

Date: September 10, 2012
To: All Faculty, Staff, and Administrators
From: Lori Baker, on behalf of the HLC Steering Committee
RE: Nominations for Student Representatives on the HLC Self-Study Teams

Once again, we are asking for your help in identifying students whom you think would be great representatives on the HLC Accreditation self-study teams. These students would replace students who have served for the past year but who have graduated.

As many of you know, in order to keep its accreditation, periodically the university must undergo a self-study process and share its findings with a group of external reviewers from the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), our regional accrediting body. Five self-study teams, organized around the criteria set for accreditation (described on the back of this sheet) and led by members of the HLC Steering Committee, have been gathering specific feedback to include in the self-study. The self-study needs to be completed by 2014-2015. While this might seem still far in the future, the bulk of the information needed in the self-study must be gathered over the course of this academic year, 2012-2013.

It is vital that we get input on the self-study criteria from ALL the different people associated with our university and surrounding community. One of the very important groups we want to make sure are represented are the students.

These students would be involved in meeting with one of the self-study teams during all of the 2012-2013 school year, as well as in the years leading up to the review if these students are still on campus and are willing to continue. The students will be expected to provide ideas on what needs to be included, to help organize team efforts at gathering information and evidence, to analyze findings, and to represent the students' perspectives. We are hoping to find several students to replace students who have graduated on each of the five self-study teams.

Please help by nominating students to serve on one of the teams. We are looking for earnest, motivated students from all different student groups who want to make certain that SMSU remains an excellent regional university and who want to have a voice in that process.

Anyone—faculty, staff, administration, other students—can nominate students to serve. To nominate a student, simply fill out the bottom of this form or paste the information into an email and return it to Lori Baker (lori.baker@smsu.edu). While we would like students to begin working with the teams as soon as possible, feel free to submit any student's name at any time. Nominated students will be contacted by members of the HLC Steering Committee with further information about joining one of the teams.

Student's name: _____ Nominator: _____

Why you believe this student would be a good addition to an accreditation self-study team:

If there is a specific criterion team you believe the student should help with (listed on back), please list here:

SMSU's Accreditation Self-Study Criterion-based Teams

I. Criterion One. Mission The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

- 1.A. The institution's mission is broadly understood within the institution and guides its operations.
- 1.B. The mission is articulated publicly.
- 1.C. The institution understands the relationship between its mission and the diversity of society.
- 1.D. The institution's mission demonstrates commitment to the public good.

II. Criterion Two. Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

- 2.A. The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions; it establishes and follows fair and ethical policies and processes for its governing board, administration, faculty, and staff.
- 2.B. The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public with regard to its programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, control, and accreditation relationships.
- 2.C. The governing board of the institution is sufficiently autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution and to assure its integrity.
- 2.D. The institution is committed to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning.
- 2.E. The institution ensures that faculty, students, and staff acquire, discover, and apply knowledge responsibly.

III. Criterion Three. Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support The institution provides high quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

- 3.A. The institution's degree programs are appropriate to higher education.
- 3.B. The institution demonstrates that the exercise of intellectual inquiry and the acquisition, application, and integration of broad learning and skills are integral to its educational programs.
- 3.C. The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services.
- 3.D. The institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching.
- 3.E. The institution fulfills the claims it makes for an enriched educational environment.

IV. Criterion Four. Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

- 4.A. The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs.
- 4.B. The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning.
- 4.C. The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.

V. Criterion Five. Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness The institution's resources, structures, and processes are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities. The institution plans for the future.

- 5.A. The institution's resource base supports its current educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.
- 5.B. The institution's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the institution to fulfill its mission.
- 5.C. The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning.
- 5.D. The institution works systematically to improve its performance.