



Accreditation

FAQs & Update, Winter 2021

On Nov. 4, 2021, the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) informed Luna Community College it is “accredited—on probation.”

What is the Higher Learning Commission, and what is the goal of an accreditation agency?

The Higher Learning Commission is one of several regional accreditors that accredit colleges and universities. Its mission is “serving the common good by assuring and advancing the quality of higher learning.” HLC accredits colleges and universities in a 19-state region of the United States, including New Mexico. The U.S. Department of Education defines the goal of an accreditation agency “to ensure that education provided by institutions of higher education meets acceptable levels of quality.” Accrediting agencies, which are private educational associations of regional or national scope, develop evaluation criteria and conduct peer evaluations to assess whether or not those criteria are met.

What is accreditation?

Accreditation is the recognition that an institution maintains standards requisite for its graduates to gain admission to other reputable institutions of higher learning or to

achieve credentials for professional practice. The goal of accreditation is to ensure that education provided by institutions of higher education meets acceptable levels of quality.

Is LCC still accredited?

Yes. Luna Community College remains accredited while on probation. The college has been continuously accredited through the HLC without interruption since 1982.

Why was LCC placed on probation?

Luna has been placed on probation because it is not in compliance with all criteria for accreditation. Detailed documents related to the Higher Learning Commission board’s decision can be accessed by clicking on HLC’s mark of accreditation at the bottom of the college’s main landing page at www.luna.edu and following the hyperlinks to the college’s profile on HLC’s website, or by searching for Luna Community College’s profile directly on the Higher Learning Commission’s website at www.hlcommission.org

What is probation?

Probation is a sanction meaning that an accredited institution is no longer in compliance with one or more of HLC’s criteria for accreditation. While on probation, the college remains accredited, and it has the opportunity to remedy the issues that led to the sanction. The period of probation is not more than two years.

What does this mean for students who are currently attending LCC or who will attend LCC?

Students may be assured that overall national accreditation remains in place, as do individual national accreditations attained by various academic and career technical education programs. In most cases, other colleges and universities will continue to accept the institution’s credits in transfer or for admission to a higher degree program. All colleges and universities define their own transfer and admission policies. Students interested in pursuing a higher degree or transferring should contact

MORE: See next page.

A word from President Martinez

Campus community members,

If there's one thing the past four years have shown us, it's that the students, faculty and staff of Luna Community College can — and will — overcome adversity.

Being placed on probation is a setback, but I believe it will be a temporary one. There has been much progress made to strengthen our accreditation status and to make Luna a stronger

institution for the benefit of our students and communities.

We must continue that progress and renew our resolve. I have faith in all of us and our commitment to Luna. Together, we are building a stronger college in which we can all take pride.

Brighter days are ahead.

Sincerely,

Dr. Edward Martinez
Luna Community College President



the college or university they plan to attend so that they are knowledgeable about the admission and transfer policies for that college or university.

Will students be eligible for financial aid while the college is on probation?

Yes. Federal financial aid remains unaffected during this period.

What is LCC doing to ensure that the probationary status is resolved?

Luna is taking action on multiple fronts to strengthen its standing in the area deemed not to meet accreditation criteria. Examples of this include increased emphasis on training to ensure all stakeholders understand their roles with regard to shared governance, daily operations and formalized reporting procedures to enhance communication. Luna respects the HLC's decision to place the college on probation, and we see this as an opportunity to strengthen our overall structures and operations and become a premier community college.

When can the probation be lifted?

The Higher Learning Commission's Board of Trustees will determine whether the

institution has successfully demonstrated that it is in compliance with the aforementioned accreditation requirements and whether probation can be removed. Further review will take place, with an on-site evaluation no later than April 2023 and a determination by the HLC Board of Trustees expected no later than November 2023.

What can a student, employee or a community member do to assist LCC during this period?

Luna Community College students, employees or community members are welcomed to share their views, concerns and ideas with college leadership. Comments can be sent via e-mail from Luna's Feedback/Voice Your Concerns link at luna.edu. The Board of Trustees also allows for public input at each regular meeting.

As part of building shared governance at the college, staff, faculty, students and community members are invited to play an active role on institutional committees that aim to strategically address issues that will make the college stronger in our policies and practices. Luna Community College is your institution, and we need your help to make it stronger.

Where can someone get more information on HLC probation?

A link has been set up to provide the general public with access to documents provided to the college by the Higher Learning Commission and documents used to prepare the probation report including drafts of the report itself. The link can be found on the front page of the Luna Community College website at www.luna.edu. Detailed documents related to the Higher Learning Commission board's decision as it relates to Luna Community College, as well as more information about the probation, can be accessed by clicking on HLC's mark of accreditation at the bottom of the college's main landing page at www.luna.edu and following the hyperlinks to the college's profile on HLC's website, or by searching for Luna Community College's profile directly on the Higher Learning Commission's website at www.hlcommission.org.