



“A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.” - Lao -Tzu

2018 HLC Conference



A team of UMSL faculty, staff, and administrators attended the Higher Learning Commission's Annual Conference last month in preparation for the upcoming site visit November 5-6, 2018. The team attended the pre-conference

accreditation workshop to strengthen and develop current strategies for assessment of co-curricular activities, student success efforts, and other valuable functions. The UMSL team were not simply passive observers. Alan Heisel, the Accreditation Liaison Officer, and Bonnie Unal, the Accreditation Site Coordinator, presented “Bottom Up: A Molecular Approach to Evidence” to a room of more than 160 attendants.



Dr. Heisel stands behind the podium as the conference room fills up.

The presentation focused on the structural and logistical strategies that UMSL used during the data gathering and draft stages of the assurance argument. It included a discussion of a distributed collection model with co-leads and using tools to index and catalog evidence. The best evidence, Heisel said, “comes from many different sources. The challenge is identifying the strongest evidence and articulating it in a way that resonates with HLC and its peer reviewers.”

Ten Days in September: The HLC Student Survey

The Higher Learning Commission will conduct a student survey for UMSL in September. The brief survey will only be active for ten days and includes fourteen Likert-type and one open-ended question. The questions on the survey are conceptually-linked to the [Criteria for Accreditation](#) and include items related to overall satisfaction as well as financial aid, advising, courses and programs, faculty expertise, and issues of access (faculty, courses, services, etc.).

Over the summer, the HLC Steering Committee will be working with faculty, staff, and student groups to promote and encourage participation in the survey. A variety of strategies will be used to engage students in the accreditation process generally as well as the student survey. Although response rates vary across institutions, greater student participation reflects a more involved student body and provides a more accurate measure of student perceptions. Please help us by encouraging students to participate.

The [survey of students](#) is a relatively new component of the comprehensive review process that was not part of our last institutional review in 2008. It is used by HLC and the peer review team to contextualize information presented in the assurance argument and to open new lines of inquiry. Responses to the survey have been positive with 77.85% of institutions and 88.82% of peer reviewers reporting it was helpful.

Transforming Lives: The UMSL Mission

The strategic planning exercise conducted in AY17-18 presented an opportunity to the university and its stakeholders to revitalize the mission and vision of our campus while outlining realistic approaches to address the opportunities and challenges we face. While the true nature of UMSL is varied and complex, our mission is simple: “We transform lives.” It is a profound and succinct description of what we all do as part of the UMSL community. The assurance argument and anecdotal evidence prove the case. What do we do? We transform lives.

UMSL | Reaccreditation
November 5-6, 2018