



# THE ACCREDITOR

NEWSLETTER • UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI-ST. LOUIS • OCTOBER 2007

## To the UMSL Community *Your re-accreditation*

We need your involvement in the campus' re-accreditation efforts. To be successful, we must document for the Higher Learning Commission that every person on campus is responsible in some way for our learning environment and that we are all working toward fulfilling UMSL's mission.

The Re-accreditation Steering Committee is reviewing documentation of how the campus carries out the mission and how the University's mission shapes campus policies and processes. Most importantly to the HLC, committee members are critically evaluating how we design, deliver, and assess learning on campus. To the HLC, learning is not simply about class work but also what students acquire from campus resources that support their social, leadership, and ethical development. Since the formal mechanisms that we have for measuring learning focus on academic learning, it has been a challenge to document such informal learning.

HLC reviewers expect to find learning taking place among faculty and staff as well. Our research mission will help us meet the criterion related to faculty learning. We are attempting to assess the impact of the tuition remission program and professional development activities. These are but a few of the difficulties the Re-accreditation Steering Committee faced as we designed Draft One of the Self-Study.

We are posting Draft One a year early to increase the campus' involvement. Our goal for this version was to include as many diverse activities as possible under each indicator to document that we have met and exceeded that indicator.

**Warning:** In Draft One we did not pay attention to scholarly writing conventions, and we have not evaluated the effectiveness of the reported activities, as will be required in the final version. This is an in-house document designed to share with our colleagues the information that committee members believe responds to the requirements. It's also our invitation for you to fill in some of the gaps by adding activities that you know about.

## ACCREDITATION EVENTS

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|-------------------------|--|
| <b>OCT. 31 - NOV. 1</b> | Dr. Mary Breslin Higher Learning Commission liaison on campus to meet with steering committee and campus representatives |
| <b>NOV. 5</b>           | First draft of self study posted for review by campus community  |
| <b>NOV. 30</b>          | Steering Committee Meeting   |
| <b>DEC. 7</b>           | Steering Committee Meeting   |

## WHAT THE CAMPUS IS SAYING ABOUT ASSESSMENT AT UM-ST. LOUIS



**David Rose**  
*Chair of Economics*

“Thank you for turning the 5 year review process into a much more meaningful process than it used to be. I began this process by looking at the last 5 year review. It struck me as excessively bureaucratic and as serving only one purpose: pile up a bunch of data to facilitate asking for more positions.

“The new approach is much more oriented toward encouraging the department to think about things it should have already been thinking about but, life being what it is, they never get around to thinking about. In any case, working through the process of writing up the review and chatting with faculty about it has occasioned many good ideas from my department and made me feel better about being more proactive about having a good department.

“Professors will always have stronger incentives to do research than for teaching because research accomplishments are what gets one outside offers. This means that if we are going to take teaching seriously, then we need to be proactive about it. It won’t just happen. The 5 year review quite naturally puts needed attention on teaching.”

“The program review, assessment, and re-accreditation processes at the University of Missouri-St. Louis have been merged to create a culture of assessment on the campus that will enhance a process of continuous improvement of student learning outcomes, academic standards and processes, administrative processes, and the review and assessment processes themselves.”

**Glen Cope**, *Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs*



“The review process was a very valuable experience for our division as it allowed us to critically analyze what we do on a daily basis and to garner excellent feedback from faculty, staff, and most importantly, students.”

**Curtis Coonrod**, *Vice Provost for Student Affairs*



*On August 31 the Accreditation Steering Committee hosted a brunch for the University trade unions. Chancellor George and Dr. Judith Walker de Felix spoke to the group regarding their role in student learning.*

## 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.

## KNOW YOUR ACCREDITATION STEERING COMMITTEE



*Some accreditation steering committee members who participated in the Homecoming parade shown in picture are (L to R): Raleigh Muns, Judith Walker de Felix, Carol Sholy, Patricia Dolan and Nancy Magnuson*

### WHAT DO YOU REALLY KNOW ABOUT YOUR STEERING COMMITTEE?

From the two columns below match the person's current job assignment from column I with an unknown fact about a person in the picture from column II.

I.	II.
A. Graduate Dean, Associate Provost	1. Lifeguard
B. Librarian III	2. Woodstock Graduate
C. Director Campus Health Services	3. Former organist at funeral home
D. Special Assistant to Provost	4. UCLA Cheerleader
E. Associate Institutional Research	5. TV anchor on campus television station

## DID YOU KNOW?

*Everyone appreciates the work faculty do to support learning. Most of us forget that staff also supports students.*

*This column will be published with each volume of the accreditation newsletter to share stories of UMSL employees and friends as they assist with informal student learning at UMSL.*

*When you witness or hear about an UMSL employee going the extra mile to assist UMSL students with learning, send us the stories so we may publish them here. Send your stories via e-mail to [accreditation@umsl.edu](mailto:accreditation@umsl.edu)*

**Steve Miller**, maintenance service attendant hosts “Classic Oldies” show on the student radio station –The U. Steve is

the DJ working on his own time every Friday from 4 pm to 5pm. Steve genuinely is assisting UMSL students’ learning.

**Oscar Gardner**, on August 17th an international student fell on his bicycle in the middle of West Drive. Oscar pulled his truck up and turned on the safety lights so other cars would go around the student and he wouldn’t get hurt. This truly was an act of promoting a learning environment.

**Carol Usery, Kevin Usery and Mike Ellerman** from Grounds Department, participate in each of the seven parades the University is involved with each year. They work closely with UMSL students by decorating and driving the campus float. This collaboration supports students’ informal learning.

**Willie Fleming**, Continuing Education, sets up rooms for Continuing Education events and always meets instructors’ expectations. Students and instructors never really see Willie but they know when he is not there because those are the only days when rooms are not set up perfectly. Willie makes the classroom environment conducive to learning.

**Tony Richards**, maintenance service attendant in MSC. During the first week of classes Tony is always mindful of students’ confusion. Tony often walks international students to where they need to go so they will feel more comfortable at UMSL. Tony sets the positive attitude we all need to promote student learning.



*On September 21 Dr. Judith Walker de Felix spoke to the Campus Key Communicators regarding their role on campus with student learning*