

To EWU Faculty, Staff, and Students:

I am pleased to announce that this week we received official notification from the Higher Learning Commission's (HLC) Board of Trustees' action, on June 29, 2017, removing the University from the Probation sanction that HLC originally imposed in June 2015. HLC took this action because it determined that the University has improved areas of noncompliance that led to *Probation*. Specifically, HLC concluded that the University now meets the following Criteria for Accreditation that previously led to the Probation sanction:

- Criterion Two, Core Component 2.A, "the institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions; it establishes and follows policies and processes for fair and ethical behavior on the part of its governing board, administration, faculty, and staff"
- Criterion Three, Core Component 3.C, "the institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services"
- Criterion Three, Core Component 3.D, "the institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching"
- Criterion Three, Core Component 3.E, "the institution fulfills the claims it makes for an enriched educational environment"
- Criterion Four, Core Component 4.C, "the institution demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs"
- Criterion Five, Core Component 5.C, "the institution engages in systematic and integrated planning"
- Criterion Five, Core Component 5.D, "The institution works systematically to improve its performance"

Removing EWU from Probation recognizes the many improvements that the University has made over the past two years, and will substantially strengthen our ability to recruit and enroll desirable students. All our faculty and staff deserve our gratitude for their work in helping us achieve this important goal.

However, in taking this helpful, supportive action, HLC also decided that the University still "meets with concerns" three of its Core Components related to Criterion Five, Core Component 5.B (governance and leadership), Criterion Two, Core Component 2.E (institutional policies), and Criterion Five, Core Component 5.A (institutional resources). Because of these continuing concerns, although HLC removed the sanction of *Probation*, it simultaneously placed the University on *Notice*. *Notice* is a sanction meaning that an accredited college or university is *at risk* of not meeting one or more of HLC's expectations. While on *Notice*, the University remains accredited and students remain eligible for federal financial aid. Other colleges and universities typically continue to accept the institution's credits in transfer<sup>1</sup> or for admission to a higher degree program, but students should contact any institution they may plan to attend in the future so they are knowledgeable about the admission and transfer policies for that institution.

To demonstrate to HLC that we have addressed the issues that led to *Notice*, we are required to submit written evidence by December 1, 2017 in preparation for an HLC on-site evaluation that will take place no later than February 2018. This will likely be a shorter visit by a smaller team than we hosted in November 2016, focusing on HLC's continuing concerns that I noted above. I am confident that we can address these concerns effectively, and will act promptly and forcefully to do so. In June 2018, the HLC Board of Trustees will determine whether the University has demonstrated that it meets the Criteria for Accreditation and whether *Notice* can be removed.

You can read HLC's action letter and its "Public Disclosure Notice" of its concerns on the HLC website at:  
<http://www.hlcommission.org/component/directory/?Itemid=&Action=ShowBasic&instid=1987>.

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<sup>i</sup> All colleges and universities define their own transfer and admission policies. HLC does not prohibit institutions from accepting transfer credits from institutions on sanction, nor does it dictate such institutions' admissions policies.