

## Self Study for the HLC Visit

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In April of 2011, PNC will host a routine, comprehensive visit by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) of the North Central Association. In preparation for that visit, a campus committee has been writing a Self Study. The contents of the Self Study are dictated by the HLC through their Criteria for Accreditation. The five Criteria cover almost every aspect of the campus and show the interest the HLC has in the operation of the institution. Under each Criterion are Core Component topics. This expands the original Criterion and provides an outline for the Self Study. (Before we go any further, the reader needs to know that *Criterion* is singular and *Criteria* is plural.)

### ***Criterion One***                    ***Mission and Integrity***

- 1a     Mission Documents are Clear and Articulate
- 1b     Recognition of Diversity in the Mission
- 1c     Support and Understanding for the Mission
- 1d     Governance Structure to Fulfill the Mission
- 1e     Protecting Institutional Integrity

This Criterion and its companion Core Components are based on the Mission of Purdue North Central. In 2008, the current campus Strategic Plan was written. At that time, the mission statement was reviewed and rewritten. A Mission statement used to be a single long and convoluted sentence. That has evolved into a collection of statements, values and vision sentences that give a broader and more complete look at the campus. The Vision statement of Purdue North Central is an excellent summation of our mission:

*Purdue University North Central will become the regional center of excellence for education, information, economic development and culture.*

### ***Criterion Two***                    ***Future Planning***

- 2a     Future Preparation
- 2b     Resource Base
- 2c     Assessment of Institutional Effectiveness
- 2d     Planning and Mission

This Criterion looks at the campus resources. There are three kinds of resources – human, financial and physical. Remember that the last time a Visiting Team was here was in April of 2001. Since then PNC has grown in all three areas. The physical resources are the easiest to point to – the Valparaiso campus, the many remodeled areas of the three academic buildings and the water tower. The campus has gained faculty, staff and students. In 2001 there were 3491 students and this semester there are 4,614. That is a growth of 1,123 or 32%. The financial resources need to reflect the current economic difficulties. That is one area the HLC Team will know all about. All HLC evaluators are professors and staff of other institutions of higher learning.

***Criterion Three Student Learning and Effective Teaching***

- 3a Learning Outcomes and Effective Assessment
- 3b Valuing and Supporting Teaching
- 3c Effective Learning Environments
- 3d Learning Resources

This Criterion is the one that looks closely at the role PNC plays in the education of its students. What do we expect our students to actually learn? These goals are called “Learning Outcomes.” How does the campus value and support teaching? The art of teaching needs support, encouragement and recognition. What kinds of learning environments do we have? This can mean everything from a nursing clinical to a chalkboard classroom in SWRZ! How many learning resources can you name? Start with the library and the Student Success Center ... and keep going!

***Criterion Four Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge***

- 4a Life of Learning
- 4b General Education
- 4c Curricula and Learning Outcomes
- 4d Research Support

Institutions of Higher Education are supposed to do a lot more than just turn out well prepared graduates. We have an obligation to acquire, discovery and share knowledge. Some of this comes directly from applied research – walk down the Biology hallway in SWRZ for specific examples – but it also comes from discussions with students and faculty. Broadening the horizons for local residents beyond northern Indiana, or exposing students to different ideas is all part of General Education. There is a difference between “becoming educated” and “getting trained.”

***Criterion Five Engagement and Service***

- 5a Learning and Analyzing Our Capacity to Serve
- 5b Commitment to Constituencies
- 5c Responsiveness to Constituencies
- 5d Value of Service

Purdue North Central does not exist in a vacuum. We have constituents beyond the campus boundaries, beyond La Porte County, beyond Indiana and well beyond the USA! How do we respond to ALL our communities? How do we serve the citizens of the State of Indiana that support us as a public institution? And, how do our constituents value our service? Those are the questions to answer in this criterion.

As the Self Study is being written it is sent to the faculty and staff for review and comments. When the Self Study is complete, it will be made available to the campus community (including students) to read. As a calendar issue, look for the finished product in mid January.