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UNO’s HLC/AQIP Accreditation Process

UNO Office of Institutional Effectiveness

University of Nebraska at Omaha

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An Overview for UNO Stakeholders
UNO’s Institutional Accreditation

- UNO has been continuously accredited by the Higher Learning Commission since 1939

- Higher Learning Commission (HLC):
  - Formerly known as North Central Association
  - One of six regional accrediting bodies for post-secondary degree-granting institutions in the nation
  - Covers a 19 state region, ranging from Illinois to Colorado, and Wyoming to Arizona
Institutional Accreditation vs. Program-specific Accreditation

• HLC accreditation covers the entire institution and includes all academic programs

• In addition, many specific degree programs have sought and been awarded their corresponding discipline-based, program-specific accreditation (for example, Social Work is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), and Chemistry is accredited by the American Chemical Society (ACS))

• Both institutional and program-specific accreditation support quality through adherence to rigorous standards
Pathways to Institutional Accreditation

- HLC has 3 pathway options *(with slightly different requirements and schedules)*
- UNO is on the AQIP Pathway *(Academic Quality Improvement Process)*
- AQIP focuses on Continuous Improvement *(with heavy emphasis on assessment, data, review, decision-making, program enhancement)*
UNO’s Re-accreditation, Schedule-Wise

- 2015-16 is year 6 of an 8 year cycle
- This year we focus on the Systems Portfolio preparation; that report is due Fall ‘16
- The Federal Compliance Report will be due Fall ‘17
- The Comprehensive Quality Review and Visit will take place within the 2017-18 academic year
- Every year there are 3 Action Projects to be carried out, and an annual institutional update due
Why is Institutional Accreditation Important?

• Federal financial assistance requires institutional accreditation
• Most graduate programs require students’ undergraduate degree to be from an accredited institution
• Accreditation provides public accountability, serving as higher ed’s primary mechanism to demonstrate quality and justify expenditures
• Accreditation is now closely tied to federal government oversight
• A matter of prestige, reputation, and viability
Institutional Re-accreditation will Encompass

• Meeting all of the standards outlined within:
  – AQIP categories/sub-categories
  – HLC criteria/core components
  – Federal Compliance requirements
  – Assumed Practices

• And, for all AQIP items, provision of evidence/documentation regarding:
  – Policies/procedures/programming
  – Assessment processes
  – Actual data
  – Data review process
  – Improvements/program changes based on data
Assessment Systems in Place at UNO that Cross Programs

- Program Review, Program-specific Accreditation
- End-of-Program Student Learning Outcomes Process
- Gen Ed Student Learning Outcomes Process
- New Student Wellness Survey
- National Survey of Student Engagement
- ‘Your First College Year’ Survey
- Alumni Survey
- And there are others
AQIP Categories/Sub-Categories (23)

• Helping Students Learn
  – Common Learning Outcomes (gen ed)
  – Program Learning Outcomes
  – Academic Program Design
  – Academic Program Quality (across all modalities)
  – Academic Student Support
  – Academic Integrity

• Meeting Student and Other Stakeholder Needs
  – Current and prospective students’ non-academic needs
  – Retention, persistence, completion
  – Key stakeholder needs (alumni, community)
  – Complaint processes
  – Collaborations and Partnerships

• Valuing Employees
  – Recruiting, hiring, orienting
  – Employee evaluation and recognition
  – Professional development and support

• Planning and Leading
  – Mission and Vision
  – Strategic Planning
  – Leadership and Governance
  – Organizational Integrity

• Knowledge Management and Resource Stewardship
  – Knowledge Management/Decision-making Processes
  – Resource Management
  – Operational Effectiveness/Budgeting

• Quality Overview
  – Quality Improvement Initiatives (CQI)
  – Culture of Quality
HLC Criteria/Core Components (21)

• **Mission**
  – Broadly understood
  – Articulated publicly
  – Diversity
  – Public Good

• **Integrity, Ethical, Responsible Conduct**
  – Financial, academic, personnel, auxiliary
  – Transparency, honesty
  – Board is sufficiently autonomous
  – Freedom of expression, pursuit of truth
  – Research, scholarly practice, etc.,

• **Teaching/Learning: Quality, Resources, Support**
  – Degree programs appropriate to Higher Ed
  – Demonstrate intellectual inquiry is integral
  – Has the needed faculty, staff for effective, high quality programs and services
  – Support for student learning, effective teaching
  – Fulfill claims for enriched educational environment

• **Teaching/Learning: Evaluation and Improvement**
  – Demonstrate responsibility for quality of ed programs (program reviews)
  – Demonstrate commitment to ed achievement through ongoing assessment of student learning
  – Demonstrate commitment to ed improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, completion

• **Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness**
  – Institution’s resource bases supports current programs and plans for maintenance and strengthening
  – Governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and collaborative processes enabling to fulfill mission
  – Institution engages in systematic and integrated planning
  – Institution works systematically to improve its performance
Federal Compliance Requirements

• Assignment of *Credits, Program Length, and Tuition*
• Institutional records of *Student Complaints*
• Publication of *Transfer Policies*
• Practices for Verification of *Student Identity*
• *Title IV* Program Responsibilities
• *Required Information* for Students and the Public
• *Advertising and Recruiting Materials* and Other Public Information
• Review of *Student Outcome Data*
• Standing with *State and Other Accrediting Agencies*
• Public Notification per *Opportunity to Comment*
• Information on *Contractual and Consortial Arrangements*
Assumed Practices*

- Integrity -- Ethical and Responsible Conduct
- Teaching and Learning -- Quality, Resources, Support
- Teaching and Learning -- Evaluation and Improvement
- Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness

* With a great level of detail for all assumed practices
Next Steps

• Gathering evidence and documentation from all corners of campus
• Moving toward meeting any standard currently not being met well
• Preparation of the Systems Portfolio document
• Preparation of the Federal Compliance Report
• Ready for the Comprehensive Quality Review and Visit
• Ongoing support for a Culture of Continuous Improvement
Thanks!

Your involvement, buy-in, and cooperation is much appreciated, highly valued, and critical for a successful reaccreditation.