



On November 7 and 8, 2016, a Peer Review Team of evaluators representing LSSU's accrediting body, the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), will be on campus talking to members of the LSSU community. Their goal is to verify that LSSU is doing everything required to remain accredited. What is accreditation, and why is it important?

"Accreditation is a form of endorsement that colleges and universities use to let potential students know that their program offers a valid education that is officially recognized the U.S. Department of Education." The U.S. Department of Education recognizes regional accrediting bodies, ours is the Higher Learning Commission, (HLC). The HLC then sets criteria for accreditation that colleges and universities in their region must adhere to. The HLC has set five criteria for accreditation<sup>ii</sup>

**Criterion One. Mission**

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

**Criterion Two. Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct**

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

**Criterion Three. Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support**

The institution provides high quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

**Criterion Four. 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 Five. Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness**

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.

While accreditation from the HLC is voluntary it is also VERY IMPORTANT. Students must attend accredited colleges and universities to be eligible for the Federal Student

Financial Aid Program<sup>iii</sup>, state financial aid, and employer tuition assistance<sup>iv</sup>. This means that LSSU's accreditation is important to all of us, but especially if you receive financial aid, work at LSSU, or are planning to use your LSSU degree to get a job or to continue your education in a graduate or professional program.

Over the past two years members of the LSSU community have been building the case for how we meet these criteria, writing an evidence-driven narrative called the Assurance Argument<sup>v</sup>. Before the Peer Review Team comes to campus they will have read our Argument, reviewed our evidence, and identified areas and questions needed further investigation. This November, peer-reviewers representing the HLC will be on campus to meet with students, professors, staff, administration, and trustees to gather this information before they make their decision about reaccrediting the College.

We encourage all members of the LSSU community to participate in the reaccreditation process by reviewing the Assurance Argument, and taking part in the events during the site visit.

Questions: contact David Myton, Ph.D. Associate Provost, Lake Superior State University

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<sup>i</sup> <https://www.petersons.com/college-search/us-colleges-universities-accreditation.aspx#/sweeps-modal>

<sup>ii</sup> <http://hlcommission.org/Criteria-Eligibility-and-Candidacy/criteria-and-core-components.html>

<sup>iii</sup> <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/sites/default/files/funding-your-education.pdf>

<sup>iv</sup> <http://www.back2college.com/plans.htm>

<sup>v</sup> <http://www.lssu.edu/hlc/documents/assuranceargument2016aug30.pdf>