UNO Website: OASA Accreditation Process

UNO Office of Academic and Student Affairs University of Nebraska at Omaha

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UNO’s HLC/AQIP Accreditation Process

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
EGs of past UNO AQIP Action Projects

- New Student Wellness Survey creation
- General Education Assessment
- CALEA Accreditation
- Reporting on Student and Alumni Post-graduation Work and Educational Activities
- Strengthening the Advising Process
This Year’s Action Projects

- Framework for Shared Understanding, contd.
- CALEA accreditation, contd.
- Community Engagement Measures
- Metropolitan University Mission – Communications Plan
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 (was less so in the past)
- 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
Internal Infrastructure Issues

- **Strategic Assessments** *(across programs, dovetailing with existing processes to the extent possible)*
- **Data Review, Decision-making, and Program Change Process** *(committee, department/college, representative entities, responsible offices, authorizing bodies -- approval processes)*
- **Alignment with Strategic Planning**
- **Document naming, filing, storage, retrieval**
- **Regular communications with stakeholders**
- **Accreditation Web Page**
  
Examples of 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
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 student’s 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
• Making any necessary changes toward meeting any standard currently not being met
• 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.