New Accreditation Process

The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) is launching a new model for continued accreditation, the “Open Pathway” that seeks to offer greater value to institutions through its reaffirmation process for continued accreditation and greater credibility to the public in its quality assurance.

The Commission currently accredits WSU through the Program to Evaluate and Advance Quality (PEAQ), which consists of:

- An institutional self-study,
- An evaluation by a team of trained (on-site) peer reviewers,
- And a final decision-making process by the HLC.

The new model separates the continued accreditation process as currently carried out through PEAQ into two components:

- **Assurance Process:** The Assurance Process will require only the accumulation over time of electronically stored information and data the institution already collects or prepares, together with an Assurance Narrative that makes the case that the institution continues to meet the Criteria for Accreditation and the federal requirements.
- **Improvement Process:** The Improvement Process will focus on institutional improvement. The process will replace the traditional self-study with a “pathway,” a Quality Initiative the institution will undertake as something it elects to do for substantial institutional improvement.