



Application Packet

Higher Learning Commission's Assessment Academy

Application Process Overview

This packet contains the information and materials needed for institutions applying to HLC's Assessment Academy.

Eligibility

The Assessment Academy is open to all institutions accredited by HLC. The curriculum is designed to benefit all institutions, from community colleges to large universities. Institutions at all stages of the improvement process are encouraged to apply.

For institutions on the Standard and AQIP Pathways, or for Open Pathway institutions choosing not to use the Academy as their Quality Initiative, applications can be submitted at any time during an accreditation cycle.

For institutions on the AQIP Pathway, Academy participation may be used in fulfillment of one Action Project per year.

For Open Pathway institutions that are choosing to use participation in the Academy as their Quality Initiative, applications must be submitted between Spring of Year 2 and Fall of Year 7. Participation must commence between Years 3 and 7 of the Open Pathway cycle in order for the institution to be eligible to use Academy participation as a Quality Initiative. *Note:* The Academy application review replaces the traditional Quality Initiative Proposal review process.

Application Submission

The completed application should be sent to academy@hlcommission.org in PDF format by the deadline given below. Paper applications will not be accepted.

All information requested in the application must be provided and the application must be signed by the institution's CEO. Any applications with missing information will not be considered.

Application Deadline:

Spring 2017 Cohort: November 23, 2016

See hlcommission.org/About-the-Commission/academy-applications for more details about cohort activities and dates.

Selection Process

All applications are reviewed by the Academy Admissions Panel, which consists of, at minimum, the institution's HLC staff liaison and the Director of Quality Services. Institutions will be notified of HLC's admission decisions no later than one month past the application deadline for a given cohort.

The Admissions Panel may accept the institution into the Academy for the preferred point of entry date, accept the institution into the Academy for a different point of entry date, deny the institution admission into the Academy, or request that the institution resubmit the application if it is incomplete.

Criteria for Selection to the Academy

Institutions applying to the Academy are reviewed and selected based on demonstration of the following four criteria:

1. Need prompted by current opportunities, challenges or barriers to assessment of student learning.
2. Evidence that Academy participation is significant and challenging to the institution and could result in broad, meaningful impact on assessment of student learning.
3. Alignment of Academy participation goals with the strategic priorities of the institution.
4. Expectations, commitment level and desired results appropriate to the purposes and intent of the Academy.

Letter of Agreement

An institution selected to join the Academy will be asked to sign a Letter of Agreement accepting the terms of the Academy. This letter outlines the institution's commitments to the Academy and HLC's commitments to the institution. The letter also addresses any expectations pertaining to the institution's accreditation relationship with HLC. If changes in the accreditation relationship occur during the institution's Academy participation, the Letter of Agreement will be amended to reflect those changes.

Please contact academy@hlcommission.org with any questions.

Assessment Academy Application

Institution: Donnelly College

City, State: Kansas City, KS

Application Date: 11/22/16

Purpose for Academy Participation

Please indicate institutional purpose for participation in the Academy:

Open Pathway Quality Initiative

AQIP Pathway Action Project

Other institutional purposes (please specify):

Application Questions

The institution should provide responses to the following questions. The completed responses should be no more than 3 pages.

1. Provide an evaluation of the institution's past and present assessment efforts, including strategies, challenges, results and accomplishments.

Assessment of student learning continues to be a priority at Donnelly College. The College has established a college-wide assessment committee composed primarily of faculty members and coordinated by the Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness. As a result of the work of the assessment committee, annual assessment reports were first completed in 2009.

Assessment of learning outcomes is still a work-in-progress as we strive to develop a culture of continuous improvement based on solid assessment data for decision making.

General education learning outcomes have been developed and approved, and rubrics for each of the seven general education components have been developed – communication skills, technology and information literacy, symbolic problem solving, analytical thinking, personal and interpersonal skills, academic inquiry, and values exploration.

In an attempt to access transfer information on its graduates, Donnelly College joined the National Clearinghouse in 2015. The College has also begun collecting data on students transferring to four-year institutions. In addition, each academic program, subject to programmatic accreditation, also collects data relative to their specific exit credentials. For example, Donnelly nursing students take the NCLEX-PN and teacher education students take the PRAXIS. Associate and bachelor's programs are not subject to credentialing examination. Students completing these programs take the Proficiency Profile, selected by the Voluntary System of Accountability as a gauge of general education outcomes.

Assessment data are disseminated through the assessment committee, shared with Donnelly's Board of Directors and Industry Advisory Boards and used for program improvements. The College is starting to develop processes to create a more comprehensive assessment plan that informs the institution's budgeting and strategic planning processes.

There are some challenges relative to the implementation of a comprehensive assessment program that includes all College departments beyond academic affairs. Most of our work has been limited to assessing student learning outcomes and does not include co-curricular departments such as Student Life, Academic Advising, Counseling, and Library.

2. What pressing needs will the institution address by participating in the Academy?
 Although assessment of student learning has been conducted since 2009, participating in the Academy will help Donnelly College address four critical needs regarding assessment:
- (1) To develop a formal assessment plan for co-curricular activities such as Student Life, Academic Advising, Counseling, and Library.
 - (2) To standardize assessment of student learning across departments.
 - (3) To develop a process for tracking and reporting transfer and employment information for all graduates.
 - (4) To improve the assessment process transparency and dissemination by making student learning outcomes readily available to internal and external stakeholders.
3. Why did the institution select the Academy as a means of institutional improvement?
 Participation in the HLC Assessment Academy will assist Donnelly College in addressing the needs related to the assessment of student learning outcomes while providing credibility and consistency to our process. It provides an opportunity to learn best practices from experts at HLC as well as peers at other institutions.
4. How does participation in the Academy align with the institution's current academic or strategic priorities?
 The College's application to the Assessment Academy is directly related to several top institutional priorities specifically (a) emphasizing faculty and staff development and engagement; (b) promoting a culture of evidence-based decision making; (c) improving institutional governance and accountability; (d) and improving internal communication and transparency.
5. What potential challenges and issues might the Academy team have to address?
 Although Donnelly College has a dedicated Assessment Committee, it has struggled to move from data collection and analysis to a comprehensive implementation plan that will close the assessment loop by using data to make improvements in academic and co-curricular programs. This challenge has been documented in the Visiting Team report (April 2016).
6. What human, financial and other resources has the institution committed to Academy participation?
 Donnelly College is committed to assessment of student learning outcomes. Since our HLC site visit in April 2016 and receipt of findings and concerns expressed in the Comprehensive Quality Review Report, the College has initiated a complete review of its assessment plan. The Student Affairs staff is in the process of developing a formal system of assessment for co-curricular activities based on best practices at comparable institutions and HLC's Assumed Practices for assessment. In addition, a program review process is being piloted which will be reviewed and modified as needed before being implemented across academic departments.
- A team of administrators and faculty has been appointed to oversee the assessment efforts and participation in the Assessment Academy. The two administrators appointed to apply to participate in the Assessment Academy are Pedro Leite, Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs/Dean of the College and Mary Pflanz, Director of Student Services. If Donnelly's application is approved, three faculty members will be appointed to complete the team for the Spring 2017 cohort.

The College has earmarked necessary funds to support participation in the Academy and to provide necessary training to faculty and staff.

Institutional Contact Information

Please list the name and contact information for the individual who will serve as the primary contact for Academy communications. *Note:* The primary contact may change with notice to HLC at any time during an institution's participation in the Academy.

Name:

Pedro Leite

Position title:

VP of Academic and Student Affairs/Dean of the College

Office address:

608 North 18th Street

City, state, ZIP code:

Kansas City, KS 66102

Office phone number and extension:

913-621-8776

Office fax:

913-621-8719

Email address:

pleite@donnelly.edu

Application Affirmation

I affirm that this application represents the institution accurately and that the institution agrees, if admitted, to commit to meaningful and productive participation in the Assessment Academy for the full Academy cycle.

Signature of Institution CEO

Date

Monsignor Stuart Swetland

Printed Name of Institution CEO

Submission of Application

Please review the entire application for accuracy and completeness prior to submitting for review, as subsequent versions may not be accepted and incomplete applications may not be considered. Once complete, applications should be sent to academy@hlcommission.org on or before the established deadline for the cohort that the institution would like to join.