

Accreditation Overview

**Central Community College Board of Governors
Work Session
January 16, 2025**

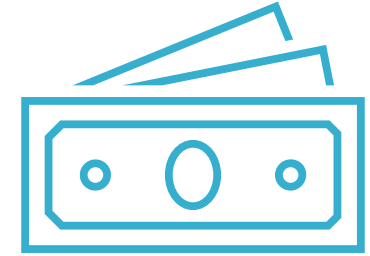
**Dr. Candace Walton, VP Innovation and Instruction
Brian McDermott, Director of Institutional Effectiveness**



Accreditation 101



Oversight process providing assurance students receive a quality education which will be recognized by potential employers or licensing boards as well as by other colleges or universities in case of student transfers or pursuit of a higher degree.



Allow the accredited institution to disperse federal (Title IV) student financial aid.

CCC's College Level Approvals

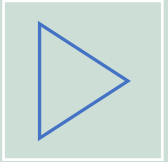
CCC is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) which is a regional accreditor.

HLC accredits our college- all campuses and learning centers- as one college.

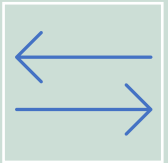
Each program and curriculum are reviewed/approved as offered by the college.

HLC works in concert with Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education (CCPE) providing both state and federal oversight.

HLC and CCC



CCC started as our candidacy for accreditation in January of 1971 and became fully accredited with HLC in 1980 (as a college area). CCC has been accredited in good standing every year since.



2001: CCC transitioned to the Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) as the pathway to maintain accreditation with HLC.



June 2018: the AQIP accreditation pathway was discontinued, requiring CCC to select one of two other pathways (Standard or Open). CCC selected the Open Pathway and was reassigned to that pathway in October of 2019.

Central Community College

AQIP Pathway Transition Map



If no Year 4 comprehensive evaluation is assigned,
transition to Year 5 of the Open Pathway



- Multi-Location Visit (March 2023)
- Develop and upload Assurance Argument (Start Summer 2023)
- Submit the Quality Initiative Report (August 2024)
- Assurance Argument Lock (February 3, 2025)
- Comprehensive Evaluation Visit (March 3-5, 2025)

Accreditation Cycle

- *The Open Pathway deploys a 10-year cycle with processes occurring within certain years of an institution's cycle.*



YEARS 1-3

Prepare Assurance Filing

Institution

May contribute documents to Evidence File and begin writing Assurance Argument for mid-cycle Assurance Review in Year 4.



YEAR 4

Assurance Review

Institution

Submit Assurance Filing (Assurance Argument and Evidence File).

Peer Review

Conduct Assurance Review (no visit).

HLC Decision Making

Acceptance of or action on Assurance Review.



YEARS 5-7

Quality Initiative Proposal

2019-22

Institution

Submit [Quality Initiative Proposal](#). May also begin preparing Assurance Filing for Year 10 [comprehensive evaluation](#).

Peer Review

Review Quality Initiative Proposal.

CCC's project was titled "Work-Based Learning/Apprenticeships expansion project."



YEARS 7-9

Quality Initiative Report

2023-24

Institution

Submit [Quality Initiative Report](#). May also continue preparing Assuring Filing for Year 10 [comprehensive evaluation](#).

Peer Review

Review Quality Initiative Report.

Results: Submitted early summer to HLC for review. Peer review panel "accepted" our project which means CCC has met this requirement. (7/2/2024)

And now to Year 10...



YEAR 10

Comprehensive Evaluation for Reaffirmation

Institution

Submit [comprehensive evaluation](#) materials.

Peer Review

Conduct comprehensive evaluation (with [visit](#)).

HLC Decision Making

Take action on comprehensive evaluation and Reaffirmation of Accreditation.

2025

- Student Opinion Survey
1/27/25 to 2/5/2025
- Submit assurance argument
and compliance documentation
to HLC by 2/3/25

Year 10 includes:

- [Student Opinion Survey](#)
 - Questions are about student experience at the College like enrollment, clarity of cost of enrollment, class experience and so on.
- [Federal Compliance Review Components:](#)
 - Assignment of Credits, Program Length, Tuition, verification of meeting class time/credit hours, homework hours, distance education requirement of substantive interaction, recruiting, transfer, credentials, program accreditations disclosures, etc.
 - Student complaint processes, student privacy, and other fed regs.
- Assurance Review ([Criterion Writing](#) and Evidence)

Criteria for Accreditation



Criterion 1. Mission –
The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.



Criterion 2. Integrity - Ethical and Responsible Conduct
- The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.



Criterion 3. Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources and Support - The institution provides quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.



Criterion 4. Teaching and Learning - Evaluation and Improvement - The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.



Criterion 5. Institutional Effectiveness, Resources and Planning - The institution's resources, structures, processes and planning are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

Example Criterion and components:

Criterion 2. Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

Core Components

2.A. The institution establishes and follows policies and processes to ensure fair and ethical behavior on the part of its governing board, administration, faculty and staff.

1. The institution develops and the governing board adopts the mission.
2. The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, human resources and auxiliary functions.

2.B. The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public.

1. The institution ensures the accuracy of any representations it makes regarding academic offerings, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, governance structure and accreditation relationships.
2. The institution ensures evidence is available to support any claims it makes regarding its contributions to the educational experience through research, community engagement, experiential learning, religious or spiritual purpose and economic development.

2.C. The governing board of the institution is autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution in compliance with board policies and to ensure the institution's integrity.

1. The governing board is trained and knowledgeable so that it makes informed decisions with respect to the institution's financial and academic policies and practices; the board meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.
2. The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.
3. The governing board reviews the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.
4. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests or other external parties.
5. The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the institution's administration and expects the institution's faculty to oversee academic matters.

2.D. The institution is committed to academic freedom and freedom of expression in the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning.

2.E. The institution's policies and procedures call for responsible acquisition, discovery and application of knowledge by its faculty, staff and students.

1. Institutions supporting basic and applied research maintain professional standards and provide oversight ensuring regulatory compliance, ethical behavior and fiscal accountability.
2. The institution provides effective support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff and students.
3. The institution provides students guidance in the ethics of research and use of information resources.
4. The institution enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

DRAFT 2.A.1- 2.A.2

2.A.1 The institution develops and the governing board adopts the mission.

The College mission of *Maximizing Student and Community Success* has been a ten-year plus mission encompassing the spirit of the College and its impact on the area. While College strategic plans and initiatives have changed to better align with academic and community changes, the mission continues to exemplify the College emphasis on student and community success. In January of 2019, the College reaffirmed its mission and vision with approval by the Board of Governors (agenda) as part of their regular meeting. Further background on the mission development was shared in Criterion 1.

2.A.2 The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, human resources and auxiliary functions.

As a public institution, the College abides by the Nebraska Open Meetings Act and is transparent regarding meetings, decisions, and actions. The Board of Governors (see pg 3, #11) approves all college policies, available through the online portal, Sparg (see screen shot), which houses other employee and college-related items. Pursuant to state statute, the Board of Governors has specific duties including but not limited to:

- General supervision, control and operation
- Develop and offer programs of study
- Enter into agreements for services, facilities
- Adopt rules and regulations

The Board approves all claims for payments except those made by themselves and abstains from votes where a conflict-of-interest may occur. The College has a Conflict of Interest policy outlining requirements for disclosure of potential conflicts for Board members and employees.

DRAFT
2.A.1- 2.A.2

CCC is committed to providing a workplace and educational environment free from all forms of discrimination, [harassment](#) and retaliation. To ensure compliance with federal and state civil right laws and affirm its commitment to promoting the goals of fairness and equity in all aspects of the educational program or activity as well as equal opportunity, CCC has developed internal policies and procedures to provide a prompt, fair and impartial process to address any allegations of discrimination or harassment as outlined in the [Civil Rights Policies & Procedures](#) document.

The College is committed to fair and unbiased hiring practices and provides [hiring guidelines](#) (p. 2&3) to ensure practices are consistent collegewide, specifically addressing diversity in hiring committees. Also, the [Adjunct Hire Back Procedure](#) provides directions on hiring full-time faculty during off-contract time and part-time instructional employees.

The [Ethics and Responsibilities for College Employees Policy](#) provides guidance and expectations for ethical standards of professional conduct. This policy covers compliance, information and data management integrity, and appropriate use of college

resources. Professional conduct is described as acting with honesty and integrity in all matters relating to employment.

Purchasing-related practices, including required public notices and bid processes, are made following the [Purchasing Policy](#). In planning for a [snack bar remodel](#) project on the Grand Island Campus in 2022, the College awarded the project to a local contractor through the bid process. The College recently released a [Request for Proposals](#) to invite firms around the state to submit proposals for college-wide architectural services.

As required by the Nebraska Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education, [financial](#) (2024) and [FTE/enrollment audits \(2024\)](#) are conducted annually by outside independent auditors.

To ensure consistency, accessibility and excellence in teaching, [Instructional Procedures and Guidelines](#) is a guide for faculty in course development and delivery. The Faculty Resource Center and Learning Support Services provides support and assistance to full-time and adjunct faculty in creating syllabi and navigating the CCC learning management system, Canvas.

Year 10

Central's Peer review visit

Mark your calendar: March 3-4, 2025

Team will visit Grand Island, Columbus, and Hastings.

HLC assigns a Peer Team Chair who will work with Dr. Gotschall to create an agenda for Central's visit to assure the peer review team is able to get the information they need during the visit.

Prior to the visit the team is expected to thoroughly review/study/learn Central's submitted assurance argument along with our evidence. The reviewers know **A LOT** about the college when they arrive- although they may not always show it.

Reviewers:

- Likely will want to meet with groups of board members, faculty and staff on specific topics.
 - Typically, to verify what is written in report, missing or not found in report, may focus on specific topic areas like assessment of student learning, contact time, teaching practices, distance education, state licensure, employability of graduates.
- Likely will want to meet with students on specific topics
 - Typically to verify what employees are saying and what the peer reviewers are seeing.

HAPPY
march



Post Visit (Next Steps in Assurance)

1. Peer review team evaluates the institution's Assurance Filing along with evidence and observations of their visit. The written outcome of this review includes a recommendation as to whether the institution complies with the Criteria for Accreditation and other HLC requirements.
2. CCC will receive the preliminary review and be asked to respond regarding its agreement with the components of the report.
3. The Internal Actions Council will review the recommendations of the team and CCC comments and will determine the reaffirmation of the college.
4. Once the college is reaffirmed the new ten-year cycle starts over.

Takeaways

- HLC's Accreditation is an essential part of CCC's operations.
- Accreditation oversees most of the operations of the college in concert with state and federal requirements.
- All CCC employees and board members have a role in supporting CCC's ability to meet HLC criteria.
- CCC has long established processes which provide evidence to support the college is meeting accreditation expectations.
- CCC's Year 10 work is on-going and will culminate with the peer-review visit in March.
- Then we start the cycle over again!

Want to learn more?

Check out:

<https://www.hlcommission.org/Accreditation/comprehensive-evaluation.html#>