



## Accreditation

# FAQs & Update, Winter 2019

On Nov. 7, 2019, the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) extended Luna Community College's probation. On Nov. 21, 2019, the HLC informed the college it will remain on probation. While on probation, Luna Community College remains accredited.

Luna Community College is fully committed to excellence and is working diligently toward meeting all criteria for accreditation.

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

The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) 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.

### **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 affiliation at the bottom of the college's main landing page at [www.luna.edu](http://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/directory](http://www.hlcommission.org/directory).

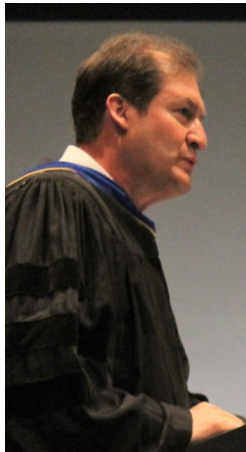
### **What is probation?**

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 vocational programs. In most cases, other colleges and universities will continue to accept the institution's credits in transfer or

**MORE: See next page.**



## A word from President Rael

Dear Luna community members,

Thank you for your continued support of Luna Community College. Recent times may have tested our resolve, but I am pleased to note that we are rising to the occasion and becoming stronger as a result. We have learned — and continue to learn

— about the ways in which we can improve how we function as a college. The process has not been easy, but it is worthwhile as we work to become better in every

aspect of what we do.

It is important that everyone who believes in Luna and its mission — creating opportunities for students and the communities it serves — contribute to this process of improvement and growth, not only for the sake of accreditation but as we move forward as a leading institution of higher education in northern New Mexico.

Let us join together and help build a community college in which we can all take pride.

Sincerely,

**Dr. Rolando Rael**  
**Luna Community College President**

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 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 it remains accredited?**

Luna is taking action on multiple fronts to strengthen its standing in areas deemed not to meet accreditation criteria. Examples of this include the development of a multi-year planning process to ensure fiscal solvency and increased responsiveness to fluctuations in regional economies, industry needs and workforce demands; increased emphasis on training to ensure all stakeholders understand their roles with regard to shared governance and daily operations. Luna respects the HLC's decision to place the college on probation, and we see this is an

opportunity to strengthen our overall structures and operations and become a premier community college.

### **When will LCC learn if it remains an accredited institution?**

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 in 2020.

### **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](http://luna.edu). The college will also host several open forums over the next several months. 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](http://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 affiliation at the bottom of the college's main landing page at [www.luna.edu](http://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/directory](http://www.hlcommission.org/directory).