



NORTH CENTRAL'S ACCREDITATION MASTER PLAN:

T**GETHER** MET

David Roland Finley, Ph.D., President
North Central Michigan College



Dear Campus Community,

As we embark on the significant journey toward reaffirming North Central Michigan College's accreditation with the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), I want to take a moment to express my sincere gratitude for the dedication and passion each of you brings to our college community. Our accreditation process is not just a formality; it is a critical reflection of our commitment to delivering high-quality education and ensuring that our students have access to the resources and opportunities they need to succeed.

The HLC accreditation process is an opportunity for us to showcase our strengths, evaluate our practices, and identify areas where we can continue to grow and improve. It is a comprehensive process that examines every facet of our institution, from our mission and values to the quality of our educational programs and the integrity of our operations.

As you are aware, this process culminates with a comprehensive evaluation by a team of HLC peer reviewers in March 2025. The preparation for this visit is extensive, requiring the collective effort of our entire Timberwolf family. I encourage you all to familiarize yourselves with our mission, vision, and values, and to be ready to articulate how we live these principles in our daily work.

Together, we will demonstrate that North Central Michigan College not only meets but exceeds the rigorous standards set forth by the HLC. Our shared commitment to our students, our community, and our mission is what drives us forward and sets us apart. Let us move through this process with the same spirit of collaboration and excellence that defines who we are as Timberwolves.

Thank you for your role in seeing that this important endeavor is Met...Together.

David Roland Finley, Ph.D.
President



Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Accreditation Process

North Central Michigan College is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). The accreditation process assesses the capacity of an institution to assure the quality of its educational programs, and is necessary for our students to access federal financial aid. Every ten years an accredited institution must have its accreditation reaffirmed. As part of this process NCMC will undergo a comprehensive evaluation by a team of HLC peer reviewers in anticipation of our ten year reaffirmation in March 2025.

HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION: THE ASSURANCE REVIEW

ASSURANCE REVIEW:

1. The institution demonstrates that it meets the Criteria for Accreditation by preparing an Assurance Filing, comprised of an Assurance Argument and an Evidence File, using HLC's Assurance System.
2. A team of HLC peer reviewers evaluates the institution's Assurance Filing. The outcome of this review is a recommendation as to whether the institution meets the Criteria for Accreditation. If the Assurance Review is part of a comprehensive evaluation, this review will also include an on-site visit by the peer review team.
3. A decision-making body reviews the institution's documentation and the recommendation from the peer review team and takes an official action.

ASSURANCE ARGUMENT:

In the Assurance Argument, the institution demonstrates how it meets each Criterion and Core Component. For each Criterion, the institution offers:

- An articulation of how each Core Component within the Criterion is met.
- A summary statement regarding any additional ways in which the institution fulfills the Criterion that are not otherwise covered in the statements on the Core Components.
- Links to materials in the institution's Evidence File for each claim or argument made.

EVIDENCE FILE:

The Assurance Argument will link to materials the institution uploads to its Evidence File to further support its narrative for each Criterion and Core Component. Every item uploaded to the Evidence File must be specifically linked to at least one Core Component in the Assurance Argument.

PEER REVIEW:

A team of peer reviewers evaluates the institution's Assurance Filing and writes its report in the Assurance System. If the review is being conducted as part of a comprehensive evaluation (on-site review), the peer review team will write its report after completing its site visit and will take into account all the additional materials involved in the evaluation.

The peer review team's report includes its findings as to whether the institution meets HLC's Criteria for Accreditation, as well as possible recommendations for further action or monitoring. In judging whether the institution is in compliance with the Criteria, the team evaluates each Core Component individually. The team determines whether the Core Component is met, met with concerns or not met using the guidelines provided in HLC's policy on the Evaluative Framework for the HLC Criteria.

CRITERIA AND CORE COMPONENTS

There are 5 Criteria and 18 Core Components. The HLC peer review team determines whether each Core Component is **Met**, **Met with Concerns** or **Not Met** using the HLC's policy on the Evaluative Framework guidelines.

Knowing everyone's commitment to our mission and dedication to student success, we are confident in our ability to receive a **Met** score on every Core Component! By working together, we *will* be successful.

Criterion 1. Mission

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

CORE COMPONENTS	MET	MET WITH CONCERNS	NOT MET
1.A. The institution's mission is articulated publicly and operationalized throughout the institution.	X		
1.B. The institution's mission demonstrates commitment to the public good.	X		
1.C. The institution provides opportunities for civic engagement in a diverse, multicultural society and globally connected world, as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.	X		

Criterion 2. Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

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

CORE COMPONENTS	MET	MET WITH CONCERNS	NOT MET
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.	X		
2.B. The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public.	X		
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.	X		
2.D. The institution is committed to academic freedom and freedom of expression in the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning.	X		
2.E. The institution's policies and procedures call for responsible acquisition, discovery and application of knowledge by its faculty, staff and students.	X		



CRITERIA AND CORE COMPONENTS *continued*

Criterion 3. Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support

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

CORE COMPONENTS	MET	MET WITH CONCERNS	NOT MET
3.A. The rigor of the institution's academic offerings is appropriate to higher education.	X		
3.B. The institution offers programs that engage students. in collecting, analyzing and communicating information; in mastering modes of intellectual inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.	X		
3.C. The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services.	X		
3.D. The institution provides support for student learning and resources for effective teaching.	X		

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.

CORE COMPONENTS	MET	MET WITH CONCERNS	NOT MET
4.A. The institution ensures the quality of its educational offerings.	X		
4.B. The institution engages in ongoing assessment of student learning as part of its commitment to the educational outcomes of its students.	X		
4.C. The institution pursues educational improvement through goals and strategies that improve retention, persistence and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.	X		

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.

CORE COMPONENTS	MET	MET WITH CONCERNS	NOT MET
5.A. Through its administrative structures and collaborative processes, the institution's leadership demonstrates that it is effective and enables the institution to fulfill its mission.	X		
5.B. The institution's resource base supports its educational offerings and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.	X		
5.C. The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning and improvement.	X		

HLC ACCREDITATION TEAM

The following team members are overseeing the creation of the Accreditation Arguments, along with assistance from many others throughout the College.

Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO): Dr. Stephen Strom

Assurance Argument Development Team: Dr. Stephen Strom, Dr. Erin Sonneveldt, Melanie Leaver, Jennifer Wood

Criterion 1. Mission	Criterion 2. Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct	Criterion 3. Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support	Criterion 4. Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement	Criterion 5. Institutional Effectiveness: Resources and Planning
Overall Lead Carol Laenen	Overall Lead Carol Laenen	Overall Lead Stephen Strom	Overall Lead Stephen Strom	Overall Lead Tom Zeidel
Core Component Leads	Core Component Leads	Core Component Leads	Core Component Leads	Core Component Leads
1A. Carol Laenen	2A. Tom Zeidel	3A. Erin Sonneveldt and Sara Glasgow	4A. Stephen Strom	5A. Melissa Mansfield
1B. Stephen Strom	2B. Carol Laenen	3B. Erin Sonneveldt and Sara Glasgow	4B. Erin Sonneveldt and Sara Glasgow	5B. Tom Zeidel
1C. Lynn Henry	2C. Melissa Mansfield	3C. Stephen Strom	4C. Renee DeYoung	5C. Carol Laenen
	2D. Stephen Strom	3D. Renee DeYoung		
	2E. Erin Sonneveldt			



ACCREDITATION IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

A successful 2025 HLC accreditation visit takes considerable preparation -- not only by the Accreditation Team but by everyone in our Timberwolf family. The Accreditors will want to meet with students, employees and community members.

MONTH/YEAR	ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBLE
Now through March 10, 2025	Review the college's mission, vision and values, and be prepared to easily recite them and comfortably speak to how we live them in our day-to-day work. Become familiar with the Assurance Argument Criteria and Core Components.	All NCMC employees and students
June 10, 2024	Submit draft Assurance Arguments to Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO), Stephen Strom	Core Component Leads
Middle of September 2024	Complete a cohesive draft of Criteria 1 and 2 including evidence.	Assurance Argument Development Team members, ALO and Core Component leads
End of September 2024	Complete a cohesive draft of Criterion 5 including evidence.	Assurance Argument Development Team members, ALO and Core Component leads
End of October 2024	Complete a cohesive draft of Criteria 3 and 4 including evidence.	Assurance Argument Development Team members, ALO and Core Component leads
February 10, 2025	Assurance Argument and Evidence Files due	Assurance Argument Development Team members
February 11, 2025 – March 7, 2025	Mock Visits	All NCMC Employees
March 10-11, 2025	On-site Comprehensive Evaluation Visit. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assurance Argument Review • Federal Compliance Review • Student Opinion survey • On-site Peer Review Visit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5-7 reviewers • Scheduled group meetings and forums • Exit session 	HLC Peer Review Team
March 12, 2025	NCMC's Met Together Party.	Campus Community: fun, food and celebration.

MET TOGETHER

TOGETHER articulates who we are and what drives us as Timberwolves. It's a call to action that separates NCMC from other colleges.

It is with this passion that all of us at NCMC are pursuing the successful completion of our 2025 HLC Accreditation. This entails having "met" all the Criteria for Accreditation which are the standards of quality by which the HLC determines whether our college merits reaffirmation of accreditation.



MISSION

To provide exceptional, accessible, relevant higher education to the benefit of all.

VISION

To become the premier student-centered college, as partners on the learning journey.

VALUES

Excellence — We hold ourselves to the highest professional standards, exceeding expectations by providing transformative learning experiences and exceptional service.

Integrity — We model ethical and honest behavior, building trust and inspiring confidence. Accountable for our words and actions, we are genuine, transparent and respectful.

Results — On and off campus, we continually deliver on our commitment to improve our institution and its relevance to those we serve through innovation, agility and thoughtful risk-taking.

Stewardship — We commit to the responsible care and growth of the human, environmental, economic and cultural resources entrusted to us.

Compassion — With kindness, caring and dignity, we seek to understand and address the complex and unique needs of others.

Inclusion — We strive to create a welcoming environment that embraces and respects the uniqueness of each individual and celebrates the power of a diverse community.

