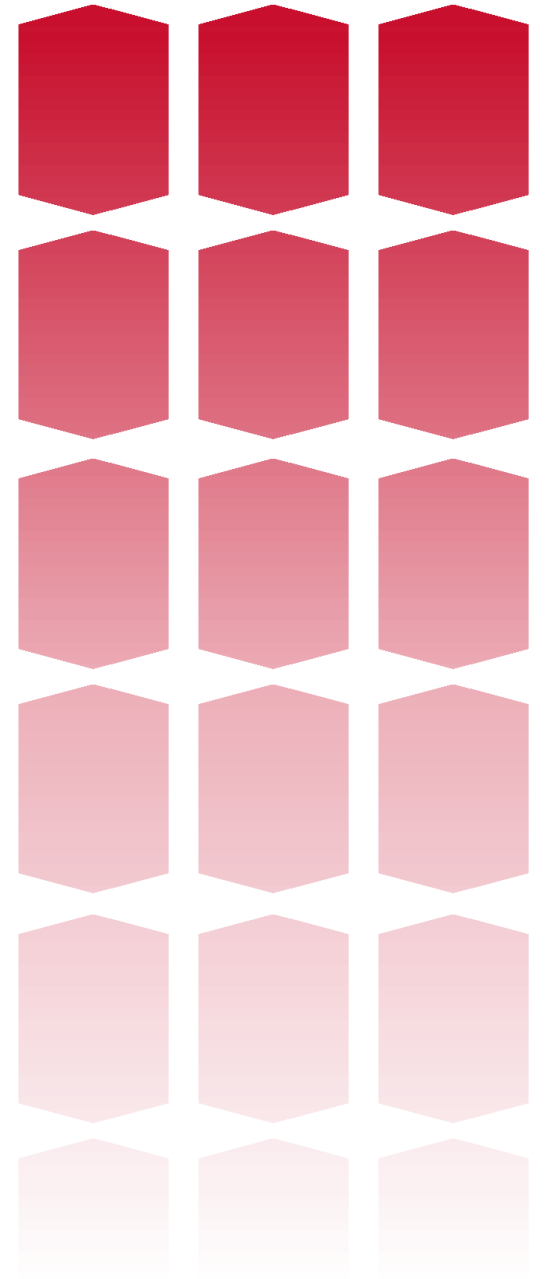




Northern Illinois
University

2023-2024
Higher Learning Commission
COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW

Sept. 19, 2023



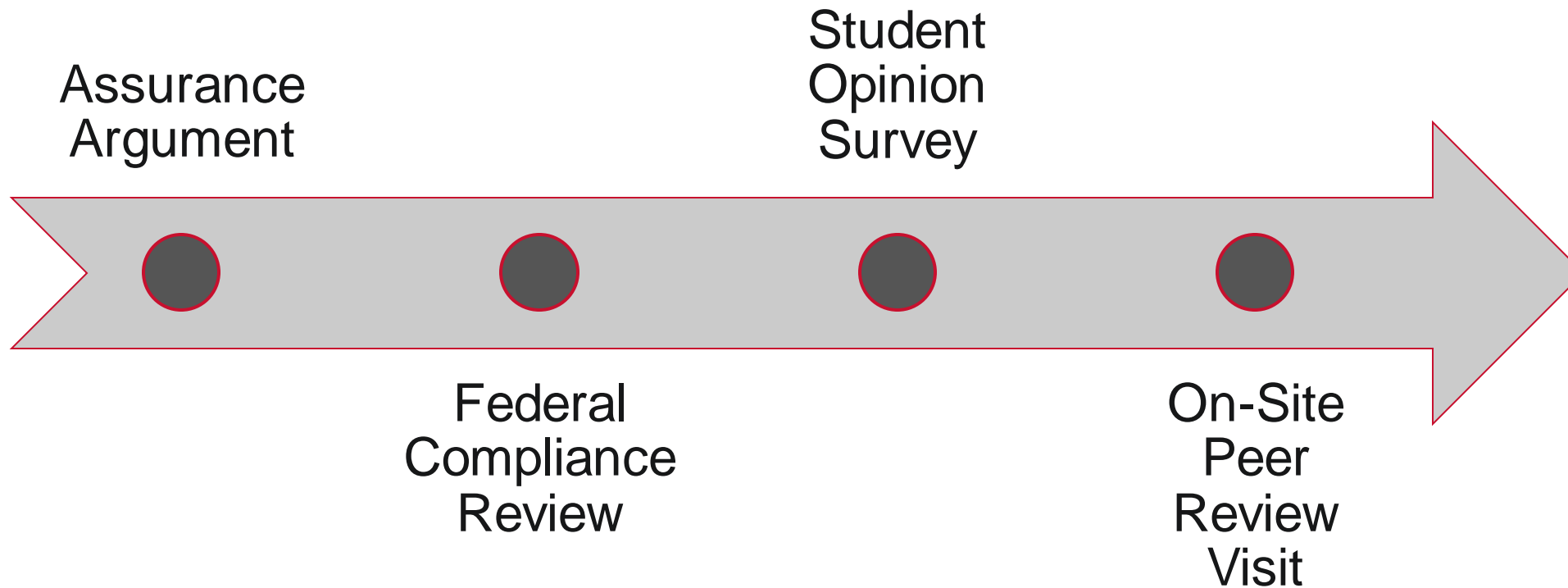
HLC Accreditation Process

Open Pathway: a 10-year cycle is focused on quality assurance and institutional improvement

Final year of the cycle: Comprehensive Evaluation



Comprehensive Evaluation



Campus Feedback

The university will release five, criteria-specific sections of the draft assurance argument to the campus community beginning in October for review and feedback.

OCT.

Launch **Criterion 1**
for review

OCT.

Feedback on
Criterion 1
due/Launch
Criterion 2

NOV.

Feedback on
Criterion 2 due/
Launch **Criterion 3**

NOV.

Feedback on
Criterion 3
due/Launch
Criterion 4

NOV.

Feedback on
Criterion 4
due/Launch
Criterion 5

DEC.

Feedback on
Criterion 5 due

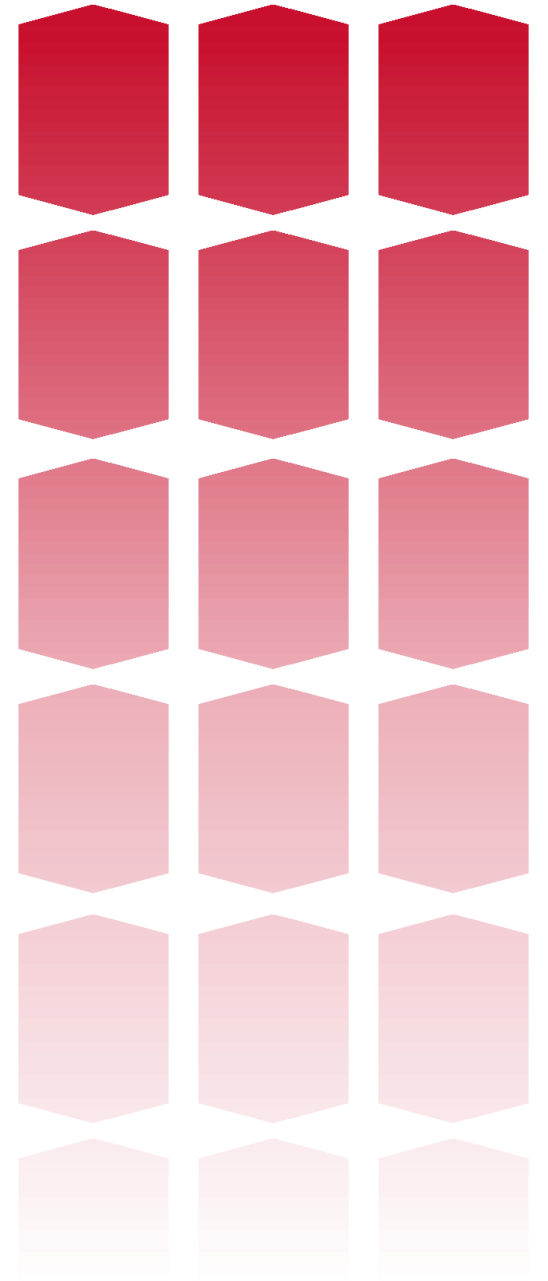


Faculty and Staff Participation

- Review the draft argument for each criterion and provide additional examples of ways we demonstrate that NIU is following the HLC's Criteria for Accreditation.
- Review and update content that is posted on the NIU website to ensure evidence is accurate.



[**niu.edu/HLC**](http://niu.edu/HLC)



HLC Accreditation

- NIU has been accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) since 1915.
- HLC is one of the seven regional accrediting agencies recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.
- NIU's last comprehensive evaluation occurred in 2014 and the university was reaccredited by HLC for 10 years (until 2024), the maximum period possible.




The Importance of Accreditation

- It's required for NIU to receive federal funds.
- Together with specialized accreditations, it assures the public of our legitimacy.
- It's an opportunity to take stock of, and celebrate, our accomplishments.




Timeline



Fall 2022

September 2022 - December 2022


- Begin drafting 2023-2024 assurance argument outline
- Create template based on HLC format and institutional themes
- Survey evidence sources



Spring 2023

January 2023 - May 2023


- Finalize assurance argument outline
- Draft argument based on outline for each criterion
- Evidence collection and editing begins



Summer 2023

May 2023 - August 2023

- Prepare penultimate draft of the assurance argument
- Evidence collecting and editing begins



Fall 2023

September 2023 - December 2023

- Evidence collecting and editing continues
- Make the assurance argument available for comment
- Incorporate assurance argument comments
- Prepare the final version of assurance argument
- Complete federal compliance review



Spring 2024

January 2024

- HLC survey of NIU students
- Submit the assurance argument report to HLC

February 2024

- Assurance system lock date

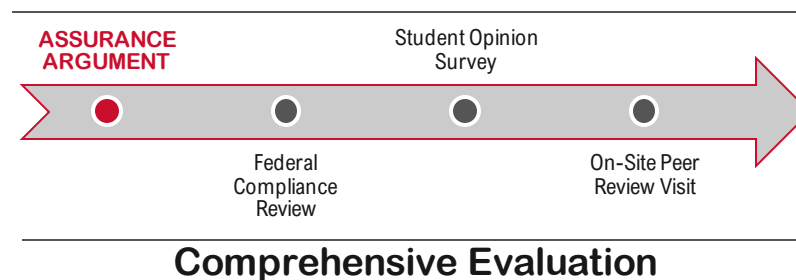
March 2024

- HLC site visit: March 25-26, 2024



Assurance Argument

- NIU will submit an assurance argument, along with materials of evidence, to demonstrate that we follow HLC's criteria for accreditation.
- The peer review team will review these materials in preparation for their on-site visit.



Criterion 1

Mission

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

Criterion 2

**Integrity:
Ethical and
Responsible Conduct**

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

Criterion 3

**Teaching and
Learning: Quality,
Resources and
Support**

The institution provides quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

Criterion 4
**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.

Criterion 5
**Institutional
Effectiveness,
Resources and
Planning**

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.

Evidence for the Criteria

Our evidence should do the following:

- Substantiate the facts and arguments presented in our institutional narrative.
- Respond to the prior peer review team's concerns and recommendations.
- Explain any nuances specific to our institution.
- Strengthen our overall record of compliance with HLC's requirements.
- Affirm our overall academic quality and financial sustainability and integrity.



Core Team Members

Chris McCord



**Interim Associate Dean
for Academic
Administration**
Assurance Argument Chair

Amy Buhrow



**Assistant Vice Provost for
Assessment and
Accreditation**
Accreditation Liaison Officer

Jason Rhode



**Associate Vice Provost for
Teaching, Learning, and
Digital Education**
Provost's Designee



Core Team Members



Matt Streb
Chief Strategy Officer
and Board of Trustees Liaison
Criterion 1. Mission



Sarah Garner
Ethics and Compliance Officer
and Title IX Coordinator
**Criterion 2. Integrity: Ethical and
Responsible Conduct**



Simón Weffer
Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion for
the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
**Criterion 3. Teaching and
Learning: Quality, Resources and
Support**



Stephanie Richter
Director of Teaching Excellence
and Support
**Criterion 4. Teaching and
Learning: Evaluation and
Improvement**



Betsy Hull
Director of Strategic Initiatives
and Innovative Practice
**Criterion 5. Institutional
Effectiveness, Resources
and Planning**



Core Team Members

Carrie Zack



Associate Director
Accreditation, Assessment
and Evaluation Office

Tawanda Paul



Senior Research Associate
Accreditation, Assessment and
Evaluation Office

Susan Smith

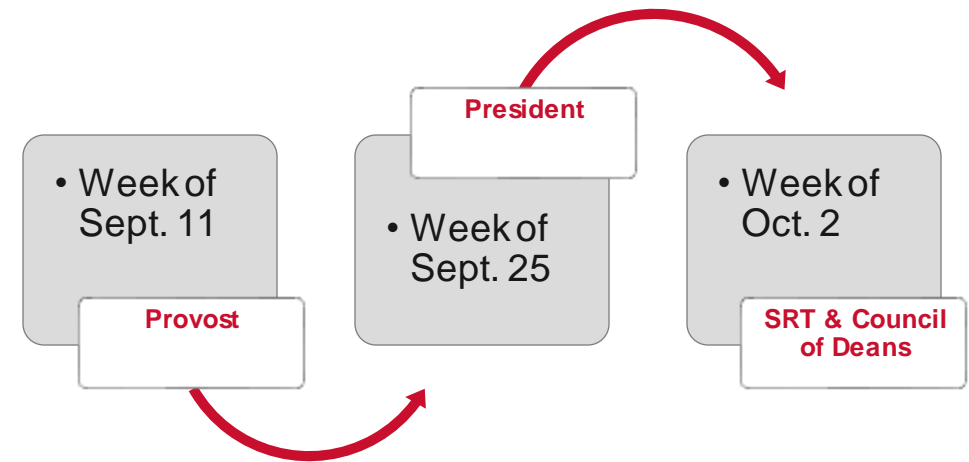


IT Associate
Director/Project Manager
Office of the Exec VP and
Provost



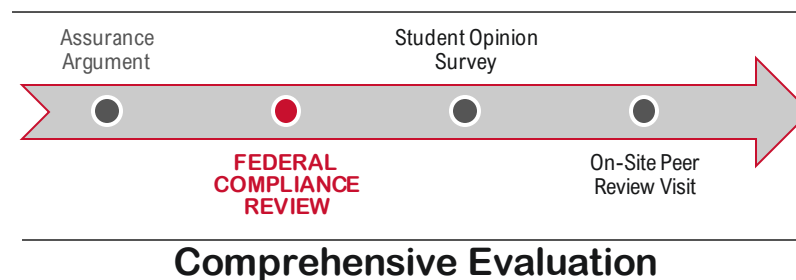
Senior Leadership Review

The initial draft assurance argument will be shared with senior leadership for review prior to soliciting campus feedback.



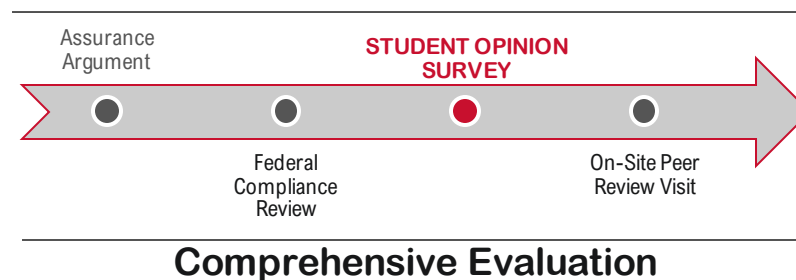
Federal Compliance Review

NIU must submit a federal compliance filing demonstrating that we are meeting our Title IV program responsibility and complying with the expectations of specific regulations set by the U.S. Department of Education.



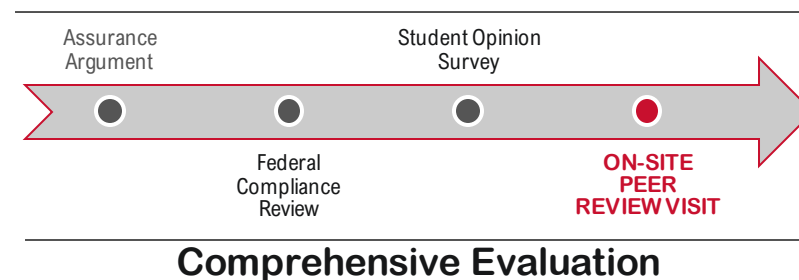
Student Opinion Survey

- Distributed via email two months prior to the peer review team's on-site visit.
- Gives students an opportunity to participate in the evaluation process and to help identify questions for the peer reviewers to ask while on site.



On-Site Peer Review Visit

- March 25-26, 2024
- Agenda for visit typically includes meetings with leadership and board, and open forums with faculty, staff and students.



Campus Communications

- Keep stakeholders informed and engaged in the accreditation process.
- Encourage the campus community to provide input and feedback for the assurance argument.
- Build awareness of the ways NIU meets the accreditation criteria and how everyone plays a part in fulfilling the mission.



Communications Channels

- Presentations to campus groups
- NIU HLC website
- Weekly email announcements for employees
- NIU Today
- The Provost Post (Academic Affairs e-newsletter) and college news blogs
- Digital signage
- Message on Blackboard
- PPT slides for classrooms and meetings
- Screensavers for labs and classrooms
- NIU Calendar
- Push notifications through NIU Mobile app and Huskie Hub
- Northern Star
- “Weekly Scroll” email for students
- Posts in class Facebook Groups
- Student Life website

