UAM 2024-25 Ten-Year HLC Comprehensive Visit

Steering Committee Activities

Steering Committee Members:

Ms. Crystal Halley	Dan Boice
Dr. Donna Hunnicutt	
Ms. Dorissa Kaufman	(Joined in 2024)
Ms. Shanna Knowles	Mr. Jay Hughes
Mr. Frank Porto	
Dr. Anita Shaw	Ms. Dawn Reed
Mr. Mark Spencer	Ms. Anissa Ross

Monday, August 29, 2022

After introductions, the Committee discussed the Ten-Year Process, and went over our basic resources:

1. Criteria for Accreditation
2. Assumed Practices
3. Federal Compliance
4. 2019 Report of the HLC Visitors for our Four-Year Assurance Review
5. Current draft of our Assurance Argument: it will need rewriting, but it's something to work from.

Dan will check into any reported trends vis-à-vis which criteria draw the most negative ratings during HLC evaluations.

For the next meeting, members will review the 2019 Team Report, noting all suggestions. We will discuss this at our next meeting, in order to see which suggestions may still need attention.

Meeting of September 19, 2022

The Committee studied the report of the HLC Visiting Team from the summer of 2017, noting the suggestions of the team and how or if UAM had responded to them, as well as sketching out future work for each:

Criterion 1: No suggestions.

Criterion 2: 2.A. The Review Team suggests that the Chancellor or a designated employee maintain and review a central repository … that contains the final resolution for any formal complaint filed with the university.

Action taken: Chancellor Doss appointed a task force that set up a repository in Maxiant. **No further action required.**

Criterion 3: 3.C   The catalog and the website provide contact information for faculty; "however, it is unclear as to the academic rank or part-time/full-time status of these faculty members…. [this information should be] readily available on the campus website or course catalog."

Action taken: The catalog has been updated to note academic rank but not part-time/full-time status. School and department listings are inconsistent. Adjuncts and Instructors could be full- or part-time.

Action required: We will look to other universities for standard practice.

3.D.   While the Writing Center, School of Math & Science, & Foreign Languages maintain tutors, and tutors are available through Career Services, "it is not clear how these services are coordinated for remote access students."

Action taken: The Writing Center offers online help sessions.

Action Required:

1.   The Online Syllabus Template can include information on online tutoring.
2.   The Tutoring Coordinator can provide information about online access on the Tutoring web page.
3.   The Writing Center can provide information about online access on its webpage.

3.D.   The Student Handbook provides information on requirements for off-site internships, clinics, and research activities, "funding support for undergraduate and graduate experiential learning is not listed."

Action Taken: Internships in some programs, such as Business, provide pay for the students. Clinicals and other experiential learning programs have never provided pay.

Action Required: The Assurance Argument should refine and give examples of our experiential learning, noting the value to our students and community with appropriate examples, and clarifying where we have funding set aside for these opportunities. If we can work in examples of how these experiences help develop our students' citizenship, encourage research skills, or otherwise enrich their education, so much the better.

3.D.   Professional Development for faculty: "it is unclear whether the faculty development activities and resources are adequate for all faculty members. While faculty receive training in using the courseware applications, faculty advising, and student success topics, it is unclear to the Review Team whether specific workshops to assist faculty reappointment, tenure, and promotion process are regularly offered to support faculty members. As such, it is unclear whether funding for faculty professional development is adequate to support junior faculty who desire to attain reappointment, tenure, or promotion."

Action Taken: Professional Development Week now includes regular sessions on the tenure process.
Action Required: The Assurance Argument will need to detail the provision of sessions, as well as more information on funding for faculty development.

      3.E.   UAM is looking at adapting a "co-curricular assessment template for Academic Advising, Career Services, and Taylor Library. The next step for UAM is to set up benchmarks to evaluate success and degrees of learning achieved through co-curricular and service learning activities."

Action Taken: The Assessment Committee has been working with Co-Curricular areas to develop more helpful reports.
Action Required: The Assessment Committee will need to maintain and make accessible records showing how this process is proceeding.

Criterion 4:   4.A.   "One area of review that could be improved is the graduate survey. …One suggestion is to work with Institutional Research and the ABHE [ADHE?] to identify data from LinkedIn accounts and the National Student Clearinghouse, thereby creating platforms to more accurately track UAM graduates."

      Given tracking of graduates in the Sciences, Education, & Nursing, "UAM may only need to synthesize graduate tracking programs already in place and establish a more refined process-oriented system designed to track graduates, areas of employment, and future academic successes."

Action Taken: Several schools do this already. Business is encouraging students to register on LinkedIn.
Action Required:
1.   We could consider a university-wide program to encourage registration on LinkedIn.
2.   The I.R. person can be involved in discussions on this and help provide solutions.

4.B.   The Report noted our use of data in annual reports to strengthen Gen Ed classes.
    Action Required: No changes, but the Assurance Argument must demonstrate ongoing use of data to strengthen Gen Ed.

4.C: The Report notes our use of EAB in identifying at-risk students.
    Action Required: The Assurance Argument must show how we manage this without EAB.

Criterion 5:   5.A.   A "need for more careful planning." But this seems to have been met by the Funding Productivity Watchdog Team.

Action Taken: The Chancellor has appointed a <u>Strategic Planning Coordinator.</u>
Action Required: None

"It is unclear whether UAM is budgeting for ongoing maintenance and repair in light of reduced state allocations and flat tuition revenues."

Action Taken: 1. The Contingency Fund has been increased to help cover emergency repairs.
2. Over the past several years, year-end funds have been transferred into the Physical Plant line for significant maintenance projects.

Action Required: The Assurance Argument must make clear that we are cognizant of maintenance requirements and budgeting accordingly.

The Team "recommends continued alignment of the budgeting process with the university strategic plan, the master plan, the enrollment plan, and the capital improvements plan."

Action Taken: In past years, department heads were required to align requests for budget increases with the strategic plan.
Action Required: Once there is a Strategic Plan, this can be again instituted.

5.D.   The report notes our use of EAB as a tool in improving retention, persistence, and completion rates.
Action Required: The Assurance Argument will again need to explain how we are managing without EAB.

Meeting of October 10, 2022

1. Dates for 2024-25 Visit: Dan reported that the HLC had asked us to rank dates – two in the Fall semester and two in the Spring semester – for the team visit, which we had done and sent back. We should know the schedule by the end of November.

2. Responses to the 2019 Visit:
   The team reviewed responses to the recommendations of the 2019 team, and noted how we will handle our response to their suggestions re:
   3.C: Our method of listing of faculty is pretty much identical to that of other schools.
   3.D.2:   Dan will contact Sydney Hill about this.

4.B.2:   The report will note that courses are assessed within their respective programs, and that the Gen Ed Committee makes changes as needed based on those unit-level reviews.

4.C: Academic Advising can help us demonstrate how we identify at-risk students.

5.D: Retention, persistence, and completion are monitored at the unit level, and data are centralized by the Assessment Committee.

3.   Assurance Argument:

The team discussed organization of the writing of the Assurance Argument, noting that the 2019 Argument can serve as a draft.

Dan will talk with Marsha Clayton to see how assigning/requesting chairs for task forces for specific criteria was handled ten years ago and her thoughts on the success of that method. Some individuals might appreciate having a co-chair, so we should keep that option in mind.

We discussed specific names for working on specific criteria. Some criteria will require more work than others, and so we will need to draft enough people to avoid overburdening individuals.

Dan asked members to ruminate on names for specific criteria.

4.   Keeping the Community Apprised of our Work
The Team discussed the critical importance of making keeping the UAM Community aware of our work. Since there is already an Accreditation webpage on the UAM website, Dan will post reports and updates there.

Meeting of November 7, 2022

1.   **Date set for 2024-25 Visit**:
Dan reported that the HLC has scheduled the dates for our Comprehensive Evaluation Visit: February 10-11, 2025. So the clock is now ticking!
The team will arrive on Sunday, Feb. 9, and be on campus all day Monday and Tuesday morning. They will confer on Tuesday afternoon, and will depart Monticello on Wednesday, Feb. 12.

2.   **Updates to responses to the 2019 Visit:**
3.D.2:   Dan contacted Sydney Hill about making tutoring available to online students, and she has been working with great energy to identify solutions. Dan also contacted Dean Harper about the Writing Center.

3. **Keeping the Community Apprised of our Work**

   Dan has been working with Bryan Fendley and Devin Burton, who will be setting up a webpage for us on the Accreditation Page. Dan will provide summaries of our activities. When that is up and going, Dan will notify the UAM community.

4. **Assurance Argument:**

   Dan talked with Marsha Clayton to see how assigning/requesting chairs for task forces for specific criteria was handled ten years ago and her thoughts on the success of that method.

   Utilizing past experience will be good, as will the infusion of new energy. Since we have a working draft of our Argument, work will be simpler and can focus on updates to the 2019 Argument as well as identifying and collecting evidence.

   After discussion, the following names were generated for the Criteria Task Forces:

   Criterion One
   Brian Hairston (Chair)
   Michael Alexander
   Landon Grimes
   Karen Hyatt
   Tiffany Osborne

   Criterion Two
   Jennifer Miller (Chair)
   Sydney Gavin-Herron
   Debbie Gasaway
   Thomas Lafaver
   Sage Loyd

   Criterion Three
   Bryan Fendley (Chair)
   Blake Denton

   Dawn Reed
   Lori Selby
   Emily Stell

   Criterion Four
   Mark Spencer (Co-Chair)
   Carrie Johnson (Co-Chair)
   Rob Ficklin
   Elaine Hargraves
   Carole Martin

   Criterion Five
   Dan Boice (Co-Chair)
   Frank Porto (Co-Chair)
   Roxanne Smith
   Lonni Davis

Meeting of February 23, 2023

1. **Committee Membership**:
   Dan reported that Donna Hunnicutt had taken a position as a VPAA at a regional college in Oklahoma. We are welcoming Vice Chancellor Jay Hughes, Chief Information Officer

Anissa Ross, and Crossett Assistant Vice Chancellor Dawn Reed.

2. **Schedule**
Dan distributed a schedule leading to the Visit in February of 2025.

3. **Keeping the Community Apprised of our Work**
Devin Burton set up a webpage for us under "Accreditation" in the "About UAM" section of the UAM website. Dan has included some news, and will regularly post updates. He will also make a report to the Deans and Executive Council next week, as well as during the February 22 Assembly meeting

4. **Assurance Argument:**

All five proposed team chairs had accepted leadership of the five Task Forces, and all of the proposed members also agreed.

5. **Challenges:**
   a. Nationally, accreditation is being challenged at the state level in at least one state, and it is possible that we will see some of this in Arkansas.
   b. Locally we will be needing someone to coordinate the Evidence File. If anyone is interested in either leading or serving on this small but critically important task force, they can contact Dan.

6. The meeting adjourned at 2:20, with the next meeting slated for **Monday, February 27, at 2:00 p.m.**

Meeting of April 3, 2023

1. **Task Force Updates:**
Dan reported that the task forces have organized and are beginning their work. Mark and Dan discussed some of the work of their two teams.
We need a replacement for his position on the Criterion 3 Task Force. Dan asked Committee members to consider names for that, as well as any other names of individuals who might want to serve.
Dan will be distributing links to recorded HLC-produced sessions on each of the criteria for any and all who might be interested.

2. **HLC Conference:**
Dan noted a few takeaways:
   a. HLC is continuing its emphasis on Civic Engagement, especially in view of Subcomponent 1.C.

    b.   Credentialing is essentially a "Wild West" right now, with accredited schools, large corporations, and fly-by-night companies offering them.

    c.   *Everyone* is very aware of the "demographic apocalypse" heading our way.

    d.   Some states are evincing hostility to DEI work. Additionally, many are targeting accreditation agencies. The political landscape looks especially challenging.

3. **HLC News:**

Dan distributed copies of the "[Key Findings of the Application of the Criteria for Accreditation AY 2022,](#)" and we discussed items of concern:

    a.   In AY 2022, 54% of Masters-Level Universities that were accredited were accredited with monitoring, meaning that additional reports would be needed.

    b.   The primary core components requiring monitoring from schools were:

        1.   4.B: Assessment of Student Learning (31%)

        2.   5.B: Resource base (15%)

        3.   4.A: Ensuring quality of educational offerings (13%)

        4.   5.C: Systematic & integrated planning & improvement (13%)

        5.   3.C: Sufficiency of faculty & staff (9%)

        6.   4.C: Persistence, retention, & completion outcomes (9%)

4. The meeting adjourned at 2:40 p.m, with the next meeting slated for **Monday, April 22, at 2:00 p.m.**

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UAM 2025 Ten-Year HLC Comprehensive Visit
Steering Committee
Meeting of April 22, 2024

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Steering Committee Members present:

Ms. Crystal Halley	Ms. Anissa Ross
Mr. Jay Hughes	Mr. Mark Spencer
Ms. Dorissa Kaufman	Dr. Tracy Tucker
Dr. Shanna Knowles	Ms. Bethany Wornick
Mr. Frank Porto	Dan Boice

Excused: Dawn Reed

5. **Updates:**

    1.   The five **Criterion Task Force chairs** have met and all are reporting progress on writing their chapters. Chapters Two (Dr. Jennifer Miller) and Four (Mark Spencer) are nearly complete. Chapter Five (Frank and Dan) is waiting on financial information.

2. **Evidence Coordinator:** Bethany Wornick noted that she has filed many items and is working with the team chairs for linking the evidence to their narratives. The evidence, like the chapters, are on the HLC portal. Anissa spoke to the importance of having the evidence accessible here at UAM, also.

3. **HLC Staff Liaison** Dr. Linnea Stenson will be visiting campus in September. She will have read our materials and will offer suggestions. She will meet with the Administration and with any other groups that want to know about the project.

4. Our **report on our Quality Initiative,** our Guided Pathways project, is due on June 1st. With Mark's guidance, it is taking shape, and needing only some good data to be ready to go.

6. **Action Items**

   1. **Conference Attendees:** Crystal, Frank, and Dan reported on what they learned at the HLC Conference in Chicago:

   - Crystal spoke about interesting ideas for hosting the team, and noted that some schools use mock interviews in preparation for the actual visit. The HLC is seeking to define Student Success, and will be sending us a questionnaire.

   - Frank attended several sessions on finances, and noted that UAM will be in comparatively good shape for our visit. Because of the number of schools either closing doors or declaring financial exigency, the HLC is increasing focus on fiscal health.

   - Dan noted the increasing HLC emphases on mission-centeredness, as well as on public service and civic engagement.

   2. Prior to the visit, the HLC will send our students a **questionnaire.** We will want to alert our students to prepare them for this, and be sure that it is not blocked by our cybersecurity.

   3. **Campus Awareness** of the upcoming visit is going to be critical. Dan will contact Kelsey about best ways to accomplish this. We will have a number of sessions during Professional Development week to help alert and prepare the community.

7. **Next Meeting:** We will hold meetings during the summer for as many as can attend, on Mondays at 2:00:
   May 13
   June 17
   July 15