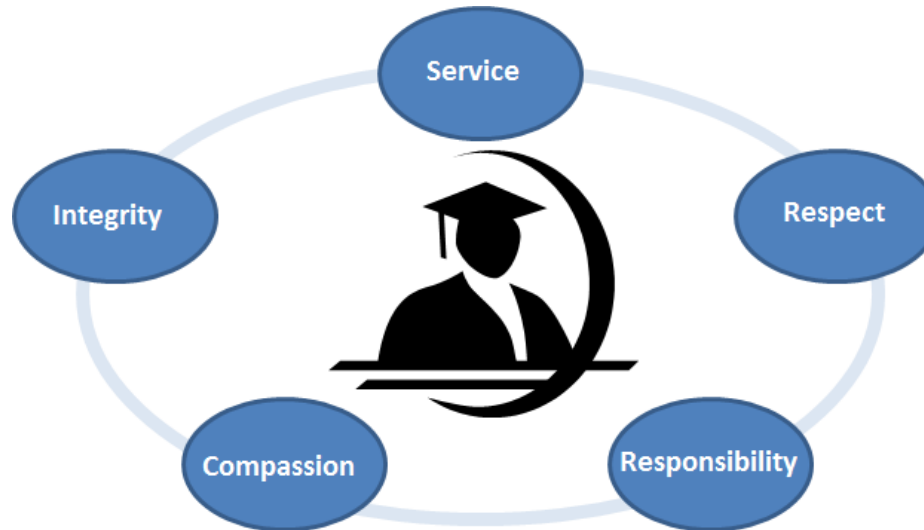


# Self-Study Plan for the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Comprehensive Site Visit

March 1, 2013



# Self-Study Plan Contents

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# I. Introduction and Background

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*Lewis and Clark Community College (L&C) was last reaccredited for ten years in 2003. We view the present self-study effort as an opportunity to reflect on our strengths and weaknesses, to improve institutional and individual effectiveness, and ultimately to better perform our mission, realize our vision, and serve the educational and other needs of our students and community.*

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## **Lewis and Clark Community College Mission Statement**

Empower people by raising aspirations and fostering achievement through dynamic, compassionate, and responsible learning experiences

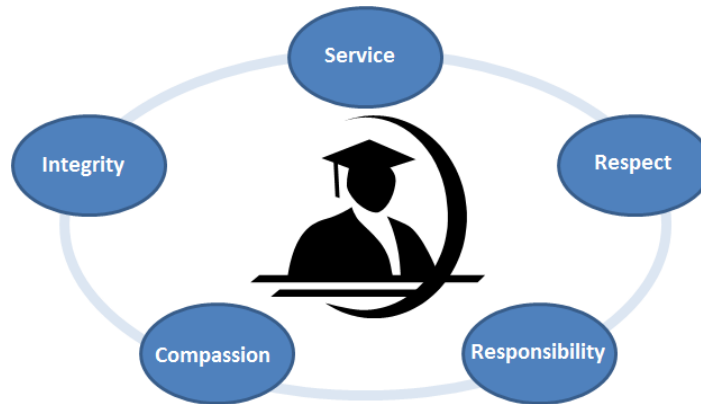
## **Lewis and Clark Community College Purposes**

1. Prepare students for transfer to four-year colleges and universities
2. Prepare students for entry into the workforce, career advancement or career change through technical certificate and associate degree programs
3. Provide adult basic education, general education development (GED), developmental, and other instruction that prepares students for college level course work
4. Provide programs and experiences that foster individual development through job skills and lifelong learning skills to meet the demands of a global, technology-driven, and knowledge-based economy
5. Provide a learning environment that is supported by teaching excellence, high quality student services, and well-equipped and maintained instructional facilities
6. Support education and research activities and the economic development of the district and the State of Illinois through partnerships and community service programs
7. Contribute to the advancement and well-being of the citizens of the district through cultural, civic, and professional activities

# I. Introduction and Background, continued.

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## Lewis and Clark Community College Values



## Lewis and Clark Community College Vision

We are the preeminent provider of relevant, high quality learning experiences to the communities we serve.

The College combines the best of the traditional and the modern to provide an environment that is accessible and highly conducive to learning, social interaction, personal enrichment, physical development, and job skills enhancement. Programs and support services are carefully designed to serve the current and evolving needs of our students. Faculty and staff exemplify the highest standards of service and performance and take pride in the achievement of our students and the College as a whole. Our actions reflect Lewis and Clark's core values of service, respect, responsibility, compassion and integrity. We hold ourselves accountable for our performance as educators and as stewards of the resources entrusted to us. The true measure of our performance is the personal and academic success of our students, the overall well-being and cultural enrichment of the communities we serve, and the economic vitality of the region.

# **I. Introduction and Background, continued.**

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## **Self-Study Goals**

1. Obtain a better understanding of L&C's strengths and weaknesses as these pertain to accreditation readiness and implement actions to resolve weaknesses
2. Secure ten-year reaccreditation with no monitoring or re-visit requirements
3. Conduct the Self-Study process with complete transparency, integrity, and intellectual honesty
4. Use this opportunity to reinforce a culture of continuous quality improvement and evidence-based effective practices
5. Engage all constituencies, including students and external / community participants in an inclusive and rewarding process
6. Position L&C for a smooth and effective transition to the new Pathways accreditation model

# I. Introduction and Background, continued.

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## Addressing the Criteria and Core Components

*The Self-Study and HLC Team review will address LC's compliance with five key "criteria" and subsets of those criteria called "core components." This compliance goes beyond minimum qualifications and "seeks evidence of continual improvement, aspiration, and best practices."*

### Self-Study Criteria

1. Mission: L&C's mission is clear, articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.
2. Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct: L&C acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.
3. Teaching and Learning - Quality, Resources, and Support: L&C provides high quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.
4. Teaching and Learning - Evaluation and Improvement: L&C demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its education programs, learning environments, and support services, and evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.
5. Resources, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness: L&C'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. L&C plans for the future.

### Other Key Elements of the Self-Study

Core Components identify areas of particular interest within each criterion

Assumed Practices "are generally matters to be determined as facts, rather than matters requiring professional judgment." (i.e., these are standards we must meet but are not required to explicitly address in the Self Study)

Obligations of Affiliation are essentially "behavioral requirements" (e.g., transparency, conduct periodic evaluations, submit reports, honesty / forthcoming, handling of complaints, etc.)

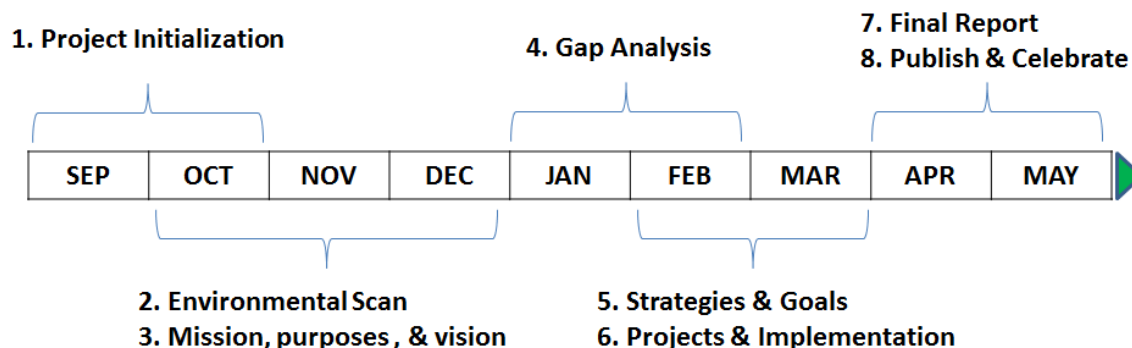
Institutional Snapshot a data package for the last two complete fall semesters to be included as part of the Self-Study Report Appendix.

## II. Strategic Plan Alignment

### Strategic Plan Alignment Objectives

1. Update the five year strategic plan (FY 2013 – 2017) to reflect :
  - a. Current / new change drivers and mandates\*
  - b. HLC priorities as represented in the new criteria / components
  - c. The reaffirmed mission and vision
  - d. Existing and anticipated future capabilities and resources
2. Redefine priorities and direct resources / emphasis accordingly
3. Continue to reinforce Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) awareness and practices across all divisions of the College
4. Establish and implement a disciplined, metric-based process for tracking progress against pre-defined goals and objectives and taking appropriate action when needed

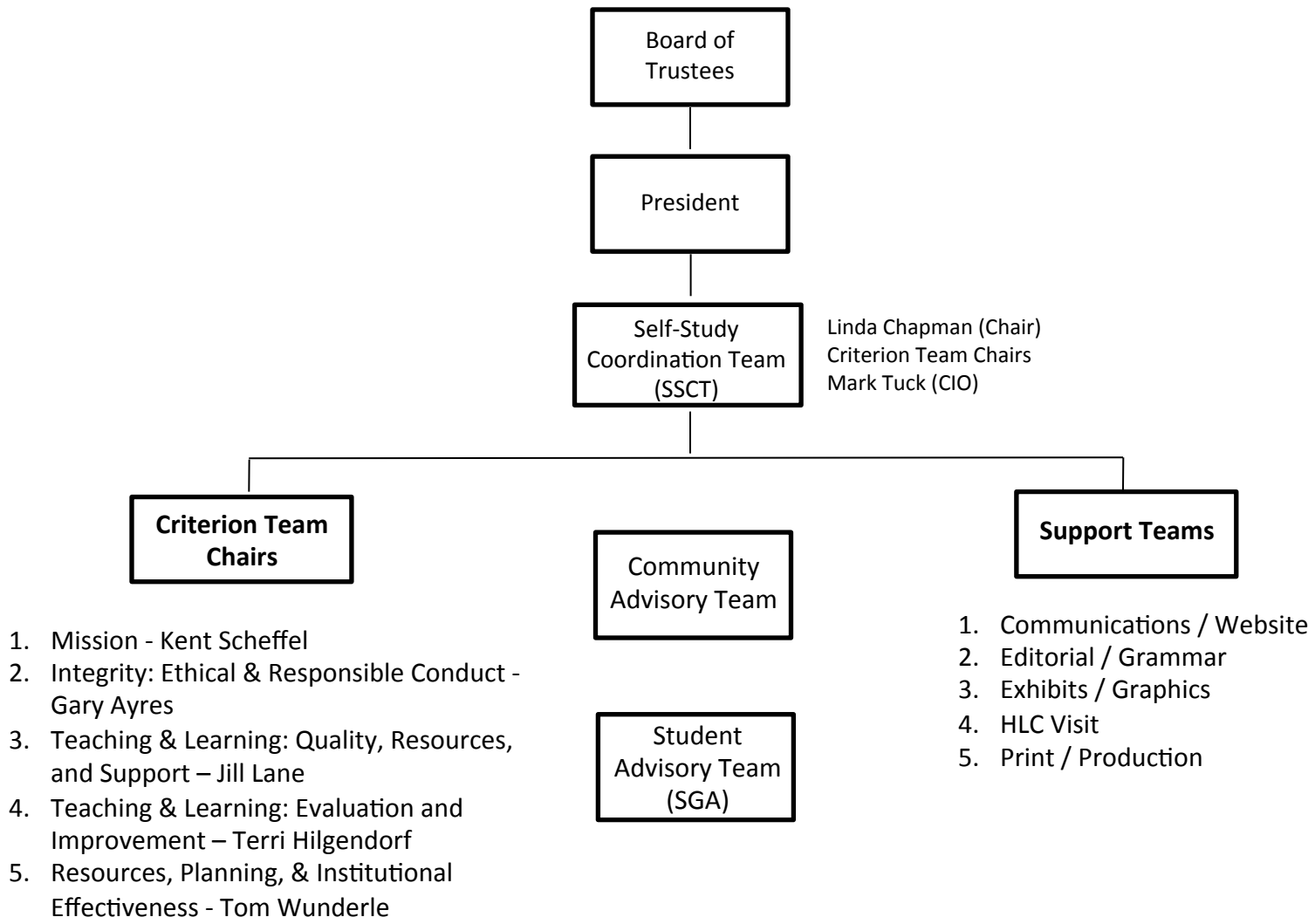
### Strategic Plan Update Timeline (2011-2012)



\*e.g., Performance based funding, emphasis on completions, the economy, climate change, etc.

# III. Organization and Team Assignments

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# III. Organization and Team Assignments, continued.

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## Team Responsibilities

### Self-Study Coordination Team (SSCT)

1. Overall coordination of the Self-Study project
2. Liaison and coordination with the HLC
3. Engage in team building and development
4. Oversee and facilitate team activities
5. Make recommendations regarding College processes
6. Manage to the plan schedule / timeline
7. Design, develop, and write the SS Report
8. Manage / coordinate all communications (internal and external)

### Criterion Teams (Chairs / Members)

1. Conduct initial SWOT analysis of assigned area
2. Prepare “storyline” and evaluative outline for assigned area
3. Gather, analyze, and interpret data / information to support evaluative statements / assertions
4. Write / submit evidence-based narrative drafts including plans to address shortfalls
5. Follow prescribed formats and conventions for documents, numbering, file names, etc.
6. Meet all deadlines for drafts and other requested materials
7. Work effectively with other teams to collaborate on common or overlapping requirements

### Self-Study Support Teams

1. Develop a good understanding of support requirements for assigned areas
2. Take the initiative to develop appropriate support actions early in the SS process
3. Meet all deadlines for concepts, drafts, and other requested support materials
4. Work effectively with other teams to collaborate on common or overlapping requirements

### Community and Student Advisory Teams

1. Provide advice and counsel related to community and student services
2. Review and provide input / feedback on the developing Self-Study document
3. Assist with communications and engagement with community and student constituencies

# **III. Organization and Team Assignments, continued.**

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## **Criterion Teams**

### **Criterion One: Mission**

1. Kent Scheffel (Chair), VP Enrollment Services
2. Bob Becherer, Director Human Resources
3. Alice Bunjan, Manager Career and Workforce Development
4. Sean Hill, VP Student Life
5. Vicki Hinkle, Assistant Director Adult Education
6. Mary Hough, Education Counselor
7. Gerald Mozur, Professor / Coordinator Philosophy
8. Kathy Willis, Director Corporate and Community Learning

### **Criterion Two: Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct**

1. Gary Ayres (Chair) VP Administration and Community Services
2. Lori Artis, VP Marketing / Public Relations and LCCC Foundation
3. Bob Becherer, Director Human Resources
4. Dale Chapman, President
5. Randy Gallaher, Associate Professor Mathematics
6. Nancy Kaiser, Associate VP Finance / Accounting
7. Bob Watson, Chairman, LCCC Board of Trustees

# **III. Organization and Team Assignments, continued.**

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## **Criterion Teams, continued.**

### **Criterion Three: Teaching and Learning – Quality, Resources, and Support**

1. Jill Lane (Chair), Dean Liberal Arts and Business
2. Chrissie Blount, Assistant Professor Reading Communications
3. Roberta Brown, Assistant Professor Dental Assisting / Dental Hygiene
4. Liz Burns, Assistant Director Instruction Services
5. Sue Czerwinski, Dean Mathematics, Science and Technology
6. Dennis Delfert, Associate Professor Biology
7. Delfina Dornes, Registrar Director Advising and Director Enrollment Center
8. Elizabeth Grant, Associate Professor Speech
9. Yvette McLemore, Assistant Director, Academic Advisement
10. Donna Meyer, Dean Health Sciences
11. Mary Lou Watson, Internet Course Technician / Instructor, Education Director Technology Enhanced Learning

### **Criterion Four: Teaching and Learning – Evaluation and Improvement**

1. Terri Hilgendorf (Chair), Professor / Coordinator English
2. Kevin Bodden, Professor / Coordinator Mathematics and Engineering Science
3. Cathy Carruthers, Professor / Coordinator Office Technology
4. Linda Chapman, VP Academic Affairs
5. Emily Corby, Assistant Professor English
6. Stephanie Fernandes, Assistant Professor Mathematics
7. Kathy Haberer, Director Student Development and Counseling Services
8. Val Harris, Director Adult Education
9. Dennis Krieb, Director Learning Resource Center
10. Becky Vellof, Assistant Professor / Coordinator Paralegal

# **III. Organization and Team Assignments, continued.**

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## **Criterion Teams, continued.**

### **Criterion Five: Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness**

1. Tom Wunderle (Chair), Consultant / Contractor for Planning and Institutional Effectiveness
2. Dale Chapman, President
3. Linda Chapman, VP Academic Affairs
4. Chris Bachmann, Associate VP Capital Projects and Campus Operations
5. Bob Becherer, Director Human Resources
6. Luke Jumper, Instructor, Architecture
7. Mary Schulte, Associate VP Finance / Accounting, Treasurer Board of Trustees
8. Jeff Watson, Associate VP IS / Network and Computer Support

# III. Organization and Team Assignments, continued.

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## Communications / Website Support Team

LEAD: Lori Artis, VP Media & Foundation Relations

Laura Griffith, Media Specialist / Web Technician

Mike Lemons, Assistant Professor / Coordinator Radio Broadcasting

### Responsibilities: Communications

1. Oversee and implement ongoing communications related to the self-study
2. Communicate to all key constituencies: students, faculty, staff, administration, community
3. Employ all appropriate media in the process (website, LCNEWS, email, student newspaper, etc.)
4. Advise and assist the Self-Study Coordination Team related to all communications opportunities including board meetings, faculty / staff convocations, student organizations, and classroom announcements
5. Consistent with all of the above, develop a communications plan that outlines key messages, primary audiences, and a schedule of communications activities that will be conducted throughout the self-study process and following the HLC visit

### Responsibilities: Website

1. Create and regularly maintain / update a web page for the Self-Study effort
2. Post informational and other updates provided by the Communications Team
3. Regularly (as needed) conduct a quality review of the site to ensure that 1) information is up-to-date, accurate, and still relevant, 2) links are live and working, and 3) navigation for users remains intuitive and convenient

# **III. Organization and Team Assignments, continued.**

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## **Editorial / Grammar Support Team**

LEAD: Emily Corby, Assistant Professor English  
Dianna LeFevre, Associate Professor Communications

### **Responsibilities**

1. At appropriate intervals as requested by the Self-Study Coordination Team (SSCT), review the developing draft for precision of language, correctness of grammar and syntax, clarity and cohesiveness of expression, effective formatting, and any unnecessary duplication or redundancy
2. Make specific recommendations to correct / change material as needed
3. Provide comments / suggested changes in the change / tracking format requested by the SSCT

# III. Organization and Team Assignments, continued.

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## Self-Study Design / Print – Production Support Team

LEAD: Steve Campbell, Associate Professor / Coordinator Computer Graphics / Web Technology

Lori Artis, VP Media & Foundation Relations

Laura Griffith, Media Specialist / Web Technician

Paige Allen, Specialist Media Information

Korin Fisher, Specialist Media / Graphic Designer

Ronnie Dublo, Specialist Learning Assistance

Ann Goodman, Specialist Media Information

### Responsibilities

1. Recommend and incorporate design features / elements, including formatting, type styles, graphics , exhibits etc. for the electronic and physical Self-Study report
2. In the process, develop and refine exhibits as requested by the Self-Study Coordination Team (SSCT) for the Self-Study report itself, and other requirements
3. Exhibits: photos, artwork, graphs, charts, tables, etc.
4. Assist the SSCT in the regular quality review of exhibits in the developing Self-Study document, including readability, formatting, consistent numbering, and relevance to the narrative
5. Coordinate the printing and production of the Self-Study Report and any associated documents as requested by the Self-Study Coordination Team (SSCT)

# **III. Organization and Team Assignments, continued.**

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## **HLC Visit Support Team**

LEAD: Janine Cooper, Administrative Assistant Academic Affairs

Sue Keener, Executive Secretary to the President

Lizabeth Drainer, Director of Capital Projects & Campus Operations

JoEllen Baker, Administrative Assistant liberal Arts & Business

### **Responsibilities**



1. Schedule and coordinate the transportation, logistical, hospitality, and other needs of the HLC visiting team prior to arrival
2. Create and maintain a “master schedule” of all HLC visiting team activities during their visit
3. Schedule and coordinate all meetings between the HLC visiting team and LCCC or other personnel / groups
4. Communicate any schedule changes to affected individuals / parties as soon as possible after changes are made
5. Ensure that transportation, meals, logistical, and other needs of the HLC visiting team are met
6. Assign one individual as the “single point of contact” (rotating responsibility) to assist the HLC visiting team at all times









# IV. Timeline

 = completed    \*\*\* = major milestones

SS = Self-Study

-  Team Training / Prep (May 9-10) -----
-  SS Plan to HLC for Review (May 30) \*\*\*

2011

- Board Approval to Proceed (Mar 8) 
- HLC Workshop (Apr 7-8) 
- Teams Announced (Board Meeting Apr 12) 
- SS Plan (Board Meeting May 10) 
- Present SS Plan to L&C Managers (May 11) 
- Aug In-Service (Aug 16) 

 1<sup>st</sup> DRAFT (Mar 1) -----

2012

- Jan In-Service (Jan 9-13) 
- Strategic Plan Completed (May) 
- Aug In-Service (Aug 14: Faculty Chapter Reviews) 
- Sep: Community Advisory Team Review 




 2<sup>nd</sup> DRAFT (Jun 30) -----

 3<sup>rd</sup> DRAFT (Sep 4) -----

 FINAL DRAFT (Nov 15) -----

 SS Printing Complete (Dec 15) -----

 **SS Delivered to HLC (Dec 15) \*\*\***

- Post Public Comment Notice (Dec) 
- Jan In-Service (Jan 7-12: Rehearsal mock ups) 
- Site Visit Prep (Jan-Feb) 

**Site Visit (Mar 3-6) \*\*\***

2013

# V. Self-Study Report Outline

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Note: The updated Institutional Snapshot will be sent to the HLC on February 15, 2013. The Assumed Practices and Obligations of Affiliation are not to be included in the Self-Study Report

# VI. Report Sections

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## SECTION I: INTRODUCTION / BACKGROUND

### Key Themes

1. Brief profile of L&C
2. Major progress / achievements since 2003 (last visit)
3. What we are most proud of
4. Challenges ahead
5. Our commitment to continuous improvement and evidence-based self assessment

# **VI. Report Sections, continued.**

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## **SECTION II: RESPONSE TO 2003 HLC RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Key Themes**

1. Monitoring Report on Assessment due September 2006
2. Advancement Recommendations:
  - a. Regular and rigorous program review
  - b. Develop / implement a diversity plan
  - c. Acquire / deploy a single-record based Student Information System (SIS)
  - d. More effective use of data to inform assessment and program review
  - e. A general education philosophy statement
  - f. A comprehensive enrollment management plan

### **Evidence Sources**

1. Assessment Monitoring Report (September 2006)
2. Diversity Plan / Policy and Diversity Council established (2006)
3. Datatel (SIS) implementation (2004-2007)
4. Education Philosophy (2004)
5. Assessment Implementation / Integration: Organization and multi-level (program, course, general education outcome) implementation (2002 – 2006)
6. Comprehensive Enrollment Management Plan (2009)

# VI. Report Sections, continued.

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## SECTION III - CRITERION ONE: MISSION

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

### Core Components

#### 1.A. The institution's mission is broadly understood within the institution and guides its operations

1. The mission statement is developed through a process suited to the nature and culture of the institution and is adopted by the governing board
2. The institution's academic programs, student support services, and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission
3. The institution's planning and budgeting priorities align with and support the mission. (This sub-component may be addressed by reference to the response to Criterion 5.C.1.)

#### 1.B. The mission is articulated publicly

1. The institution clearly defines its mission through one or more public documents, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans, or institutional priorities
2. The mission document or documents are current and explain the extent of the institution's emphasis on the various aspects of its mission, such as instruction, scholarship, research, application of research, creative works, clinical service, public service, economic development, and religious or cultural purpose
3. The mission document or documents identify the nature, scope, and intended constituents of the higher education programs and services the institution provides

#### 1.C. The institution understands the relationship between its mission and the diversity of U.S. Society

1. The institution addresses its role in a multicultural society
2. The institution's processes and activities reflect attention to human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves

#### 1.D. The institution's mission demonstrates commitment to the public good

1. Actions and decisions reflect an understanding that in its educational role the institution serves the public, not solely the institution, and thus entails a public obligation
2. The institution's educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests
3. The institution engages with its identified external constituencies and communities of interest and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow

# VI. Report Sections, continued.

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## SECTION IV - CRITERION TWO: INTEGRITY: ETHICAL AND RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT

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

### Core Components

2.A. The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions: it establishes and follows fair and ethical policies and processes for its governing board, administration, faculty, and staff

2.B. The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public with regard to its programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, control, and accreditation relationships

2.C. The governing board of the institution is sufficiently autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution and to assure its integrity

1. The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.
2. The governing board reviews and considers the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations
3. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests, or other external parties when such influence would not be in the best interest of the institution
4. The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the administration and expects the faculty to oversee academic matters

2.D. The institution is committed to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning

2.E. The institution ensures that faculty, students, and staff acquire, discover, and apply knowledge responsibly

1. The institution provides effective oversight and support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff, and students
2. Students are offered guidance in the ethical use of information resources
3. The institution has and enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity

# VI. Report Sections, continued.

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## SECTION V – CRITERION THREE: TEACHING AND LEARNING – QUALITY, RESOURCES, AND SUPPORT

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

### Core Components

#### 3.A. The institution's degree programs are appropriate to higher education

1. Courses and programs are current and require levels of performance by students appropriate to the degree or certificate awarded
2. The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for its undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, and certificate programs
3. The institution's program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations (on the main campus, at additional locations, by distance delivery, as dual credit, through con-tractual or consortial arrange-ments, or any other modality)

#### 3.B. The institution demonstrates that the exercise of intellectual inquiry and the acquisition, application, and integration of broad learning and skills are integral to its educational programs

1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings, and degree levels of the institution
2. The institution articulates the purposes, content and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements. The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to stu-dents and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educat-ed person should possess
3. Every degree program offered by the institution engages students in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information; in mastering modes of inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments
4. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity of the world in which students live and work
5. The faculty and students con-tribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appro-priate to their programs and the institution's mission

#### 3.C. The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and stu-dent services

1. The institution has sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty members to carry out both the classroom and the non-classroom roles of faculty, including oversight of the curriculum and expectations for student performance; establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff; involve-ment in assessment of student learning
2. All instructors are appropri-ately credentialed, including those in dual credit, contrac-tual, and consortial programs
3. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures
4. The institution has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles; it supports their professional development
5. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry
6. Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising, and co-curricular activities, are appro-priately qualified, trained, and supported in their professional development.

# VI. Report Sections, continued.

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## CRITERION THREE: Core Components, continued.

### 3.D. The institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching

1. The institution provides support services suited to the needs of its student populations
2. The institution provides for learning support and preparatory instruction to address the academic needs of its students. It has a process for directing entering students to courses and programs for which the students are adequately prepared
3. The institution provides academic advising suited to its programs and the needs of its students
4. The institution provides to students and instructors the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning (technological infrastructure, scientific laboratories, libraries, performance spaces, clinical practice sites, museum collections, as appropriate to the institution's offerings)
5. The institution provides to students guidance in the effective use of research and information resources

### 3.E. The institution fulfills the claims it makes for an enriched educational environment

1. Co-curricular programs are suited to the institution's mission and contribute to the educational experience of its students
2. The institution demonstrates any claims it makes about contributions to its students' educational experience by virtue of aspects mission, such as research, community engagement, service learning, religious or spiritual purpose, and economic development



# VI. Report Sections, continued.

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**SECTION VI – 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 evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

## Core Components

### 4.A. The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its education programs

1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews
2. The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning
3. The institution has policies that assure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer
4. The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It assures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum
5. The institution maintains specialized accreditation as appropriate to its educational purposes
6. The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution assures that the degree or certificate programs it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission, such as employment rates, admission rates to advanced degree programs, and participation rates in fellowships, internships, and special programs (e.g., Peace Corps and Americorps)

### 4.B. The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning

1. The institution has clearly stated goals for student learning and effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of learning goals
2. The institution assesses achievement of the learning outcomes that it claims for its curricular and co-curricular programs
3. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.
4. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty and other instructional staff members

### 4.C. The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs

1. The institution has defined goals for student retention, persistence, and completion that are ambitious but attainable and appropriate to its mission, student populations, and educational offerings
2. The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence and completion of its programs

# VI. Report Sections, continued.

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## CRITERION FOUR: Core Components, continued.

3. The institution uses information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs to improve its persistence and completion rates as warranted by the data
4. The institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs reflect good practice. (Institutions are not required to use IPEDS definitions in their determination of persistence or completion rates. Institutions are encouraged to choose measures that are suitable to their student populations, but institutions are accountable for the validity of their measures.)

# VI. Report Sections, continued.

**SECTION VII – 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.

## Core Components

5.A. The institution's resource base supports its current educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future

1. The institution has the fiscal and human resources and physical and technological infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered
2. The institution's resource allocation process ensures that its educational purposes are not adversely affected by elective resource allocations to other areas or disbursement of revenue to a superordinate entity
3. The goals incorporated into mission statements or elaborations of mission statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources, and opportunities
4. The institution's staff in all areas are appropriately qualified and trained
5. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring expense

5.B. The institution's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the institution to fulfill its mission

1. The institution has and employs policies and procedures to engage its internal constituencies - including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff, and students – in the institution's governance
2. The governing board is knowledgeable about the institution, provides oversight for the institution's financial and academic policies and practices, and meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities
3. The institution enables the involvement of its administration, faculty, staff, and students in setting academic requirements, policy, and processes through effective structures for contribution and collaborative effort

5C. The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning

1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities
2. The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning, and budgeting
3. The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups
4. The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity. Institutional plans anticipate the possible impact of fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue, such as enrollment, the economy, and state support
5. Institutional planning anticipates emerging factors, such as technology, demographic shifts, and globalization

5D. The institution works systematically to improve its performance

1. The institution develops and documents evidence of performance in its operations
2. The institution learns from its operational experience and applies that learning to improve its institutional effectiveness, capabilities, and sustainability, overall and in its component parts

# VI. Report Sections, continued.

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## ASSUMED PRACTICES

### A. Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

1. The institution has a conflict of interest policy that ensures that the governing board and the senior administrative personnel act in the best interest of the institution
2. The institution has ethics policies for faculty and staff regarding conflict of interest, nepotism, recruitment and admissions, financial aid, privacy of personal information, and contracting
3. The institution provides its students, administrators, faculty, and staff with policies and procedures informing them of their rights and responsibilities within the institution
4. The institution provides clear information regarding its procedures for receiving complaints and grievances from students and other constituencies, responds to them in a timely manner, and analyzes them to improve its processes
5. The institution makes readily available to students and to the general public clear and complete information including:
  - a. statements of mission, vision, and values
  - b. full descriptions of the requirements for its programs, including all pre-requisite courses
  - c. requirements for admission both to the institution and to particular programs or majors
  - d. policies on acceptance of transfer credit, including how credit is applied to degree requirements. (Except for courses articulated through transfer policies or institutional agreements, the institution makes no promises to prospective students regarding the acceptance of credit awarded by examination, credit for prior learning, or credit for transfer until an evaluation has been conducted.)
  - e. all student costs, including tuition, fees, training, and incidentals; its financial aid policies, practices, and requirements; and its policy on refunds
  - f. policies regarding academic good standing, probation, and dismissal; residency or enrollment requirements (if any)
  - g. a full list of its instructors and their academic credentials
  - h. its relationship with any parent organization (corporation, hospital, church, or other entity that owns the institution) and any external provider of its instruction.
6. The institution assures that all data it makes public are accurate and complete, including those reporting on student achievement of learning and student persistence, retention, and completion
7. The institution portrays clearly and accurately to the public its current status with the Higher Learning Commission and with specialized, national, and professional accreditation agencies.
  - a. An institution offering programs that require specialized accreditation or recognition in order for its students to be certified or to sit for licensing examinations either has the appropriate accreditation or discloses publicly and clearly the consequences to the students of the lack thereof. The institution makes clear to students the distinction between regional and specialized or program accreditation and the relationships between licensure and the various types of accreditation.
  - b. An institution offering programs eligible for specialized accreditation at multiple locations discloses the accreditation status of the program at each location.

# VI. Report Sections, continued.

## ASSUMED PRACTICES, continued.

### A. Ethical and Responsible Conduct, continued.

- c. An institution that advertises a program as preparation for a licensure examination publicly discloses its licensure pass rate on that examination, unless such information is not available to the institution
8. The governing board and its executive committee, if it has one, include some “public” members. Public members have no significant administrative position or any ownership interest in any of the following: the institution itself; a company that does substantial business with the institution; a company or organization with which the institution has a substantial partnership; a parent, ultimate parent, affiliate, or subsidiary corporation; an investment group or firm substantially involved with one of the above organizations. All publicly elected members or members appointed by publicly elected individuals or bodies (governors, elected legislative bodies) are public members<sup>1</sup>
9. The governing board has the authority to approve the annual budget and to engage and dismiss the chief executive officer<sup>1</sup>
10. The institution documents outsourcing of all services in written agreements, including agreements with parent or affiliated organizations
11. The institution takes responsibility for the ethical and responsible behavior of its contractual partners in relation to actions taken on its behalf

### B. Teaching and Learning – Quality, Resources, and Support

1. Programs, Courses, and Credits
  - a. The institution conforms to commonly accepted minimum program length: 60 semester credits for associate’s degrees, 120 semester credits for bachelor’s degrees, and 30 semester credits beyond the bachelor’s for master’s degrees. Any variation from these minima must be explained and justified
  - b. The institution requires that 30 of the last 60 credits earned for a bachelor’s degree that the institution awards and 15 of the final 30 for an associate’s degree it awards be credits earned at the institution.<sup>2</sup> Institutions that do not maintain such a requirement, or have programs that do not, are able to demonstrate structures or practices that ensure coherence and quality to the degree. (Consortial arrangements are considered to be such structures. In addition, an institution that complies with the criteria for academic residency requirements of the Service members Opportunity Colleges (SOC) will not be deemed out of conformity with this Assumed Practice provided that its policy is an exception for active-duty service members and not for students in general)
  - c. The institution’s policy and practice assure that at least 50% of courses applied to a graduate program are courses designed for graduate work, rather than undergraduate courses credited toward a graduate degree. (An institution may allow well-prepared advanced students to substitute its graduate courses for required or elective courses in an undergraduate degree program and then subsequently count those same courses as fulfilling graduate requirements in a related graduate program that the institution offers. In “4+1” or “2+3” programs, at least 50% of the credits allocated for the master’s degree – usually 15 of 30 – must be for courses designed for graduate work.)
  - d. The institution adheres to policies on student academic load per term that reflect reasonable expectations for successful learning and course completion
  - e. Courses that carry academic credit toward college-level credentials have content and rigor appropriate to higher education
  - f. The institution has a process ensuring that all courses transferred and applied toward degree requirements demonstrate equivalence with its own courses required for that degree or are of equivalent rigor

# VI. Report Sections, continued.

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## ASSUMED PRACTICES, continued.

### B. Teaching and Learning – Quality, Resources, and Support, continued.

- g. The institution has a clear policy on the maximum allowable credit for prior learning as a reasonable proportion of the credits required to complete the student's program. Credit awarded for prior learning is documented, evaluated, and appropriate for the level of degree awarded. (Note that this requirement does not apply to courses transferred from other institutions.)
  - h. The institution maintains a minimum requirement for general education for all of its undergraduate programs whether through a traditional practice of distributed curricula (15 semester credits for AAS degrees, 24 for AS or AA degrees, and 30 for bachelor's degrees) or through integrated, embedded, inter-disciplinary, or other accepted models that demonstrate a minimum requirement equivalent to the distributed model. Any variation is explained and justified
2. Faculty Roles and Qualifications
- a. Instructors (excluding teaching assistants enrolled in a graduate program and supervised by faculty) possess an academic degree relevant to what they are teaching and at least one level above the level at which they teach, except in programs for terminal degrees or when equivalent experience is established. In terminal degree programs, faculty members possess the same level of degree. When faculty members are employed based on equivalent experience, the institution defines a minimum threshold of experience and an evaluation process that is used in the appointment process
  - b. Instructors teaching at the doctoral level have a record of recognized scholarship, creative endeavor, or achievement in practice commensurate with doctoral expectations
  - c. Faculty participate substantially in:
    - 1. oversight of the curriculum—its development and implementation, academic substance, currency, and relevance for internal and external constituencies;
    - 2. assurance of consistency in the level and quality of instruction and in the expectations of student performance;
    - 3. establishment of the academic qualifications for instructional personnel;
    - 4. analysis of data and appropriate action on assessment of student learning and program completion
3. Support Services
- a. Financial aid advising clearly and comprehensively reviews students' eligibility for financial assistance and assists students in a full understanding of their debt and its consequences
  - b. The institution maintains timely and accurate transcript and records services

### C. Teaching and Learning – Evaluation and Improvement

- 1. Instructors (excluding for this requirement teaching assistants enrolled in a graduate program and supervised by faculty) have the authority for the assignment of grades. (This requirement allows for collective responsibility, as when a faculty committee has the authority to override a grade on appeal.)

# VI. Report Sections, continued.

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## ASSUMED PRACTICES, continued.

2. The institution refrains from the transcription of credit from other institutions or providers that it will not apply to its own programs
3. The institution has formal and current written agreements for managing intern-ships and clinical placements included in its programs
4. A predominantly or solely single-purpose institution in fields that require licensure for practice is also accredited by or is actively in the process of apply-ing to a recognized specialized accredit-ing agency for each field, if such agency exists
5. Instructors communicate course requirements to students through syllabi
6. Institutional data on assessment of student learning are accurate and address the full range of students who enroll
7. Institutional data on student reten-tion, persistence, and completion are accurate and address the full range of students who enroll

### D. Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness

1. The institution is able to meet its cur-rent financial obligations
2. The institution has a prepared budget for the current year and the capacity to compare it with budgets and actual results of previous years
3. The institution has future financial projections addressing its long-term financial sustainability
4. The institution maintains effective systems for collecting, analyzing, and using institutional information
5. The accredited entity undergoes an external financial audit by a certi-fied public accountant or a public audit agency of its own financial and educational activities and maintains audited financial statements. For private institutions the audit is annual; for public institutions it is at least every two years.<sup>3</sup>
6. The institution's administrative struc-ture includes a chief executive officer, chief financial officer, and chief academ-ic officer (titles may vary) with appropri-ate credentials and experience and suf-ficient focus on the institution to ensure appropriate leadership and oversight.

#### Notes:

<sup>1</sup> *Institutions operating under federal control and authorized by Congress are exempt from these requirements. These institutions must have a public board that includes representation by individuals who do not have a current or previous employment or other relationship with the federal government or any military entity. This public board has a significant role in setting policy, reviewing the institution's finances, reviewing and approving major institutional priorities, and overseeing the academic programs of the institution.*

<sup>2</sup> *For example, for a bachelor's degree requiring 120 credits, the institution accepts no more than 90 credits in total through transfer or other assessment of prior learning, and the remaining 30 must fall within the last 60 credits awarded the student.*

<sup>3</sup> *Institutions under federal control are exempted provided that they have other reliable information to document the insti-tution's fiscal resources and management.*

# VI. Report Sections, continued.

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## Obligations of Affiliation

While seeking and holding affiliation with the Commission, an institution voluntarily agrees to meet obligations set forth by the Commission as follows:

1. The institution meets obligations set forth by the Commission, including periodic evaluation through the structures and mechanisms set forth in Commission policies, submission of reports as requested by the Commission, filing of the Annual Institutional Data Update, and any other requirements set forth in its policies.
2. The institution is candid, transparent, and forthcoming in its dealings with the Commission, including in its responses to any special inquiries or requests for information from the Commission. The institution agrees not to enter into any agreement that limits the nature or scope of its communications with the Commission or requires that a third party review and approve those communications prior to their transmission to the Commission.
3. The institution notifies the Commission of any condition or situation that has the potential to affect the institution's status with the Commission, such as a significant unanticipated reduction in program offerings or serious legal investigation. (A fuller list of such conditions or situations is included in the Commission's policy on special monitoring.)
4. The institution informs the Commission of its relationship with any related entity wherein institutional decision-making is controlled by that entity and of any changes in that relationship that may affect the institution's compliance with Commission accreditation requirements. (Definitions and process requirements are contained in the Commission's policy on institutions with related entities.)
5. The institution describes itself in identical terms to the Commission and to any other institutional accrediting body with which it holds or seeks affiliation with regard to purpose, governance, programs, sites, degrees, diplomas, certificates, personnel, finances, and constituents
6. The institution notifies the Commission when it receives an adverse action from or has been placed on sanction by any other accrediting agency or if a state has issued a pending or final action that affects the institution's legal status or authority to grant degrees
7. The institution assures its employees and students that it will consider fairly all complaints and third-party comments and not engage in retaliatory action against any who have submitted such information
8. The institution accepts that the Commission will, in the interest of transparency to the public, publish outcomes from its accreditation process
9. The institution portrays its accreditation status with the Commission clearly to the public, including the status of its branch campuses and related entities. The institution posts the electronic version of the Commission's Mark of Affiliation on at least one place on its Web site, linking users directly to the institution's status on the Commission's Web site



# VI. Report Sections, continued.

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## Obligations of Affiliation, continued.

10. The institution communicates to its constituencies and applicants any Public Disclosure Notice it receives from the Higher Learning Commission
11. The institution maintains prominently on its Web site a telephone number that includes an option for both current students and the public to speak with a representative of the institution
12. The institution submits timely payment of dues and fees and accepts the fact of surcharges for late payment
13. The institution agrees to accept binding arbitration in the event of an action by the Commission's Board of Trustees that the institution disputes and is not able to resolve through the Commission's processes. This agreement follows procedures developed and published by the Commission

# **VI. Report Sections, continued.**

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## **SECTION VIII: REQUEST FOR CONTINUING ACCREDITATION**

**[PLACEHOLDER PAGE]**

# **VI. Report Sections, continued.**

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## **APPENDIX**

A. Institutional Snapshot

B. Acronyms

C. Glossary