

QUALITY CHECKUP REPORT

Lincoln Land Community College

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The Higher Learning Commission
A Commission of the North Central Association

QUALITY CHECKUP TEAM MEMBERS:

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Background on Quality Checkups conducted by the Academic Quality Improvement Program

The Higher Learning Commission's Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) conducts Quality Checkup site visits to each institution during the fifth or sixth year in every seven-year cycle of AQIP participation. These visits are conducted by trained AQIP Reviewers to determine whether the institution continues to meet The Higher Learning Commission's *Criteria for Accreditation*, and whether it is using quality management principles and building a culture of continuous improvement as participation in the Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) requires. The goals of an AQIP Quality Checkup are to:

1. Affirm the accuracy of the organization's Systems Portfolio and verify information included in the portfolio that the last Systems Appraisal has identified as needing clarification or verification (System Portfolio Clarification and Verification), including review of distance delivery and distributed education if the institution is so engaged.
2. Review with organizational leaders actions taken to capitalize on the strategic issues and opportunities for improvement identified by the last Systems Appraisal (Systems Appraisal Follow Up);
3. Alert the organization to areas that need its attention prior to Reaffirmation of Accreditation, and reassure it concerning areas that have been covered adequately (Accreditation Issues Follow Up);
4. Verify federal compliance issues such as default rates, complaints, USDE interactions and program reviews, etc. (Federal Compliance Review); and
5. Assure continuing organizational quality improvement commitment through presentations, meetings, or sessions that clarify AQIP and Commission accreditation work (Organizational Quality Commitment).

The AQIP peer reviewers trained for this role prepare for the visit by reviewing relevant organizational and AQIP file materials, particularly the organization's last *Systems Appraisal Feedback Report* and the Commission's internal *Organizational Profile*, which summarizes information reported by the institution in its *Annual Institutional Data Update*. The Quality Summary Report provided to AQIP by the institution is also shared with the evaluators. Copies of the Quality Checkup Report are provided to the institution's CEO and AQIP liaison. The Commission retains a copy in the institution's permanent file, and will be part of the materials reviewed by the AQIP Review Panel during Reaffirmation of Accreditation.

Clarification and verification of contents of the institution's *Systems Portfolio*

In the team's judgment, the institution presented satisfactory evidence that it met this goal of the Quality Checkup. The institution's approach to the issue, documentation, and performance were acceptable and comply with the Commission's standards and AQIP's expectations. The team verified this through the triangulation of discussions, documentation, and the Systems Portfolio prepared by LLCC. Documents reviewed in preparation for these discussions included:

- The LLCC Systems Portfolio
- The Systems Appraisal Feedback Report
- The LLCC Quality Program Summary
- The LLCC Federal Compliance Report

The Portfolio results were discussed with a variety of individuals, groups and departments during the visit. Although there was a strong indication that the institution only recently received the feedback results, in general, they had no concerns or questions about the feedback. The team discussed the portfolio feedback with each of the groups they met with on Campus. Direct discussions about specific strengths and opportunities were held with

- The President
- The President and Cabinet
- Action Project Team Leaders
- AQIP Steering Team
- Academic Services
- The Board of Governors

Overall, the College representatives expressed their satisfaction with the results and indicated that opportunities identified were those that the College had self-identified within the self-study process. This appeared to be affirming. Discussion was held describing opportunities as not necessarily deficiencies in the College's operations but as true opportunities for improvement. The team cited many examples of opportunities in the portfolio that could build on foundational processes and activities already in place. The College did question the team with regard to the lack of responses to all items. The team clarified the revised portfolio review process with regard to how only those items which were noteworthy received comments.

Since there were no accreditation issues, the team framed the discussion around the initial response to

strategic challenges identified in the systems appraisal. In general, the College representatives indicated that they were not surprised by any of the findings in the feedback report. Discussion was held at length regarding the spirit of the continuous improvement AQIP process in which organizations inherently identify areas of need regardless of the current situation. The team praised the College for their efforts as many of the opportunities identified in the portfolio were based on foundations already established for a more rigorous, defined, or systematic process that would improve/enhance those already in place. These include prioritization of partnership effectiveness, training of staff for succession and quality purposes, collecting and analyzing more direct measures and designing work processes in divisions and units that align with the strategic plan.

Specific opportunities in the Portfolio feedback that were discussed/clarified included:

Succession Planning: Concerns were addressed over the need articulated by the team for the College to engage in succession planning. The College leadership indicated that they did not feel that they wanted to identify individuals for succession leadership positions. The team discussed with the College leadership, a broader definition of succession planning that includes leadership development, collaboration and cross training within and across departments, contract negotiation, etc. The College identified a number of processes and policies that align with these descriptions of succession planning. The College leadership acknowledged that succession planning is part of their overall strategy and will consider using the process mapping techniques developed in their action project to document this.

Efforts to Address Learning Styles: This item received an “O” in the portfolio report and it was an area in which the organization asked for assistance from the team. The President explained that the College was providing staff development on “flipped” classrooms and “disruption.” The team discussed with the President the alignment of these pedagogical strategies with addressing learning needs of diverse groups including recent research regarding learning styles versus learning preferences. The President concluded that they were, indeed, addressing learning styles through these efforts, would continue faculty development in these areas, and report the progress in the next portfolio.

More Formal Processes and Stronger Links between Budgeting and Planning: The College disagreed with the portfolio feedback in this area, citing their current processes detailed response in 8P1. The team clarified that it was the process for establishing this link that needed to be clarified and, after discussion, it was determined that the process was in place but could be better documented and described.

Support of Faculty and Students: The College was praised for its efforts to support faculty throughout the selection and maintenance stages through clear processes, opportunities for development, participation in shared governance, and creating a shared understanding about organizational goals and priorities (all

areas receiving “SS” statements in the portfolio feedback). With regard to students, the College received praise for their efforts to ensure that the student as a ‘person’ was supported including personal needs not directly related to academics. For example, during the visit, the Foundation Director reported working with a student who was homeless and had walked twelve miles to classes that day. The Foundation was able to provide emergency assistance and work with student services to identify the student as a Veteran and connect him with appropriate, ongoing services. This level of commitment to student success was commended.

Indirect discussions regarding the portfolio feedback were held with the following groups.

- Student Services
- Administrative Services
- Student Government Association
- Faculty Senate

These discussions were more general as it was acknowledged that these individuals had just recently had the opportunity to review the portfolio feedback so were unable to provide in-depth insight. However, they did express that they were pleased with the current status of the AQIP process and there were no initial findings in the feedback report that were surprising or of concern.

Overall, all groups and individuals who met with the team appeared appropriately knowledgeable and familiar with current AQIP activities. Groups and individuals were positive about the AQIP process and appeared enthusiastic about meeting the challenges identified in the Portfolio Feedback Report. Because not all external stakeholders have had an opportunity to review the Portfolio feedback new action projects have not yet been identified. However, all action projects currently in progress will continue as planned.

Documents reviewed to verify outcomes in this section include:

- The Systems Appraisal Feedback Report
- The LLCC Quality Program Summary
- College Dashboard
- Courses Assessment Summary
- Program Assessment Summary

Review of the organization's quality assurance oversight of its distance education activities.

In the team's judgment, the institution has presented satisfactory evidence that its distance education activities are acceptable and do comply with the Commission's standards and expectations.

LLCC ensures that distance education offerings are equivalent to face-to-face courses through a number of mechanisms. First, only faculty who have taught the face-to-face course are allowed to teach the same course online. The ITDE office provides extensive, standardized training to all online instructors which includes a face-to-face and an online component. Once a faculty member has completed the training, he/she is partnered with an instructional designer to ensure that the College standards for online instruction are met according to an official rubric. Once the faculty member has started teaching, the Dean of the college or peer will enroll in the class to conduct observations and make recommendations to the faculty members. Courses identified for online format are the result of strategic targeting to accomplish specific educational goals. Online class enrollment is strictly limited to prevent faculty burnout and insure full student participation.

Review of the organization's quality assurance and oversight of distributed education (multiple campuses)

The team confirmed that the institution does not offer programs at additional campuses at this time, and that the institution understands it must seek HLC approval before it offers 50% or more of any program at an additional location.

Review of specific accreditation issues identified by the institution's last Systems Appraisal

In the team's judgment, the institution presented satisfactory evidence that it met this goal of the Quality Checkup. The institution's approach to the issue, documentation, and performance were acceptable and comply with Commission and AQIP's expectations. No accreditation issues were identified in the Systems Appraisal.

Screening of Criteria for Accreditation and Core Components

The following section identifies any areas in the judgment of the Quality Checkup Team where the institution either has not provided sufficient evidence that it currently meets the Commission's *Criteria for Accreditation* (and the core components therein) or that it may face difficulty in meeting the *Criteria* and core components in the future. Identification of any such deficiencies as part of the Quality Checkup affords the institution the opportunity to remedy the problem prior to Reaffirmation of Accreditation.

Items judged to be “Adequate but could be improved” or “Unclear or incomplete” during the Checkup Visit screening will not require Commission follow-up in the form of written reports or focused visits. However, Commission follow-up will occur if the issues remain apparent at the point of reaffirmation of accreditation.

Criterion 1: Evidence found in the Systems Portfolio	Core Component				
	1A	1B	1C	1D	
Strong, clear, and well-presented.	X	X	X		
Adequate but could be improved.				X	
Unclear or incomplete.					
Criterion 2: Evidence found in the Systems Portfolio	Core Component				
	2A	2B	2C	2D	2E
Strong, clear, and well-presented.	X	X	X	X	X
Adequate but could be improved.					
Unclear or incomplete.					
Criterion 3: Evidence found in the Systems Portfolio	Core Component				
	3A	3B	3C	3D	3E
Strong, clear, and well-presented.	X	X	X	X	X
Adequate but could be improved.					
Unclear or incomplete.					
Criterion 4: Evidence found in the Systems Portfolio	Core Component				
	4A	4B	4C		
Strong, clear, and well-presented.			X		
Adequate but could be improved.	X	X			
Unclear or incomplete.					
Criterion 5: Evidence found in the Systems Portfolio	Core Component				
	5A	5B	5C	5D	
Strong, clear, and well-presented.		X	X	X	
Adequate but could be improved.	X				
Unclear or incomplete.					

In the team’s judgment, the institution presented satisfactory evidence that it met this goal of the Quality Checkup. The institution’s approach to the issue, documentation, and performance were acceptable and comply with Commission and AQIP’s expectations.

Core Component 1D - A clear and systematic process for first identifying needs relative to the public good could be more fully described.

Core Components 4A and 4B - The College needs to develop ways to aggregate program review measures and general education assessment measures at an institutional level. A clear connection between businesses that hire graduates and identification of the SLO’s could be stronger. LLCC has begun to make

progress on systematically aligning student services programs more closely to SLO's.

Core Component 5A - LLCC links action plans to strategies with clearly adequate ability to fund those plans. However, there doesn't appear to be a clear process for prioritizing those plans for funding. LLCC currently starts the resource allocation process with baseline budgets within departments but it is unclear how often those baselines are adjusted.

Review of the institution's approach to capitalizing on recommendations identified by its last Systems Appraisal in the Strategic Issues Analysis.

In the team's judgment, the institution presented satisfactory evidence that it met this goal of the Quality Checkup. The institution's approach to the issue, documentation, and performance were acceptable and comply with Commission and AQIP's expectations.

LLCC is developing a comprehensive plan for disseminating the Portfolio review report to the entire college community—including both internal and external stakeholders. The plan will include opportunities for active reflection and prioritizing of further actions with the full involvement of the faculty and staff. There will also be active solicitation of input from students and external stakeholders. The report had only been delivered to the college leadership approximately two weeks prior to the team's visit. LLCC plans to use the report to re-evaluate strategic priorities.

The College leadership and AQIP coordinating team acknowledged that the Portfolio writing process raised overall awareness of areas needing further focus for improvement such as assessing community impact and developing more direct measures of success. There was also recognition of the challenge of keeping the energy level and focus high and aligned to continuous quality improvement.

Review of organizational commitment to continuing systematic quality improvement

In the team's judgment, the institution presented satisfactory evidence that it met this goal of the Quality Checkup. The institution's approach to the issue, documentation, and performance were acceptable and comply with Commission and AQIP's expectations.

The CQI training continues and is continually expanding the number of trained LLCC staff and faculty. The strategies have been observed throughout the organization such as at institutional improvement day. The President acknowledged the challenge of keeping staff focused and engaged and noted the ongoing training is beneficial in that effort.

The Portfolio review identified opportunities to clarify and document processes for greater clarity. LLCC has undertaken a comprehensive process mapping project they readily acknowledge will take some time to complete. They are seeing some early benefits of this project even in its infancy. The college leadership and staff have learned from previous action projects and are continuously improving the process for identifying priority projects and the design of those projects' scope, time allocation, and upfront development. The strategic planning of the college continues to inform the choice of action projects and the by clarifying short- and long-term priorities. Likewise, the college considers action project ideas from multiple sources in terms of their link to strategic priorities.

LLCC has a well-developed strategic planning process that is informed by the AQIP processes and vice versa. For example, the process of writing the Portfolio was noted as an opportunity to identify and increase awareness of strategic challenges still facing the college while the Portfolio feedback affirmed their existing strategic priorities. AQIP processes continue to help imbed continuous improvement into the organizational culture.

Other AQIP Considerations or Concerns

Process Clarification

The team discussed the issue of process clarity with all of the groups with which it met, except for the Student Government Association. The discussions were consistently focused around similar themes. The College recognized the Portfolio review had identified an area of needed improvement, mostly in terms of greater clarity. The team was fully satisfied that many processes were in place but not always fully explained in the Portfolio. The LLCC staff indicated they would provide more details of processes in the next report. The College has begun a comprehensive program of developing process maps for all activities. While this will be a multi-year project and will likely not be complete by the writing of the next Portfolio, just doing the analysis of processes that is necessary to develop process maps is expected to facilitate fuller explanations in the future. Furthermore, with the clearly evident priority being given to this effort by college leadership and staff, the team recognizes that very substantial progress will be made. The team is fully satisfied that LLCC is completely committed to the process mapping projects at all levels and in all departments.

Student Support

One of the most significant challenges for student services is to intentionally link activities to general education outcomes. A beginning process for this is being implemented with the College Speaker series. In this process, the content of each speaker's message must be aligned with general education outcomes.

In another example, athlete community projects are being expanded to include time for reflection on learning and connection to curricular outcomes. The group was commended for these initial steps but encouraged to consider how the outcomes of these activities might be measured and documented with regard to student learning outcomes. The Financial Aid office clearly has a student first focus and offers FASA and other training for students to improve their understanding of financial aid options. They also actively monitor student progress to identify potential issues with satisfactory progress by students.

The Student Support offices interface with the college foundation as a source of funding to support its speaker series. The foundation is also able to provide student emergency financial support.

Student Governance

Students overwhelmingly reported a feeling of support and genuine concern at all levels of the College. This was well articulated by one student who said that the message they consistently receive is “We care about getting you here, but we care more about getting you out with something tangible.” Specifically, the group spoke highly of Career Services, Academic Advising, and the faculty. They described faculty as available and flexible. The group reported that they felt that they would be well prepared to continue their education or enter the workforce upon completion of their program. They also spoke very highly of the immediate guidance they receive upon matriculation and the continual follow-up, advice, and referrals to available support services like the learning center that provides tutoring and supports for students with learning challenges. Students also expressed their appreciation of the career interest surveys and guidance provided by LLCC.

Students described online courses as rigorous and, at times, more challenging than their face-to-face counterparts. However, they also described a system of support and guidance from faculty, advisors and other staff to ensure their success in their online study.

Academic Services

All faculty, part-time and full-time, participate in shared governance, Institutional Improvement Day and professional development day. The College acknowledged that it was more difficult to ensure that adjunct faculty participate because of other commitments but that they are pleased with the overall representation of adjunct faculty. A comprehensive process is in place to hire and onboard adjuncts (a process receiving and SS in the portfolio feedback) and efforts continue to socialize adjuncts and create a sense of community and belonging among them. For example, as part of the professional development day, adjuncts are given the opportunity to develop relationships with faculty. Full-time faculty then act as coordinators to support adjunct faculty through classroom observations and mentorship. This ensures that instruction is consistent and rigorous throughout the organization and at various instructional sites.

Furthermore, to ensure equivalency in learning outcomes across course sections and sites, the Academic Deans have full responsibility for approving syllabi, hiring instructors, ordering books and managing coordinators. At times, the Academic Deans, in addition to the coordinators, will do classroom observations. In some instances Deans will work with operational analysts in Institutional Research to review and compare data, student evaluations, etc. across sections and sites. A recommendation from the site visit team is to evaluate that process and determine the extent to which it can be formalized so that data is collected and compared across sections and sites consistently and comprehensively.

As reported in the Systems Portfolio, the Assessment team is responsible for the development of the general education philosophy and the SLO's. While the team did not meet with the Assessment Team, discussion of the College's six general learning outcomes were embedded within all of the discussions as central to the continuous improvement of the College. For example, the discussion with the Student Services representatives focused on efforts to ensure the co-curricular activities aligned with the SLO's and to document and provide data on the results. In addition, conversations with the Deans focused on systems in place served to ensure that the SLO's were addressed throughout programs and courses. It was noted that in the Systems Portfolio, the College received an "SS" for this process that includes a rubric for assessing the academic program review process that occurs every five year.

Strategic Planning

The strategic planning process appears to be very structured and inclusive. Budgeting of initiatives is linked directly to the goals of the College and involves a method to monitor throughout the year with related dashboards. LLCC has an AQIP Action Project to initiate cultural change for continuous quality improvement through professional development. That action plan has yielded substantial results evidenced by the team's discussion with multiple constituencies that clearly demonstrated the extent to which the CQI philosophy and approach have permeated institutional culture. LLCC recognizes the challenge of expanded training within the College and appears to have a well thought out approach to accomplishing that target.

Lincoln Land Community College has a well-designed process for strategic planning that is systematic, integrated, strategic, and operational. The use of an Institutional Improvement Day and the Planning Leadership Roundtable ensures widespread collaboration. The process also incorporates budgeting into the planning process.

The College described to the review team a clear process for developing key action plans to support organizational strategies. This process begins with the identification of action plans and associated strategies by divisions, departments, and units. Initiatives that are approved by the division's senior

leadership are moved into the College's planning and budgeting database for consideration during the strategic planning process. Planning processes, strategies, and action plans are coordinated and aligned across the organization through its mission and goals. The College has developed key performance indicators to measure progress within the College's six goal areas. Each performance indicator includes an analysis of trend data associated with each goal. The resulting indicator data are analyzed by the President's Cabinet and shared with the Board of Trustees annually.

Federal Compliance Worksheet for Evaluation Teams

Effective for visits beginning January 1, 2013

Institutional Records of Student Complaints

The institution has documented a process in place for addressing student complaints and appears to be systematically processing such complaints as evidenced by the data on student complaints since the last comprehensive evaluation.

1. Review the process that the institution uses to manage complaints as well as the history of complaints received and processed with a particular focus in that history on the past three or four years.
2. Determine whether the institution has a process to review and resolve complaints in a timely manner.
3. Verify that the evidence shows that the institution can, and does, follow this process and that it is able to integrate any relevant findings from this process into its review and planning processes.
4. Advise the institution of any improvements that might be appropriate.
5. Consider whether the record of student complaints indicates any pattern of complaints or otherwise raises concerns about the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation or Assumed Practices.
6. Check the appropriate response that reflects the team's conclusions:
 - (X) The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.
 - () The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements but recommends follow-up.
 - () The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution not to meet the Commission's requirements and recommends follow-up.
 - () The team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Comments: LLCC has policies and processes in place to address student complaints. These are outlined and formally communicated in several documents including Board Policy 5.40, the Catalog and in the Student Planner. The College has mechanisms in place to address informal and formal complaints and grievances. This includes an appeals process as well as a formalized system to track student complaints. LLCC has documented formal student complaints since the last comprehensive evaluation.

Additional monitoring, if any: None

Publication of Transfer Policies

The institution has demonstrated it is appropriately disclosing its transfer policies to students and to the public. Policies contain information about the criteria the institution uses to make transfer decisions.

1. Review the institution's transfer policies.
2. Review any articulation agreements the institution has in place, including articulation agreements at the institution level and program-specific articulation agreements.
3. Consider where the institution discloses these policies (e.g., in its catalog, on its web site) and how easily current and prospective students can access that information.

Determine whether the disclosed information clearly explains the criteria the institution uses to make transfer decisions and any articulation arrangements the institution has with other institutions. Note whether the institution appropriately lists its articulation agreements with other institutions on its website or elsewhere. The information the institution provides should include any program-specific articulation agreements in place and should clearly identify program-specific articulation agreements as such. Also, the information the institution provides should include whether the articulation agreement anticipates that the institution under Commission review: 1) accepts credit from the other institution(s) in the articulation agreement; 2) sends credits to the other institution(s) in the articulation agreements that it accepts; or 3) both offers and accepts credits with the other institution(s).

4. Check the appropriate response that reflects the team's conclusions:
 - (X) The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.
 - () The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements but recommends follow-up.
 - () The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution not to meet the Commission's requirements and recommends follow-up.
 - () The team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Comments: LLCC has demonstrated that it appropriately discloses its transfer policies to students and to the public. LLCC has clear and consistent policies that contain information about the criteria the institution uses to make transfer decisions. The majority of LLCC transfer requests are from Illinois state colleges. The college has a number of articulation and 2+2 agreements with various colleges and universities for specific programs. In addition to these articulation agreements, LLCC participates in the Illinois Articulation Initiative for the transfer of student credit at more than 100 colleges and universities within the State. The majority of transfer issues are covered by these policies and agreements. Other transfer

requests are few and decisions are made on a case-by-case basis through a collaborating with the registrar and Deans.

Additional monitoring, if any: None

Practices for Verification of Student Identity

The institution has demonstrated that it verifies the identity of students who participate in courses or programs provided to the student through distance or correspondence education and appropriately discloses additional fees related to verification to students and to protect their privacy.

1. Determine how the institution verifies that the student who enrolls in a course is the same student who submits assignments, takes exams, and earns a final grade. The team should ensure that the institution's approach respects student privacy.
2. Check that any fees related to verification and not included in tuition are explained to the students prior to enrollment in distance courses (e.g., a proctoring fee paid by students on the day of the proctored exam).
3. Check the appropriate response that reflects the team's conclusions:
 - (X) The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.
 - () The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements but recommends follow-up.
 - () The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution not to meet the Commission's requirements and recommends follow-up.
 - () The team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Comments: LLCC has policies and processes in place to verify student identity in their distance education courses. There are no fees related to verification to students or to protect their privacy.

Additional monitoring, if any: None

Title IV Program Responsibilities

The institution has presented evidence on the required components of the Title IV Program.

This requirement has several components the institution and team must address:

- **General Program Requirements.** *The institution has provided the Commission with information about the fulfillment of its Title IV program responsibilities, particularly findings from any review activities by the Department of Education. It has, as necessary, addressed any issues the Department raised regarding the institution's fulfillment of its responsibilities in this area.*
- **Financial Responsibility Requirements.** *The institution has provided the Commission with information about the Department's review of composite ratios and financial audits. It has, as necessary, addressed any issues the Department raised regarding the institution's fulfillment of its responsibilities in this area. (Note that the team should also be commenting under Criterion Five if an institution has significant issues with financial responsibility as demonstrated through ratios that are below acceptable levels or other financial responsibility findings by its auditor.)*

Default Rates. *The institution has provided the Commission with information about its three year default rate. It has a responsible program to work with students to minimize default rates. It has, as necessary, addressed any issues the Department raised regarding the institution's fulfillment of its responsibilities in this area. Note for 2012 and thereafter institutions and teams should be using the three-year default rate based on revised default rate data published by the Department in September 2012; if the institution does not provide the default rate for three years leading up to the comprehensive evaluation visit, the team should contact Commission staff.*

- **Campus Crime Information, Athletic Participation and Financial Aid, and Related Disclosures.** *The institution has provided the Commission with information about its disclosures. It has demonstrated, and the team has reviewed, the institution's policies and practices for ensuring compliance with these regulations.*
- **Student Right to Know.** *The institution has provided the Commission with information about its disclosures. It has demonstrated, and the team has reviewed, the institution's policies and practices for ensuring compliance with these regulations. The disclosures are accurate and provide appropriate information to students. (Note that the team should also be commenting under Criterion One if the team determines that disclosures are not accurate or appropriate.)*
- **Satisfactory Academic Progress and Attendance.** *The institution has provided the Commission with information about policies and practices for ensuring compliance with these regulations. The institution has demonstrated that the policies and practices meet state or federal requirements and that the institution is appropriately applying these policies and practices to students. In most cases, teams should verify that these policies exist and are available to students, typically in the course catalog or student handbook. Note that the Commission does not necessarily require that the institution take attendance but does anticipate that institutional attendance policies will provide information to students about attendance at the institution.*
- **Contractual Relationships.** *The institution has presented a list of its contractual relationships related to its academic program and evidence of its compliance with*

Commission policies requiring notification or approval for contractual relationships (If the team learns that the institution has a contractual relationship that may require Commission approval and has not received Commission approval the team must require that the institution complete and file the change request form as soon as possible. The team should direct the institution to review the Contractual Change Application on the Commission's web site for more information.)

- ***Consortial Relationships.*** *The institution has presented a list of its consortial relationships related to its academic program and evidence of its compliance with Commission policies requiring notification or approval for consortial relationships. (If the team learns that the institution has a consortial relationship that may require Commission approval and has not received Commission approval the team must require that the institution complete and file the form as soon as possible. The team should direct the institution to review the Consortial Change Application on the Commission's web site for more information.)*
1. Review all of the information that the institution discloses having to do with its Title IV program responsibilities.
 2. Determine whether the Department has raised any issues related to the institution's compliance or whether the institution's auditor in the A-133 has raised any issues about the institution's compliance as well as look to see how carefully and effectively the institution handles its Title IV responsibilities.
 3. If an institution has been cited or is not handling these responsibilities effectively, indicate that finding within the federal compliance portion of the team report and whether the institution appears to be moving forward with corrective action that the Department has determined to be appropriate.
 4. If issues have been raised with the institution's compliance, decide whether these issues relate to the institution's ability to satisfy the Criteria for Accreditation, particularly with regard to whether its disclosures to students are candid and complete and demonstrate appropriate integrity (*Core Component 2.A and 2.B*).
 5. Check the appropriate response that reflects the team's conclusions:
 - (X) The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.
 - () The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements but recommends follow-up.
 - () The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution not to meet the Commission's requirements and recommends follow-up.
 - () The team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Comments: LLCC currently has no limitations, suspensions, or termination actions as the result of an audit or any other administrative action. No fines, letters of credit or heightened monitoring have emerged from Department of Education reviews. There were no findings in the A-133

portion of the audited financial statements that identified any material weaknesses in the processing of financial aid.

LLCC monitors the default rate and is taking proactive steps to address defaults on student loans. One strategy is to consider how to manage default through the withholding of transcripts, restrictions on further borrowing and face-to-face borrowing counseling. The College is also considering how they might identify high default rate programs and determine what barriers might exist. Other strategies include information on borrowing/repayment at student orientation and a free online financial literacy course for students.

Additional monitoring, if any: None

Required Information for Students and the Public

1. Verify that the institution publishes fair, accurate, and complete information on the following topics: the calendar, grading, admissions, academic program requirements, tuition and fees, and refund policies.
2. Check the appropriate response that reflects the team's conclusions:
 - (X) The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.
 - () The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements but recommends follow-up.
 - () The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution not to meet the Commission's requirements and recommends follow-up.
 - () The team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Comments: LLCC publishes fair, accurate, and complete information on the following topics: the calendar, grading, admissions, academic program requirements, tuition and fees, and refund policies per the documents and material listed below.

Additional monitoring, if any: None

Advertising and Recruitment Materials and Other Public Information

The institution has documented that it provides accurate, timely and appropriately detailed information to current and prospective students and the public about its accreditation status with the Commission and other agencies as well as about its programs, locations and policies.

1. Check the appropriate response that reflects the team's conclusions:

- (X) The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.
- () The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements but recommends follow-up.
- () The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution not to meet the Commission's requirements and recommends follow-up.
- () The team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Comments: LLCC discloses its institutional accreditation on the College website, catalog, *Forward* Magazine, Annual Report and LLCC Viewbook. This information includes a mailing address, phone number, and web address for contacting the Higher Learning Commission. LLCC's accreditation status is also included in the College's *Forward* magazine/class schedule. This publication includes the web address for contacting the Higher Learning Commission.

LLCC's affiliation with programmatic accrediting organizations is also communicated to internal and external constituents via the College's website and Catalog. This listing includes contact information for each organization.

Additional monitoring, if any: None

Review of Student Outcome Data

1. Check the appropriate response that reflects the team's conclusions:

- (X) The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.
- () The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements but recommends follow-up.
- () The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution not to meet the Commission's requirements and recommends follow-up.
- () The team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Comments: LLCC's Institutional Research (IR) office systematically collects data related to student retention, persistence, and program completion. The review of student outcome data and

results are clearly communicated in the Federal Compliance Report and documented in a number of reports including:

- LLCC Fact Book
- Enrollment Trend Reports
- College Dashboard
- Gear Rubrics
- Course Assessment Summary
- Program Assessment Summary
- CTE Follow-Up Study
- Pass Rate Reports

Additional monitoring, if any: None

Standing with State and Other Accrediting Agencies

The institution has documented that it discloses accurately to the public and the Commission its relationship with any other specialized, professional or institutional accreditor and with all governing or coordinating bodies in states in which the institution may have a presence.

1. Check the appropriate response that reflects the team's conclusions:

- (X) The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.
- () The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements but recommends follow-up.
- () The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution not to meet the Commission's requirements and recommends follow-up.
- () The team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Comments: LLCC is recognized and is in good standing with the following state affiliates:

- Illinois Board of Higher Education
- Illinois Community College Board
- Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs
- Office of the State Board of Education Universities of the State of Illinois

Nine academic programs at Lincoln Land Community College maintain programmatic accreditation. LLCC accurately discloses to the public and the Commission its relationship with these affiliates per the materials and documents listed above on page 14. ?

Additional monitoring, if any: None

Public Notification of Opportunity to Comment

The institution has made an appropriate and timely effort to solicit third party comments. The team has evaluated any comments received and completed any necessary follow-up on issues raised in these comments. Note that if the team has determined that any issues raised by third-party comment relate to the team's review of the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation, it must discuss this information and its analysis in the body of the Assurance Section of the Team Report.

1. Check the appropriate response that reflects the team's conclusions:

- (X) The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.
- () The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements but recommends follow-up.
- () The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution not to meet the Commission's requirements and recommends follow-up.
- () The team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Comments: The institution has made an appropriate and timely effort to solicit third party comments; however, few public comments were submitted. The team evaluated these comments and initiated a discussion regarding one comment that related to LLCC's support of diversity among the Board, staff, administration, faculty and students. LLCC is concerned about the perception of diversity among the governing board, administration, faculty, staff, and students. While the governing board make-up is beyond the control of LLCC leadership because these individuals are elected, efforts to recruit and attract diverse faculty were discussed. It was also clarified that since the College district encompasses such a large geographical area, the demographics of administration, staff, and faculty should mirror the entire area rather than the City of Springfield itself. The team is satisfied that LLCC is taking steps to ensure diverse representation in all areas.

Additional monitoring, if any: None

Institutional Materials Related to Federal Compliance Reviewed by the Team

Materials reviewed pre and/or post visit include:

- LLCC Federal Compliance Report, November, 2013
- LLCC Board Policy Manual including excerpts relating to:
 - Course Credit Hour Policy

- Student Grievance Policy
- Student Grievance and Appeals Procedure
- Transfer Credit Policy
- Return of Title IV Funds
- Student Attendance
- 2012 – 2014 Catalog including excerpts related to:
 - Transfer Credit Procedures
 - Articulation Agreements
 - Disclosures
- LLCC Annual Report
- A-133 Audit Letter
- Forward Magazine/Course Scheduler including excerpts related to:
 - Open Entry Courses
- LLCC Viewbook
- Credit Hour Assignment Worksheets
- Academic Program Accreditation Associated Action Letters
- Handout for Military Students
- Handout on Illinois Articulation Initiative
- Satisfactory Academic Progress and Attendance Policy Student Handout
- Department of Education Approval Letter
- Eligibility and Certification Approval Report
- Admissions Guide for International Students
- Program Participation Agreement
- Public Notification of Opportunity to Comment – Newspaper and Website
- LLCC website and online resources including
 - LLCC Transfer Policies
 - LLCC Athletics Disclosure-Participation Rates
 - Consumer Information and Right to Know information
 - LLCC Graduation and Transfer Rates
 - Tuition and Fees
 - Academic Departments
 - Accreditation
 - Special Needs Services
 - Graduation and Transfer Out Rates
 - Student Abroad Programs for Credit
 - Attendance Requirement
 - LLCC Fact Book
 - Enrollment Trend Reports
 - College Dashboard
 - Gear Rubrics
 - Courses Assessment Summary
 - Program Assessment Summary
 - CTE Follow-Up Study
 - Pass rates
 - Academic Calendar

- LLCC Police Department Website

Appendix

Team Worksheet for Evaluating an Institution's Program Length and Tuition, Assignment of Credit Hours and on Clock Hours

Part 1: Program Length and Tuition

Instructions

The institution has documented that it has credit hour assignments and degree program lengths within the range of good practice in higher education and that tuition is consistent across degree programs (or that there is a rational basis for any program-specific tuition).

Worksheet on Program Length and Tuition

A. Answer the Following Questions

Are the institution's degree program requirements within the range of good practice in higher education and contribute to an academic environment in which students receive a rigorous and thorough education?

Yes

No

Comments:

Are the institution's tuition costs across programs within the range of good practice in higher education and contribute to an academic environment in which students receive a rigorous and thorough education?

Yes

No

Comments:

B. Recommend Commission Follow-up, If Appropriate

Is any Commission follow-up required related to the institution's program length and tuition practices?

Yes

No

Rationale:

Identify the type of Commission monitoring required and the due date:

Part 2: Assignment of Credit Hours

Instructions

Worksheet on Assignment of Credit Hours

A. Identify the Sample Courses and Programs Reviewed by the Team (see #5 of instructions in completing this section)

Graphic Design Technology Associate in Applied Science

ART 124 Digital Photography I

ART 106 Introduction to Computer Art

CWB 260 Advanced Macromedia Flash Techniques

Literature Associate of Arts

LIT 120 Introduction to Children's Literature

LIT 202 Survey of English Literature: Romantic Movement through the Contemporary Period

LIT 220 Literary Masterpieces I

Management Certificate of Completion

BUS 204 Management

BUS 230 Leadership

Associate Degree Radiography - Associate in Applied Science

RAD 103 Radiographic Procedures I

RAD 225 Clinical Internship IV

RAD 210 Radiation Biology

B. Answer the Following Questions

1) Institutional Policies on Credit Hours

Does the institution's policy for awarding credit address all the delivery formats employed by the institution? (Note that for this question and the questions that follow an institution may have a single comprehensive policy or multiple policies.)

Yes No

Comments:

Does that policy relate the amount of instructional or contact time provided and homework typically expected of a student to the credit hours awarded for the classes offered in the delivery formats offered by the institution? (Note that an institution's policy must go beyond simply stating that it awards credit solely based on assessment of student learning and should also reference instructional time.)

Yes No

Comments:

For institutions with non-traditional courses in alternative formats or with less instructional and homework time than would be typically expected, does that policy equate credit hours with intended learning outcomes and student achievement that could be reasonably achieved by a student in the timeframe and utilizing the activities allotted for the course?

Yes No

Comments:

Is the policy reasonable within the federal definition as well as within the range of good practice in higher education? (Note that the Commission will expect that credit hour policies at public institutions that meet state regulatory requirements or are dictated by the state will likely meet federal definitions as well.)

Yes No

Comments:

2) Application of Policies

Are the course descriptions and syllabi in the sample academic programs reviewed by the team appropriate and reflective of the institution's policy on the award of credit? (Note that the Commission will expect that credit hour policies at public institutions that meet state regulatory requirements or are dictated by the state will likely meet federal definitions as well.)

Yes No

Comments:

Are the learning outcomes in the sample reviewed by the team appropriate to the courses and programs reviewed and in keeping with the institution's policy on the award of credit?

Yes No

Comments:

If the institution offers any alternative delivery or compressed format courses or programs, were the course descriptions and syllabi for those courses appropriate and reflective of the institution's policy on the award of academic credit?

Yes No

Comments:

If the institution offers alternative delivery or compressed format courses or programs, are the learning outcomes reviewed by the team appropriate to the courses and programs reviewed and in keeping with the institution's policy on the award of credit? Are the learning outcomes reasonably capable of being fulfilled by students in the time allocated to justify the allocation of credit?

Yes No

Comments:

Is the institution's actual assignment of credit to courses and programs across the institution reflective of its policy on the award of credit and reasonable and appropriate within commonly accepted practice in higher education?

Yes No

Comments:

C. Recommend Commission Follow-up, If Appropriate

Review the responses provided in this section. If the team has responded “no” to any of the questions above, the team will need to assign Commission follow-up to assure that the institution comes into compliance with expectations regarding the assignment of credit hours.

Is any Commission follow-up required related to the institution’s credit hour policies and practices?

Yes

No

Rationale:

Identify the type of Commission monitoring required and the due date:

D. Identify and Explain Any Findings of Systematic Non-Compliance in One or More Educational Programs with Commission Policies Regarding the Credit Hour

N/A