



MINNESOTA STATE
Board of Trustees

AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

NAME: Academic and Student Affairs

DATE: January 25, 2023

TITLE: Institutional and Specialized Accreditation

- Proposed New Policy or Amendment to Existing Policy Approvals Required by Policy Other Approvals
- Monitoring/Compliance Information

PRESENTERS

Satasha Green-Stephen, Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs
Jesse Mason, Interim Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
Nerita Hughes, Interim Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs and Workforce Innovation, North Hennepin Community College
Mary Fenske, Paralegal Program Director, North Hennepin Community College
Rebecca Bates, Professor and Chair, Department of Integrated Engineering, Minnesota State University, Mankato
Cody Mann, Director of Operations, Iron Range Engineering
Jayant Anand, Dean of the School of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math, North Hennepin Community College
Ashley Martin, Medical Laboratory Technology Coordinator and Faculty, North Hennepin Community College
Louise Millis, Medical Laboratory Science and Histotechnician Program Director and Professor of Biology, St. Cloud State University

PURPOSE

This informational presentation revisits the topic of accreditation, which was shared with the Academic and Student Affairs Committee in May 2022, and will highlight the importance of accreditation in providing an external evaluation of quality, both in academic programs and more broadly in areas such as governance, administration, and financial sustainability. This presentation will provide a brief summary of institutional accreditation through the Higher Learning Commission and the role of the Board of Trustees in the accreditation process. Additionally, it will describe the function and role of specialized accreditation and its relationship to licensure and certification in some disciplines. Representatives from colleges and universities will discuss examples of specialized accreditation.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Accreditation is the process by which entire institutions and/or programs and schools within institutions undergo an external peer evaluation to assess that institutions or program's quality and adherence to a set of accreditation criteria that typically cover curriculum, co-curriculum, assessment, leadership and governance, and financial sustainability.

The accreditation landscape in the United States includes both national and specialized accrediting bodies. National accreditors evaluate entire institutions. Historically, institutional accreditation was managed across six accreditation regions in the United States, the largest of which is the north central region of which Minnesota is a part. The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) is the accreditor for the north central region. More recently, accreditation has shifted from a regional model to a national model for institutional accreditation.

The HLC describes institutional accreditation as follows:

Institutional accreditation validates the quality of an institution's academic programs at all degree levels, whether delivered on-site, online or otherwise.

Institutional accreditation also examines the quality of the institution beyond its academic offerings and evaluates the institution as a whole, including the soundness of its governance and administration, adherence to mission, the sustainability of its finances, and the sufficiency of its resources.

There is a regular cycle of accreditation activities that institutions must complete in order to maintain accreditation with HLC.

In addition to institutional accreditation, there are more than 70 specialized accreditors that evaluate specific academic programs in disciplines such as teacher education, business, and many health professions. Because they most often accredit specific academic programs, these specialized accreditors are sometimes referred to as "programmatic" accreditors. Most colleges and universities manage multiple specialized accreditation relationships and review cycles in addition to their accreditation with HLC.