

HLC Fact of the Week:
“HLC’s Guiding Values: A Culture of Continuous Improvement”
(February 10, 2017)

As we prepare our Assurance Argument for the November 6-7, 2017 HLC site visit, we are addressing how we meet the five [HLC Criteria for Accreditation](#). Those criteria are best understood in the context of the guiding values that underlie them. HLC has described ten such guiding values, one of which addresses “a culture of continuous improvement.”

A culture of continuous improvement

“Continuous improvement is the alternative to stagnation. Minimum standards are necessary but far from sufficient to achieve acceptable quality in higher education, and the strongest institutions will stay strong through ongoing aspiration. HLC includes improvement as one of two major strands in all its pathways, the other being assurance that member institutions meet the Criteria and the Federal Requirements.

A process of assessment is essential to continuous improvement, and therefore a commitment to assessment should be deeply embedded in an institution’s activities. Assessment applies not only to student learning and educational outcomes but to an institution’s approach to improvement of institutional effectiveness.

For student learning, a commitment to assessment would mean assessment at the program level that proceeds from clear goals, involves faculty at all points in the process, and analyzes the assessment results; it would also mean that the institution improves its programs or ancillary services or other operations on the basis of those analyses. Institutions committed to improvement review their programs regularly and seek external judgment, advice or benchmarks in their assessments. Because in recent years the issues of persistence and completion have become central to public concern about higher education, the current Criteria direct attention to them as possible indicators of quality and foci for improvement, without prescribing either the measures or outcomes.

Innovation is an aspect of improvement and essential in a time of rapid change and challenge; through its Criteria and processes HLC seeks to support innovation for improvement in all facets of institutional practice.” (From HLC website – The Criteria for Accreditation: Guiding Values. Read about all ten guiding values [here.](#))

To learn more about accreditation and Lindenwood’s comprehensive evaluation and site visit scheduled for November 6-7, 2017, and to see the countdown clock to the visit, go to the HLC page on the Lindenwood website here: <http://www.lindenwood.edu/about/higher-learning-commission/>.

Questions? Contact David Wilson, Associate VP for Institutional Effectiveness, at DWilson@lindenwood.edu or x4737.