

# Toward Reaccreditation at UM-Flint

# News of the Self-Study Process



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## Points of Interest

- Message from the Vice Chancellor for Administration
- Sub-committee chair reports
- Faculty/Staff Self-study Opinion Survey Information
- Institutional Survey Table
- Useful links

The following links can provide additional information and insight into the process as well as access to our 1999 Self-Study document.

- 1999 Self-Study

<http://www.umflint.edu/home/ncareport.pdf>

- Higher Learning Commission (HLC)

<http://www.ncahigherlearningcommission.org/>

- UM-Flint HLC Self-Study SharePoint Site

<http://portal.umflint.edu/sites/s-shlc/default.aspx>

- UM-Flint Accreditation Web Page

<http://www.umflint.edu/hlc/>

## Assessment and Improvement

The Office of the Vice Chancellor for Administration (VCA) provides an array of campus support services that enable academic excellence in learning and teaching, student centeredness and engaged citizenship. A group of select employees from VCA departments are actively involved in preparing for the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) site visit in October 2009.

Much of the work required preparing for the HLC report and visit is part of the VCA Assessment and Evaluation Program which includes:

- Customer service satisfaction
- Employee workplace satisfaction
- External comparative analysis and feedback

To develop a systematic, comprehensive assessment and evaluation plan for Customer Service Satisfaction of the VCA unit, periodic customer surveys were implemented with the goal of identifying processes and procedures that work well and need improvement. This is an ongoing process.

All VCA employees are invited to participate in an employee survey every three years. The purpose of the survey is to identify any workplace issues that can be addressed to improve employee satisfaction. This is based on the belief that employees who are well satisfied with their workplace will in turn deliver a higher level of service. Based on findings, action plans are developed to address issues identified in the survey.

All VCA departments continue to work on external comparisons to benchmark key performance indicators. Efforts are currently focused on local, state, federal and University guidelines, rules, regulations and laws to insure compliance, with the goal of enhancing departmental and VCA effectiveness and efficiency.

Our ultimate goal is continuous improvement which is exactly what we need to demonstrate in the HLC report and during the site visit in fall 2009. The VCA Group is pleased to actively support preparations for a successful HLC visit and reaccreditation.

Dave Barthelmes  
Vice Chancellor for Administration

## Update from the Steering Committee

Dear Campus Community;

The process continues to move forward and the report is coming together. Currently, the Self-Study report is nearing 200 pages double spaced. The Steering Committee has been working to edit the report and has created a “parking lot” document with information which we have extracted from early subcommittee drafts for future use in other areas of the report. The parking lot information was removed because of repetitiveness or excess detail and is currently 70 pages.

The Steering Committee has, and will continue to meet with individuals from various departments and units who can clarify data and offer information to fill in gaps in the report. It is imperative that the information included in the report is accurate and comprehensive. With that said, the Steering Committee would like feedback from everyone on campus. Within the next few weeks, the full Self-Study report will be available to everyone on campus to read and to offer feedback. You will receive more information on how to access the document and how to submit your feedback soon.

The HLC consultant-evaluators will visit the UM-Flint campus October 26-28, 2009. The Self-Study report deadline is three months prior to their visit. In the mean time, the Steering Committee, as well as the full Self-Study committee, will continue to use your feedback by way of individual meetings, group meetings with faculty, staff, and student organizations, and written submissions. All this will contribute to an accurate and comprehensive snapshot of our university.

In addition to writing the Self-study report, we must also prepare for the HLC consultant-evaluators’ visit. Please be on the lookout for various HLC-related information and events in the coming year!

Thank you for your continued support in the accreditation process.

Sincerely,

The Self-Study Steering Committee

## Your Opinions Matter - Faculty/Staff Opinion Survey Coming Soon!

You will soon receive by email a link to the Self-Study Faculty and Staff Opinion Survey asking for your feedback on a broad range of campus topics. Your responses are vital to the Self-study process, so please access the survey and let your voice be heard! Your time and effort are very much appreciated.

*Contact the Office of Institutional Analysis (762-3327) for more information.*

## Subcommittee Reports from the Chairs

### **Criterion One: Mission and Integrity ~ Teddy Robertson and Bob Houbeck, Co-chairs**

*The organization operates with integrity to ensure the fulfillment of its mission through structures and processes that involve the board, administration, faculty, staff, and students.*

By Bob Houbeck ~ The self-study process forces one to reflect on the institution as a community rather than an assembly of parts. I saw the importance of taking that lesson to heart beyond the HLC committee. My librarian colleagues and I recast the library’s mission statement to align with that of the institution. We also specified guiding principles and objectives that would help us think in terms of outcomes rather than inputs and process (see [http://www.umflint.edu/library/policies/mission\\_statement.htm](http://www.umflint.edu/library/policies/mission_statement.htm) posted at the “About Us” link on the library homepage). Prompted by my HLC committee work, I’ve sought ways in my teaching to connect my students to both the overarching mission of the university and the objectives of my American Culture course. At our first class we reviewed the mission that is posted on every classroom wall and linked it to the program mission posted in the catalog and to my course objectives. What had been wallpaper suddenly became personal, a mutual commitment. “Community of scholars” moved from word to substance. The self-study process can play an important role in building a sense of integration and community. I can now better see how the labor can be fruitful. We’re not producing a report for someone else. We are figuring out how to make sure we really do “operate with integrity” -- that we do what our documents have promised we do.

## **Criterion Two: Preparing for the Future ~ Chris Waters and Cindy Pfalzer, Co-chairs**

*The organization's allocation of resources and its processes for evaluation and planning demonstrate its capacity to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its education, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.*

By Chris Waters ~ The Criterion Two section of the Self-Study is still in the development stage. Since this is a document that needs to be evidence-driven, and since this part of the overall self-study speaks to the future and how well we are prepared to meet it, we are taking care to document all the good things we know we do. The good news is how very evident it is that our planning for the future is far more data driven than ever before, and we are continuously better at scanning our environment and making good plans for our future. It is also clear we have been fiscally responsible and our future will benefit from it. There is a lot of work still to be done and we thank both Scott Arnst and Eric Freedman for joining our group for the remainder of the endeavor. We will also miss the contributions of Susan Gano-Phillips for the next year as she will be off to the Far East as a Fulbright Scholar.

## **Criterion Three: Student Learning and Effective Teaching ~ Donna Fry and Aimi Moss, Co-chairs**

*The organization provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission.*

By Donna Fry ~ Do you ever feel as if the university is a very slow moving entity? Having to document change in this self-study is a good exercise to help us realize that even slow moving entities make significant change over time. Do you realize since our first six online courses were offered in winter 2000 with 150 students our online offerings have increased to 143 courses with 3,729 students in winter 2008? Had anyone heard of a “smart cart” at the time of our last site visit? Now we have them in all of our primary classrooms. Do you remember having to travel to Ann Arbor for instructional sessions on teaching? Now, through significantly increased funding to support teaching, we have numerous excellent workshops and seminars on teaching on our own campus offered through the Thompson Center for Learning and Teaching which was established in 1998. Student outcome assessment may have been a whisper on campus at our last full accreditation visit, but rest assured no one on campus can escape it now! Even a slow moving tortoise makes headway, even on our campus!

## **Criterion Four: Acquisition Discovery, and Application of Knowledge ~ John Callewaert and Alicia Kent, Co-chairs**

*The organization promotes a life of learning for its faculty, administration, staff, and students by fostering and supporting inquiry, creativity, practice, and social responsibility in ways consistent with its mission.*

by Steve Bernstein ~ Members of the Criterion Four subcommittee have continued to refine their sections while also casting their eyes over the larger draft document. It is with regret that we saw medical issues force Marge Andrews to leave her extremely capable work as chair, but we are happy to welcome Director of Research John Callewaert into that role. Future tasks for the subcommittee include further polishing of text and incorporation of additional evidence and other data. We look forward to working with the comments that will result from dissemination of the draft document to the university community in May. At the same time we understand that one of the greatest challenges remaining for our subcommittee (and, indeed, for all the subcommittees) is the development of the document’s evaluative sections. Various presenters at the HLC’s April self-study conference in Chicago stressed that evaluation is perhaps the most important aspect of the document. Our work is cut out for us.

## **Criterion Five: Engagement and Service ~ Tony McGill and Renee Zientek, Co-chairs**

*As called for by its mission, the organization identifies its constituencies and serves them in ways both value.*

By Tony McGill ~ There are two enlightening areas that have filled my gap of knowledge since I began to chair the Criterion Five group. First, is the incredible extent to which our students, staff, and faculty are engaged in projects with our many constituencies. Everywhere I look there are dozens of people doing hundreds of service activities. Throughout the self-study process I have come to believe that we are capable of doing even more. The second area of my enlightenment is the sheer number and diversity of our constituencies. I originally thought about our constituencies as simply the members of our local community. I now see the community as a global community which reaches individuals and groups all over this planet and the reach continues to grow. I now feel a greater sense of pride when I think about our university, especially our engagement and service activities. I am proud of our students, staff, faculty, and our administrators for all they have accomplished. Together we have made, and will continue to make, a positive difference in our world.

## Data Collection and Analysis ~ Fawn Skarsten, Chair

By Fawn Skarsten ~ While some may say that things never change, reflection points to numerous changes in our handling of institutional data collection these last ten years. Since the last self-study we have implemented a number of major systems that assist us with information: the Banner Student system, in 1999; MPathways in 2000-01, and later, HRMS. Admissions added EMAS for applicant communications and many of our records are now imaged. What ever happened to microfiche? We now have tools that allow for more sophistication than most of us can comprehend for student records and cost accounting. Assessment of learning now utilizes implementation reports, portfolios, and direct measures of student outcomes rather than a small sampling of plans yet to be implemented. Departments routinely look at trend data in comparison to other institutions in the state and country. IPEDS and HEIDI are now part of our campus vocabulary. Students are asked for feedback more frequently. We now have course feedback forms for all courses and student surveys have expanded. The Student Satisfaction Survey (SSI) was first conducted in 1996. The upcoming academic year will mark the fifth survey providing us with twelve years of trend data on student satisfaction. The incoming freshman survey is in its 37<sup>th</sup> year while the new additions of NSSE and CSS recently completed their second year. Externally, the world has seen an explosion of information and data sources. Our institutional data is in guidebooks online and contained in federal and state Web sites. The ease at which individuals can research any topic in higher education online speaks to the volumes of information available; the challenge is determining what is important and how to interpret it. The visibility of our data and our accountability for it continues to be a focus for parents and constituents.

## Institutional Surveys

Survey	Vendor	Year Started	Target
Freshman Survey Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP)	Higher Education Research Institute, UCLA (HERI)	1972 to date	Incoming Freshman
Your First College Year (YFCY)	Higher Education Research Institute, UCLA (HERI)	2000-2004	Freshman (6 months) (links to CIRP)
College Senior Survey (CSS)	Higher Education Research Institute, UCLA (HERI)	2007, 2008	Seniors (links to CIRP & YFCY)
College Student Inventory (CSI)	Noel-Levitz	1997 2001 all Freshman	Incoming Students
Student Satisfaction Survey (SSI)	Noel-Levitz	1996, 1999, 2002, 2005, 2008	<i>Sample of All Students (3 yr rotation)</i>
Graduation Survey	Home Grown	1994-2003	Seniors
Alumni Survey	Home Grown	1994-2003	Alumni (one year out)
Graduate Alumni Survey	Home Grown (Survey Solutions)	2003, 2005	Graduate Alumni (one year out)
National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)	National Survey of Student Engagement, Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research	2007, 2008	Freshman & Seniors
National Survey of Faculty Engagement (FSSE)	National Survey of Student Engagement, Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research	2007, 2008	Faculty
NCA Faculty Opinion Survey	Home Grown (SSI model) (CSCAR)	1997	Faculty
NCA Staff Opinion Survey	Home Grown (SSI model) (CSCAR)	1989 & 1997	Staff
NCA Faculty Governance Survey	Home Grown	1997	Governing Faculty
NCA Management/ Administrative Opinion Survey	Home Grown (SSI model) (CSCAR)	1997	Administration
NCA Follow-up Opinion Survey	Home Grown (SSI model) (CSCAR)	1999	Faculty & Staff
Faculty & Staff Opinion Survey	Home Grown (SSI model) (CSCAR)	2008	Faculty & Staff