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Perfect 10: Jefferson College Receives Maximum Reaccreditation Recommendation

Following three days of intense on-campus inquiry and review in early March, a five-member evaluation team from the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools recommended another 10-year maximum accreditation cycle for Jefferson College.

This is the fifth consecutive period that Jefferson has received the highest possible length of accreditation.

A group of nearly 100 faculty, staff, administrators and members of the Board of Trustees listened intently as team chair Dr. Peg Lee summarized the recommendation, praising the extraordinary effort the institution put forth in writing the self-study and preparing for the visit.

“I am so proud of our faculty and staff for all of the hard work over the past couple of years in conducting the comprehensive self-study and preparing for the visit by the HLC evaluation team,” said College President Dr. Wayne Watts. “The award of the full 10-year reaccreditation validates that Jefferson College is a quality institution that serves the citizens of the county in many positive ways. In my travels around the county, I am told all the time how fortunate we all are to have such a wonderful college in our own backyard.”

The HLC visit was the culmination of an extensive institutional self-study review addressing the commission’s five criteria for reaccreditation: mission and integrity; preparing for the future; student learning and effective teaching; acquisition, discover, and application of knowledge; and engagement and service. As such, team members toured Jefferson’s main campus and auxiliary sites, met with faculty, staff, students and community members, and reviewed an impressive array of documentation assembled for the visit.

In a few weeks, the College will receive a draft copy of the team’s report to review for factual accuracy. A final accreditation report will then be issued from the Higher Learning Commission.

Team members included Dr. Peg Lee, president and professor of English at Oakton Community College in Des Plaines, Illinois; Dr. James Baber, executive vice president of academic and student affairs at Jefferson Community College in Steubenville, Ohio; Dr. Lois Bollman, vice president of strategy, planning and accountability at Minneapolis Community and Technical College in Minneapolis, Minnesota; Dr. Manuel Gomez, dean of humanities, fine arts and social sciences at Illinois Community College in Oglesby, Illinois; and Dr. George Swan III, vice chancellor of curriculum and campus operations for Wayne County Community College District in Detroit, Michigan.

Accreditation is a voluntary, independent review of educational programs to determine that the education provided is of uniform and sound quality. In addition to assuring students and the public regarding educational quality and adherence to academic standards, accreditation determines an institution’s eligibility for participation in federal (Title IV) and state financial aid programs. Accreditation is also important for the acceptance and transfer of college credit and is a prerequisite for many graduate programs.