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## UNO's HLC/AQIP Accreditation Process

UNO Office of Institutional Effectiveness  
*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



## 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

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