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June 17, 2014

Dr. Howard Keim
President
Hesston College
P.O. Box 3000
301 S. Main
Hesston, KS 67062-2093

Dear President Keim:

The interim report you submitted to our office has now been reviewed. A staff analysis of the report is enclosed.

On behalf of the Commission, staff accepts the report on planning and assessment. No further reports are required. The institution's next reaffirmation of accreditation is scheduled for 2020 – 2021.

Also enclosed is a copy of the institution's Statement of Affiliation Status, which reflects the actions taken by the Commission. For more information on the interim report process contact Lil Nakutis, Accreditation Processes Specialist, at lnakutis@hlcommission.org. Your HLC staff liaison is Steph Brzuzy (sbrzuzy@hlcommissioni.org); (800) 621-7440 x 106.

Thank you.

HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION

STAFF ANALYSIS OF INSTITUTIONAL REPORT

DATE: June 17, 2014

STAFF: Steph Brzuzy

REVIEWED BY: Katherine C. Delaney

INSTITUTION: Hesston College, Hesston, KS

EXECUTIVE OFFICER: Howard Keim, President

PREVIOUS COMMISSION ACTION RE: REPORT: An interim report due 6/1/2014 focused on planning and assessment along with specific coverage of assessment of general education.

ITEMS ADDRESSED IN REPORT: The office of the Commission received the institution's report on the above topic on 6/1/2014.

STAFF ANALYSIS: Hesston College hosted a comprehensive visit in March 2011. The comprehensive visit team recommended two progress reports, which the team suggested might be combined into one report. One report was to address planning and the other assessment.

Assessment

The comprehensive visit team recommended the assessment report based on the following rationale:

Although Hesston College has been working diligently to enhance assessment activities throughout the college, the majority of these efforts have resulted in indirect assessments, many based on student perception acquired through student surveys. To accurately demonstrate student learning, it is imperative that the college enhance their assessment efforts to incorporate direct assessments of student learning. Thus it is the recommendation of the Team that Hesston College complete a Progress Report by June 1, 2014 that demonstrates the college has implemented an assessment program that includes direct assessment of student learning outcomes. This report should include the following:

- a. the identification of the type of direct assessments, which have been implemented*
- b. the identification of where these assessments have been implemented*
- c. a summary of data on the results obtained*
- d. a summary of what was learned from this data and any plans of actions*

The interim report on assessment was introduced by an overview of activities and accomplishments in both strategic planning and assessment. Relating to assessment, the report stated that through the institution's participation in the AAC&U's Institute of General Education and Assessment in June 2011, Hesston College has:

- revised student learning outcomes
- revised the general education program
- implemented a systematic plan to measure student achievement of the student learning outcomes using established rubrics (i.e., VALUE rubrics, and
- adopted the CLA+ as an integral component of the assessment program.

Indirect Measures

Hesston College continues to administer - and learn by - the Individual Development and Educational Assessment (IDEA) and the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE).

The IDEA tool has been used at the College since the 2006-2007 academic year. According to the interim report, in 2006-07, only 51% of the Hesston College classes were rated above the IDEA average. By the fall of 2013, 66% were rated as being above the IDEA average. IDEA states in its literature that "anytime a group's percentage score exceeds 60% the inference is that the group's overall instructional excellence is unusually high." Hesston College, with a group a score ranging between 66% and 76% for the past seven semesters, believes that the caliber of teaching and the growth in student learning has increased substantially in the past seven semesters, as evidenced by the IDEA results.

Hesston College has administered CCSSE three times in recent years: 2007, 2009, and 2012. This survey (with a cohort of 266 institutions in 2012) provides information about effective educational practices and promotes improvements in student learning and persistence. Student engagement, or the amount of time and energy invested by students in meaningful educational practices, is the underlying foundation for the CCSSE survey. The interim report presented a 2012 graph that demonstrated Hesston College received the highest ratings nationally on two of the five benchmarks: Student-Faculty Interaction (73.2) and Support for Learners (71.2).

The interim report concludes,

We are confident that if we used exclusively direct measures (like scoring rubrics, pre/post-tests, and standardized exams), we would not be where we are at today in terms of student progress. The informational resources provided by IDEA and CCSSE to assist faculty in using the data for improvement are excellent and well-worth the investment of finances and energy.

Direct Assessment

The College applied for and was accepted into the AAC&U Institute on General Education and Assessment. As a result of this initiative, the College adopted a new set of student learning outcomes in the fall semester 2011.

In Fall 2012, the Director of the AAC&U Assessment for Learning offered an in-service session at Hesston College. In addition, members of the General Education Committee attended a webinar on assessment. The General Education Committee implemented a Moodle classroom site for faculty, allowing ease of access to information related to General Education. It also provided faculty with a place to electronically post their work related to course certification and their assessment assignments.

In the Spring 2013, the College accomplished a great deal related to assessment:

- Faculty approved the general education distribution/outcome requirements for all HC degrees (AA, AS, AGS, and AAAS).
- Faculty submitted to the General Education Committee courses for general education certification and identified within these syllabi one "assessment assignment" for each course to be used for course evaluation and institutional assessment.
- The majority of the HC General Education courses were approved by the General Education Committee this spring by successfully going through the new certification process.
- Curricular mapping (course by course) began as General Education courses were being certified,

correlating course outcomes with the Hesston College student learning outcomes and also by reviewing which HC outcomes were being systematically addressed and assessed by faculty in their courses through "assessment assignments."

- *The revised general education requirements and programs of study were published in HC Catalog for all degrees.*
- *Division and department chairs were asked to work with their faculty to ensure division/department outcomes were revised and aligned with the new HC student learning outcomes.*
- *Faculty teaching general education courses posted electronic samples of completed "assessment assignments" to be assessed by faculty/staff teams in May 2013 related to the HC outcome of written communication.*
- *Faculty and members of Student Life staff were recruited for their involvement on the summer assessment teams.*

Through the assessment of student writing, the assessment team identified three primary areas of focus – clarity of context and purpose, use of sources and evidence, and control of syntax and mechanics – as well as a number of concrete recommendations faculty can employ to improve these areas of focus on student writing. The team also identified the steps in place to inform the different areas of campus during the 2013-2014 academic year. A full report of this assessment process, the results, and the recommendations are provided in the appendix of the report.

Hesston College's second summer assessment workshop met to assess the following outcomes using the AAC&U VALUE rubrics: Written Communication, Integrative Learning, Intercultural Competency, and Ethical Reasoning. Two primary methods of direct assessment of student learning have been integrated into the Hesston College academic assessment plan since 2011. These methods include

- 1) the annual assessment of student "assessment assignments" which address several HC student learning outcomes, utilizing the VALUE rubrics and several other rubrics developed especially for Hesston College; and
- 2) implementation of the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA+) norm-referenced assessment for sophomore students who have attended Hesston College for two academic years.

The interim report detailed the results of the CLA+ and the AAC&U VALUE rubrics and criteria. Also detailed in the appendices were the follow-up measures taken by the College to improve student learning. Below is an example of one such outcome and follow-up:

Issue 1: Students struggled to write purpose driven papers.

- *Some samples had organizational structure but still lacked clear purpose.*
- *Some samples stated a purpose, but did not follow it throughout the work.*
- *"I learned so much" was used as a purpose in a variety of samples.*

Recommendations:

1. *Focus early feedback on the development of purpose statements.*
2. *Make clear purpose an important part of the evaluation of all written work.*
3. *Also focus early feedback on connecting the purpose statement with the content development throughout a paper, including the use of sources and evidence.*
4. *Consider asking students to read the work out loud to a peer, with the peer working to identify the purpose and supporting ideas.*
5. *Create clear assignment expectations regarding purpose. Consider providing sample work demonstrating expectations.*

Planning

The comprehensive visit team provided the following rationale for a progress report on planning:

For an institution to function in a manner that provides clarity in its focus, it is important that it is clear in the identification of both its strategic initiatives and the means by which it intends to reach those initiatives. Not all planning which occurs is strategic in nature. It is also important that all levels of the college support each other in the planning process. It is the recommendation of the Team that Hesston College complete a Progress Report by June 1, 2014 that demonstrates that the College has defined and implemented a planning process that results in the following:

- a. the identification of the College's strategic initiatives*
- b. the identification of operational activities that are aimed at addressing the strategic initiatives*
- c. a demonstration of timing in the planning process which supports both budgeting and the appropriate flow of planning at different levels within the college.*
- d. the identification of the process for assignment of responsibility*
- e. the identification of the process for review of progress*
- f. an overview of other planning process which may exist at the institution which are not directly aimed at the College's strategic planning process.*

Again, the introduction to the interim report provided a summary of the progress made in strategic planning since the 2011 comprehensive visit:

The institutional strategic goals were re-defined in three areas, with specific imperatives identified for each goal. The Hesston College Board of Directors and the Administrative Council developed the strategic directions and addressed/implemented strategic planning as an integral component of their regular sessions. Vice Presidents (members of the Administrative Council) are assigned responsibility for various imperatives and work with their teams to develop more specific objectives, timelines and action plans. Regular reporting to the Administrative Council by Vice Presidents provides oversight and accountability. Under the leadership of the Vice Presidents, division and department chairs and other faculty/staff are asked to develop and implement yearly academic or team plans that are linked to the institutional imperatives as well as assessment and budgeting. Institutional strategic planning efforts have been resourced by a number of external consultants over the past three years.

The College established the following goals for strategic planning:

- Refine and clarify goals
- Identify responsible persons to lead planning and achievement of the goals.
- Provide resources necessary to achieve goals.
- Engage the Administrative Council and Hesston College Board of Directors on a regular basis for reporting and feedback.

The interim report addressed monitoring, budgeting, and planning for each imperative related to the strategic plan. In 2011, the Administrative Council developed five strategic areas for the strategic plan:

1. Develop as a learning community that values and practices the scholarship of teaching and learning.
2. Improve our external connections.
3. Embed appreciation, respect, and celebration of multicultural and global perspectives.
4. Transform the technology we use.

5. Develop plans for institutional strength.

The institution has addressed the third goal intensely, utilizing external consultants and establishing an Inclusion and Diversity Council of 28 members. General education, too, is guided by a faculty committee that includes students.

In 2012, an external consultant assisted the College to further refine the strategic goals, which were then reduced to the following three strategic goals:

1. Increase enrollment, completion and graduation rates.
2. Enhance student learning and persistence by infusing the learning environment with high support, high impact practices and innovation.
3. Become a more inclusive community.

In 2013-2014, the College experienced declines in new student enrollment, which led to College to engage Noel-Levitz to assist in enrollment management. Currently, the number of senior visits is up 20% over a year ago and deposits are up nearly 40%.

The interim report also address planning in Advancement, Auxiliary Services, Technology Transformation, Academic Planning, etc.

For the upcoming year, the College will continue to use the three strategic goals and accompanying imperatives to guide institutional strategic planning. In May 2014, the President reported to the Board a plan for future planning in two phases:

First, in the coming months, identify the adaptive challenges that the college needs to address in our Five Key Result Areas (enrollment, financial strength, quality of programs, employee competence and satisfaction, and Anabaptist Identity) in order to remain strong and grow in the future.

Second, align these Key Result Areas with our strategic goals and imperatives. Future work at Hesston College related to strategic planning will continue to be led by our President but will also be facilitated by Jack Swain, a national expert in the use of the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence to drive organizational improvement.

Staff comment: Hesston College submitted a strong interim report that reflected significant progress in both assessment and strategic planning. The College is commended for the serious efforts it has devoted to both of these issues and for the very effect report in conveying those efforts.

STAFF ACTION: Accept the report on planning and assessment. No further reports are required. The institution's next reaffirmation of accreditation is scheduled for 2020 – 2021.

STATEMENT OF AFFILIATION STATUS

Hesston College
P.O. Box 3000
301 S. Main
Hesston, KS 67062-2093

Affiliation Status: Candidate: 06/01/1962 - 04/06/1964
Accreditation: 04/07/1964

Nature of Organization

Control: Private NFP
Degrees Awarded: Associates

Conditions of Affiliation:

Stipulations on Affiliation Status: None.

Approval of New Additional Locations: Prior Commission approval required.

Approval of Distance and Correspondence Courses and Programs: Approval for distance education is limited to courses. The institution has not been approved for correspondence education.

Accreditation Activities: Open Pathway, Quality Initiative Report: 08/31/2020
Open Pathway, Quality Initiative Proposal: 08/31/2018

Summary of Commission Review

Year of Last Reaffirmation of Accreditation: 2010 - 2011

Year for Next Reaffirmation of Accreditation: 2020 - 2021

Last Date of Information Change: 06/17/2014

Accreditation Note:
None.

Name Change: