The Assurance Process and System

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Higher Learning Commission
A commission of the North Central Association

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The Higher Learning Commission
North Central Association
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HLC Pathways for Reaffirmation of Accreditation

The Standard Pathway

HLC Pathways for Reaffirmation of Accreditation

The Open Pathway

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Form Follows Function...

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Assurance System Basics

- Web-based system

- Secure access for institutional representatives (3 "official" plus 12 more), peer reviewers, HLC staff

- Maintained over entire timeline of HLC affiliation

- HLC's Assurance System is "all that is required" unless institution chooses other systems to help it organize materials, manage a process, etc.
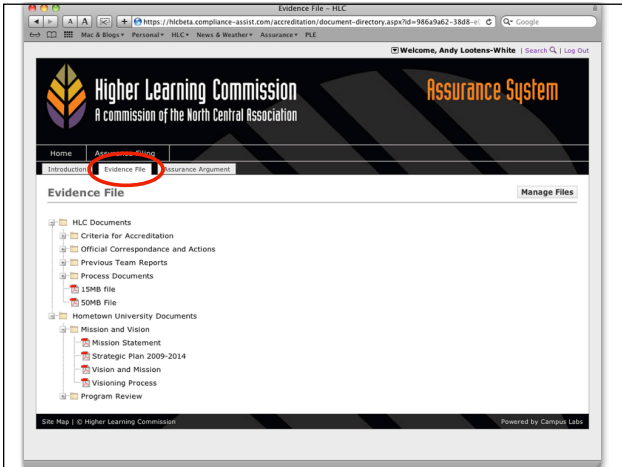
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Assurance Filing

- Evidence File

  - HLC-provided materials

  - Institution-provided materials

    - Addendum space (as needed)

- Assurance Argument

- Add-on templates as applicable (Federal Compliance, Assumed Practices, Eligibility Requirements)

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Evidence File

- HLC-provided evidence is pre-loaded

- Folder and file management area for institutionally-provided evidence

- Supports PDF's and a limited set of URL links

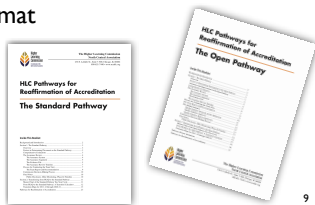- Upload once, link many times throughout Assurance Argument

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Assurance Argument

- Assurance Argument concept replaces the Self-Study model; they are quite different

- 35,000 word limit (40,000 for Standard Pathway)

- Organized by Criteria and Core Components; highly structured format

- Links to evidence

- Additional detail in Pathways booklets

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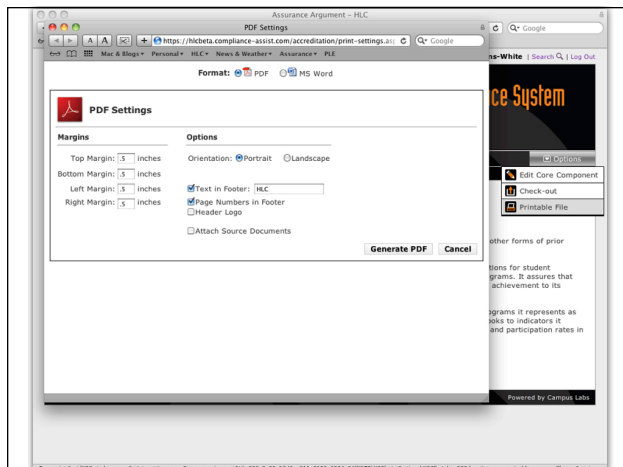## System "Smart" Features

- At-a-glance dashboard view with word count

- Document history with change tracking

- Reveal where evidence is linked to Argument

- "Replace" outdated evidence documents easily

- Generate PDF or Word versions of entire Assurance Argument or subsets

- Assign person responsible for each section

- Built-in deadline scheduling with reminders

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Timeline for Availability

- Right Now: 5 Beta Tester institutions using it now

- Thru Fall 2012: Peer Review module development

- Fall 2012: Access for all Pathways Cohort 1 institutions

- Fall 2013: Access for all other HLC member institutions; meanwhile,

    - keep in mind your Pathway timeline

    - you may begin collecting evidence, writing argument

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Test Drive the Assurance System!

- Sunday Drop In Sessions
    - 1:15 - 2:00 Butler Community College
    - 2:15 - 3:00 Pittsburg State University
    - 3:15 - 4:00 Aurora University
    - 4:15 - 5:00 Aurora University
- Monday Drop In Sessions
    - 10:00 - 10:45 St. Olaf College
    - 11:00 - 11:45 Butler Community College
    - 12:15 - 1:15 Metropolitan Community College (NE)
    - 1:30 - 2:15 Metropolitan Community College (NE)
    - 2:30 - 3:15 Pittsburg State University
    - 3:30 - 4:15 St. Olaf College

    Thanks to Campus Labs for Sponsoring the Drop-In Center

    (Columbus KL in the East Tower, Gold Level)

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Assurance Review, Comprehensive, and Reaffirmation

- Year 4 Open Pathway Assurance Review is conducted at a distance unless team requests a visit (Standard always has visit)

- Year 10 Assurance Review includes the online component as well as a 2-day visit to the campus (Both Open & Standard)

- For Open Pathway, Year 10 is a "Comprehensive Review" in that it includes Assurance Review plus Federal Compliance & Multi-Campus Review (For Standard, this occurs in 4 and 10)

- Reaffirmation of Accreditation occurs in Year 10 following the Comprehensive Review. For Open Pathway, this also must include results of the Quality Initiative.

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Assurance Review, Comprehensive, and Reaffirmation

Pathway	Year 4 Review	Year 10 Review		Reaffirmation in Year 10
Standard	w/ visit Comp	w/ visit Comp	➡	✓
Open	w/o visit	w/ visit Comp	+ QI	✓

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Review Timeline

Review	Online Review Begins	Campus Visit Begins	Campus Visit Ends	Online Review Ends
Year 4	On start date scheduled	Not applicable unless a visit is requested by team		When final report is submitted to HLC (10 weeks after online review begins)
Year 10	4 weeks before campus visit date	On campus visit date scheduled	At conclusion of 1.5 days on campus	

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Sample Visit Agenda

Sample Agenda for the Year 10 Team Visit

Day 1: Morning
- Meet with the institution's senior leadership
- Meet with individuals involved in the Assurance Argument and Evidence File
- Meet with representatives of the institution's board
- Meet individually with the institution's chief officers

Day 1: Afternoon
- Conduct campus tour
- Meet with formal committees typically led by faculty (general education, curriculum, assessment, etc.)
- Meet with leadership representatives from academic and student affairs units, as needed
- Conduct open forum for faculty and staff
- Meet with additional individuals and groups (as determined by electronic review of Evidence File and Assurance Argument)

Day 2: Morning
- Meet with student senate (or key student groups as applicable)
- Meet with groups and individuals from Day 1 if meetings not yet held
- Hold Exit Session with institution's senior leadership (visit concludes and team departs campus)

Post-Visit

Day 2: Afternoon and Day 3: Morning
- Team deliberations and work at off-campus location

Page 8 in Standard Booklet or Page 9 in Open Booklet

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Due Process & Decision

- Institution identifies errors-of-fact
- Team revises as appropriate
- Institution receives final team report
- Institution has opportunity to provide a response
- Year 4: IAC acts to accept team report and any interim monitoring
- Year 10: IAC acts on Reaffirmation of Accreditation, any interim monitoring, and verifies Pathway participation

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More Information About Pathways

General Program – Presentations and Roundtables

Sunday

9:30 – 10:15 a.m.	One Accreditation, Multiple Pathways to Reaffirmation (offered twice)	Grand EF
10:30 – 11:15 a.m.	The Open Pathway Assurance Process	Grand EF
	The Standard Pathway	Crystal B
1:15 – 2:00 p.m.	The Open Pathway Quality Initiative	Grand EF
2:15 – 3:00 p.m.	AQIP as a Pathway	Grand EF
4:15 – 5:00 p.m.	Transitions and Their Impact: What's Different, What's the Same	Grand EF

Monday

7:15 – 8:00 a.m.   Roundtables on the Open Pathway Quality Initiatives:

    a. Strategic Assessment of Student Learning in General Education and Student Learning Outcome Plans to Improve Learning in All Degree Programs (Illinois State University) ....Columbus C-F

    b. Comprehensive Growth: Purposes, Principles, and Processes (Cornell College)..........Crystal A

    c. Teaching, Assessing, and Improving Student Learning through University Learning Outcomes (University of Arkansas-Fort Smith)..........Acapulco

    d. Aligning Teaching and Learning Outcomes (Linn State Technical College)..........Water Tower

    e. Finding the Franciscan Charism in Education (Franciscan University of Steubenville) ....Gold Coast

| 1:30 – 2:15 p.m. | One Accreditation, Multiple Pathways to Reaffirmation (repeated) | Grand |

Tuesday

| 10:30 - 11:15 a.m. | Listening Session. Questions and Answers on the Open Pathway | Crystal B |
| | Listening Session. Questions and Answers on the Standard Pathway | Regency B |

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