Executive Summary for Senate Presentations
Concerns Identified in the Higher Learning Commission 2016 Review
May 9, 2017 and May 15, 2017

This Executive Summary very briefly summarizes concerns that must be addressed by the 2020-21 Assurance Review. It also includes those concerns that will get increased scrutiny in that review. This summary is by no means inclusive of all of the feedback received. A more detailed listing of all of the concerns from the Review Team is being compiled and will be shared with the campus community in the coming weeks.

Concerns That Require Interim Reporting in the Year 4 Assurance Review (2020-21)

1) **Financial Indicators, Faculty and Staff Employment Levels, Deferred Maintenance Needs, and Planning and Budgeting Processes:** The review will examine our financial and non-financial indicators, as well as faculty and staff employment levels, deferred maintenance needs, and results from the RCM budget model to evaluate whether our planning and budgeting process have stabilized and are sufficient to support continuing operations. (Criterion 5.A)

2) **Continuous Improvement Strategies and Data Collection:** The review will examine how we have implemented specific strategies to evaluate institutional performance, our self-evaluation of those strategies, and actions taken toward continuous improvement. We must provide evidence of the implementation of systems that generate the needed data. The team specifically noted that many resources are “in place for data collection but the extent of implementation at the time of the visit is limited.” (Criterion 5.D)

3) **Student Complaints:** The federal compliance reviewer specifically noted that we failed to provide an aggregated report of the number and type of complaints received since the last comprehensive evaluation and that it is not clear that we follow a systematic process for reporting, documenting, and reviewing complaints. We will be expected to provide summary reports of student complaints based on our established policies. We will also need to demonstrate a common, shared approach for collecting this information from the colleges and other units. (Federal Compliance on “Institutional Records of Student Complaints”)

Additional Concerns

- **General Education:**
  While the team acknowledged that work yet remains to bring the General Education Program to the standards that we intend, particularly in embedding advanced writing across the curriculum, the next review team will expect to see four years’ worth of data that documents the effectiveness of General Education in achieving the learning goals established by the faculty. (Criterion 3)

- **Course Availability and Advising:**
  The team noted that the results of the student survey raised concerns about insufficient course availability, particularly within majors, as well as a lack of quality advising. These two issues are commonly identified as factors that contribute to increased time to degree completion. They recognized that improved co-curricular assessment under the auspices of the Division of Student Success and Enrollment should make it possible to address issues such as advising. (Criterion 4.A)
• **Faculty Qualifications:**
The team specifically stated that we need to improve compliance with HLC policy on faculty qualifications. At the time of review, they noted that undergraduate instruction in agriculture, business administration, civil engineering, criminal justice, mathematics, and graduate-level courses in education and business administration, was provided by instructors approved as exceptions to campus policy. (Criterion 4.A)

• **Using Assessment to Improve Academic Programs:**
The review team noted that our evidence showed that assessment is occurring in curricular programs, including the General Education program, but not in a way that leads to program improvement. The next review will make a point of examining General Education assessment, including the use of evidence to improve the program. (Criterion 4.B)

• **Strategic Enrollment Plan**
The team recognized that we are in the process of discussing a strategic enrollment plan and pointed out the need for documentation for transparency and communication. (Criterion 4)

**Summary Conclusion:**

The 2017 HLC Review team lauded the institution’s history, mission, and commitment to serving our varied constituencies, but expressed serious concerns about reductions in state funding that threaten to compromise UW-Platteville’s capabilities. Cutbacks have obviously negatively impacted campus morale for both students and personnel, increased deferred maintenance needs, and reduced support for programs. Increases in enrollment have been accompanied by reductions in personnel. The team noted that “signs are trending downward,” including for financial indicators.

The documentation and evidence we provide in the Assurance Review in 2020-21 must be sufficient to demonstrate that we meet criteria for accreditation without the additional explanation or context that an on-site review might allow. It is especially important that our evidence files in support of the above mentioned areas are complete and leave no room for doubt in the reviewer’s mind that we have addressed concerns noted in the 2016 Comprehensive Review.