

HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION ACCREDITATION

**PRE-VISIT
INFORMATION AND
DISCUSSION:**

ASSURANCE DOCUMENT



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SCOPE OF ACCREDITATION VISIT AND ASSURANCE ARGUMENT

- Comprehensive Visit
 - Required for all Standard Pathway institutions at fourth and tenth year
 - Requires submission of an Assurance Argument (Self Study)
 - 5 Criteria containing 21 Core Components and 69 Sub-components
 - Onsite 13-14 February 2017
- Assurance Argument
 - Maximum 40,000 words (currently at 30,500)
 - Facts not stories – we need to back up what we say
 - Evidence! Evidence! Evidence!

CRITERIA FOR ACCREDITATION

1. The institution's mission is broadly understood with the institution and guides its operations.
2. The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible
3. The institution provides high quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.
4. The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.
5. The institution's resources, structures, and processes are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities. The institution plans for the future.

CRITERION 1

Strengths

- Planning and budgeting priorities align with and support the mission (1.A.3)
- A strong Strategic Plan that fully supports the college's mission is used operationally and reviewed systematically (1.A)
- Responsive to the needs of the communities it serves (1.D)
- High priority on diversity (1.C)

CRITERION 1

Challenges

- Loss of key personnel and restructuring will have to be carefully monitored to ensure adequate services are maintained(1.D)
- Need to develop a better plan to identify and respond to community needs (1.D.3)
- Engagement with external constituencies and communities of interest WARRANTS improvement (1.D.3)

CRITERION 2

Strengths

- Solid reporting system for reporting ethical violations (2.A)
- Provides students with knowledge about the ethical use of information in the classroom, through library instruction, at a variety of student support services, and through online resources (2.E.2)
- Comprehensive website to communicate information to stakeholders (2.B)
- Reorganized to make the best use of fiscal resources and to better serve existing and future students. (2.C.4)

CRITERION 2

Challenges

- Keeping information on the website up to date continues to be a challenge (2.B)
- Communicating accurate program information to current and prospective students continues to be a challenge (2.B)
- Marketing of new programs is not part of the program development strategy. (2.B)
- The planning and budgeting function of faculty (required by ARP 2.15) needs improvement (2.A)
- Hiring and position changes are not made public.(2.A)
- Post-graduation employment opportunities are not published(2.B)
- Part-time faculty credentials are not published. (2.B)

CRITERION 3

Strengths

- Solid evaluation process to ensure that all instructors meet the educational and experiential requirements set by the college and by the NMSU system (3.C.3)
- Strong annual evaluation process for all staff members that provides for annual goal setting and evaluation as well as evaluation of performance of basic job duties (3.C.6)
- Employee diversity reflects that of the service area population. The college works to ensure that diversity exists in all areas of the campus (3.B.3)
- Students have access to a variety of support services that include the Student Services offices, Townsend Library, LTC, ASC, ITS, and Media Services (3.D.1)
- Students and instructors are provided with the appropriate infrastructure necessary for effective teaching and learning (3.D.4)
- The requirement an associate degree was successfully lowered to a minimum of 60 credits. (3.A.1)

CRITERION 3

Challenges

- While significant progress has been made to improve the curriculum development process at our campus level, the end-to-end process for new programs at the system and state level is vague (3.A.1)
- Clear articulation of Program and Institutional Learning Outcomes to stakeholders warrants improvement (3.A.2)
- *The college is continuing to refine the program review process (3.A.1)
- General Education requirements for some Associate of Applied Science Degrees are not clearly defined (3.B.2)
- Student Services continues to experience significant turnover of staff (3.D.5)
- Assessment of co-curricular and service learning contribution to student educational experience requires refinement (3.E.2)
- *While the response rate for student evaluation of online classes has improved Significantly, the return rate is not yet comparable to onsite classes (3.A.3)
- *Additional enriched learning opportunities for students concerning the issues of human and cultural diversity could be offered (3.B.4).
- *The number of faculty and exempt staff members who make presentations at local, regional, and national conferences should be increased (3.B.5).
- *Although student contributions to scholarship and knowledge are recognized and publicized at the time, a more systematic method of compiling and tracking these achievements should be established (3.B.5).

CRITERION 4

Strengths

- Strong progress in developing course level learning outcomes (4.B.1)
- While enrollment and retention need improvement, the Strategic Plan and the Retention Plan provide strategies for long term improvement.(4.C.2)
- Faculty actively participate on-campus professional development and participate and present at conferences with regard to assessment of student learning (4.B.4)
- Strong commitment to student retention, persistence, and completion rates. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness monitors and report on these elements, and with a retention team develops an annual plan to help improve student success rates (4.C.1)
- Assessment of learning at multiple levels is planned, organized, and implemented (4.B)

CRITERION 4

Challenges

- *Internal processes for review of instruction support, Adult Education and Continuing Education require improvement (4.A.1)
- NMSU-A requires improvement in its practice of regular program reviews (4.A.1)
- NMSU-A requires improvement in the evaluation of the success of its graduates. (4.A.6)
- *Improvement is needed in the assessment of student learning for co-curricular programs (4.B.2)
- Better evidence of the use of assessment to improve student learning is needed (4.B.3)
- Substantial participation of faculty is needed in the assessment of student learning at the program and institutional levels
- Better use of enrollment, retention and completion information to improve programs is needed (4.C.3)
- Assessment of Student Learning results and improvements need to be extended to additional stake holders, especially to our students and prospective students.(4.B.2)
- Assessment results have not been made readily available to students or the public. (4.B.3)

CRITERION 5

Strengths

- Clearly defined plan that drives its fiscal resources, physical resources, and educational programs in support of the mission (5.A.1)
- Strong fiscal contingency planning (5.C.4)
- Proactive in meeting technological needs of students. When monetary issues arise, the college finds creative ways to cover expenses without overburdening the student population (5.A.1)
- Sound fiscal management that has allowed the college to meet its budgetary needs through the recent sustained enrollment down-turn (5.D.2)

CRITERION 5

Challenges

- Budget committee comprised primarily of elected faculty is needed. (5.A.5)
- Improvement to link assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning, and budgeting. (5.C.2)
- Improve anticipation of new technologies, demographic shifts and globalization (5.C.5)
- Improve development and documentation of evidence of operational performance (5.D.2)
- The Sustainability Plan is out of date (5.D.1)
- The Safety and Security Manual is out of date (5.D.1)
- Continuing Education needs a strong plan for managing enrollment and programs (5.A.1)
- In many staffing areas, only one or two individuals perform particular functions due to our relatively small size (5.A.1)

TIMELINE AND IMPORTANT DATES

Task Name	Start	Finish
Complete and submit Assurance Argument		Nov 15
Public Review	Nov 15	Dec 15
Student Survey	Nov	Dec
Federal Compliance Submission	Oct 1	Nov 15
HLC Comprehensive Visit	Mon Feb 13, 2017	Tue Feb 14, 2017

REVIEW PROCESS

- Does the argument make sense?
- Does the argument address the criteria as stated at the beginning of each section?
- Is the information factual?
- Do we have evidence to back it up?
- Is there anything that was omitted that will help make our case?
- Do you know if any strengths and/or weaknesses we need to address in a particular area?

IMMEDIATE ISSUES

- Web site is not up to date (needed for evidence)
- Documents are not up to date (needed for evidence)
- Key committees have not been meeting
- Minutes for some committees are not posted (needed for evidence)
- Committee structure is in-flux

QUESTIONS? COMMENTS

WHEN, WHERE, AND HOW TO GET INFORMATION AND PROVIDE INPUT.

To get information or provide feedback on the document contact or access:

- Greg Hillis at ghillis@nmsu.edu, call 439-3624
- Joyce Hill: email joyhill@nmsu.edu, call 439-3879, or come by RM 164, Allied Health
- Access the document through:

<http://nmsua.edu/ir/>

or

<http://nmsua.edu/files/uploads/draft-assurance-argument-20160929.pdf>