

According to the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), “‘Accreditation’ is the primary means of assuring and improving the quality of higher education institutions and programs in the United States.”<sup>1</sup> UCA’s institutional accreditor is the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. The HLC evaluates and monitors its member institutions through comprehensive evaluations (typically every ten years), focused evaluations (as dictated by institutional change), and a variety of reports, ranging from annual data updates to issue-specific reports as required. UCA’s last comprehensive evaluation took place in April 2000. The next comprehensive evaluation visit is scheduled for March 8–10, 2010. Between now and the visit in 2010, UCA’s HLC2010 Self-Study Steering Committee (SSSC) will publish this monthly update for the campus.



## On Our Plates

Since September 2008, six Task Forces have been preparing the reports on which the self-study institutional report will be based. Final reports will be submitted to the SSSC by July 1, and the committee meets to begin the next stage in the self-study process on July 8.

Link to schedule <http://www.uca.edu/panda/hlc2010/#timeline> & task forces <http://www.uca.edu/panda/hlc2010/taskforces.html>

## Focus on Accreditation: Criteria and Global Themes

HLC accreditation does not apply to specific programs, but rather to the university as a whole, and the process and its concerns embrace the entire university organization. The Five Criteria for Accreditation do not apply equally to all parts of the university, but all parts of the university are reflected in the criteria. Briefly stated, the five criteria are about (1) Mission & Integrity, (2) Preparing for the Future, (3) Learning & Teaching, (4) Acquiring, Discovering, & Applying Knowledge, and (5) Engagement & Service. UCA’s steering committee formulated a series of key questions to help the self-study task forces appraise the extent to which UCA meets the five criteria in a comprehensive review of all areas of the university.

The HLC has also developed a set of Cross-Cutting Themes, assertions that, the Commission and its member institutions believe, characterize an effective institution of higher education. The themes are organized in four dimensions: (1) the Future-Oriented Organization, (2) the Learning-Focused Organization, (3) the Connected Organization, and (4) the Distinctive Organization. For more detail, follow the links . . . .

Link to Criteria, Key Questions, and Themes: <http://www.uca.edu/panda/hlc2010/#criteria>

## Accreditation Resource Links

### UCA – University of Central Arkansas

- :: HLC2010: <http://www.uca.edu/panda/hlc2010/>
- :: Accreditors: <http://www.uca.edu/ubulletin/01/103.html> (link to the *Undergraduate Bulletin*)
- :: Strategic Framework: [http://www.uca.edu/panda/sti/uca\\_strategic\\_framework.pdf](http://www.uca.edu/panda/sti/uca_strategic_framework.pdf) (see especially UCA’s Mission and Principles)

### HLC – Higher Learning Commission

- :: Home: <http://www.ncahlc.org/>
- :: Overview of Accreditation: [http://www.ncahlc.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=83&Itemid=111](http://www.ncahlc.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=83&Itemid=111)
- :: Directory of Affiliated Institutions: [http://www.ncahlc.org/index.php?option=com\\_directory&Itemid=192](http://www.ncahlc.org/index.php?option=com_directory&Itemid=192)

### CHEA – Council for Higher Education Accreditation

- :: Home: <http://www.chea.org/>
- :: Informing the Public about Accreditation: [http://www.chea.org/public\\_info/](http://www.chea.org/public_info/)

## Contact Us

If you have questions or concerns, email Jonathan Glenn ([jona@uca.edu](mailto:jona@uca.edu)) or any member of the SSSC.

<sup>1</sup> Council for Higher Education Accreditation, “Talking Points: Accreditation, Students and Society.” February 2009. Online at [http://chea.org/pdf/2009\\_Talking\\_Points.pdf](http://chea.org/pdf/2009_Talking_Points.pdf).