

HLC STEERING COMMITTEE

Date: Tuesday, January 27, 2015

Time: 2:00PM – 3:00PM

Location: Carrington 203

SITE VISIT – October 5-6, 2015

Agenda Topics

1. Approval of meeting notes from December 2, 2014
2. Communication Update (Report to Administrative Council attached)

Report to Faculty Senate posted -
http://www.missouristate.edu/assets/hlc/Summary_of_HLC_Progress_Jan2015_Faculty_Senate.pdf
3. Timeline Report
4. Strengths/Areas of Concern and Visioning – alignment
5. Site visit document
6. Steering Committee work in late February/March/April – Read the assurance argument with evidence attached.

Each committee member must devote 5-7 hours in each of two different weeks in this time period to review specific sections. You will get to pick your review weeks!

Please look at your calendars and send Sherry four different weeks in priority order by February 9th. For example –

Priority 1 – Week of March 23

Priority 2 – Week of March 16

Priority 3 – Week of April 13

Priority 4 – Week of April 27

Next meeting dates:

February 24

March 17

April 28

Assurance Argument (which includes all evidence) – (not called a self study any longer)

From HLC - For each Criterion, the institution offers:

- a Criterion introduction
- an articulation of how each Core Component within the Criterion is met, including a statement of future plans with regard to the Core Component, and, if applicable, an explanation of circumstances that (1) call for improvement, (2) support future improvement, or (3) constrain improvement or threaten the institution's ability to sustain the Core Component
- a statement regarding any additional ways in which the institution fulfills the Criterion that are not otherwise covered in the statements on the Core Components, including any gaps in achievement and future plans with regard to the Criterion
- links to materials in the institution's Evidence File for each statement made

There is no need to distribute equally the amount of text devoted to each Criterion or each Core Component; however, it is important to observe the Assurance Argument's maximum limit of 35,000 words. Institutions are advised that although there may be various ways to circumvent the length limitations on the Assurance Argument such strategies may be counter-productive if the ultimate effect is to exhaust or annoy the reviewers.

HLC Site Visit is October 5-6, 2015

We should know the make-up of the team this spring (probably after the annual meeting in late March)

The team will have access to our assurance argument and evidence file on September 1, 2015.

From September 1 until October 4 the team will be reviewing our online materials. As they have questions they will be sending them to Clif. The team chair only interacts with the CEO although Clif can assign people to take care of various pieces – like local arrangements, scheduling of meetings, etc. I would expect that this period could be busy for a small group.

The team will arrive on Sunday, October 4, 2015

There will be meetings all day Monday and Tuesday morning.

The team may conduct an exit session on Tuesday. If held – we will be thanked for our efforts and they may share some initial observations. We will not learn anything beyond that.

The team will stay in Springfield through noon on Wednesday with the goal of nearly completing the first draft of the report.

Within 4-6 weeks we will receive a draft for a fact check. At that point we will have a clear indication of the recommendation. After we respond to the fact check the team will make any necessary changes and submit to HLC.

We will receive the final recommendation report from HLC approximately two weeks after we respond to the fact check. I would expect that this could all be done by Thanksgiving.

Spring 2015 timeline

- HLC Steering Committee will review strengths and areas of concern in January
- The next draft will go directly into the assurance system along with all evidence files. Completion goal – March 17, 2015
- Various people will have access to the online system through April (15 at a time) but we can post pdf versions of the report on the website for a broader review.
- Make final changes to assurance argument. Update evidence files as needed from April - June, 2015.
- Write an executive summary for all employees, students and external constituencies.
 - This will focus on strengths noted in each criteria along with our noted concerns
- Federal Compliance Report

- A draft report will be complete by February 1, 2015 for review by administrative council and others.
- The report will be reviewed again in May/June to see if anything needs to be updated.
- QIP report is due before the end of the spring semester of 2015. Keri Franklin has the report documents and will complete this task.
- Figure out when and how we will comply with the new student survey requirement.
- Post a link to obtain third party comments – this needs to be done in the spring.

Alignment of strengths and areas of concern with visioning at Missouri State.

January 12, 2015

HLC Criteria and latest version of strengths and areas of concern.

Criterion One: Mission

The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

Strengths

1. The purpose of developing educated persons and the public affairs mission are strong, clear and have staying power.
2. Over time, the mission has been developed so it takes on an increasingly richer meaning in curriculum, co-curricular activities and relationships/partnerships with the community.
3. The University's budget process is a model for campus-wide participation and transparency.
4. The mission has provided a strong foundation for the University's progress in diversity and inclusion.

Areas of Concern

1. Even with the public affairs mission further incorporated into General Education, the University will need to continue to find fresh ways in which to incorporate the mission into the curriculum at all levels, as well as all aspects of campus life.
2. While much progress has been made on diversity, with significant increases in the student body, the University must continue to explore opportunities to achieve goals of more diversity in its workforce.

Criterion Two: Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

Strengths

1. The combination of the policy library, the Office of Internal Audit and Compliance, the information security officer, and the annual external financial audit help set Missouri State apart from many institutions.
2. The public affairs mission provides a strong philosophical foundation for ethical and responsible behavior, including the celebration of freedom of thought and speech, and the initiatives to expand diversity among students and employees.
3. Codes of conduct are clear for all members of the campus community, from the Board of Governors, to faculty and staff, to administrators, to students.
4. Missouri State remains an honest broker and strong partner with many institutions, organizations and other entities.

Areas of Concern

1. Given the importance of cost to its students, Missouri State must continue to find the clearest ways in which to list the price of education.
2. The University must remain diligent in its goal of increasing all forms of scholarly activity.
3. Building on its current policies and practices, the University must address new challenges as they arise, including honesty and integrity with online courses.

Criterion Three: Teaching and Learning; Quality, Resources, and Support

The institution provides high quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

Strengths

1. Faculty are highly qualified, as evidenced by more than 90 percent of the full-time ranked faculty holding the terminal degree in their field.
2. The University has a strong philosophy of evaluating both its academic programs (accreditation and program review) and its students (learning objectives and exit exams).
3. Missouri State has a nationally recognized Academic Advisement Center which provides faculty and staff advisors with the Master Advisor Program to help ensure quality advising.
4. The General Education Program recently underwent a thorough review, resulting in changes so that courses more closely aligned with the University's mission in public affairs.

Areas of Concern

1. Need to ensure that policies and syllabi differentiate between graduate and undergraduate learning outcomes.
2. Need to ensure that policies and practices adequately review and provide resources for per course faculty.
3. Need to continue to increase the number of students who participate in high impact experiences such as service-learning, study away, and internships.

Criterion Four. Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

Strengths

1. Enhanced a program review with external evaluations, a clearer calendar, and developed a webpage to store all reports. The program review process was assessed after the first cycle with minor changes recommended for the second cycle which began in 2013.
2. Completed a review of the General Education program and implemented a new curricular structure with learning outcomes and assessment plans looking specifically at the University's statewide mission of public affairs.
3. The Office of Assessment was reinvented to focus on institutional assessment, benefiting from outside consultants, the National Institute for Learning best practices, and a Quality Initiative Project (QIP) that assesses the public affairs mission.
4. Increased the emphasis on, and the tools available to measure, the success of Missouri State graduates and alumni.

Areas of concern

1. Missouri State University continues to refine its customized approach to assessment. Departments and programs write their own assessment plans, collect and analyze data and finally make changes in the curriculum based on the data. There is a need to develop a map and calendar of college, unit, division, and institutional assessment for accountability and improvement of student learning. This will connect assessment occurring at departments and the university that can lead to improvement in student learning.
2. Continue to have conversations centered on postgraduate success, bringing together institutional data from the Office of Institutional Research and Grad Track data from Career Services evaluate postgraduate success.

Criterion Five. Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness

The institution's resources, structures, and processes are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to

future challenges and opportunities. The institution plans for the future.

Strengths

1. Since 2005, the budget process has become increasingly transparent and participatory, aided by the creation of “cost centers,” multi-leveled budget committees, public budget records. One outcome has been a strong reserve fund which is now being used to enhance programs and facilities.
2. The five-year cycle of strategic planning is now part of the institutional fabric, maintained through annual updates to institutional goals, Key Performance Indicators, and performance funding. Contributing to this cycle is the improved program review process for academic units, with clear expectations, templates and timelines for effective planning and assessment.
3. The changes in the governing board since 2005 – from statewide membership to the committee structure – have been positive changes for the University. The changes have allowed the Board of Governors to engage more in the vision for the University and the strategic planning to achieve the vision.
4. Conscientious attention, aided by improved technology, to improved communication and provided greater transparency throughout the campus has led to increased institutional effectiveness. Some of the examples include President’s regular communication provided in blog format, the Provost’s Communiqué, Twitter feeds, the expanded and inclusive budget process, the Public Affairs Conference, the Statewide Collaborative Diversity Conference, and the Public Affairs convocation speaker.

Areas of Concern

1. Much has been accomplished toward the goal of making the cost of Missouri State University clear and transparent for students and their families. Still, further simplifying and clarifying the cost of education is an ongoing goal.
2. Absent comprehensive state funding for facilities for more than dozen years, the University must continue to find ways to fund improvements in buildings, labs, classrooms, and other facilities, as well as address deferred maintenance and repair needs.
3. More must and will be done to link assessment of student learning and success with strategic planning and budgeting.
4. University must address increasing numbers of students and class sizes without significant additional resources.

Six Task Forces

Missouri State Vision:

Our Passion for Excellence

Preamble

All task forces will operate with these guiding principles:

- ✓ Achieving excellence (top priority)
- ✓ Raising University profile
- ✓ Building/enhancing relationships
- ✓ Being student-centered with specific focus on student success
- ✓ Incorporating the three pillars of the public affairs mission: ethical leadership, cultural competence, and community engagement
- ✓ Making “data-informed” decisions – including, but not limited to, demographics, best practices, analysis of University’s current position, etc.
- ✓ Identifying key elements necessary to achieve goals

1. FUNDING: Envisioning the long-term financial vitality of the University and position the University to deal with changes and challenges that might be anticipated in the next 10-12 years.

2. ACADEMIC PROFILE: Envisioning alignment of the University’s array of academic programs, strategic partnerships, and research emphasis to help ensure the next generation of students/learners succeeds.

3. INFRASTRUCTURE: Envisioning a campus infrastructure – facilities, technology, environmental sustainability – that supports the academic programs and research initiatives, as well as contribute to the University’s overall operational efficiency.

4. DIVERSITY: Envisioning a campus community that embraces diversity in all aspects of campus learning/life.

5. GLOBALIZATION: Envisioning integration of globalization in all University endeavors in order for the campus community to compete, function and succeed in the worldwide environment/ economy.

6. STUDENT EXPERIENCE: Envisioning a rich, memorable and distinctive educational experience that helps ensure success for students.

ON-SITE VISITS

HLC's procedure for on-site visits identifies the expectations for institutions undergoing evaluation and HLC Peer Reviewers serving on teams conducting HLC on-site visits. The peer review team has the discretion to depart from this procedure if circumstances of the visit warrant such departure.

Institutional Communication about the Team Visit

The campus community should be informed about the visit. The institution should:

- Announce the dates of the visit to all constituent groups.
- Announce the dates in the publications it traditionally uses to reach its various publics.
- Publicize the schedule of the team's open meetings.
- Contact students, employees, and other constituents who may be invited to participate in the visit, and arrange tentative time frames for access.
- Be receptive to times for team members to interact informally with members of the institution.
- Consult with the team chair regarding requests from any special groups to meet with the team; the chair will make the final decision about whether to accommodate such requests.

The institution may share the names of team members, their titles, and their institutional affiliations. The institution should not share contact information for the team members (street addresses, email addresses, phone numbers) and it should not identify the team's place of lodging during the

visit. See HLC's [Third-Party Comment: Policy and Procedures](#) for more information.

Team Expenses

HLC bills the institution for the evaluation visit and team expenses. The institution has no other direct financial responsibility for the team's transportation, housing, and meals, unless it chooses to host a limited social event. The institution is not obligated to transport the team during the visit; if it does provide a car or livery service, it absorbs those costs directly.

Team members are expected to pay for their own expenses associated with the visit, including travel, lodging, and food, and to seek reimbursement from HLC. The institution should not establish a master bill for the team or pay bills that clearly belong to the team. (Any exceptions to this procedure should receive prior approval from HLC staff.)

Team members are expected to act with appropriate fiscal moderation while conducting an institutional evaluation. The basic assumption is that arrangements should be professional and comfortable to allow the team to conduct its work without distraction. Arrangements should neither be lavish and extravagant nor overly modest.

Gifts for the Team

Team members are not permitted to accept gifts, incentives, or other compensation from any institution under review unless those gifts are nominal in nature (less than \$50 fair market value per individual gift, such as an imprinted mug).

Hotel Accommodations

The institution, in consultation with the team chair, makes hotel reservations for the team; this should be done early to

ensure availability. Teams often meet late into the evening and therefore, if possible, hotel arrangements may include a room in which the team can meet. Wireless Internet access must be available to the team for them to do their work. The team chair will notify the institution of any special needs of team members.

On-Campus Meeting Space and Support

The team chair will advise the institution about the team's needs on campus. The institution should provide the team with secure space on the campus that is adequate to serve as a meeting room, workroom, and resource room. The space reserved for the team should accommodate the institution's resource materials; work space with furniture; technology support; Internet access, including easy online connection to virtual resources; and ready access to a printer, photocopier, telephone, and fax machine.

Once on campus, the team will need the assistance of a person who can help with the scheduling of interviews and with accessing any needed materials.

Team Activities on Campus

Team chairs take the lead in establishing the basic visit agenda, usually a month or two before the visit, with the understanding that late modifications to the agenda are to be expected. Some team chairs will request scheduled appointments with key people. These may include members of the governing board, representatives of the state coordinating board or other related agency, faculty representatives, student representatives, or alumni and community leaders. Most team chairs ask for a special meeting with the governing board and publicized open meetings with faculty and staff.

Typically, team members arrive at the institution's main location the day before the visit officially begins, and the team chair convenes an initial team meeting. Through earlier communication, the team chair and the CEO have decided whether a get-acquainted gathering will be held on the day the team members arrive. If such an event is scheduled, it is held early in the evening and is relatively brief.

The institution may provide a meal or social function for the team provided that the function is not elaborate or costly and that it allows the team to accomplish some of its work, such as meeting with a key stakeholder group or an open forum.

Observers

Occasionally, the institution or HLC may request that an observer be present for all or a portion of the visit. Observers do not participate in the team's deliberations or decision-making. If the observer is from a state agency, the visit is governed by HLC's policy [Relations with State Higher Education Agencies, and Other State Offices](#). The HLC staff liaison reviews all requests for observers. In most situations, the team chair, the institution, and HLC must agree that the observer may be present during the visit.*

*Note: In certain situations, HLC expects that the HLC staff liaison or other HLC staff member will accompany the evaluation team. The role of staff on such visits is defined in HLC Policy [Staff Role and Responsibility](#).

The Role of the Team

The team evaluates the institution to determine the extent to which it fulfills the Criteria for Accreditation, provides consultation relative to the ongoing improvement of the institution, and recommends the affiliation status that the institution should have with HLC.

During the visit, team members consult on and evaluate many topics, not all of which have bearing on the decision about accredited status. Some are part of the team's general observations and consultation. A team cannot solve an institution's problems or resolve its internal disputes, but through professional interaction with members of the host institution, it may learn about factors that may be causing tensions and offer ideas about ways to improve systems and processes.

Communications with the Institution's CEO

The evaluation team typically starts the first full day of the visit by meeting the CEO and anyone else he or she invites. This meeting establishes the tenor of the visit and clarifies for the team any unique contexts in which the visit might be conducted. The team is prepared to pose questions, and the CEO is expected to answer them. The team may also use this meeting to confirm appointments with members of the administration, faculty, staff, and governing board.

The team chair may meet with the CEO at other times during the visit to summarize the progress of the team and to learn if some constituencies of the institution still expect to talk to the team. The CEO should feel free to ask for time

with the chair at any point in the visit, particularly if there are any concerns emerging about the conduct of the visit.

The Exit Session

The team may conduct an exit session at the conclusion of the visit. Holding an exit session is optional and at the team's sole discretion. If held, an exit session is an opportunity for the team to thank the institution for its efforts and to share with the institution the team's initial observations about strengths, concerns, or other topics. See [Exit Session Protocol for Commission Visits](#) for more information.

Next Steps

The team will prepare a report and the institution will have an opportunity to respond to the draft and final report. The process continues through decision-making and HLC action.

Beyond the Visit

Peer Reviewers may not review an institution for which they have engaged in consulting activities during the 10 years prior to the visit and for three years following a visit may not engage in consulting activities for an institution they have reviewed. The role of Peer Reviewers in consulting relationships is defined in HLC's [Statement on Peer Reviewers Serving as Independent Consultants or on Mock Teams to Institutions that are Accredited by or Seeking Accreditation with the Commission](#).

Questions?

Contact the institution's HLC staff liaison with any questions about this process. 🌱

Report to Administrative Council 1/12/2015
HLC Steering Committee Chair – Tammy Jahnke

Timeline

October 5-6	Site Visit
September 1	Team has access to assurance argument
August 1	No more changes may be submitted to assurance argument
July	We must distribute a student satisfaction survey for HLC
July 1	Executive summary complete – to be distributed to campus
June/July	Post link for third party comments
March 17	Next draft of assurance argument with evidence attached will be complete
February 1	First draft of federal compliance report will be complete and distributed for review

Assurance Argument – 35,000 words

We will have a very good third draft done soon.

Evidence files – Evidence that shows that we meet all criteria and core components.

85-90% complete

What can you do to help in the next two weeks?

- Read through the steering committee's lists of strengths and concerns. It will be important that they align with our visioning/long range planning. Send me feedback.
- Block your calendars on October 5 for meetings. Block your calendars until 1:00 PM on October 6 for meetings.

What can you do to help between April 1 and June 15?

- Sometime between April 1-June 15 – set aside a week to read through our assurance argument that includes links to evidence. Tell me which week you want. (We can and will post the pdf of the assurance argument for the entire campus but it will not be linked to evidence.)
- Provide feedback as we work on the executive summary to distribute to the campus community.
- Help the steering committee and others with a communication plan that ensures everyone knows when the team will be on campus and how they can participate.

What can you do between August 15-October 1

- Answer requests for information promptly.