# What You Can Do to Support UNO's HLC Reaccreditation Process

Be familiar with how UNO addresses HLC's expectations and standards (see information provided below). Attend and speak up at Open Forums and special topic sessions during the HLC Visit. Following is information you need to know.

## Mission

*The institution's mission is clear, public, and guides operations. The institution addresses its role in a multicultural society and demonstrates commitment to the public good. (HLC Criterion 1)*

- UNO's mission is: "As a Metropolitan University of distinction, the University of Nebraska at Omaha transforms and improves the quality of life locally, nationally, and globally."

- As a Metropolitan University, UNO accepts all of higher education's traditional values in teaching, research, and service as well as embracing the additional responsibility of engaged leadership in the community.

- The mission is supported by the four overarching goals of UNO's strategic plan-student centeredness, academic excellence, community engagement, and institutional quality.

- UNO demonstrates commitment to a diverse and inclusive society through various means including:  degree programs reflective of diversity, international programs, general education requirements, services designed to address the needs of diverse student populations, and community involvement.

- The university serves the people of Nebraska and the common good through learning, teaching, research, scholarship, and public service.

> *A Metropolitan University:*
> - *commits to excellence in teaching, research, and public service;*
> - *serves the region by providing an educated citizenry and workforce;*
> - *serves as a cultural and intellectual resource for the community;*
> - *engages in partnerships with other local organizations;*
> - *responds to the needs of the local region; and*
> - *serves a diverse student body reflecting the demographic composition of the region.*

## Institutional Integrity

*The institution acts with integrity in its financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions; it establishes and follows policies for fair and ethical behavior. (HLC Criterion 2)*

- UNO has policies and processes to ensure legal and ethical behavior among members of the UNO community. These policies address issues such as academic integrity for students and faculty, conflict of interest and ethics, athletics compliance, Title IX compliance, human resources, and business operations. Policies are available online.

- UNO's Compliance Office and Compliance Committee assure adherence with federal and state laws and regulations, including those related to managing complaints or grievances.

- The Office of Internal Audit follows international standards for internal audit and covers all key functional areas of the university including financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary operations.

- The Office of Equity, Access, and Diversity collaborates with Student Affairs and other offices in providing leadership in training and advocacy regarding issues related to Title IX.

- Integrity is also ensured through standards associated with institutional and program accreditation.

- The NU Board of Regents has adopted code of ethics and conflict of interest policies to ensure that the Board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests, or other external parties.

Nebraska UNIVERSITY OF Omaha

## Academic Quality, Resources, and Support

*The institution provides high quality education that is appropriate to higher education, requiring appropriate levels of performance wherever and however its programs are offered (all modalities and all locations). (HLC Criterion 3)*

- Academic quality and program rigor are ensured through UNO's comprehensive academic program design, review, and assessment processes. The design and oversight process includes faculty committees at the department, college, and institutional levels as well as review by Academic Affairs, the Board of Regents, and the state Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education.

- Academic Program Review, led by an external discipline-based expert, is a long-standing tradition at UNO whereby academic programs are reviewed periodically according to rigorous standards.

- Program accreditation includes a review of alignment with national professional standards by external reviewers, and it provides an additional indicator that UNO's programs are current and require levels of performance by students appropriate to the degree awarded. Approximately 45% of UNO's declared students are enrolled in a program with external accreditation.

- UNO's curricular standards, learning outcomes, instructional time, and student responsibilities are consistent across courses and programs regardless of the mode or location of delivery. All courses and programs are developed, governed, and evaluated by the same departmental, college, and campus curriculum approval processes.

- UNO operates according to a formal policy for Credentials and Qualifications for Faculty and Instructional Personnel that aligns with HLC guidelines. Faculty development opportunities are available, and faculty are regularly evaluated.

- UNO's General Education (Gen Ed) Program assures students possess fundamental academic skills, experience the breadth of a liberal education, and develop an appreciation for the diversity that exists in the nation and the world. Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) for Gen Ed are articulated and assessed.

- UNO is a Carnegie Doctoral Research University. It supports faculty research, creative activity, and discovery through research workload assignments, promotion and tenure of faculty, and assistance with research grants and contracts.

## Enriched Educational Environment

*Initiatives and programs supporting diversity, research, co-curricular programming, and community engagement are integral to the student experience and contribute to overall institutional quality. (HLC Criterion 3)*

- The Office of Research and Creative Activity provides grants, technical assistance, and encouragement to faculty and students with respect to research and creative activity.

- Criss Library is a valuable resource for supporting research and discovery. In addition to providing access to research publications and to programs and materials for supporting academic integrity, it hosts Digital Commons, an electronic, web-based archive for unpublished research and reports.

- Units across campus design, align, and deliver co-curricular activities. Services support student involvement, wellness, inclusion, academic achievement, and success.

- Student resource centers and services are in place to ensure an inclusive environment, including Accessibility Services Center, Gender and Sexuality Resource Center, Office of Military and Veteran Services, Multicultural Affairs, and International Studies/Programs.

- UNO has defined learning outcomes for its co-curricular programs. These learning outcomes focus on competencies in communication, civic and social responsibility, creative and critical thinking, intercultural competency, self-awareness, interpersonal skills, leadership, and sustainability.

- UNO has been awarded the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification in recognition of a broad range of programs that include both institutional and unit-based community collaborations and partnerships. Students are involved in many of these efforts, including service learning, volunteerism, research, and service.

UNIVERSITY OF Nebraska Omaha

# Ongoing Assessment, Evaluation, and Improvement

*The institution demonstrates responsibility for quality programs and services by its use of regular assessments and evaluations that inform improvements of student learning, graduation rates, and program effectiveness. (HLC Criterion 4)*

- UNO has processes in place for assessment of SLOs for both Gen Ed and all academic programs. These processes include criteria related to program rigor and are designed to produce information that may be used to improve student learning.

- Program review processes and co-curricular outcomes assessments are in place for Student Affairs units. In addition, special evaluations are frequently commissioned or undertaken by other units across campus.

- UNO faculty have primary responsibility for the curriculum and assessment including determining, communicating, assessing, and ensuring achievement of SLOs for their respective programs.

- UNO routinely analyzes historical and current institutional data on student enrollment, persistence, and completion and considers such data in the context of larger economic and demographic trends to support retention efforts and identify educational needs in the state, region, and nation.

- UNO's Office of Institutional Effectiveness offers multiple analysis methodologies designed for decision support related to student learning, including both analytics and traditional institutional research reports. UNO's primary benchmarking peer group is the Coalition for Urban and Metropolitan Universities (CUMU).

# Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness

*The institution's resources, structures, and processes support mission fulfillment and encourage continuous quality improvement and planning for the future. (HLC Criterion 5)*

- According to IPEDS benchmarking data, UNO is in the mid-range of its CUMU peer group in terms of faculty and staff resources. Furthermore, comparisons that consider faculty and staff numbers in relation to various performance measures, such as graduation rates, indicate UNO has sufficient faculty and staff to support high quality programs and student services.

- Capital planning processes at the institutional and system levels have ensured UNO's physical infrastructure is sufficient to support operations. Capital investments have been significant over recent years and UNO's overall square footage is growing. Facilities condition analyses indicate most spaces are in good condition.

- Information technology resources are deployed effectively, with cost-efficiencies available through the NU System's unified IT services.

- The State of Nebraska is currently facing a budget shortfall. Information and updates on the university's response are published regularly on the NU System website.

- UNO's mission and strategic goals inform all aspects of the institution's planning processes, academic program offerings, university communications, and resource allocations.

- UNO's resource management policies and processes are designed to ensure alignment with strategic priorities, ethical and documented financial transactions, efficiency, and effectiveness.

- Since its inception and formalization almost 20 years ago, UNO's strategic planning process has been open and invitational. The Strategic Planning Steering Committee, which oversees the process, is composed of representatives from multiple internal and external constituent groups.

- UNO's Office of Institutional Effectiveness regularly publishes specified reports, has implemented a data warehouse powered by Blackboard Analytics, and maintains a strategic assessments inventory used to organize institutional-level survey activities.

UNIVERSITY OF Nebraska Omaha

# What is Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI)?

CQI is an organizational practice that seeks to make use of data for quality enhancement in all types of businesses, schools/colleges, hospitals, and non-profits. CQI is reflected in UNO's long-standing practice of using data as a part of decision-making for ongoing program improvement. Some examples include:

- Academic Program Review, Gen Ed SLO Assessment, and Program SLO Assessment all generate data useful for program improvement.

- UNO's strategic enrollment planning and analysis has generated a number of programming changes in support of student retention.

- Complaints-related data has been reviewed and has contributed both to enhancements in services to students as well as to improved processes for complaint submission.

- New or enhanced visualization/analytics tools created by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (e.g., Financial Reporting Analysis, Tuition Remission) have been used to support decision-making at the institutional and unit levels.

- UNO's Strategic Planning Steering Committee has recently adopted a new Metrics Model and UNePlan to facilitate tracking of progress on key indicators and initiatives.



**UNO Model of Continuous Quality Improvement**

UNIVERSITY OF
Nebraska
Omaha