Overview of HLC Reaccreditation and UWM’s Preparation for the Visit on 4/20-21/2015

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The basics – what

- Accreditation is a process that evaluates the institution on
  - The level to which the criteria for accreditation are met (Assurance)
  - The processes for quality improvement (Advancement)
  - How previously identified shortcomings are addressed
  - Level of compliance with federal regulations

- Evaluation based on
  - Self-reports, evidentiary materials, on-site visit and interviews, and external input to the Commission
The basics – why

- **HLC** is certified by the US Dept of Education to accredit post-secondary institutions in its region.
- Institutional accreditation is necessary:
  - to enable students to access federal financial aid.
  - to enable faculty and staff to apply for DOE funding for research and for programs.
  - to enable graduates with placement in numerous public institutions and agencies.
  - to make students and graduates eligible for certification/licensure.
The basics – who and when

- Accrediting Body:
  - Higher Learning Commission (HLC) of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools

- Next visit year: 2014-15 academic year

- Previous visit: April 2005

- Accreditation review in 2005 required progress reports in 2008 on two issues:
  - Assessment
  - Enrollment planning for Race/Ethnicity
  - Progress report submitted in 2008
Follow-up Actions from Previous Visit (1)

- Assessment progress report addressing identified issues:
  - The development of evidence of the implementation of department assessment plans
  - How assessment and results are being used for program improvement
  - The equitable use of academic staff in providing quality instruction
Follow-up Actions from Previous Visit (2)

- Enrollment Planning for Race/Ethnicity report addressing identified issues:
  - The establishment and implementation of a targeted recruitment program in the City of Milwaukee and other areas of the state for underrepresented and first generation undergraduate students
  - The final conclusions and recommendations from the Task Force on Race and Ethnicity that addresses the campus climate for underrepresented students, faculty and staff
  - The coordination of the multiple campus support service and retention programs for underrepresented and underserved students
  - The development of University supplemental sources of financial aid for low income and full financial need students
HLC action in 2008

- Progress report accepted
- Accreditation extended to 2014-15
Changes since last review

- What has changed?
  - **Criteria** – new criteria adopted by HLC in 2011
  - Process – the review process is considerably different

- In 2009, HLC proposed a new process
  - **Pathways for Accreditation**
  - UWM was invited to be part of the initial pilot cohort to validate the new process
  - Attended HLC workshops with other such institutions
  - Consultations with governance and administration
    - University Committee, APCC, GFC, ASC
    - Academic Deans Council, Associate Deans, Vice Chancellors

- Application submitted in May 2010
Pathways Process

- Assurance review based on an electronic portfolio
  - Short narrative on each component of criteria
  - Artifacts documenting evidence
- Advancement review based on institution’s quality initiative (QI)
  - QI proposed by institution with goals and timeline
  - Review and acceptance of proposal by HLC
  - Evaluation of report documenting progress
- Federal compliance review
UWM Quality Initiative

- QI has two components
  - Articulation and effective assessment of student learning outcomes for each program
  - Articulation of student learning outcomes, goals and content for general education and assessment of these outcomes
Assurance Argument

- Narrative to show how UWM complies with the criteria for accreditation

- **Five Criteria:**
  1. Mission
  2. Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct
  3. Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support
  4. Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement
  5. Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness
Federal Compliance

- Items to address:
  - Student complaint process
  - Assignment of credits, program length, and tuition
  - Transfer policies
  - Verification of student identity for distance-delivered courses
  - Title IV Program responsibilities
  - Information for students and public, advertising and recruitment materials
  - Review of student outcome data
  - Standing with other accrediting agencies
Where are we in the process?

- Steering Committee formed in 2011
- Charged a sub-committee to develop the initial draft
- Drafting group working over the summer
  - Progress: initial draft being reviewed by the Steering Committee
Timeline

Fall 2013

✧ First draft completed and shared with Steering Committee

✧ Continue to gather information on criterion elements listed in previous slides to include in later drafts

✧ Review by a reading group (faculty, staff, admin)
Timeline

Spring 2014

- Develop second draft based on feedback and additional information gathered
- Continue to collect information related to assessment of student learning
- Share draft with schools/colleges/departments
Timeline

Summer 2014

- Complete Quality Initiative Report and submit to HLC
- Third draft of Assurance Argument based on feedback and additional information
Timeline

Fall 2014

✧ Share draft widely with campus community
✧ Finalize draft, copy edit
✧ Prepare files for uploading to HLC system
✧ Complete Federal Compliance Packet
Timeline

Spring 2015

✧ Upload all documents to HLC workspace
✧ Respond to reviewer questions
✧ Prepare for campus visit
✧ Host visit and respond to requests for additional information

✧ VISIT DATES: APRIL 20 & 21, 2015