Less than a year away! On March 21, 22, 2016, we will be hosting a team of peer reviewers from the Higher Learning Commission as part of our ten year reaffirmation of accreditation. These newsletters are part of our campus preparation for the upcoming re-accreditation visit by informing the campus community of the goals and process of accreditation.

**Assumed Practices:** In addition to the five criteria for accreditation, the Higher Learning Commission defines a set of practices that each accredited institution is assumed to meet. The assumed practices are not the focus of the re-affirmation visit since it is expected that every accredited institution satisfies these conditions. However, if any questions arise concerning these practices either in the assurance argument submitted to the Higher Learning Commission or by the team visiting our campus, they have responsibility to request information to ensure that the practice is followed. Failure to meet an assumed practice may result in a sanction to the institution.

There are four categories of assumed practices: Integrity, Ethical and Responsible Conduct; Teaching and Learning, Quality, Resources, and Support; Teaching and Learning, Evaluation and Improvement; and Resources, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness. Today’s newsletter highlights the two assumed practices categories that focus on teaching and learning. The subcommittee reviewing Wright State’s compliance with the assumed practices is led by Dr. Kimberly Barrett and Dr. Melissa Gruys.

**Assumed Practices:**

**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 maintains structures or practices that ensure the coherence and quality of the programs for which it awards a degree. Typically institutions will require that at minimum 30 of the 120 credits earned for the bachelor’s degree and 15 of the 60 credits for the associate’s degree be credits earned at the institution itself, through arrangements with other accredited institutions, or through contractual relationships approved by the Commission. Any variation from the typical minima must be explained and justified.
   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. (Cf. Criterion 3.A.1 and 2.) (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 for 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.

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, interdisciplinary, 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 for this requirement 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:
   a. oversight of the curriculum—its development and implementation, academic substance, currency, and relevance for internal and external constituencies;
   b. assurance of consistency in the level and quality of instruction and in the expectations of student performance;
   c. establishment of the academic qualifications for instructional personnel;
   d. 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 overide a grade on appeal.)

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 any internships 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 applying to a recognized specialized accrediting agency for each field, if such agency exists.

5. Instructors communicate course requirements to students in writing and in a timely manner.

6. Institutional data on assessment of student learning are accurate and address the full range of students who enroll.

Information on the reaffirmation of accreditation process, including Wright State’s history of accreditation and the Open Pathway process that we are currently undergoing, is available at http://www.wright.edu/academic-affairs/accreditation.

From: Higher Learning Commission Criteria for Accreditation

The Higher Learning Commission