To the UMSL Community

Update On The Reaccreditation Process

About three months remain until the Higher Learning Commission Reaccreditation site visit takes place November 10th-13th, 2008. In this edition of The Accreditor, we want to review activities of the past year and provide a timeline for upcoming events.

Last academic year, the HLC Reaccreditation Steering Committee met once a month, with subcommittees meetings more frequently. In late November 2007, the first draft of the self-study was completed and posted for comments, which were received via email, an anonymous site on the web, and a public wiki. The differing formats were used to encourage the campus community to make comments in the most comfortable format. In total, over 900 individual viewings were recorded on the site where the self-study was posted, and comments came from numerous personnel from different disciplines. The second wiki, posted in June 2008, produced even more comments.

In addition to reviewing the comments and revising the self-study, staff and committee members met with over twenty administrative and five academic units to discuss university processes, including the reaccreditation process. Some unexpected outcomes of those discussions include the following:

• A new campus map was designed to serve numerous functions. Some maps are folded for UMSL staff working outside and to send to visitors; other maps are bound for office staff to provide to walk-in visitors. The map is also available on the web, where it will be updated as the campus changes.

• A Respect Initiative, to be launched in fall semester, will support respectful interactions to enhance the positive learning experience of our students, support intellectual pursuits of our faculty, and provide a valued work environment for our staff colleagues.

• In response to poor conditions of the south campus road, we learned of renovations of the south campus road, which were scheduled to be completed before classes started.

• The need for a central location where visitors can access information about events when offices are closed was resolved when library staff volunteered to add campus events at the Reference Desk as the public repository of event information.

• Another outcome of the meetings was a survey designed to assess safety issues on south campus. The results will be shared with the campus community in the near future.

• The need for continuing dialog became clear, and the chancellor has agreed to continue town hall and departmental conversations after the site visit.

For a successful HLC site visit, the entire campus must participate. To facilitate that, after the self-study is submitted to HLC September 4, 2008, events will be held so all campus employees and students can continue discussions of campus processes and the findings of the self-study.

It is a pleasure to watch the campus pull together to help tell UMSL’s outstanding story. Please continue to make your voice heard through the self-study—and beyond.
YOU ARE UMSL
by Peter Heitbaus

You are UMSL. You are what students and visitors see when they arrive here. Yours are the eyes they look into when they’re lonely or lost. Yours are the faces they look to for encouragement and hope. Yours are the voices they hear as they walk the halls or walk between buildings. You are what they hear and see on their way to meetings that could affect their destinies. You are what they see and hear as they ponder whether they should attend here or stay here. Or when they are trying to figure out whether they can afford to attend or stay here. You are what they see and hear when they have had a bad day in the classroom, a scheduling problem, or a problem with parking. Your voice or your glance may be the sound or the look that intrudes on their thoughts when they are trying to decide whether this place will help them achieve their next major life choice. Yours are the comments people hear when you think they can’t hear you. Yours are the actions people see when you think they can’t see you. Yours is the intelligence and caring that people hope they find here.

If you’re rude, so is UMSL. If, by your actions or appearance, you show that you don’t care, it looks like UMSL doesn’t care. And if you’re wonderful, so is UMSL. When students, visitors, or for that matter, alumni and the community in general, talk about UMSL, they don’t talk about buildings and books. They talk about you, their interactions with you, or their observations of you. No visitors or students can ever know the real you, the you that you know is in there – unless you let them see it. All they can know is what they see, hear and experience.

All of us rely on your attitude and the collective attitudes of everyone who works at UMSL for our livelihood. We are judged by your performance. When you smile, UMSL smiles; when you listen, UMSL listens; when you act professionally, UMSL acts professionally; when you offer your assistance; UMSL offer its assistance. We are the kindness you show, the attention you pay, the knowledge you display, the courtesies you extend. Keep up the good work!

Taken from the book Resonant Leadership by Richard Boyatzis and Annie McKee

DEFINITIONS

WHAT IS ACCREDITATION?
Accreditation assures the public of the quality of an institution. The federal government relies on regional accrediting bodies to provide those assurances. In our case the accrediting body is the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools in Chicago.

WHAT IS A SELF-STUDY?
The self-study is a written response to the evaluation criteria established by the accrediting agency. HLC assigns a review team to review the report and conduct a site visit to verify the claims in the self-study.

WHAT IS ASSESSMENT?
According to HLC, assessing—or measuring--student academic achievement is the essential component to every organization’s effort to measure their overall effectiveness. The HLC review also measures all processes related to institutional effectiveness. The self-study must document how assessment informs institutional planning and quality improvement.
Two committee members working at a committee meeting. D’anne Hancock and Aaron Proctor.
Susan Caban worked diligently by assisting with writing of self-study.
Three committee members taking a breather during a steering committee meeting. (L to R) Malaika Horne, Floyd Welsh and Clinton Greene.

WHAT DO YOU REALLY KNOW ABOUT YOUR STEERING COMMITTEE?
From the two columns below match the person's current job assignment as listed in column I with an unknown fact about that person from column II. Answers will appear in the next edition of the Accrictor.

I.
A. Manager of Center for Student Success
B. Des Lee Endowed Professor
C. Director of Executive Leadership Institute
D. Associate professor Economics
E. Graduate Student
F. Associate Professor College of Business Administration

II.
1. Was mugged on a train in France
2. Often raided grandpas candy store as a child
3. Renowned painter
4. Sat next to Keanu Reeves at Academy Awards
5. Is a Character Educator teacher for adolescences
6. Worked as a cook on oil platforms in Gulf of Mexico

RESULTS to contest from last Accrictor: 1A.4, 1B.3, 1C.2, 1D.1

BONUS CONTEST
Everyone on campus is eligible to participate except the members of the accreditation steering committee. To participate in this contest you must correctly identify the person and send that name via e-mail to dolan@umsl.edu. The winner will be the first person to correctly identify the person described below and will receive a $25 gas card. Contest ties will be broken using time and date of the received e-mail.

What member of the Accreditation Steering Committee was the Betty Crocker Homemaker of theyear in their high school?

POINTS OF PRIDE
• 100% of programs at UMSL have undergone a 5-Year Review or have one scheduled.
• 100% of programs at UMSL have specified learning outcomes.
• 100% of undergraduate programs at UMSL build on the critical thinking skills in the campus’ General Education curriculum.
• 93% of programs at UMSL have specialized accreditation if it’s available.
• Recent CLA results indicated our Freshmen scored in the 98th percentile and our seniors scored in the 89th percentile.
This story was told to us by Rachel Sommerer in Student Support Services

On Thursday, March 13th, Scott Armstead, Coordinator of Student Support Services, assisted visitors to our campus on separate occasions. First, a lady came to our department wondering if there were any pay phones in the building. Instead of sending her somewhere else to make a long distance phone call, Scott loaned her his personal cell phone for the call to her daughter. In addition he then discussed possible restaurants in the area to which she could take the students with whom she was traveling. The second incident is probably even more commendable. On his way out of the parking lot at the end of the day, Scott stopped alongside a stopped tour bus to see if he could help them find their campus destination. Instead of just pointing the driver in the right direction, Scott took the time to drive ahead and lead them to where they needed to be. He also then got out of his truck to chat with the driver to see if he needed any other assistance. Once again, Scott became a local eatery guide and gave them suggestions on where they could go for an evening meal with 30 people.

This story came to us via human resources as Michele Pattison nominated Lawrence Leslie for Employee of the Month

Lawrence was formerly one of our two custodians in Woods Hall. He now works in the research buildings. We were devastated to lose him. He was unfailingly pleasant to everyone he met and went above and beyond to keep our building immaculate and to do extra tasks if we were having an event in the building. He carried things to our cars for us; made sure our sidewalks were clean no matter what the season; and was a true joy to work with.

What prompted me to nominate Lawrence was the big snowstorm yesterday (March 4). I looked out the Woods Hall window during the height of the storm, shortly after the university had officially closed and saw Lawrence coming across the street with a snow shovel. He began shoveling the walk and stairs in front of Woods Hall. He helped our custodians clear a safe path for us in addition to doing the same for his currently assigned building. I am relatively sure that no one asked him to do this – he just did it. That is typical of Lawrence.

Elizabeth Pawloski, coordinator of volunteer services sent this story to the Accreditor

Yesterday, I attended the Gypsy Caravan that was held on campus. My brother-in-law made the comment as we drove down Natural Bridge that although he lived in St Louis until he was 25, he had never been on the UMSL campus before. As we made the trek down the sidewalk from the MSC upper lot to the lower lot—he began to share his thoughts. He said, “Wow, this campus is gorgeous, the lakes are beautiful and look, they even have a fire circle. I had no idea how nice this campus really was. Someone did a great job in designing its overall look.”

You might be interested to know that he is currently on the staff of Vanderbilt University in Nashville.

Sent by the Dean of Optometry after losing utilities in the south campus facility commending facilities services

A flood in the 4th floor restroom located on the east side of the College of Optometry near the transition between the Colleges of Optometry and Education was discovered early this morning. Facilities services responded soon after it was discovered. The leak has been stopped and the clean-up of visible water is nearly complete. However water flowed into portions of each floor of the college causing a variety of problems including the loss of telephone services to select lines. Technicians are assessing the extent of damage to the telephone lines which could prove to be extensive because a major hub for telephone services sustained a lot of water. At this point only select lines are affected.

It appears to have been the perfect storm. There is a floor drain below where the leak occurred, however it was clogged. Water might have been flowing most of the weekend. As is typical of these things the facilities folks are responding very well under the circumstances.

January Johnson has provided tremendous support for the Steering Committee and many people do not know January is a student in the Washington University/UMSL Joint Engineering Program. She works hard during the day for Chartwells and is a great engineering student at night. January truly represents the many UMSL students who work full-time and attend classes at night.