

Higher Learning Commission of NCA News January 2007

Reaccreditation

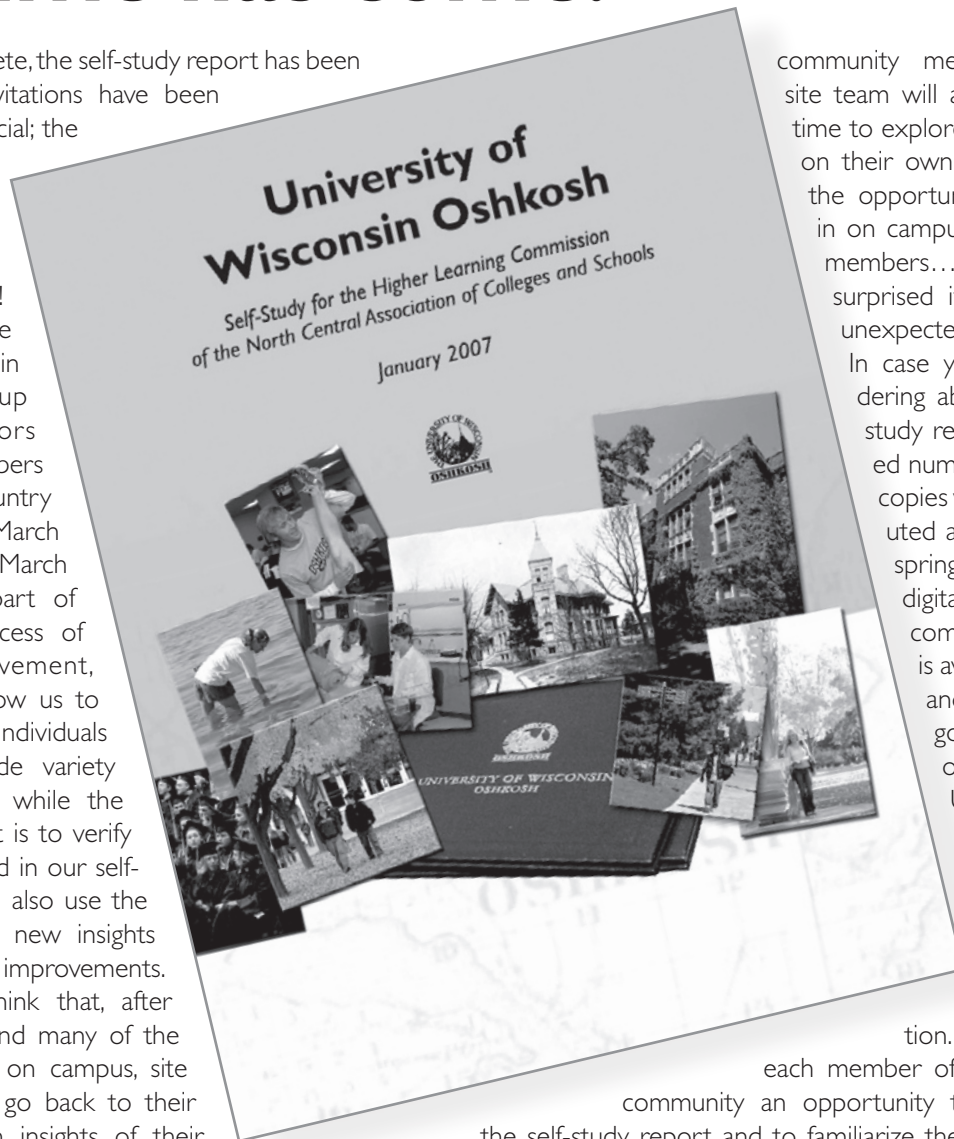


UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN OSHKOSH

The time has come!

The analysis is complete, the self-study report has been written, and the invitations have been mailed. It is now official; the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association is coming to town! Thank you to everyone who has participated in this process. A group of ten administrators and faculty members from around the country will be visiting from March 12th through March 14th. As another part of our university's process of continuing improvement, the site visit will allow us to host a number of individuals who possess a wide variety of experience. And while the purpose of their visit is to verify the evidence outlined in our self-study report, we will also use the opportunity to gain new insights that can lead to future improvements. One would also think that, after experiencing first-hand many of the great things we do on campus, site team members will go back to their own campuses with insights of their own!

While no formal agenda has been developed as yet, the site team is expected to meet with a wide range of individuals (e.g., administrators, faculty, staff, students, area



community members). The site team will also set aside time to explore our campus on their own and will use the opportunity to drop-in on campus community members...so, do not be surprised if you get an unexpected visitor!

In case you are wondering about the self-study report, a limited number of bound copies will be distributed at the start of spring semester. A digital copy of the complete report is available online and provides a good overview of why the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh is such a great place to get an education. This will give

each member of our campus community an opportunity to look over the self-study report and to familiarize themselves with the criteria that the HLC-NCA will be utilizing to evaluate our request for reaccreditation. So, when you get a chance, please take a look at our self-study report and remember those dates...March 12th through March 14th.

The reaccreditation site visit is March 12th through March 14th

Read the self-study online at http://www.uwosh.edu/nca_accreditation/UWOshkoshSelfStudy.pdf

An in-depth look at Criterion Five: Engagement and Service

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

Core Component - 5a

The organization learns from the constituencies it serves and analyzes its capacity to serve their needs and expectations.

Examples of Evidence

- The organization's commitments are shaped by its mission and its capacity to support those commitments.
- The organization practices periodic environmental scanning to understand the changing needs of its constituencies and their communities.
- The organization demonstrates attention to the diversity of the constituencies it serves.
- The organization's outreach programs respond to identified community needs.
- In responding to external constituencies, the organization is well-served by programs such as continuing education, outreach, customized training, and extension services.

Core Component - 5b

The organization has the capacity and the commitment to engage with its identified constituencies and communities.

Examples of Evidence

- The organization's structures and processes enable effective connections with its communities.
- The organization's co-curricular activities engage students, staff, administrators, and faculty with external communities.
- The organization's educational programs connect students with external communities.
- The organization's resources—physical, financial, and human—support effective programs of engagement and service.
- Planning processes project ongoing engagement and service.

Core Component - 5c

The organization demonstrates its responsiveness to those constituencies that depend on it for service.

Examples of Evidence

- Collaborative ventures exist with other higher learning organizations and education sectors (e.g., K-12 partnerships, articulation arrangements, 2+2 programs).
- The organization's transfer policies and practices create an environment supportive of the mobility of learners.
- Community leaders testify to the usefulness of the organization's programs of engagement.
- The organization's programs of engagement give evidence of building effective bridges among diverse communities.
- The organization participates in partnerships focused on shared educational, economic, and social goals.
- The organization's partnerships and contractual arrangements uphold the organization's integrity.

Core Component - 5d

Internal and external constituencies value the services the organization provides.

Examples of Evidence

- The organization's evaluation of services involves the constituencies served.
- Service programs and student, faculty, and staff volunteer activities are well-received by the communities served.
- The organization's economic and workforce development activities are sought after and valued by civic and business leaders.
- External constituents participate in the organization's activities and co-curricular programs open to the public.
- The organization's facilities are available to and used by the community.
- The organization provides programs to meet the continuing education needs of licensed professionals in its community.



**Mark your
calendar!
Reaccreditation
SITE VISIT
March 12-14**

http://www.uwosh.edu/nca_accreditation

HLC Self-study: how are we doing?

This article is a summary of the report delivered to the Academic Leaders Breakfast – January 4, 2007

We believe we meet all criteria and consequently are requesting reaccreditation. Below is a quick overview of the criteria and a few ways we have met them.

Criterion 1: Mission and Integrity

“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.”

UW Oshkosh has particular strength in the area of mission and planning. We have made major updates to our mission and goals and then extended this planning via the development of a facilities master plan and key operational plans. We have also developed core values and strategic directions. Together these documents are called our Governing Ideas.

Criterion 2: Preparing for the Future

“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.”

Planning is an ongoing and dynamic process at UW Oshkosh. Governing Ideas provide the articulation of our mission and values and are carefully aligned with our Strategic Action Initiatives and Key Operational Plans. Together these documents provide guidance for resource allocation and planning. In preparing for the future, we are also mindful of our impact on the environment. This has led to our emphasis on being a “green” campus and has led to national recognition for our commitment to “green” principles.

Criterion 3: Student Learning and Effective Teaching

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

Teaching and learning is the central function of our campus. Evidence that we value and excel in this area includes the following:

- Establishment of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning program;
- Program assessment plans are being implemented, with FSCAL overseeing this process;
- We are participating in NSSE, with improvement seen in our scores;
- We have received seven UW System Board of Regents Teaching Excellence awards;
- All programs in Nursing, Business, Education, Human

Services, and several COLS departments are nationally accredited; and

The student compact promotes the integration of advising, assessment and career development services.

Criterion 4: Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge

“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.”

Evidence of this criterion includes:

- Continued support of the Faculty Development program (\$1,073,686), which funded 146 research, professional development and sabbatical proposals in 2004-05;
- The collaborative student/faculty research programs for undergraduate and graduate students;
- Establishment of an undergraduate research journal;
- Establishment of endowed professorships; and
- The display of published books and CDs in Dempsey.

Criterion 5: Engagement and Service

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

Evidence of this criterion includes:

- The University, as well as various departments, divisions, and offices, has established advisory boards to communicate constituent needs and wants. Such boards include NEW ERA, New North, and the Chancellor’s advisory boards;
- We partner extensively with the community in projects such as The Pride of Oshkosh, Oshkosh Sports Complex, and Fall Fest on the Fox;
- We provide a multitude of learning opportunities for youth (ie. music and sports camps, Head Start, pre-college classes), seniors (Learning in Retirement), and the community in general (speakers bureau, musical/theatrical events, Center for Community Partnership, etc.);
- Students participating in internships, clinical experiences, student teaching, and other field-based experiences provide hundreds of thousands of hours to local community schools, hospitals, businesses, and other projects. COEHS estimates that its students alone contribute over 300,000 hours per year; and
- UW Oshkosh seniors are on a par in the area of volunteering/community service compared to their peers in UW System schools and other Master’s level campuses at 73%, 75%, and 70% respectively (NSSE 2004 data)

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Self-study summary *continued from previous page*

Concerns from 1997:

1. **Assessment plans**—Plans have now been implemented; the Faculty Senate Committee on the Assessment of Student Learning (FSCASL) collects and evaluates plans every two years and data is being collected and used to modify existing curricula and engage in future planning. We now need to measure the impact on curriculum change and use data in an aggregate fashion to develop and enhance all academic areas. Some departments have this underway.
2. **Dissatisfaction with General Education program**—Ten goals have been established for the General Education program and courses identify which goals are addressed and how they are assessed. Students can now take a wider variety of courses to meet general education requirements. Basic skills are infused throughout the undergraduate curriculum and then tied together via the use of interdisciplinary seminars to provide more coherence. PBIS and WBIS have been implemented and there was an assessment of General Education in 2005, with the results going before the Faculty Senate.
3. **Graduate programs are not distinctively separate from undergraduate programs**—The Office of Graduate Studies now reports directly to the Provost thus providing more direction and administrative involvement with

graduate education. The graduate curriculum is approved by a separate Graduate Council and a rubric for dual-level courses has been developed to help differentiate between undergraduate and graduate-level courses.

The Self Study Process: Comprehensive, Transparent, and Iterative

Involvement by representatives from all areas of campus (students, academic staff, classified staff, faculty, administration) including:

The Coordinating Committee (17 people) and criterion subcommittees (more than 50);

Campus community submission of documents (more than 500 received);

Campus listening/feedback sessions on the self study (6 sessions, 67 participants, additional feedback via email and snail mail);

Newsletters (two per semester);

Web site listing activities and minutes; and

Updates at Academic Leader Breakfasts each semester and at Opening Day.

The entire self study is on-line at http://www.uwosh.edu/nca_accreditation/UWOshkoshSelfStudy.pdf

What's a site visit like?

FROM *The Handbook of Reaccreditation*, Third Edition, Chapter 5.4 "Preparation For and Participation in the Comprehensive Visit."

A comprehensive visit for continued accreditation normally lasts three days. If circumstances warrant, the visit maybe extended if such arrangements have been approved in advance, or if the Commission staff liaison, the team chair, and the organization's CEO agree at the time of the visit that an extension will serve a useful purpose.

Typically, team members arrive at the organization's main site the day before the visit officially begins, and the team chair convenes an initial team meeting. Through earlier communication, the team chair and the CEO have decided whether a get-acquainted gathering will be held on the day the team members arrive. If such an event is scheduled, it is held early in the evening and is relatively brief.

The visit includes both an Opening Session and an Exit Session. Typically, the Opening Session is the initial activity of the first visit day. The Exit Session concludes the visit and typically is scheduled during mid-morning of the third day. Visits generally are concluded by noon on the third day so as to accommodate team members' travel.

The Multiple Roles of the Team

The team evaluates the organization to ascertain the extent to which it fulfills the Criteria for Accreditation; it provides consultation relative to the ongoing improvement of the organization; and it recommends the affiliation status that the organization should have with the Commission. Each of these roles is reflected in the structure and content of the team report.

During the visit, team members consult on and evaluate many topics, not all of which have bearing on the decision about accredited status. Some are part of the team's general observations and consultation. A team does not visit an organization to solve its problems or resolve its internal disputes. However, a team, through professional interaction with members of the host organization, can learn about factors that may be causing tensions and offer ideas about ways to improve systems and processes. At the Exit Session, the team chair clarifies those topics that have direct bearing on accredited status and those that constitute consultative advice directed toward continued improvement of the organization.