UNO’s HLC/AQIP Accreditation Process

An Overview for UNO Stakeholders

November, 2016
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

- 2016-17 is year 7 of an 8 year cycle for UNO
- The Systems Portfolio was submitted in Fall 2016
- The Federal Compliance Report will be due Fall 2017
- 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
2016-2017 Action Projects

• Continuous Quality Improvement / Decision Support Log
• Dual Enrollment Needs Assessment / Formative Evaluation
• Faculty Activity: Data Tracking and Benchmarking
Why is Institutional Accreditation Important?

- Federal financial assistance requires institutional accreditation
- Most graduate programs require a student’s undergraduate degree to be from an accredited institution
- Accreditation provides public accountability, serving as higher ed’s primary mechanism to demonstrate quality
- Accreditation is closely tied to federal government oversight
- A matter of prestige, reputation, and viability
Institutional Re-accreditation Encompasses

• 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
  http://www.unomaha.edu/accreditation/institutional/index.php
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 (22)

• Helping Students Learn
  – Common Learning Outcomes (gen ed)
  – Program Learning Outcomes
  – Academic Program Design
  – Academic Program Quality (across all modalities)
  – Academic Integrity

• Meeting Student and Other Stakeholder Needs
  – Current and prospective students’ need
  – 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
  – Resource Management
  – Operational Effectiveness

• 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 and Publication of Student Outcome Data
- Standing with State and Other Accrediting Agencies
- Public Notification per Opportunity to Comment
- Competency-Based Programs including Direct Assessment Programs / Faculty-Student Engagement
HLC’s Assumed Practices

- Integrity -- Ethical and Responsible Conduct
- Teaching and Learning -- Quality, Resources, Support
- Teaching and Learning -- Evaluation and Improvement
- Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness
Thanks!

Your involvement, buy-in, and cooperation is much appreciated, highly valued, and critical for a successful reaccreditation