



Frequently Asked Questions About Accreditation

What is accreditation?

- Assuring and advancing the quality of higher education.
- Required to be eligible for federal student financial aid
- Validates UNL's standing in requests for public or private support.

Who is UNL's accreditor?

- The Higher Learning Commission (HLC, for short).
- UNL last received 10-year continuance of accreditation in 2006.

When is UNL's visit with the HLC?

- External review team arrives October 23, 2016; conducts interviews with UNL community October 24-25.

What will occur during the HLC visit?

- Nine team members will conduct interviews with the UNL community, including the chancellor, vice chancellors, deans, department heads, faculty, staff, students, and the Board of Regents.
- Team members will seek to validate the evidence that was presented in UNL's Assurance Argument, The Assurance Argument addresses the HLC's five criterion for accreditation. (see back)
- During the interviews, the team members will be determining whether UNL meets the standards for reaccreditation.

What am I expected to know in order to prepare for the HLC visit?

- Know UNL's mission statement (<http://www.unl.edu/about/role-mission/>)
- Become familiar with UNL's strategic priorities in the 2016 State of the University Address (<http://www.unl.edu/chancellor/>)
- Become familiar with Reaffirmation and Accreditation process and read UNL's assurance argument (<http://svcaa.unl.edu/accreditation/reaffirm-2016/assurance-argument>)

How to contribute to a positive accreditation outcome?

- Participate in one of the eight open sessions (faculty, students, staff, and criterion).
- Answer questions from the review team candidly and thoughtfully.
- If you don't know the answer, there is no need to make up an answer or to guess. It is okay to say "I don't know".

Questions You May Be Asked

1. What do you know about accreditation and have you seen or read UNL's Assurance Argument?
2. How would you describe UNL's mission? Do you know where you would find the official statement?
3. What are the university's current strategic planning priorities?
4. What are UNL's greatest strengths?
5. What are the biggest challenges facing UNL?
6. What makes UNL unique in your state and among higher education universities in general?
7. Provide an example of how UNL is committed to freedom of expression.
8. Describe your codes of conduct and how they are used.
9. Do you know where to find information about academic integrity and policies regarding academic misconduct?
10. How would you describe the campus climate for diversity?
11. Describe any campus processes that could be improved or made more efficient.
12. What kind of changes are taking place at UNL? Do you see these as positive or not?

1	<p>Mission</p> <p>The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. <i>The institution's mission is broadly understood within the institution and guides its operation.</i> B. <i>The mission is articulated publicly.</i> C. <i>The institution understands the relationship between its mission and the diversity of society.</i> D. <i>The institution's mission demonstrates commitment to the public good.</i>
2	<p>Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct</p> <p>The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. <i>The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions; it establishes and follows fair and ethical policies and processes for fair and ethical behavior on the part of its governing board, administration, faculty, and staff.</i> B. <i>The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public with regard to its programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, control, and accreditation relationships.</i> C. <i>The governing board of the institution is sufficiently autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution and to assure its integrity.</i> D. <i>The institution is committed to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning.</i> E. <i>The institution's policies and procedures call for responsible acquisition, discovery and application of knowledge by its faculty, students and staff.</i>
3	<p>Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources and Support</p> <p>The institution provides high quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. <i>The institution's degree programs are appropriate to higher education.</i> B. <i>The institution demonstrates that the exercise of intellectual inquiry and the acquisition, application, and integration of broad learning and skills are integral to its educational programs.</i> C. <i>The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services.</i> D. <i>The institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching.</i> E. <i>The institution fulfills the claims it makes for an enriched educational environment.</i>
4	<p>Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement (Assessment)</p> <p>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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. <i>The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs.</i> B. <i>The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning.</i> C. <i>The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.</i>
5	<p>Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness</p> <p>The institution's resources, structures, and processes are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities. The institution plans for the future.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. <i>The institution's resource base supports its current educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.</i> B. <i>The institution's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the institution to fulfill its mission.</i> C. <i>The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning.</i> D. <i>The institution works systematically to improve its performance.</i>



Questions For Faculty

1. What are the characteristics of a UNL education?
2. How do you contribute to the university's mission?
3. What is your department's vision for the future? How does this relate to the university's vision?
4. Can you describe the tenure and promotion process? What is your impression of the process?
5. Talk about shared governance and how faculty participate in decision-making at different levels of the university (department, college, institution).
6. How would you describe the relationship between faculty and administration? What works and what needs improvement?
7. Describe the relationship between UNL's colleges. What collaborations currently exist?
8. What resources are available to support faculty (e.g., library, internal grants, external grant support, faculty development, travel, etc.)? Are these sufficient in meeting faculty needs?
9. Is your department actively involved in assessing student learning? How has your department used its assessment findings? What evidence do you have that students achieve your program's intended learning outcomes?
10. For those who've recently had an APR/program accreditation visit, what have you learned from the process of writing the self-study, experience the external visit, and from the external visitor's written report?
11. Do you have undergraduate students and graduate students in the same classroom? How do you differentiate between undergraduate and graduate learning outcomes?
12. Tell me about the ACE (Achievement-Centered Education) Program. How does it work? How are you assessing the learning outcomes? How did this program tie to your mission?
13. What is the purpose of UNL's general education (ACE)? In what ways does the program achieve its goals for students? How could it be improved?
14. Over the past five years, significant initiatives were implemented in several key student support areas. Can you describe some of these efforts and how they've contributed to undergraduate success?
15. How are your students doing once they graduate?
16. Are you involved in research? How does the university's focus on research further UNL's mission?
17. What opportunities do students in your program have to gain experience with research? Community or civic engagement? Diversity or multiculturalism?
18. For some common faculty issues (workload, salary, sabbatical leaves, etc.), what works well and what needs to be improved?
19. What is the role of faculty in ensuring academic quality?
20. Provide an example of how UNL is committed to the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning.
21. How do you ensure that all classes – online, blended, off-campus, dual credit - have the same student learning outcomes and equivalent assessments?
22. Does your department offer courses or programs via distance education? If so, how does the department ensure the quality of the curriculum regardless of how or where it is delivered?
23. Is UNL or your college/unit/department more effective than it was 5-10 years ago? Explain.
24. What are the biggest resource challenges at UNL?



Questions For Staff

1. How does your department support the academic mission of the university?
2. What is it like to be a staff member at UNL? How is morale on campus?
3. How do you contribute to the university's mission?
4. What opportunities do you have for professional development? Are staff members treated equitably in their access to these opportunities?
5. How are staff evaluated at UNL? What is your impression of the evaluation process?
6. How are staff involved in campus decision-making processes? Do you think that staff have sufficient input into decisions that affect them?
7. How would you describe the relationship between staff and administration? What works and what could be improved?
8. What are some important benefits about working at UNL? What do you like best about your job? What would you change if you could?
9. How do units across campus work collaboratively? What works well and what could be improved?
10. Do you feel that the work you do is valued by administration? Faculty? Other staff members? Students?
11. How does your department contribute to student learning and development? How does your department assess or evaluate effectiveness?
12. What are the biggest resource challenges at UNL?



Questions For Students

1. Why did you choose to enroll at UNL? Have your expectations been met?
2. What do you think is special about a UNL education?
3. Would you recommend UNL to other students?
4. What do you like best about UNL? What would you change if you could?
5. Have you experienced any problems getting the courses you need in a timely manner?
6. Describe your experiences with academic advising.
7. Do you know where to go for help with the following? (a) academic support; (b) career planning; (c) personal counseling; (e) making a complaint; (f) technology support.
8. Do you use any of the following: library, tutoring services, dining services, the health center, recreational facilities? If yes, what has been your experience?
9. Are you able to estimate your bill each semester or are you surprised when you receive it? Do you know if you are enrolled in an accredited program?
10. How is the relationship between students and faculty?
11. What opportunities do you have to conduct research? Participate in community or service learning experiences? Interact with people and cultures different from your own? Gain real world experience related to your educational and career goals?
12. Tell us about programming that happens outside of academic departments where you have learned something.
13. If you have transferred in credits, what was the experience like for you?
14. Do you think the university is clear in its communication with students about topics such as financial aid, student conduct, costs, and graduation requirements? What improvements would you recommend?