



November 15, 2018

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Valerie Newhouse, President
Iowa Lakes Community College
19 S. 7th St.
Estherville, IA 51334

Dear President Newhouse:

This letter is formal notification of action taken by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Board of Trustees (“the Board”) concerning Iowa Lakes Community College (“the Institution”). This action is effective as of the date the Board acted, November 1, 2018. In taking this action, the Board considered materials from the most recent comprehensive evaluation, including, but not limited to: the Quality Highlights Report the Institution submitted, the report from the comprehensive evaluation team, the report of the Institutional Actions Council (IAC) Hearing Committee, and the institutional responses to these reports.

Summary of the Action: The Board reaffirmed the accreditation of the Institution. The Institution meets Core Components 3.A, 3.C, 4.A, and 4.B with concerns. The Institution is required to host a Focused Visit, as outlined below, no later than December 2020.

Board Rationale

The Board based its action on the following findings made with regard to the Institution:

The Institution meets Criterion Three, Core Component 3.A, “the institution’s degree programs are appropriate to higher education,” but with concerns for the following reasons:

- Although the Institution is in the process of reviewing and developing consistent learning goals which are scheduled to be completed by the end of the fall 2018 semester, course level learning goals are not consistent across all modes of delivery and at all locations.
- There appears to be limited understanding of the importance of consistency in developing learning goals for the same courses in different modalities.
- There are no policies or procedures in place for determining course learning goals across modalities.

The Institution meets Criterion Three, Core Component 3.C, “the institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services,” but with concerns for the following reasons:

- The Institution has limited documentation verifying all faculty, including those teaching dual credit, are properly credentialed. (As to dual credit faculty, since the Institution had not applied for an extension for meeting HLC's credentialing requirements, the limited documentation was a concern.)
- The IAC Hearing Committee determined that the institution's documentation providing two examples of tested experience was insufficient to allay concerns related to their process for determining tested experience.

The Institution meets Criterion Four, Core Component 4.A, "the institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs," but with concerns for the following reasons:

- While some progress has been made by the Institution, inconsistencies in the learning outcomes for the same course, regardless of modality (face-to-face, dual credit, or multiple sections of the same course) make it difficult to ensure if the courses offered are equivalent in content.

The Institution meets Criterion Four, Core Component 4.B, "the institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning," but with concerns for the following reasons:

- While specific learning outcomes are being drafted and the institution has modified its committee structure to better accommodate the anticipated assessment activities, assessment at this point lacks maturity and is not collected regularly or used for programmatic improvement or to improve general education outcomes.
- Concerns remain about the overall lack of direct measures of student learning, co-curricular assessment, and student success data.

Next Steps in the HLC Review Process

Focused Visit: The Board required the Institution host a Focused Visit regarding Core Components 3.A, 3.C, 4.A, and 4.B no later than December 2020.

Comprehensive Evaluation: The Institution has been placed on the Standard Pathway with its next comprehensive evaluation (Year 4) in 2022-23.

HLC Disclosure Obligations

The Board action resulted in changes that will be reflected in the Institution's Statement of Accreditation Status as well as the Institutional Status and Requirements Report. The Statement of Accreditation Status, including the dates of the last and next comprehensive evaluation visits, will be posted to the HLC website.

HLC policy¹ requires that a summary of Board actions be sent to appropriate state and federal agencies and accrediting associations. It also will be published on HLC's website. The summary will include this HLC action regarding the Institution.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, thank you in advance for your cooperation. If you have questions about any of the information in this letter, please contact your HLC Staff Liaison, Dr. Linnea Stenson.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Barbara Gellman-Danley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with "Barbara" and "Gellman-Danley" connected by a single stroke.

Barbara Gellman-Danley
President

Cc: Robert Leifeld, Vice President of Administration, Iowa Lakes Community College
Evaluation Team Chair
IAC Hearing Committee Chair
Linnea A. Stenson, Vice President for Accreditation Relations and Director of the AQIP
Pathway, Higher Learning Commission
Anthea Sweeney, Vice President for Legal and Governmental Affairs, Higher Learning
Commission

¹ COMM.A.10.010, Commission Public Notices and Statements