that involve the board, administration, faculty, staff, and students.

Core Components

- A. The organization's mission documents are clear and articulate publicly the organization's commitments.
- B. In its mission documents, the organization recognizes the diversity of its learners, other relevant constituencies, and the greater society it serves.
- C. Understanding of and support for the mission pervade the organization.
- D. The organization's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the organization to fulfill its mission.
- E. The organization upholds and protects its integrity.

Criterion Two: Preparing for the Future

The organization's allocation of resources and its processes for evaluation and planning demonstrate its capacity to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its education, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

Core Components

- A. The organization realistically prepares for a future shaped by multiple societal and economic trends.
- B. The organization's resource base supports its educational programs and its plans for maintaining and

strengthening their quality in the future.

- C. The organization's ongoing evaluation and assessment processes provide reliable evidence of institutional effectiveness that clearly informs strategies for continuous improvement.
- D. All levels of planning align with the organization's mission, thereby enhancing its capacity to fulfill that mission.

Criterion Three: Student Learning and Effective Teaching

The organization provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission.

Core Components

- A. The organization's goals for student learning outcomes are clearly stated for each educational program and make effective assessment possible.
- B. The organization values and supports effective teaching.
- C. The organization creates effective learning environments.
- D. The organization's learning resources support student learning and effective teaching.

Criterion Four: Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge

The organization promotes a life of learning for its faculty, administration, staff, and students by fostering and supporting inquiry, creativity, practice, and social responsibility in ways consistent with its mission.

Core Components

- A. The organization demonstrates, through the actions of its board, administrators, students, faculty, and staff, that it values a life of learning.
- B. The organization demonstrates that acquisition of a breadth of knowledge and skills and the exercise of intellectual inquiry are integral to its educational programs.
- C. The organization assesses the usefulness of its curricula to students who will live and work in a global, diverse, and technological society.

- D. The organization provides support to ensure that faculty, students, and staff acquire, discover, and apply knowledge responsibly.

Criterion Five: Engagement and Service

As called for by its mission, the organization identifies its constituencies and serves them in ways both value.

Core Components

- A. The organization learns from the constituencies it serves and analyzes its capacity to serve their needs and expectations.
- B. The organization has the capacity and the commitment to engage with its identified constituencies and communities.
- C. The organization demonstrates its responsiveness to those constituencies that depend on it for service.
- D. Internal and external constituencies value the services the organization provides.

Appendix B: Current Minimum Expectations within the Criteria

The current Minimum Expectations became effective on August 2, 2010, as a transitional measure during the broader study of the Criteria. They will be replaced by the Proposed Minimum Expectations.

The current Minimum Expectations are organized by six areas: Fiduciary Responsibility, Public Information, Programs and Instruction, Faculty, Student Support Services, and Resources, although each minimum refers to one or more Criteria. The Proposed Minimum Expectations are organized by Criterion.

Part 1. Fiduciary Responsibility

- The institution has the legal documents required to confirm its status as an institution of higher education (public, non-profit, for-profit).

- The institution has legal authority to grant degrees and meets the legal requirements to operate as an institution of higher education wherever it conducts its activities.
- The institution understands and abides by local, state, and federal laws and regulations applicable to it (or bylaws and regulations established by federally sovereign entities).
- The institution has a governing board that possesses and exercises the necessary legal power to establish and review the basic policies that govern the institution.
 - The board provides oversight of the institution’s finances as well as its academic and business operations.
 - The board is sufficiently autonomous from the administration, ownership, and other related entities to assure the integrity of the institution and to allow the board to make decisions in the best interest of the institution.
 - The board authorizes the institution’s affiliation with the Commission.
- The institution has a qualified Chief Executive Officer, Chief Financial Officer and Chief Academic Officer (titles may vary).
- The institution has a published conflict of interest policy for the governing board and the senior administrative leadership.
- The institution defines and applies minimum qualifications for administrators.
- The institution follows established administrative policies and procedures.
- The institution evaluates its governance and administrative structures and processes regularly.
- The institution presents to the Commission a clear and complete description of its relationship to any corporate parent or other related legal entity to which the institution is subject.

- The institution documents outsourcing of services in written agreements, including agreements with parent or affiliated organizations.
- The institution addresses diversity of students and staff within the values and purposes of its mission.
- The institution responds to complaints and grievances, particularly those of students, in a timely manner.

Part 2. Public Information

- The Board has adopted and published statements of mission, vision, values, goals and organizational priorities that together clearly and broadly define the organization’s mission.
- The institution presents itself accurately and honestly to the public:
 - The institution advertises only programs it actually provides.
 - The institution’s catalog, with full descriptions of programs and admission requirements, is accessible to the public.
 - The institution portrays its accreditation status clearly to the public, including the status of its branch campuses and related entities and its specialized and professional accreditations.
 - The institution communicates to its constituencies and applicants any Public Disclosure Notice it receives from the Higher Learning Commission.
- The institution presents itself clearly and honestly to students and applicants:
 - The institution provides students clear, timely, and accurate disclosure of all costs: tuition, fees, training, and incidentals.
 - The institution provides students timely and accurate information on its refund policy.
 - The institution explains clearly to applicants its requirements for admission to particular programs or majors as well as to the institution.
 - The institution explains clearly to applicants in advance of enrollment its policies on acceptance of transfer credit.

- The institution clearly indicates to students what services it provides and how to access them.
- The institution includes on its Web site a telephone number that includes an option to speak with a representative of the institution.

Part 3. Programs and Instruction

- The institution follows established academic policies and procedures that reflect commonly accepted practice in higher education:
 - Faculty have primary authority for the assignment of grades.
 - The institution has clear published policies on student academic load.
 - Syllabi are provided for all courses offered.
 - Residency requirements for each program are stated.
 - The institution has formal, written agreements for managing internships and clinical placements.
- The institution maintains a practice of regular academic program reviews that include attention to currency and relevance of courses and programs.
- Assessment provides evidence of student learning:
 - Programs, majors, degrees and general education have stated learning outcomes.
 - Processes for assessment of student learning are in effect.
- The institution follows appropriate policies for academic level and program requirements:
 - The institution clearly differentiates its learning goals for undergraduate, graduate, and post-baccalaureate programs by identifying the expected learning outcomes for each.
 - No graduate program is composed primarily of courses that are available for both graduate and undergraduate credit.
 - Credits earned in remedial courses do not receive degree credit.

- The institution conforms to commonly accepted minimum program length: 60 semester credits for associate’s degrees, 120 semester credits for bachelor’s degrees, 30 semester credits beyond the bachelor’s for master’s degrees, 30 semester credits beyond the master’s degree for doctorates. Any exception to these minima must be explained and justified.
- The institution maintains a minimum requirement for general education for all of its undergraduate programs whether through the traditional distributed curricula (15 semester credits for technical associate’s degrees, 24 for transfer associate’s degrees, and 30 for bachelor’s degrees) or through integrated, embedded, interdisciplinary, or other accepted models that demonstrate a minimum requirement equivalent to the distributed model. Any exceptions are explained and justified.
- The institution assigns credit values to courses based on commonly accepted ascriptions for traditional classroom learning, distance learning, hybrid programs, and compressed schedules. (Note: This item will incorporate whatever definition of a credit hour results from the federal regulatory process in progress during 2010.)
- Students have access to the resources necessary to support learning and teaching (e.g., research laboratories, libraries, performance spaces, clinical practice sites) and those resources are appropriate for the institution’s mission and programs.
- Students have access to guidance in the use of research and information resources.
- Faculty members at the institution are available for student inquiry and mentoring.
- The rigor of programs is consistent wherever and however curricula are delivered (on the main campus, at additional locations, by distance delivery, as dual credit, etc.).

Part 4. Faculty

- Faculty members possess an academic degree one level above the level at which they teach, except in programs for terminal degrees or when equivalent experience is established. In terminal degree programs, faculty members possess the same level of degree. When faculty members are employed based on equivalent experience, the institution defines a minimum threshold of experience and an evaluation process.
- Faculty members teaching at the doctoral level have a record of recognized scholarship, creative endeavor, or achievement in practice commensurate to doctoral expectations.
- The institution has a process for assuring that faculty members are current in their disciplines.
- All faculty members are evaluated regularly in accordance with established procedures.
- The institution has a sufficient number of faculty members to carry out the administrative roles of faculty, in particular oversight of the curriculum and assurance that students meet program requirements.

Part 5. Student Support Services

- The institution provides student support services consistent with the type of students admitted:
 - Qualified staffing is provided for the student services offered.
 - Appropriate academic advising is provided.
 - Financial aid advising clearly and comprehensively reviews the student’s eligibility for federal assistance and scholarships and the student’s debt capacity.
 - Timely and accurate transcript and records services are maintained.
- The institution assures the quality and integrity of its admissions function.
- The institution maintains contact information for student support services on its Web site for its main campus, off-campus locations, branch campuses, and online delivery. Con-

tact information is also provided for students to use should a service not be readily available.

Part 6. Resources

- The institution is fiscally viable.
- The accredited entity has an external financial audit by a certified public accountant or a public audit agency. For private institutions the audit is annual; for public institutions it conforms with state practice.
- The institution’s resources are adequate to ensure the quality of the academic programs and services it claims to provide.
- The institution maintains an annual statement of revenue and expense.
- The institution has a prepared budget for the current year and the capacity to compare it with budgets of previous years.
- The institution has a system of ongoing planning and a current operational plan.
- The institution’s planning processes are linked with its budgeting process.
- The institution maintains systems for collecting, analyzing, and using institutional information.
- The institution has a process for regular review of its physical infrastructure at all locations.
- The institution’s facilities are compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- The institution’s facilities are compliant with state and local regulations to ensure health and safety.

— end of current Minimum Expectations —

Timeline for the Criteria Revision

This document will be revised at various stages as outlined below. Updated versions will be distributed by e-mail, at regional forums, and through the Commission's Web site. The Commission welcomes the participation of its members and others throughout the process.

- 2011** July: Beta version sent to Commission constituents via e-mail, comments invited
- July-September: Regional Forums on the Criteria
- November: HLC Board Meeting. First formal reading—gamma version
- November: Gamma version sent to HLC members for comment
- 2012** February: HLC Board Meeting. Adoption of delta version
- March: Delta version (final) distributed to HLC members
- April: Presentations at 2012 Annual Conference. Training begins
- 2013** January 1: Revised Criteria effective for most affiliated institutions (see preliminary implementation schedule at right)

2011 Regional Forums: The Criteria for Accreditation and the Open Pathway Model for Continued Accreditation

These forums provide the opportunity to hear about proposed changes in the Criteria for Accreditation and the development and implementation of the new Open Pathway model for continued accreditation, and to provide comments, ask questions, and raise issues.

Online registration is now available. Pre-registration is required. Choose one of these seven locations. All dates are Thursdays.

July 21	Minneapolis
July 28	Chicago (closed*)
August 4	Columbus
August 11	Colorado Springs
September 8	Detroit / Dearborn
September 15	St. Louis
September 22	Phoenix

Register now at www.ncahlc.org

*Watch for additional date in Chicago

Preliminary Implementation Schedule

Accredited Institutions

The revised Criteria for Accreditation are effective for all accredited institutions on January 1, 2013.

What this timeline means for specific Commission processes:

- All visits prior to January 1, 2013, will address the current Criteria.
- All visits occurring on or after January 1, 2013, will address the revised Criteria.*
- Change requests submitted on or after January 1, 2013, will address the revised Criteria, where appropriate.
- AQIP Systems Portfolios submitted November 2012 or thereafter should address the new Criteria for Accreditation.
- All Change of Control requests submitted on or after September 1, 2012, will address the revised Criteria.

* Accredited institutions with comprehensive visits scheduled in spring 2013 will have the option to write their Self-Study Reports based on the revised Criteria or address them through an addendum or a crosswalk. The Commission will provide a template for this crosswalk.

Candidacy through Initial Accreditation

The revised Eligibility Requirements are effective for all non-affiliated institutions and candidates on June 27, 2011.

The revised Criteria for Accreditation are effective for all non-affiliated institutions and candidates on September 1, 2012.

What these timelines mean for specific Commission processes:

- All Preliminary Information Forms due on or before May 1, 2011, will address the current Eligibility Requirements.
- All Preliminary Information Forms due after May 1, 2011, will address the new Eligibility Requirements.
- All candidacy and initial accreditation visits occurring prior to September 1, 2012, will address the current Criteria for Accreditation.
- All candidacy and initial accreditation visits occurring on or after September 1, 2012, will address the revised Criteria for Accreditation.

SLC 2010-11 What we've learned.

If we don't come up with an assessment system ourselves, someone else will tell us what to do.

We can assess the way we want to.

We can create any system that works for us.

Assessment should be faculty driven.

"D" is for done.

Assessment can be a team builder, educational, informer.

We need to see if students are learning what we intend for them to learn.

Assessments are a part of all educational programs.

Assessment takes place in all classrooms already.

Assessment drives improvement in services.

There are already good rubrics from AAC&U for Gen Ed assessment.

Understanding assessment is process that can be learned.

Assessment is important, diverse, directed, possible.

We have to measure at different points to detect student progress.

Assessment can be anything.

Assessment can be simple to be efficiently executed/analyzed

Assessment: Keep it simple

Assessment process is commonly misunderstood

Everybody does assessment.

Assessment is a part of continuous quality improvement.

There is flexibility in designing assessment programs.

If it's not documented, it's not done.

We don't have to assess everything.

JJC goals for student success.

Good to meet faculty from many departments.

Learned the importance of Gen Ed and assessment of learning outcomes in the academic world.

We do so much as faculty we need to document our efforts.

Assessment is organic and happens regularly.

Assessment benefits individual students, classes, programs and the institution.

Assessment is difficult to measure across campus.

Better or more efficient communication than in the past.

Everyone is informed well in the process of inventory process, AQI, etc. We know more what we're heading for.

We are already doing a lot to assess student learning.

Gen Ed assessment is not limited to Gen Ed courses.

Re-affirmed that assessment can benefit me in:

- Improving my instruction
- Convincing others that an issue of concern to me should be addressed

Assessment allows creative construction of my teaching abilities in a manner that is positive.

Assessment can be implemented immediately or over time.

Different tiers of assessment: classroom, courses, program.

Quality control (assessment) is a part of a lot of businesses.

Assessment is intimidating, but is a useful part of ensuring student success.

Faculty and staff participation is important.

We drive assessment – it is up to us to tell the positive stories.