

Harold Washington College

Reaffirmation of Regional Accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission

The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) is an independent corporation founded in 1895 as one of the six regional institutional accreditors in the United States. It accredits degree-granting colleges and universities in a 19-state region of the United States. HLC's mission is, "Serving the common good by assuring and advancing the quality of higher learning". Harold Washington College last received full accreditation in 2008 and we were placed on the Open Pathway, the most preferred option institutions have for maintaining their HLC accreditation. It follows a 10-year cycle focusing on quality assurance and institutional improvement. HLC conducts a comprehensive Evaluation Process through which accreditation is reaffirmed - this has five key components:

- 1 **Quality Initiative (QI):** Completed between years 5 and 9 of the 10-year cycle. The QI provides the college with the opportunity to develop or continue a quality improvement project.
- 2 **Federal Compliance Review:** A report submitted within the last year of the 10-year cycle to ensure the college is in compliance with Title IV program responsibilities and other U.S. Department of Education Regulations under the Higher Education Act.
- 3 **Assurance Argument:** A comprehensive narrative with supporting evidence submitted by the college within the last year of the 10-year cycle. The argument is the college's opportunity to address how it has met the HLC criterion for accreditation.
- 4 **Student Opinion Survey:** Survey completed electronically by current students that informs the HLC peer review team about students' opinions and experiences at the institution. The survey is an opportunity for students to participate in the reaffirmation process.
- 5 **Comprehensive Evaluation Visit:** Is an on-site, 1.5-day visit to the college by an assigned team of HLC peer reviewers. The purpose of this visit is to verify that statements made by the college in submitted materials are accurate, as well as to review the college's capacity to meet criteria for accreditation.

Primary Source: <http://www.hlcommission.org/About-HLC/about-hlc.html>

HWC Progress towards Reaffirmation of Accreditation			
1	Quality Initiative	Done – Approved 2015	"Quality Curriculum: Program Learning Outcomes and Course Matrix."
2	Federal Compliance Review	In progress	Team working on the document, and planning the creation of an institutional committee.
3	Assurance Argument	In progress	Grassroots process resulting in an expected 35,000 words + 600 evidence file narrative.
4	Student Opinion Survey	Online survey of all credit students sent prior to visit.	
5	Comprehensive Evaluation Visit	October 1 & 2, 2018	Peer Reviewers visit HWC. Meetings and open forums with many stakeholders.