

## Higher Learning Commission (HLC) – Comprehensive Evaluation Visit Guide

Visit Date: **10.1.18**

### HLC Criteria for Accreditation

*The standards of quality by which HLC determines whether an institution merits accreditation or reaffirmation of accreditation consists of the following five criteria:*

#### Criterion 1: Mission

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

#### Criterion 2: Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

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

#### Criterion 3: Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support

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

#### Criterion 4: 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.*

#### Criterion 5: 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.*

**Each criterion has core components. The criteria and core components are listed here:**

[HLC Commission Criteria and Core Components.](#)

## GENERAL FAQS

What is regional accreditation?

- Assuring and advancing the quality of higher education
- A requirement to receive Title IV funding (federal financial aid)
- Allows students to earn a credential from an accredited institution, further assuring quality of the credential

Who is HWC's regional accreditor?

- The Higher Learning Commission, or HLC
- HWC last received 10-year reaffirmation of accreditation in 2008 – a full “clean” accreditation

How can I contribute?

- Participate in one of the open sessions scheduled during the visit
- Answer questions about the college thoughtfully
- If you don't know the answer, it is ok to say, “I don't know” or “I don't know, but I will let the HLC Operations Team get that information to you”
- Be prepared but not rehearsed
- Discuss with colleagues issues and ideas in advance

When is HWC's HLC Comprehensive visit?

- The team of HLC peer reviewers will visit HWC **October 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> 2018**

What will occur during the HLC visit?

- Peer review team members will conduct interviews with HWC students, employees, trustees, and community members
- Peer review team members will seek to validate evidence presented in HWC's Assurance Argument
- Peer review team members will determine whether HWC meets the five criteria for accreditation

What am I expected to know?

- HWC's mission statement. Remember: Student Centered, Accessible and Affordable, Academic Advancement, Career Development, & Personal Enrichment. Grounded in [7 Core Values](#).
- Recognize which core value(s) you utilize through your work at HWC.

## STUDENTS: QUESTIONS YOU MAY BE ASKED

- Why did you choose to enroll at HWC? Have your expectations been met?
- Would you recommend HWC to other students?
- What do you like about HWC? What would you change if you could?
- Have you experienced any problems getting the courses you need in a timely manner?
- Describe your experiences with academic advising.
- Do you think the college clearly communicates with students about financial aid, student expectations, costs, admissions, and graduation requirements?

## FACULTY: QUESTIONS YOU MAY BE ASKED

- What are the characteristics of an HWC education?
- Tell us about HWC's shared governance and how faculty participate in decision-making.
- What is your experience with faculty professional development at HWC?
- How would you describe the relationship between faculty and administration? What works and what does not?
- What resources are available to support faculty?
- How has your department used assessment findings to improve student learning?

## STAFF: QUESTIONS YOU MAY BE ASKED

- How do you contribute to the college's mission and to student learning?
- What opportunities do you have for professional development?
- How are staff evaluated at HWC? What are your impressions of the evaluation process?
- How are staff involved in campus decision-making processes?
- What are the biggest resource challenges at HWC?

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to explore • to design • to discover • to ask

to include • to grow • to love • to communicate