

Lawrence Technological University

Accreditation Matters VOL. IV - May 2009

HLC Criterion 3 of 5 Preparing for the Future:

The organization provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission.

3a. The organization's goals for student learning outcomes are clearly stated for each educational program and make effective assessment possible.

3b. The organization values and supports effective teaching.

3c. The organization creates effective learning environments.

3d. The organization's learning resources support student learning and effective teaching.

What Everyone Should Know:

- HLC Accreditation Criterion Three
- Lawrence Tech's Assessment Initiative
- Self-Study Timeline

Purpose of this Newsletter

This newsletter informs the campus community about Lawrence Tech's upcoming institutional accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, scheduled to begin October 18, 2010. The institutional self-study, which helps us prepare for the accreditation visit, is an extensive process of self-study and reflection. This newsletter – which will be issued in January, May, and September of each year leading up to the 2010 accreditation visit – provides information to the campus community about the accreditation process, the activities across the institution in support of the process, and about how you can contribute to the process.

Lawrence Tech's Assessment Initiative and Learning Environment

Criterion 3 addresses not only assessment of learning outcomes but the broader learning environment. Lawrence Tech has made great strides in both of these areas since the 2001 accreditation visit.

Lawrence Tech has developed a comprehensive outcomes assessment process led by a University-wide Assessment Committee chaired by Dr. Walter Dean, with Dr. Donald Carpenter assuming the Chair's role beginning in September 2009. The Committee includes faculty representatives from each academic department. The major work of the Assessment Committee has focused on developing undergraduate educational goals in five critical areas and detailed plans and processes for assessing learning outcomes in each area. With the growth graduate programs since the 2001 accreditation visit, the Committee has broadened its focus to include graduate program learning outcomes and assessment. We anticipate that graduate program assessment will be an area of significant focus in the 2010 accreditation visit.

Another aspect of Lawrence Tech's focus on assessment includes professional accreditation of our academic programs, which involves external validation of program content and learning outcomes by academic peers. Programs in architecture, interior architecture and design, chemistry, engineering imaging, and management are currently accredited through national professional accreditation agencies including the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB), American Chemical Society (ACS), Engineering Accreditation Commission of the Accreditation and Technology (EAC/ABET), National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD), Council for Interior Design Accreditation (CIDA), National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB), Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP), and the International Assembly of Collegiate Business Education (IACBE).

Criterion 3 not only addresses assessment of learning outcomes, but also the quality and sustainability of the campus learning environment. Over the past ten years, Lawrence Tech has substantially upgraded its learning environment in a number of areas, including establishing the Academic Achievement Center, Office of First Year Programs, Center for Teaching and Learning, campus wireless network, laptop program, and Blackboard learning management system. Increased digital library resources, the LTU Online initiative, Help Desk, and eLearning Services enrich our learning environment and provide opportunities for faculty to use innovative instructional techniques to improve student learning.

Lawrence Tech's learning environment, commitment to professional accreditation, and University-wide assessment initiative directly responds to the Higher Learning Commission's accreditation criterion 3, which calls on the institution to allocate resources and processes to "provide evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission."

Self-Study Timeline

The Self-Study Steering Committee meets every two weeks during the academic year to lead the self-study effort. Here is a review of the timeline used by the Committee:

2008-2009

- Self-Study Data Design and Evidence Gathering plan
- Interviews with Vice Presidents, Deans, and Administrative Offices
- Campus Briefings

2009-2010

- Self-Study Detailed Data Gathering
- Report Writing

2010-2011

- Report Publication (August 2010)
- Higher Learning Commission Site Visit (tentatively scheduled to begin October 18, 2010)

Self-Study Principles

As the Self-Study Steering Committee develops the self-study project plan, members will focus on these priorities:

1. To gather evidence of the alignment of Lawrence Tech's mission with institutional and educational outcomes. This evidence supports the "Assurance Section" of the HLC report.
2. To gather evidence that Lawrence Tech is organized, governed, and resourced to sustain its mission into the future. This evidence supports the "Advancement Section" of the HLC report.
3. To gather evidence that demonstrates linkages between long-term initiatives, student learning outcomes, and operations.
4. To actively engage the entire Lawrence Tech community in the accreditation process, and to learn from the self-study process.

Self-Study Steering Committee:

Lawrence Tech has established a Self-Study Steering Committee to prepare our self-study report that will be sent to the members of the visiting team and to the HLC in December 2010. The self-study report is very comprehensive and gives the visiting team a real picture of who we are and how we are fulfilling our mission. The members of the Self-Study Steering Committee are:

Dr. Patty Castelli
College of Management

Prof. Lew Frasch
College of Engineering

Dr. Dale Gyure
College of Architecture & Design

Dr. Steve Howell
Associate Provost and
Dean of Graduate Studies

Dr. Alan McCord
College of Management and LTU Online
Steering Committee Chair

Dr. Valentina Tobos
College of Arts & Sciences