

Accreditation – How Things Have Changed



Lane Holte, Dean of General Studies & ALO
Moraine Park Technical College

A Few Points to Note

- Currently the ALO liaison to the WTCS Registrars and WTCS Financial Aid Officers groups
- Information presented are my interpretations of guidelines, federal definitions, and compliance requirements based on discussions among the WTCS ALO group, HLC publications and communication with our (MPTC's) HLC VP of Accreditation Relations
- Please be sure to discuss accreditation matters with your institution's ALO (who in turn has access to your assigned HLC VP of Accreditation Relations)



Change: Regional to Institutional Accreditors

- US Department of Education no longer recognizes the distinction between regional and national accreditation
- Prior to the change the US was split into six (6) regions under seven (7) accrediting commissions
- Colleges and universities may now choose their institutional accreditor
- Opportunity to specialize area of focus such as two-year schools or R1 doctoral universities



Change: Elimination of AQIP Pathway

- HLC provides two accreditation pathways: Open and Standard
- AQIP phased out at the end of academic year 2019-2020
- Open Pathway:
 - Assurance review in Year 4
 - Quality Initiative in Years 5-9
 - Comprehensive Review in Year 10
- Standard Pathway:
 - Comprehensive evaluation in years 4 and 10



*Potential Change: Faculty Qualifications

- Essentially shifts determination of ‘qualified faculty’ from HLC to individual institutions.
- Old policy included “qualified faculty members are identified primarily by credentials...”
- New policy notes that factors to be considered “could include, but are not limited to: the achievement of academic credentials, progress toward academic credentials, equivalent experience, or some combination thereof.”

*June 2023 Board of Trustees approved first reading

*November 2023 Board of Trustees second reading
[outcome pending at time of presentation]



Change: Clarification of Distance Education Requirements

- January 2021 – USDE informed accreditors and institutions that the Dear Colleague Letter 06-17 had been rescinded due to conflicts with federal regulations that reference programs offered “in whole or in part” through telecommunications.
 - Essentially any program with as little as one distance education course in an otherwise in-person program was considered distance education
 - HLC responded by strongly encouraging institutions that were not already approved for the highest stipulation for distance education offerings to review their current offerings and apply for the approval level of HLC approval.
- May 2023 – USDE published a Dear Colleague Letter clarifying guidance on distance education
 - Essentially reintroduces the “50% rules” (i.e. and institution offers 50% of the program via distance education, enrolls 50% of its students via distance education*, or offers at least 50% of its courses via distance education)

*Note: 50% enrollment...



Change: Federal Definition of Additional Locations

- Effective July 1, 2023 the USDE has expanded the federal definition of the term “additional location” to include correctional facilities.
- If possible for one or more students to achieve 50% or more of a certificate or degree program the institution issues at the correctional facility – the institution must seek HLC approval for the instructional site as an additional location.
- Institutions in HLC’s Notification Program for Additional Locations would need to notify HLC.
- HLC is reviewing their substantive change materials to incorporate this new definition.



Contact Information

Reminder: Best contact is your institution's ALO 😊

Lane Holte, Dean of General Studies & ALO
Moraine Park Technical College
lholt@morainepark.edu



THANK YOU!!

I hope you've had an incredible WACRAO experience!

This is an amazing organization providing invaluable networking and professional development opportunities throughout the WTCS!

