

SLIDE 1: Welcome to a brief summary of the University of Akron's preparation for the upcoming visit by the Higher Learning Commission's accreditation team.

This PowerPoint presentation will discuss the process of accreditation, continue with a history of accreditation at The University of Akron, and conclude with a summary of the self-study report.

SLIDE 2: The North Central Association of Colleges and Schools Handbook says:

“Institutional accreditation evaluates an entire institution and accredits it as a whole. An institutional accrediting body evaluates more than the formal educational activities of an institution; it assess, as well, such characteristics as governance and administration, financial stability, admissions and student personnel services, institutional resources, student academic achievement, institutional effectiveness, and relationships with constituencies outside the institution.”

SLIDE 3: While the accreditation agency is often called NCA – the acronym for North Central Association of Colleges and Schools - it is actually the Higher Learning Commission, a unit of the North Central Association, that is charged with making recommendations about institutional accreditation for the 19 states that form the north central region.

Many of you are familiar with individual program accreditation. Regional accreditation is institutional accreditation - the HLC consultant-evaluator team will be reviewing the institution as a whole.

SLIDE 4: A university wide Self-Study Steering Committee comprised of faculty, contract professionals, staff and students began work on the report in Fall 2001. The completed Self Study is found on this CD. From April 27-30, the HLC consultant evaluator team will visit our campus to examine, interview and analyze how the University is accomplishing its mission. On the 30th, the team will present a draft report to the President. No later than nine weeks after the visit, the team's final report is sent to our liaison at NCA.

The second step is a review of the documents, usually by a Reader's Panel of NCA. Within two weeks of receipt of the final team report, The University of Akron will provide an official response and choose which review process it prefers.

The third step is final review and action by the members of the Commission. No later than 30 days after the deadline for responses, the Commission takes final action at either a regularly scheduled meeting or a special meeting. We expect a response late in fall 2003.

SLIDE 5: The Self-Study Steering Committee finds that The University of Akron meets the criteria for continuing full accreditation. The best possible outcome is to receive a 10-year accreditation from HLC, however, in today's rapidly changing environment, the commission will accredit an institution for six or more years, so any time period between six and ten years will be viewed as a satisfactory outcome.

SLIDE 6: While it is certain that the team will meet with particular members and groups of the campus community such as the Planning and Budgeting Committee, all of the vice-presidents and deans, open faculty, contract professional, staff and student meetings, and the Board of Trustees, it is just as certain that the team members will make sure to have spontaneous, unscheduled interviews with various individuals and groups as they conduct their review. Everyone on campus should be prepared to greet and talk with the team members during their visit.

SLIDE 7: The members of the consultant evaluator team are:

Dr. Phillip Jones, chair

SLIDE 8: Dr. Donald Bennion

Dr. Sandra Marie Flake

SLIDE 9: Dr. Juan Franco

Dr. Lin Holder

SLIDE 10: Dr. John Ory

Dr. Kathleen Rountree

SLIDE 11: Dr. Gail Scukanec

SLIDE 12: The University of Akron has been fully accredited by NCA for almost 90 years. As with most long-term complex relationships, we have had our accomplishments and challenges.

SLIDE 13: The long-term accomplishments have far outweighed the recent challenges. The University of Akron has been fully accredited since 1914 and our academic programs and institutional vitality have consistently received a strong endorsement.

SLIDE 14: In 1997, our last scheduled comprehensive accreditation, we received only a 5-year accreditation, and we sustained a focus visit in 2000.

When a team of consultant-evaluators comes to a campus to study and review a specific area of the institution that is of particular concern, it is referred to as a focus visit. Our focus visit in 2000 addressed two areas: 1) the planning process and 2) the budget reallocation process.

SLIDE 15: Following the last comprehensive visit in 1997, the NCA's "Report" included a list of institutional strengths and institutional concerns. Chapter One of our Self-Study report includes responses to these concerns.

SLIDE 16: It is important to note that we now have a stable administration, a participatory budget process, a sound framework for planning in *Charting the Course* (also available on this CD), and the adoption of the Balanced Scorecard methodology for implementation of *Charting the Course* (also available on this CD). This methodology provides for ongoing assessment and continuous quality improvement.

SLIDE 17: An institution accredited by the HLC of NCA must meet five criteria for accreditation. In its consideration of each criterion, the commission looks for patterns of evidence in support of that criterion.

SLIDE 18: The University of Akron has organized its self-study report around the five criteria that are summarized in the following slides. I will read the official statement for each of the criterion and then provide quiet time for you to read examples of the Self-Study findings for each criterion.

SLIDE 19: Criterion One states: The institution has clear and publicly stated purposes consistent with its mission and appropriate to an institution of higher education.

time to read - SLIDES 20 and 21

SLIDE 22: Criterion Two states: The institution has effectively organized the human, financial, and physical resources necessary to accomplish its purposes.

time to read - SLIDES 23, 24, 25

SLIDE 26: Criterion Three states: The institution is accomplishing its educational and other purposes.

time to read - SLIDES 27, 28, 29

SLIDE 30: Criterion Four states: The institution can continue to accomplish its purposes and strengthen its educational effectiveness.

time to read - SLIDES 31, 32

SLIDE 33: Criterion Five states: The institution demonstrates integrity in its practices and relationships.

time to read

SLIDE 34: While The University of Akron demonstrates many positive responses to the required criteria, we also recognize ongoing challenges, particularly in the areas of processes and resources.

Time to read next two slides - SLIDES 35, 36

SLIDE 37: To address these challenges, we have developed these future plans.

Time to read next slide

SLIDE 38: After two years of self-analysis, the Self-Study Steering Committee has concluded that:

The University of Akron has demonstrated significant progress and ongoing work in addressing critical concerns.

The University of Akron meets all HLC general institutional requirements and criteria for accreditation

And as a result, The University of Akron is requesting continuing full accreditation.

SLIDE 39: All members of our university family play a critical role in achieving a successful outcome. Some of the things you can do are:

SLIDE 40: Understand the HLC standards and expectations

Know the difference between program and institutional accreditation

Welcome the consultant evaluators

Participate in the visit; and

Know your University of Akron!