

Message from Chancellor Susan Koch

August 18, 2017

Dear Colleagues:

As the new academic year begins, we are moving into the final months of the reaffirmation of our accreditation with the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). We are working to demonstrate our compliance with reaccreditation standards and our ongoing efforts at continuous improvement. Late in fall semester, we will conclude our Assurance Argument and complete our Evidence File, the central pieces of our application. On **February 19-20, 2018**, our external peer reviewers will visit our campus on behalf of the HLC.

I'm grateful for the leadership of Associate Vice Chancellor Cecilia Cornell on this important project and we greatly appreciate the assistance of so many of you who have shared your program/unit initiatives, supplied data to help respond to questions, served on various reaccreditation committees, and read and commented upon drafts of our Assurance Argument.

Much remains to be done!

- We are in the final stages of our Quality Initiative project with the HLC Assessment Academy, which is designed to encourage innovation and improvement. Our efforts for the past four years have focused upon assessing student learning outcomes for our general education program, particularly those tied to the Global Awareness and American Communities categories of our Engaged Citizenship/Common Experience (ECCE) courses. This coming October, a team of UIS faculty and staff will attend the Results Forum to report on our project and to plan for sustaining it after this review cycle is completed.
- We currently are soliciting public comments about UIS from the community, alumni, students, parents, faculty, and staff. Those anonymous comments are due back to HLC no later than January 18, 2018.
- We are in the process of asking members of HLC committees and subcommittees to read and comment upon portions of the draft of our Assurance Argument.
- We are finalizing the Federal Compliance Document that is required to accompany our materials.
- We are planning to sponsor informational sessions on campus this fall to let you know how we are progressing.

What can you do?

- Attend one or more of the upcoming forums regarding the reaccreditation process so that you can stay informed and get your questions answered.

- Promptly provide any additional information that the reaccreditation team may request of you.
- Take this opportunity to [review the UIS mission](#)
- If one or more members of the peer review site visit team engages with you in February, please be as welcoming and as helpful as you can.

This will be a busy and exciting year for us, and we are grateful for your continued involvement in this process and your support of our efforts.

If you have any questions, please [visit our Accreditation website](#), or [email us](#).

Sincerely,

Susan Koch, Chancellor

October 25, 2013

Dear Colleagues:

As you know, the Springfield campus of the University of Illinois is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. Our most recent reaccreditation review was conducted in Fall 2007, and our accreditation was affirmed and continued for the full ten-year period, which runs through Academic Year 2017-18. [Information about the 2007 process and outcome is available on the UIS web site](#). The HLC has revised its reaffirmation processes significantly over the last three years, and the new process focuses on both assurance that institutions meet compliance standards and evidence of ongoing efforts in support of continuous improvement. The new HLC pathway to reaffirmation is called the Open Pathway for Reaffirmation of Accreditation, and UIS has elected to use this pathway.

Under the Open Pathway, universities are still required to build portfolios of data and materials that demonstrate compliance with the HLC's accreditation standards, but the new documentation process is online, and it will involve entering and updating institutional information throughout the accreditation review cycle. In addition, universities must propose and complete an institutional Quality Initiative that focuses on institutional innovation and improvement. A comprehensive institutional evaluation, including a site visit, will still be conducted by the HLC in Year Ten (2017-18) of our accreditation review cycle. While we are only through Year Five of our cycle, the new HLC timeline indicates this is the ideal time to begin preparations for the reaffirmation review.

With this timeframe in mind, I have asked Provost Pardie to assemble a core team of faculty and staff to lead our reaffirmation efforts. Their work will include developing an appropriate timeline and task list for the next four years, so that UIS is well-prepared to meet the assurance and continuous improvement aspects of accreditation requirements. While the core team will provide leadership for our efforts toward reaffirmation of accreditation, as in the past, everyone's help will be

needed to accomplish the work. Working collaboratively, the core team and contributing subcommittees will need information and assistance from all aspects of the campus to build an online portfolio that fully reflects the strength of our mission, vision, accomplishments, strategic plans, and commitment to excellence.

I hope you'll take advantage of opportunities to learn more about and participate in these important reaccreditation efforts. Information and periodic progress updates about the reaffirmation of accreditation process and the status of our Quality Initiative will be shared with the campus community and also made available on UIS' Institutional Accreditation web page.

Sincerely,

Susan Koch, Chancellor
