



# Restructuring Update – Higher Learning Commission (HLC)

March 15, 2019

Presented by Carleen Vande Zande

## Timeline

- The review panel report was finalized this spring 2019
- Their report and a report by HLC VP were submitted to the HLC Institutional Actions Council (IAC) and approved by the IAC at their most recent meeting early spring 2019 on March 4,5
- The Institutional Actions Committee (hereafter, IAC or Council) issued letters to the seven receiving institutions stating that the recommendation of the review panel was upheld

## Decision

The decision to uphold the recommendation by the peer reviewers is a good decision for UW System. This means that there are no follow up reports due, no sanctions, and no other HLC matters for the UW System Restructuring Committee to deal with. The integration of the branch campuses and the accompanying compliance issues now rests with the receiving institutions for follow up. The responsibility to ensure quality, compliance, and sustainability of the branch campus now rests fully with the receiving institutions.

## Letters to Chancellors

Dear Chancellor Mone: This letter serves as formal notification and official record of action taken concerning University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee by the Institutional Actions Council of the Higher Learning Commission at its meeting on March 4, 2019. The date of this action constitutes the effective date of the institution's new status with HLC.

## Action

IAC concurred with the evaluation team's findings and affirmed that the following institutions have demonstrated sufficient evidence that they have addressed the concerns related to approval of the Change of Structure:

- University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire
- University of Wisconsin-Green Bay
- University of Wisconsin-Madison
- University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
- University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh
- University of Wisconsin-Platteville
- University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point
- University of Wisconsin-Whitewater

In two weeks, this action will be added to the Institutional Status and Requirements (ISR) Report, a resource for Accreditation Liaison Officers to review and manage information regarding the institution's accreditation relationship. Accreditation Liaison Officers may request the ISR Report on HLC's website at <https://www.hlcommission.org/isr-request>. Within the next 30 days, HLC will also publish information about this action on its website at <https://www.hlcommission.org/StudentResources/recent-actions.html>.



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To that end, I have prepared and provided a document to the receiving institutions that aligns branch campus responsibilities and the appropriate HLC criteria. This document can serve as a guide for all receiving institutions moving forward to ensure that the necessary compliance issues related to branch campuses are addressed in campus-wide work.

## Results of Peer Review Panel that were upheld by the Institution Actions Council-listed below

Although the work for compliance to HLC criteria has passed to the receiving institutions, there remain areas of concern across many of the receiving institutions which could be areas where UW System could support for these institutions to meet accreditation expectations.

### Concerns

#### Student Service Staffing Levels

- This is an area that has already been hit hard by budget reductions at all institutions as a result of enrollment declines
- The institutions and the System are aware of the need to rebuild these vital student services using new models of delivery and resource support
- If this is not addressed, it makes meeting compliance with HLC Criterion 3 D especially challenging for all of our institutions
  - Criterion 3 D: The institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching.
    - 1. The institution provides student support services suited to the needs of its student populations.
    - 2. The institution provides for learning support and preparatory instruction to address the academic needs of its students. It has a process for directing entering students to courses and programs for which the students are adequately prepared.
    - 3. The institution provides academic advising suited to its programs and the needs of its students.
    - 4. The institution provides to students and instructors the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning.
    - 5. The institution provides to students guidance in the effective use of research and information resources.

#### Challenges with Enrollment

- Enrollment challenges remain a concern for leadership
- Restructuring brought renewed focus on enrollment
- Chancellors and staff are attuned to regional stakeholders to better understand the needs of each region
- Institutions are vigorously addressing enrollment challenges at this time



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## Communication

- We currently have plans in motion to map communication strategies to address this point
- The reviewers encourage more communications using multiple channels and messaging appropriate to target audiences need to be fully realized to fully realize the benefits of restructuring

## Financial Challenges

- The reviewers noted that concerns about the financial sustainability of the plan were evident in the many interviews
- The institutions have done a good job of identifying issues related to financial challenges such as:
  - Potential revenue growth or decline through tuition and state support
  - Cost containment
  - Synergies resulting from restructuring
  - Service and infrastructure needs
- The team noted that issues of compensation across 4 yr. and 2 yr. institutions for faculty and staff are a concern
  - Matters of equity should be acknowledged and addressed as expeditiously as possible
- UW representatives demonstrated an in-depth awareness of issues in higher education business models and have a firm determination to address the financial concerns
- The System and institution finance officers are engaged in ongoing planning and preparation beyond the 2 yr. horizon of the plan
- The collaborative frameworks developed through restructures will address these challenges
- The collaboration and commitment by System and institution reps are noteworthy

## Areas of Strength Noted in the Peer Reviewer Report

### Leadership

- UW System demonstrated strong, forward thinking leadership in proposing and implementing the plans to restructure the System
- The UW System demonstrated a strong commitment and support of the Presidents and the Chancellors for the restructuring proposal and plans
- The leadership team at UW System is committed to work through the full implementation of the plan
- The team recognized our strong desire to maintain quality higher education for students in all regions of the state

### Strong Collaboration

- The team observed that collaboration is vibrant across the System
- They observed high levels of engagement among committees and task forces at System and at institutions
- There is a high level of involvement of branch campus faculty and staff in planning with plans in place for future collaborations

### Board of Regents

- There has developed a strong understanding and sense of support among the Board



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- The Board requires regular updates to stay informed of the progress of this work
- The issues addressed through the reorganization were long held concerns by the Board

## Detailed Planning and Execution

- The reviewers commented on the high level of detail and careful planning
- The documentation provided showed clear evidence of thoughtful deliberative planning
- The reviewers noted there is an iterative process for revision and modification of the plan if necessary
- The reviewers noted the collaborative input to create the plan
- There is a high level of awareness and understanding of all the details of the plan across the System
- The receiving institutions show a deep commitment to the goals of the plan and engage in extensive collaboration to ensure its success
- Overall the reviewers observed that the planning is excellent and that the execution of the first phase of the plan is well executed

## Memoranda of Understanding and Institutional Statements

- Contents of these documents demonstrate how the HLC criteria are being met
- The agreements allow wide latitude in developing campus plans related to distinctive culture of each receiving institution
- The creation and adoption of the MOU's show a high level of support

## Accountability

- The System maintains a dashboard of specific action steps to monitor progress of the plan
- System set up its own accountability reporting with milestones
- The Board received regular update about the progress of restructuring

## Flexibility in Local Restructuring

- The reviewers noted the large scale restructuring supported a variety of implementation strategies across the seven receiving institution and that multiple approaches have been used
- These include the creation of new colleges or alignment to existing departments in the receiving institutions
- The reviewers encouraged the System to study the impact of different approaches being used

## Support Across Regions of the State

- The restructuring will increase opportunities to improve involvement with and responsiveness to economic development needs of affected communities and constituent groups
- The receiving institutions also have opportunities to bring talent development and education programs to smaller communities throughout WI

## Compliance with HLC

- The team found that nothing that would put the institutions at risk of falling out of compliance with HLC criteria or Eligibility Requirements