

HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION RE-ACCREDITATION

A team of peer reviewers representing the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) will visit Jefferson College on March 11-12, 2019. This document will inform faculty and staff about the HLC process, the Open Pathway option, and how they may participate in the process.

ACCREDITATION: WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

There are three reasons why HLC accreditation is important for Jefferson College. **First**, in order to receive federal Title IV funding, Jefferson College must be fully accredited by the HLC, a regional accrediting body recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. Approximately 55% of our students receive Title IV aid. **Second**, many of our students transfer to other institutions of higher learning. Accreditation by the HLC assures that credits earned at Jefferson College will be accepted by other colleges and universities. **Third**, receiving accreditation from the HLC assures that our students are being provided a high-quality education at Jefferson College.

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE HLC

The HLC, established in 1895, is an accrediting body that seeks to assure that degree-granting institutions are offering high-quality education to their students and living up to their mission statements.

HLC Peer Reviewers visit institutions of higher learning to observe their strengths; observe areas where improvement may be needed; and offer recommendations on how to make these improvements. Jefferson College has been accredited since 1969 with the last re-accreditation occurring in 2009. The College has always received the maximum 10 year re-affirmation of accreditation.

MARCH 11-12, 2019

HLC

HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION

Jefferson
College

HLC MOCK VISIT

On October 8, 2018, Jefferson College held a HLC Mock Visit. The team of consultants shared feedback on methods Jefferson College faculty and staff could utilize to improve the Assurance Argument and Federal Compliance Filing before meeting with the HLC Peer Review team in March.

Their suggestions include:

1. Faculty need to be present at open forums to ensure appropriate representation.
2. The Assurance Argument needs more recent evidence and, where appropriate, explanation of the College's story from 2009 to now.
3. Ensure that the College Mission is known, understood, and utilized!

OPEN PATHWAY

The Open Pathway is one option institutions have for maintaining their accreditation with HLC. It follows a 10-year cycle and is focused on quality assurance and institutional improvement. The cycle includes the following institutional reviews:

Regular Monitoring

Institutions submit an annual [Institutional Update](#), which is reviewed by HLC to monitor organizational health, comply with certain federal requirements, and identify any changes that may require HLC follow up.

Year 4: Assurance Review

Institutions complete an [Assurance Review](#) to ensure they are continuing to meet HLC's [Criteria for Accreditation](#). A peer review team evaluates these materials and recommends whether the institution should continue in the cycle or whether additional monitoring is required.

Years 5-9: Quality Initiative

Institutions design and undertake a [Quality Initiative](#) project. HLC approves an initial project proposal, as well as a report on the outcomes of the project.

Year 10: Comprehensive Evaluation

Institutions undergo a [comprehensive evaluation](#) to ensure they are meeting the Criteria for Accreditation, pursuing institutional improvement, and complying with certain [requirements](#) set by the U.S. Department of Education. This review leads to action regarding the reaffirmation of the institution's accreditation.

HLC CRITERIA

Below are the Criteria for Accreditation utilized to assess each institution that is part of the Higher Learning Commission.

Criterion I. Mission

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

Criterion II. Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

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

Criterion III. Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support

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

Criterion IV. 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 V. 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.

QUALITY INITIATIVE

The Open Pathway option allows Jefferson College to develop its own Quality Initiative to improve the quality of education the College delivers. [HLC](#) indicates that the Quality Initiative Report "offers the institution the opportunity to reflect on what it has accomplished, to document the achievements and strategies used, and to define new priorities and challenges" (http://download.hlcommission.org/QualityInitiativeReportProcess_PRC.pdf).

Jefferson College's Quality Initiative focused on implementing the attendance/participation tracking system to collect required data for federal financial aid regulations and leveraging the institutional committee structure to analyze data and submit action plans to implement student retention initiatives.

Our [Quality Initiative Report Review](#) stated, "Jefferson is to be commended for taking an end-in-mind student success approach to challenges that often are left at the mere compliance level. Instead, by engaging a wide variety of stakeholders through a standing committee structure, the College used the opportunity to leverage a positive and lasting culture shift."

SHOULD YOU BE INVOLVED?



Are you a critical component of how Jefferson College meets the HLC Criteria? Should you be involved in the HLC Re-accreditation visit on March 11-12, 2019? Please reflect on the following questions:

DO YOU:

- Positively affect a student's sense of belonging on campus? (Criterion 1)
- Assist the institution in financial efficiency? (Criterion 5)
- Work to create a safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environment? (Criteria 1,3,5)
- Motivate students to reach their academic goals? (Criterion 1)
- Use assessment to inform your work? (Criteria 3,4)
- Seek professional development opportunities to enhance the services, resources, and opportunities you can provide to others on campus? (Criteria 2,3,4)

The numbers beside each question identify the HLC Criterion reflected in the question. If you answered yes to any of the above, you play a critical role in assisting Jefferson College in the Higher Learning Commission reaffirmation of accreditation.

PEER REVIEW TEAM COMMON QUESTIONS:



- What are the College Mission, Vision, and Values Statements?
- Do you know where they can be found?
- Approximately how many students are enrolled at Jefferson College? Full-time/Part-time?
- What degree programs are offered at Jefferson College?
- Where can students receive help if they are having difficulty with a subject?
- If a student has a complaint, how would you advise the student to proceed?
- Does the College have a Diversity Plan? How is the plan being carried out on campus?



MISSION
Jefferson College serves our community by delivering quality learning opportunities that empower individuals to achieve their goals.

**HIGHER
LEARNING
COMMISSION**
MARCH 11-12, 2019

Top 10

Accomplishments at Jefferson College Since 2009

n=132

What	Responses	Percentage
1. Library renovation	95	72%
2. Academic Success Center creation	81	61.40%
3. Attendance tracking (Quality Initiative)	78	59.10%
4. Campus safety initiatives (security cameras, updating crosswalks, creation of Campus Police Department, training for campus constituencies)	72	54.50%
5. CTE growing from having one third-party accreditation to having eleven	69	52.30%
6. Information Technology campus-wide updates (infrastructure updates including wifi, wireless, and cellular accessibility, cost savings on computers/printers, etc.)	67	50.80%
7. Early College expansion (NACEP Accreditation, High school student completion of AA degree, high school student completion of 42 hour general education core, online AA degree, 1/3 partnerships)	57	43.20%
8. Health Occupation Programs added	56	42.40%
9. Wellness initiatives (Healthy Campus Award 2016, Mercy Clinic on campus, etc.)	54	40.90%
10. Process improvement/efficiency (document imaging, People Admin., web-time entry, online admissions application, online graduation application, online transcripts, etc.)	48	36.40%



STAFF REFLECTION WORKSHEET



In your current role...

(When possible, provide an example of related policy, procedure, event, etc.)

Criterion 1 Mission

1. How does the role you play at Jefferson College enhance the Mission of the College?
2. What programs/activities on campus address our role in a multicultural society?

Criterion 2 Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

3. In what ways do you ensure the integrity of your work and the work environment?
4. How does Jefferson College clearly present information regarding its programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, and accreditation relationships?

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

5. How do you assist in creating a supportive educational environment for our students?
6. What co-curricular programs are suited to our mission and contribute to the educational experience of our students?

Criterion 4 Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

7. How does your role directly affect student persistence, retention, and completion? What methods are utilized in your area to assess effectiveness and/or direct next steps?
8. What programs at the College maintain specialized accreditation as appropriate to its educational purposes?

Criterion 5 Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness

9. In what ways do you assist your department in being fiscally responsible?
10. What options do you have to be involved in the governance/future planning activities at Jefferson College?

FACULTY REFLECTION WORKSHEET



In your current role...

(When possible, provide an example of related policy, procedure, event, etc.)

Criterion 1 Mission

1. How does the role you play at Jefferson College enhance the Mission of the college?
2. What programs/activities on campus address our role in a multicultural society?

Criterion 2 Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

3. What training programs or curricular support the acquisition, discovery, and application of knowledge?
4. How do you ensure integrity in your classroom or office?

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

5. In what ways do we ensure faculty are qualified to teach the curriculum of their programs?
6. How do we provide an enriched educational environment for our students?

Criterion 4 Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

7. What has been your role in determining/assessing course-level, program-level, and institutional outcomes?
8. In what ways do we show that we are responsible for the quality of our educational programs?

Criterion 5 Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness

9. How do we use data to plan for educational programs and student support services?
10. What options do you have to be involved in the governance/future planning activities at Jefferson College?