

This is our final newsletter. As you are all aware, Oakton's self study, *Learning Matters*, was published over the summer. Representing an enormous amount of labor by a substantial cross section of Oakton employees, *Learning Matters* narrates our recent history, analyzes our strengths as an institution of higher learning, and articulates the challenges as we look toward the future.

Copies of the self study can be found in all of the Division Offices at the Des Plaines campus, the Faculty Support office at the Skokie campus, both libraries, and the Office of Facilities. You also can access a PDF version of the document that maintains the vibrant color and imagery of the printed document through the Faculty Staff tab on Oakton's homepage—just click on the "HLC Self Study" link.

[As the cochairs of the steering committee, we would like to take this final opportunity to offer our thanks and appreciation for the hard work of the many people involved in this project.](#)

It is important to recognize and thank the numerous members of the Steering Committee and the Criterion Committees. The production of the self study involved the collection and analysis of huge amounts of data, from past budget reports to current student assessment projects. The compilation and analysis of this data are the work of the five criterion subcommittees (a list of whose members can be found in the opening pages of the self study), and the Steering Committee.

Trudy Bers and the Office of Institutional Research were essential partners in compiling and analyzing the data, as well as in helping the committee move from "raw" data to "evidence" in support of conclusions. We thank Pat Miller especially for her role in organizing the entire process.

Carlee Drummer and the Office of College Advancement provided important help by developing the basic logo for the project, *Learning Matters*; publishing the newsletters; and designing the final published version. The work of Nancy Nash, Kathleen DeCoursey, and others in the office is clear in the stunning visual presentation of the final document.

The self study's coherence and strong presentation also owes a great deal to the editorial skill of Marian Staats.

Sherrill Weaver's work in organizing the evidence and data for easy access by the visiting team and putting together the resource room (a work currently in process) deserves recognition and thanks.

Of course, without the support of President Margaret Lee, the Board of Trustees, and the College administration, the project would have been impossible.

Finally, we would like to thank the entire Oakton community for your participation in the process through the Constellation Survey and Vital Focus, and for your many helpful clarifications and comments on the first drafts of the document.

With thanks,
Thomas Bowen and Kathleen Carot

THE VISIT

The self study is an essential part of our reaccreditation process and serves a variety of functions for the College. However, the pivotal event in our reaccreditation process is the visit from the Higher Learning Commission's Consultant Evaluator Team. Below you will find a list of the C-E Team Members as well as a schedule of the meetings with various Oakton constituencies. Of these many meetings, of key interest is the "exit interview" where the C-E Team will present its findings. This is not a question and answer session; rather, it is a preview of the basic direction the C-E Team's report will take when it is written.

Within 4-6 weeks after the visit, Oakton will receive the C-E Team's draft reports. The Assurance Report provides official notification of the team's recommendations to the HLC regarding length of accreditation and need for follow-up, and the Advancement Report offers the C-E Team's observations and recommendations in their roles as colleagues and consultants.

Oakton will have two weeks to respond to the draft reports, and then, six weeks after that, the Higher Learning Commission will issue the final report and will act on the recommendations of the C-E Team.

Sunday, October 14

HLC Team Dinner and Meeting
 6 p.m.
 Hilton Hotel or outside restaurant

Monday, October 15

HLC team greeting with President, HLC Steering Committee
 8 - 8:30 a.m.
 Room 1560, Des Plaines campus

Student Open Meeting
 1 - 2 p.m.
 TenHoeve Center, Room 1610, Des Plaines campus

Staff Open Meeting
 2 - 3 p.m.
 Room 1610, Des Plaines (TenHoeve Center)

Student Academic Assessment Team (SAAT)
 3:30 - 4:30 p.m.
 Business Conference Center, Room D, Des Plaines campus

Tuesday, October 16

Breakfast and Discussion with Community Leaders
 7:30 - 8:30 a.m.
 Performing Arts Center Lobby, Des Plaines campus

All Employee Open Meeting
 11 a.m. - 12 p.m.
 Room P103, Ray Hartstein Campus

Student Open Meeting
 1 - 2 p.m.
 Room P103, Ray Hartstein Campus

Faculty Senate Meeting
 2 - 2:45 p.m.
 TenHoeve Center, Room 1610, Des Plaines campus

Faculty Open Meeting
 2:45 - 3:45 p.m.
 TenHoeve Center, Room 1610, Des Plaines campus

Wednesday, October 17

Exit Interview
 11 - 11:45 a.m.
 Performing Arts Center, Des Plaines campus

Visit our [Higher Learning Commission Self Study Web site](http://www.oakton.edu/hlc) at www.oakton.edu/hlc.

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