

November 11, 2025

BY CERTIFIED MAIL

Ms. Stacie Lyon
Interim President
Leech Lake Tribal College
6945 Little Wolf Road NW
Cass Lake, MN 56633

Dear President Lyon:

This letter is formal notification of action taken by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Board of Trustees (“the Board”) concerning Leech Lake Tribal College (“the Institution”). This action is effective as of the date the Board acted, November 6, 2025. In taking this action, the Board considered materials from the most recent comprehensive evaluation, including, but not limited to: the Assurance Filing 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 Institution has been placed on Notice because it is at risk of being out of compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. This action also resulted in the Board continuing and reaffirming the accreditation of the Institution. The Institution meets Core Components 4.A, 4.B, and 5.B with concerns. The Institution does not meet Assumed Practice D.3. The Institution is required to host a Notice Visit no later than May 2027 to determine whether the Institution has ameliorated the findings that led to the imposition of the sanction.

Institutional Disclosure Obligation: HLC policy¹ requires that an institution inform its constituencies, including Board members, administrators, faculty, staff, students, prospective students, and any other constituencies about the sanction and how to contact HLC for further information. The policy also requires that an Institution on sanction disclose this status whenever it refers to its HLC accreditation. HLC will monitor these disclosures to ensure they are accurate and in keeping with HLC policy. The Institution must submit drafts of its planned disclosures to these various audiences to its HLC Staff Liaison in advance of transmission and provide its Staff Liaison with a link to relevant information on its website. At a minimum, an institution must: i) provide a copy of this Action Letter to its governing board, administration, and faculty, ii) provide a copy of the enclosed Public Disclosure Notice to its currently enrolled students, and iii) prominently display the Mark of Accreditation Status where accreditation status is described on its website. Once disclosures have been made, the Institution must submit copies of its disclosure documents as a single .pdf file to <https://www.hlcommission.org/sign-in/submit-documents-to->

¹ INST.E.10.010, Notice.

[hlc/](#) (by selecting “Information about Institutional Disclosures”) no later than seven (7) business days following receipt of this Action Letter. HLC will retain this information as part of the Institution’s record.

Substantive Change: HLC policy² requires that an institution placed on Notice be subject to additional requirements for substantive change during the Notice period and for three (3) years following the removal of Notice.

Notification Program: HLC policy³ states that an institution placed on notice is ineligible for the Notification Program for Additional Locations for three (3) years following the removal of Notice, providing all other requirements for the Notification Program are met.

Board Rationale

The Board based its action on the following findings made with regard to the Institution as well as the entire record before the Board:

Leech Lake Tribal College (“the Institution”) meets, but with concerns, Criterion Four, Core Component 4.A, “the institution ensures the quality of its educational offerings,” for the following reasons:

- The Institution has not maintained a regular practice of program review.
- The Institution has hired a new Director of Assessment and Institutional Research and provided several administrators with clarity on their responsibilities for oversight of program review.
- The Institution now has a revised process for program review in place but it has not yet been tested. The Institution needs to complete a cycle of program review, analyze the data, make recommendations for improvement, and document the effectiveness of the new process.

The Institution meets, but with concerns, Criterion Four, Core Component 4.B, “the institution engages in ongoing assessment of student learning as part of its commitment to the educational outcomes of its students,” for the following reasons:

- The Institution has not yet fully implemented functional processes for assessment of general education and course level assessments.
- The Institution is in the process of developing outcomes for general education, courses, and programs aligning with institutional outcomes.
- The Institution is moving to Phase Two of a four-phase assessment implementation plan. However, the plan has not been in place long enough to determine if it achieves the Institution’s anticipated goals.

² INST.G.10.010, Substantive Change.

³ INST.E.10.010, Notice.

The Institution meets, but with concerns, Criterion Five, Core Component 5.B, “the institution’s resource base supports its educational offerings and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future,” for the following reasons:

- The Institution needs to ensure the completion of annual audited reports on a timely basis.
- The Institution’s inability to follow internal financial processes has limited the Institution’s ability to monitor and manage its finances, including with respect to completing the required audits.
- Due to the delays over several years, the Institution’s 501(c)3 status has been revoked; there are plans to request re-establishment in the future.
- The Institution has developed plans to address past issues with financial processes, but time is needed to demonstrate their efficacy.

The Institution does not meet Assumed Practice D.3, “the institution has future financial projections addressing its long-term financial sustainability,” for the reasons cited above under Core Component 5.B.

The Board of Trustees of the Higher Learning Commission has determined based on the preceding findings and the evidence in the record that the Institution is at risk of being out of compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation.

Next Steps in the HLC Review Process

Notice Visit: The Institution will host a Notice Visit no later than May 2027 to determine whether the Institution has ameliorated the findings that led to the imposition of Notice and to make a recommendation about whether to remove Notice or take other action.

Notice Report: The Board required that the Institution submit a Notice Report at least eight weeks prior to the Notice Visit providing evidence that the Institution is no longer at risk for being out of compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation and Assumed Practices and that it has ameliorated the issues that led to the Notice sanction.⁴

Board Review: The Board will review the documents associated with the evaluation at its November 2027 meeting to determine whether the Institution has ameliorated the issues that led to this action and is no longer at risk of being out of compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation and thus whether Notice shall be removed, or if the Institution has not ameliorated the findings, or is no longer in compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation, whether other action should be taken under HLC policy, up to and including withdrawal of accreditation.

⁴ Please note: Revisions to HLC’s Criteria for Accreditation and Assumed Practices went into effect on September 1, 2025. Institutions will be evaluated against these revised HLC requirements for all reviews conducted after that date, including reviews related to previously assigned monitoring. Institutional reports submitted on or after September 1, 2025, or institutional reports or Assurance Arguments for visits that will take place on or after September 1, 2025, should be written to the revised version of the Criteria or Assumed Practices as applicable. More information, including a crosswalk between the previous and revised versions of the Criteria, is available on HLC’s website at <https://www.hlcommission.org/accreditation/policies/criteria/>.

Comprehensive Evaluation: The Institution has been maintained on the Standard Pathway with its next comprehensive evaluation for reaffirmation of accreditation in 2030-31.

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.

In accordance with HLC policy,⁵ information about this action is provided to members of the public and to other constituents in several ways. This Action Letter and the enclosed Public Disclosure Notice will be posted to HLC's website not more than one business day after this letter is sent to the Institution. Additionally, a summary of Board actions will be sent to appropriate state and federal agencies and accrediting associations. This summary 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. Stephanie Brzuzy.

Sincerely,



Barbara Gellman-Danley
President

Enc: Public Disclosure Notice

Cc: Chair of the Board of Trustees, Leech Lake Tribal College
Anyea Hake, Dean of Academics, Leech Lake Tribal College
Evaluation Team Chair
IAC Hearing Committee Chair
Stephanie Brzuzy, Vice President of Accreditation Relations, Higher Learning Commission
Marla Morgen, Vice President and General Counsel, Higher Learning Commission
Elizabeth Daggett, Director, Accreditation Group, Office of Postsecondary Education, U.S. Department of Education

⁵ COMMA.10.010, Notice of Accreditation Actions, HLC Public Notices and Public Statements