



July 2, 2019

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Dr. Chad Wiginton, President  
Western Oklahoma State College  
2801 N. Main St.  
Altus, OK 73521

Dear President Wiginton:

This letter is formal notification of action taken by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Board of Trustees (“the Board”) concerning Western Oklahoma State College (“the Institution” or “Western”). This action is effective as of the date the Board acted, June 27, 2019. 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 Board continued the accreditation of the Institution. The Institution meets Core Component 4.B with concerns. The Institution is required to submit an Interim Report, as outlined below, no later than September 1, 2021.

### **Board Rationale**

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

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

- Western has a systematic process for collecting and reporting assessment results at the course level. The Institution ties both course and program learning outcomes across all disciplines within its curriculum to the institutional learning outcomes within its annual Report on Assessment Activities. The Institution’s data are aggregated to produce program outcome results, and these results then feed into general education assessment. Program reports include past and anticipated changes based on data, as well as resources needed at the course level.
- Western cites the connection between assessment of course, program and institutional learning outcomes, analysis of the data, identification of actionable opportunities and improvement efforts themselves. Such connections, however, are difficult to track given

the "siloeed" documentation that separates the annual Assessment Report, Program Reviews, and the annual College Plan.

- While course-level assessment processes have served well in the collection and reporting of assessment data, improvements need to be made in the communication of how these results feed into the General Education Assessment, and training in the analysis and use of assessment results at the varying levels is needed. The general education assessment does not report on how the accumulated evidence from the assessments have impacted change or improved general education outcomes across the curriculum.
- Although Western has implemented new methods of co-curricular assessments in recent years, additional steps need to be taken to develop and implement a campus-wide plan for co-curricular assessment. The Institution must plan and develop comprehensive student co-curricular structure and outcomes as it would in curricular design. The assessment of the co-curricular program must be developed to include direct and indirect assessment design.
- The Institution is making progress on assessment of student learning in academic areas; however, there has been insufficient time to demonstrate systemic results. The Institution needs to continue its momentum in developing and communicating curricular and co-curricular assessment. Although its assessment processes have been systematic, they have not been systemic.

### Next Steps in the HLC Review Process

**Substantive Change:** The Board remanded the Institution's embedded change application to the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Institutional Actions Council for final action.

**Interim Report:** The Board required that the Institution submit an Interim Report no later than September 1, 2021, regarding Core Component 4.B.

**Comprehensive Evaluation:** The Institution has been maintained on the Standard Pathway with its next comprehensive evaluation for reaffirmation of accreditation in 2024-25.

### 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 policy<sup>1</sup> 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.

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<sup>1</sup> COMM.A.10.010, Commission Public Notices and Statements

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. A. Gigi Fansler.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Barbara Gellman-Danley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'B'.

Barbara Gellman-Danley  
President

Cc: Chrystal Overton, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Western Oklahoma State College  
Evaluation Team Chair  
IAC Hearing Committee Chair  
A. Gigi Fansler, Vice President for Accreditation Relations, Higher Learning Commission  
Anthea Sweeney, Vice President for Legal and Governmental Affairs, Higher Learning  
Commission