May-June  
Newsletter #11

This series of newsletters reviewed the Higher Learning Commission’s Guiding Values for accreditation, the Criteria for Accreditation, and the Assumed Practices for all accredited institutions. These documents define the objectives and criteria that will guide the team of peer reviewers who will visit Wright State’s campus on March 21 and 22, 2016 for our ten year comprehensive evaluation.

Wright State will be reviewed under the Higher Learning Commissions Open Pathway reaccreditation process. Wright State’s previous review in 2006 was completed under the Program to Evaluate and Assure Quality (PEAQ) methodology. The Higher Learning Commission transitioned to the Open Pathway process.

- To enhance institutional value by opening the improvement aspect of accreditation so that institutions may choose Quality Initiatives to suit their current circumstances
- To reduce the reporting burden on institutions by utilizing as much information and data as possible from existing institutional processes and collecting them in electronic form as they naturally occur over time
- To enhance rigor by checking institutional data annually (Institutional Update) and conducting Assurance Reviews twice in the ten-year cycle
- To integrate as much as possible all HLC processes and HLC requests for data into the reaffirmation of accreditation cycle.

Components of the Open Pathway process are briefly described below.

**Assurance and Improvement in the Open Pathway**

The Open Pathway separates the continued accreditation process into two components: the Assurance Review and the Quality Initiative.

- Two Assurance Reviews take place in the ten-year cycle; one in Year 4 and one in Year 10. The Year 4 review occurs asynchronously via the Commission’s online Assurance System and without a visit. The Year 10 review also is conducted with the Assurance System but includes a visit to the campus, as noted below. No change requests may be combined with the Year 4 review; all change requests at Year 4 are evaluated separately through the Commission’s change process.

- Between Years 5 and 9 of the ten-year cycle, the institution proposes and completes a Quality Initiative. The Assurance Reviews free the Quality Initiative to focus on institutional innovation and improvement. The institution undertakes a Quality Initiative as something it elects to suit its own purposes. Its timeframe is flexible to accommodate the amount of time necessary to complete or make substantial progress toward completion.

- In Year 10, the institution undergoes a comprehensive evaluation.

**Comprehensive Evaluation**

A comprehensive evaluation takes place in Year 10 of the ten-year Open Pathway accreditation cycle.

The components of the comprehensive evaluation in the Open Pathway are these:
• An Assurance Review
• A review of Federal Compliance
• An on-site visit
• If applicable, a multi-campus review

In the comprehensive evaluation, peer reviewers determine whether the institution continues to meet the Criteria for Accreditation by analyzing the institution’s Assurance Filing; a preliminary analysis is followed by a campus visit. The purposes of the visit are to validate claims made in the institution’s Assurance Filing and to triangulate those materials with what the team finds during planned activities while on site.

All comprehensive evaluations include a review of whether the institution meets the Federal Compliance Requirements. In addition, comprehensive evaluations include visits to branch campuses as applicable.

Information on the reaffirmation of accreditation process including Wright State’s history of accreditation is available at http://www.wright.edu/academic-affairs/accreditation.

Information on the Open Pathway process is from the Higher Learning Commission.