HLC EVALUATION TEAM SET TO ARRIVE SEPT. 28

A five-member Higher Learning Commission Evaluation Team will visit Monroe County Community College from Sept. 28-30 to examine our infrastructure, review documents, observe employees in the performance of their work and conduct formal and informal interviews with faculty, staff and students. The visit is the culmination of MCCC’s HLC Self-Study process. The goal of the process is another 10-year HLC accreditation. The Self-Study Report can be viewed at http://www.monroecc.edu/self-study/report.htm.

While most of the team’s work will be highly structured and formally scheduled, team members may also seek random, less formal contact with any member of MCCC’s campus community. The visit by the team will include a number of open meetings, which are outlined below:

**Monday, September 28**

1:30-2:30 p.m.  Open meeting with support staff and maintenance employees  
La-Z-Boy Center  
Rooms Z-257 and Z-258

1:30-2:30 p.m.  Open meeting with administrative staff  
La-Z-Boy Center, Meyer Theater

2:30-3:30 p.m.  Open meeting with students  
La-Z-Boy Center, Meyer Theater

5:30-7 p.m.  Dinner gathering with Board of Trustees for social interaction and general discussion  
Warrick Student Services/Administration Building, Cuisine 1300

**Tuesday, September 29**

12:30-1:30 p.m.  Open meeting with faculty  
La-Z-Boy Center, Meyer Theater

**Wednesday, September 30**

10:30 a.m.  Exit Session  
La-Z-Boy Center, Meyer Theater
HLC Site Visit Preparation: Frequently Asked Questions

This FAQ is provided for faculty and staff to help prepare individuals for evaluation team interviews and inquiries. All members of MCCC’s campus community are encouraged to become familiar with the Self-Study Report (http://www.monroeccc.edu/self-study/report.htm) and the expectations of the evaluation team surrounding individual areas of concern and responsibility.

What is the Higher Learning Commission?
The Higher Learning Commission is the arm of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools that is responsible for the accreditation of colleges, universities and other institutions of higher learning. The name reflects the importance of accountability for student learning.

What is the North Central Association?
The North Central Association is one of six regional associations that accredit schools and colleges in the United States. Although most of the colleges and universities that the NCA Higher Learning Commission accredits are in the upper Midwest, its geographical range extends from West Virginia to Arizona.

What is HLC accreditation? Why is it important?
While many academic agencies accredit particular programs of study (education, nursing, etc.), the Higher Learning Commission and other regional accrediting agencies are responsible for assuring that colleges and universities meet certain standards in terms of their missions, operations, activities in teaching and student learning, discovery and promotion of knowledge, and service. Accreditation is an assurance to the public that an institution is properly prepared to do its job. On a more practical level, the HLC and the other accrediting agencies have been designated as the “gatekeepers” for federal funds in higher education. Unaccredited schools are not eligible for many kinds of federal support. For more information, see http://www.ncahigherlearningcommission.org.

What does the HLC look for when it accredits colleges and universities?
The HLC has adopted a set of criteria for evaluation. The five criteria areas are:
- Mission and Integrity
- Preparing for the Future
- Student Learning and Effective Teaching
- Acquisition, Discovery and Application of Knowledge
- Engagement and Service

Components of these criteria and examples of evidence are available at the HLC Web site (http://www.ncahigherlearningcommission.org).

When will the HLC accreditation visit to MCCC take place?
The college has prepared a Self-Study Report based on the aforementioned criteria, which was submitted to the HLC last month. The HLC Evaluation Team is scheduled to visit the college from Sept. 28-30.

Why are we being visited for accreditation so soon?
Didn't we just go through this? The last full accreditation visit from the North Central Association was in 1999. Accreditation usually takes place in a ten-year cycle. MCCC is now coming due for our next full accreditation visit.

How is MCCC preparing for the accreditation visit?
A Steering Team was formed to develop a college-wide Self-Study Report and to help prepare the college for the 2009 visit. You can visit our accreditation Web site by selecting the “Accreditation” link on the home page at www.monroecd.edu. For more information, contact one of the Self-Study co-chairs: Suzanne Wetzel (swetzel@monroecd.edu) and Dr. David Waggoner (dwaggoner@monroecd.edu).

How can I best prepare for the site visit?
By far, the best way to prepare for the visit is to review our Self-Study Report at www.monroecd.edu/self-study/report.htm.

Who will be on the HLC team?
The college will be visited by a peer review team of trained consultant evaluators. These are administrators, staff people and faculty who have been accepted to the Peer Review Corps by the HLC. All will have gone through training for such visits and will be familiar with the criteria for evaluation. The HLC Handbook states that “the organization should not share the names of the team members prior to their arrival on campus.”
When the team arrives on campus, their names will be shared with the campus community.
What will the HLC team do during the visit?
The team will already have received the complete Self-Study Report and will have had access to documents in electronic formats. During the visit, they will be seeking to validate the content of the report in terms of the strengths we have declared and data that support them, as well as concerns that need attention or issues that may confront us in the future.

Team members will want to have conversations with representative members from all segments of the MCCC community: administrators, staff, faculty and students. Some of these conversations will occur in small group settings and some will be individual interviews. Some will be scheduled in advance, but the visitors always reserve the right to arrange additional interviews or activities after they arrive. Quite literally, we will not have a complete list of all the visitors’ activities until the three-day visit is over! The team will summarize its findings and share their planned recommendation for affiliation status at the Exit Session.

What questions will site visitors ask? What information can – or should – be shared?
Site visitors will move across the college to (1) observe programs and (2) talk to people. They will be sure to talk to faculty, staff and students. They will also talk to trustees and to leaders in the surrounding community. And they will review mountains of documentation.

But as they do this, the visitors will be likely to ask questions rooted in the five criteria. So, they will ask things like:

What is the mission of this program or unit? And how does it relate to the college’s mission?
Are you clear about MCCC’s mission and how you fit in?
Where are you going, as you move into the future, as a college and as a program, department, office or whatever?
How do you know you are successful? How do you measure effectiveness?
How do you relate to the public and to all the stakeholders who are outside the college?
When you are asked questions like this, you should answer them candidly and thoughtfully. We are proud of our college and, above all, of its people. The interactions of the visitors with our faculty, staff and students will provide the best evidence of our fulfillment of the accreditation criteria.

How will the findings be reported?
In both the initial draft and the later, full-written report, the HLC team will write an Assurance section that addresses the Criteria and Core Components for accreditation. The team will note the components that have been met, any that have not been, and any qualifications or concerns regarding them. In addition, the team will write an Advancement section to offer advice to the campus about issues that might be of concern and ways in which MCCC might seek to approach or address those issues. The president should receive a draft of the written report within six weeks of the visit. He will have a chance to correct factual errors, and the final report will be submitted to the HLC no more than nine weeks after the visit.

What kinds of recommendations might the team make?
The team may simply recommend continued accreditation with no recommended follow-up activities before the next scheduled visit in 2019. If an institution is in serious trouble, the team could recommend probation or even withdrawal of accreditation. In between is a range of possible actions, including required progress reports on how the institution is dealing with particular issues, monitoring reports dealing with specific issues that require careful and ongoing attention and contingency reports dealing with changes taking place that affect the mission or nature of the institution.

What will happen to the report when the visit is over?
MCCC as an institution will need to look carefully at the report, both for the validation of the things that we are doing well and for advice about ways in which we can improve what we are doing. Particular issues may be referred to appropriate committees and offices for examination and action.

What do we hope to learn from this process?
The Self-Study process is a unique opportunity to examine the extent to which we meet the needs of our various constituent groups. In addition, the process of conducting a Self-Study develops networks across the college units and departments that can be used to more effectively achieve the overall MCCC mission in the future.
Mission
Monroe County Community College provides a variety of higher education opportunities to enrich the lives of the residents of Monroe County.

Vision
Monroe County Community College aspires to be our community’s first choice for higher learning.