

SOUTH DAKOTA BOARD OF REGENTS

Academic and Student Affairs

AGENDA ITEM: 6 – C
DATE: October 3-5, 2017

SUBJECT

HLC Reaffirmation of Accreditation

PERTINENT HISTORY

Public institutions under the control of the South Dakota Board of Regents obtain institutional and programmatic accreditation to ensure standards of excellence in areas such as faculty, curriculum, administration, and student services. Regional accreditation is the educational accreditation of schools, colleges, and universities in the United States by one of seven regional accrediting agencies. Accreditation is a voluntary process by which colleges demonstrate to each other, and sometimes to employers and licensing agencies, that their credits and degrees meet minimum standards. Institutions in the Regental system obtain accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) which requires a comprehensive self-study every ten years to maintain accreditation. Those institutions that fail to meet expectations for HLC are placed on probation and are confronted with a potential loss of Regional accreditation if the appropriate interim action is not taken. Regional accreditation is a necessary requirement to ensure access to Federal funds.

CONTROLLING STATUTE, RULE, OR POLICY

- [SD Codified Law 13-39A-17 – Accreditations](#)
- [BOR Bylaws – Section 3.1.1](#)
- [BOR Policy 1:10 – Relationship of Curriculum and Instruction to Statutory Objectives](#)

BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION

On a routine basis an Accreditation Status Report is completed and provided to the Board of Regents to provide an update on the Regional and Specialty accreditation activity at each of the Special Schools and Regental campuses. The most recent update was provided in [August 2014](#), and outlines the upcoming HLC visits for each institution. With the outcome of the most recent Reaffirmation of Accreditation for NSU, their next

(Continued)

INFORMATIONAL ITEM

This item is for informational purposes only. Any action will be at the Board’s discretion.

accreditation visit will be in 2027. The upcoming accreditation visits for each of the other Regental institutions are as follows:

BHSU: 2021-2022

DSU: 2018-19

SDSM&T: 2019-2020

SDSU: 2019-2020

USD: 2020-21

IMPACT AND RECOMMENDATION

The recent Comprehensive Review for Reaffirmation of Accreditation for NSU by the Higher Learning Commission included several components: (1) Assurance Review (i.e., Assurance Argument/self-study), (2) Federal Compliance Review, (3) Public Comments, (4) Student Opinion Survey, and (5) a site visit in March 2017 by HLC peer reviewers. The writing of the Assurance Argument was a large-scale collaborative effort resulting in the creation of a "Criterion Committees," which included representation from faculty, administrators, and staff from various units on campus. These staff worked to develop the arguments and collected evidence to support NSU's compliance with the Higher Learning Commission's five "Criteria for Accreditation."

The Criterion Committees' separate narratives were edited into one document and uploaded, along with supporting evidence, into HLC's Assurance System. These five criteria, and the 21 core components within, are the standards by which HLC determines whether an institution merits accreditation. NSU's Comprehensive Review resulted in a finding by the HLC Institutional Actions Council that they met every core component and the five Criteria for Accreditation with no sanctions, no internal monitoring required, and eligibility to choose its accreditation pathway going forward. Administration from NSU will provide a brief overview of the outcomes from the work undertaken during the past two years.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment I – August 7, 2017 HLC Formal Notification Letter



230 South LaSalle Street, Suite 7-500
Chicago, IL 60604-1411
312.263.0456 | 800.621.7440
Fax: 312.263.7462 | hlcommission.org

August 7, 2017

Dr. Timothy Downs
President
Northern State University
1200 South Jay Street
Aberdeen, SD 57401

Dear President Downs:

This letter serves as formal notification and official record of action taken concerning Northern State University by the Institutional Actions Council of the Higher Learning Commission at its meeting on July 31, 2017. The date of this action constitutes the effective date of the institution's new status with HLC.

Action. IAC continued the accreditation of Northern State University with the next Reaffirmation of Accreditation in 2026-27.

In two weeks, this action will be added to the *Institutional Status and Requirements (ISR) Report*, a resource for Accreditation Liaison Officers to review and manage information regarding the institution's accreditation relationship. Accreditation Liaison Officers may request the ISR Report on HLC's website at <http://www.hlcommission.org/isr-request>.

Information on notifying the public of this action is available at <http://www.hlcommission.org/HLC-Institutions/institutional-reporting-of-actions.html>.

If you have any questions about these documents after viewing them, please contact the institution's staff liaison Mary Vanis. Your cooperation in this matter is appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Barbara Gellman-Danley".

Barbara Gellman-Danley
President

CC: ALO

