



**SPRING 2015**

# **JOHN A. LOGAN COLLEGE Open Pathway Newsletter**

## **What is the Higher Learning Commission?**

The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) is an independent corporation that was founded in 1895 as one of 6 regional institutional accreditors in the United States. HLC accredits degree-granting post-secondary educational institutions in the North Central region, which includes Illinois and 18 additional states (see <https://www.hlcommission.org/about-hlc.html> for additional information).

## **What are the main reasons for maintaining accreditation with the Higher Learning Commission? *Students.***

1. HLC accreditation provides assurance that John A. Logan College is offering quality education that meets or exceeds national standards.
2. Most schools will only accept transfer credits from an accredited school.
3. Only schools that are accredited are eligible to offer federal and state financial aid to their students.

## What is The Open Pathway?

In September 2012, the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) launched two new pathways for maintaining accreditation, the Open Pathway and the Standard Pathway. These pathways were introduced to replace the Program to Evaluate and Advance Quality (PEAQ). As a PEAQ Institution, John A. Logan College was transitioned to the Open Pathway. The Open Pathway is a ten year cycle that assures quality by meeting threshold standards and demonstrating engagement in continuous improvement. John A. Logan College will prepare electronic Assurance Reviews in years four and ten to verify that core components within the criteria for accreditation are being met. Year ten also requires a federal compliance review and on-site visit by the Higher Learning Commission. In addition, a quality initiative must be implemented between years five and nine.

## Open Pathway Committee Update

In February 2015, the Steering Committee, composed of the Vice-President for Instruction, Dean for Institutional Effectiveness, and one full-time faculty member assigned Criterion and Federal Compliance co-chairs. Each of the six committees is facilitated by two co-chairs, a full-time faculty member and non-teaching professional. An initial meeting was held on March 3, 2015, to orient co-chairs to the Open Pathway. Committees were populated by faculty and staff and are currently reviewing, collecting, and submitting documents that pertain to criteria core components. Thank you to the seventy-six individuals who have agreed to serve on one or several of these committees (see <https://jalcollege.sharepoint.com/instructionalservices/SitePages/Home.aspx>).

Even if you are not serving on a committee, you may be asked to contribute evidence from your department. Thanks in advance for your assistance and for being a part of this reaffirmation of accreditation cycle. John A. Logan College has a great story to tell, and we should be proud of our accomplishments since our last HLC visit. Our next site visit by the Higher Learning Commission is scheduled for October 17-18, 2016.

## Did You Know?

A student art contest is underway to develop a logo for our reaffirmation of accreditation cycle. Entries are due May 14, 2015, and the winner will be announced prior to the end of the semester. Stay tuned!

