

# Key Topics for 2014-2015: HLC Re-Affirmation of Accreditation and the New Science Building

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# Overview of Accreditation Expectations

- We are now under the Open Pathways approach to re-affirmation of Accreditation
- Key components of this approach are the Assurance Argument, the Evidence File, and the Quality Initiative
- We are required to fully address the Five Criteria for Accreditation, the Assumed Practices, Federal and State Required Reporting, and to complete the Quality Initiative

# Overview of Accreditation Expectations

- The HLC is clearly showing what matters to them: continual quality improvement efforts, and complete assessment of student learning outcomes
- Assessment is now firmly embedded in several of the criteria for accreditation
- Student Learning Outcomes broadly fall into three areas: academic, student affairs / student life, and student support services. We need to fully assess all three areas

# Overview of Accreditation Expectations

- The challenge: of the first 50 colleges / universities to undergo a review under the new system, 10 % were sanctioned and 56 % were required to do focused reports or focused visits
- Focused reports are open-ended: monthly until the HLC tells us that we can stop; focused visits are much more intensive than focused reports
- We need to get this right

# Our Challenge

- We need to get started early on this process
- We need to get all programs compliant: academic, student affairs, and student support services, in particular
- Currently, eight departments at Valpo are in a “yellow light” status with respect to program assessment. Six departments at Valpo are in a “red light” condition.
- The good news is that 18 departments are in a “green light” status
- We need to have all green lights: Really

# Our Approach

- A Valpo Re-Affirmation of Accreditation Team should be constituted by the end of this month
- The core team will consist of about 15 or 16 people
- The core team will be complemented by a Federal Compliance working group consisting of 5 or fewer members with key perspectives
- The core team will be supported by all of campus, with particular support by key administrators and staff members

# Our Approach

- Work on re-affirmation of accreditation will commence immediately, and continue after our visit in 2017-2018
- During 2014-2015, the team will focus on aligning the results of our last HLC re-affirmation with the new process, determining key areas for effort
- During 2015-2017, the team will ensure that required processes and activities are in place, that data are being collected, and that the assurance argument is developing
- During 2016-2017, the assurance argument will be completed

# Our Approach

- We will likely seek a visit from the HLC team in the late Fall of 2017 or the late Winter of 2018
- The entire process should be complete by the end of the 2017-2018 academic year
- We will have our next review by the HLC four years after this process ends, and our next campus visit ten years after the process ends
- Continual attention to the assessment of student learning outcomes is essential throughout this process and beyond: embedded in multiple criteria

# New Science Building: The Project

- We are in clear need of new and expanded laboratory science spaces on campus
- This need is based on facilities, safety, and program needs, and on planned, focused growth in the STEM areas: Science Technology Engineering and Math
- Planning and preparation for this project has been occurring for over a year, and we are now entering a key next phase of this project

# New Science Building: The Project

- The planning that has been completed to date has allowed us to identify the overall science facility needs at Valpo
- The programming process has determined that Valpo needs 155,000 sq ft of space for the natural sciences
- The plan is to address this overall need in three phases
- The new science building is Phase 1, and will address the most pressing needs in laboratories and associated teaching spaces

# New Science Building: The Approach

- The approach being used for the new science building will include a number of changes / innovations to the construction process
- We currently have a Steering Committee, smaller, strategic, and an Advisory Committee, larger, program
- We are supplementing this administrative structure with a project ombudsperson, or facilitator
- Ensure clear communication between faculty and other end users and the contractors / architects / consultants

# New Science Building: The Approach

- We are in the process of selecting a laboratory consultant to work with this project
- Provide key expertise in translating the program into physical spaces; convert teaching and learning needs into concrete facilities (sometimes literally)
- The laboratory consultant should be selected soon
- We are using an RFC process, including on-campus visits, in order to identify the laboratory consultant for the project

# New Science Building: The Approach

- We are using a “CM at risk” approach to this project, as opposed to a “design build” approach
- This alternative approach is warranted by the complexity of the project
- The CM, construction management firm, will over-see the entire project
- The CM is not the contractor, but represents Valpo in securing and working with contractors
- This approach is effective and helps to manage overall project costs on a project such as the science building

# New Science Building: Timeline

- The timeline is very aggressive
- Scope and program questions will be resolved in the near future: at least a third of the program in Phase I
- An aggressive approach will then be taken to schematic design, design development, and construction documents
- Clearly, the Board of Directors will need to approve the project before any actual construction occurs
- Construction should commence next summer

# HLC Process and the New Science Building

Questions?