Criterion 1

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1 Resource Guide for HLC Criterion 1 (2025): Mission

This guide provides practical guidance for addressing the Higher Learning Commission's Criterion 1: Mission (revised effective 2025). It is organized by each Core Component (1.A, 1.B, 1.C) and includes Evidence Suggestions, Example Practices, and Reflective Prompts to help institutions demonstrate compliance. The goal is to show how an institution's mission is lived out and evidenced, without merely restating the criterion language.

1.1 Core Component 1.A – Mission Alignment

The institution's educational programs, enrollment profile, and scope of operations align with its publicly articulated mission.

This core component necessitates that the institution demonstrates a clear and consistent alignment between its publicly stated mission and its educational programs, enrollment profile, and the overall scope of its operations. This implies a fundamental coherence between the institution's core purpose and its everyday activities and academic offerings.

The requirement to demonstrate alignment across diverse institutional functions, encompassing programs, enrollment, and budget, underscores that the mission should not be perceived merely as a declarative statement. Rather, it should function as an active operational principle that guides decision-making at all levels of the institution. Accreditation reviewers will be looking for tangible examples and concrete data that illustrate this comprehensive alignment. Institutions should therefore move beyond simply articulating their mission and instead provide compelling evidence of its practical application in all facets of their operations.

Evidence Suggestions: (Types of evidence that demonstrate alignment with mission) [see[1], p. 4]

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[1] Providing Evidence for the Criteria for Accreditation

- Mission Development Documentation: Records of the history, development, and formal adoption of the mission statement (e.g. meeting minutes or reports from committees that drafted or approved the mission).
- Public Articulation of Mission: Evidence of where and how the mission, vision, values, and goals are published and made accessible (institution's website, catalogs, handbooks, campus displays) for students, faculty, staff, and the public.
- Alignment of Programs and Services: Documentation showing that academic programs, co-curricular programs, student support services, and institutional planning/budgeting priorities align with mission values (for example, budget allocations or strategic plan objectives tied to mission elements).
- Enrollment Profile Data: Data on student enrollment demographics and characteristics, demonstrating that the students the institution serves are consistent with its stated mission (e.g. serving a particular region, religious affiliation, demographic group, etc.).
- Orientation and Communication: Information on how new students, employees, and board members are introduced to the mission (orientation programs, onboarding materials, mission-focused trainings).
- Policy Alignment and Changes: Evidence of policies or institutional actions that have been implemented (or discontinued) to bring practices into closer alignment with the mission (such as revisions to programs, initiatives, or policies that were found to stray from mission).
- Recruitment Materials: Admissions and recruitment publications that highlight mission elements, showing that outreach to prospective students reflects the mission's focus and values.

Example Practices: (Illustrative ways institutions put 1.A into practice)

- Collaborative Mission Revision: The college periodically reviews and updates its mission statement through a broad-based, collaborative process. This involves gathering input via shared governance mechanisms (open forums, committees with faculty, staff, student representation, campus-wide input through forums and surveys, etc.) to ensure the updated mission reflects current institutional values and has buy-in from the whole community.

- Mission Integration in Planning: The institution explicitly uses the mission to guide decision-making. One practice is requiring that new programs or initiatives include a statement on how they advance the mission. Likewise, budget planning might give priority to items supporting mission-critical areas (e.g. an institution emphasizing access might allocate extra funds to need-based financial aid, aligning resources with mission commitments).

Institutional example: Iowa Lakes Community College explicitly integrates its mission, vision, and core values into its comprehensive strategic plan, which receives

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[...] final approval from the institution's Board of Trustees. This practice clearly establishes a direct connection between the institution's fundamental purpose and its overarching strategic direction.[2]

- Curricular and Co-Curricular Alignment: The mission's themes are woven into academic and co-curricular programs. For instance, if an institution's mission emphasizes leadership or service, it may implement a leadership development program or a service-learning requirement for all students, ensuring that the student experience reflects the mission. Another example is aligning general education outcomes with mission values (such as developing critical thinking, ethical reasoning, or multicultural understanding in line with mission statements).

Institutional example: Bismarck State College (BSC) effectively utilizes Business and Industry Leadership Teams (BILTs) to ensure the relevance of their program offerings to industry needs, which directly supports their mission focused on student success and fostering public-private partnerships. Furthermore, BSC consistently incorporates mission-driven language in its marketing and communication materials.[3]

Institutional example: The University of New Mexico's (UNM) previous Academic Program Review (APR) criteria mandated that academic units provide a detailed overview of their vision and mission and explicitly explain how each of their programs fits within that established framework. This requirement underscores the importance of program-level alignment with the broader institutional mission.[4]

- Mission-Focused Outreach and Access: The institution aligns its outreach and enrollment strategies with its access-oriented mission. This might include prioritizing recruitment of underserved student populations and implementing strong affordability measures (for example, meeting high financial need or keeping tuition low) so that the student body reflects the mission's commitment to educational access and opportunity.

Institutional example: Oakland University articulates that its academic programs, the services it provides for students, and its overall enrollment profile are all carefully aligned with its established mission. This indicates a holistic approach aimed at ensuring mission coherence across the institution's key functional areas.[5]

Institutional example: Gateway Technical College (GTC) employs curriculum documents and student demographic data as concrete forms of evidence to demonstrate the alignment of their academic programs and enrollment profile with their institu-

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[2]Iowa Lakes Community College - HLC Assurance Argument
[3]Bismarck State College - HLC Accreditation
[4]University of New Mexico - APR Criteria Alignment to HLC Core Components
[5]Oakland University - Criteria for HLC Accreditation

tional mission. This data-driven approach provides tangible support for their claim for mission alignment.[6]

Visibility and Communication: A practical approach to operationalizing the mission is making it highly visible and regularly communicated. Institutions post mission, vision, and values prominently on campus and websites, include them in important events and speeches, and incorporate mission discussions into faculty/staff meetings and student orientations. This ensures every member of the campus community understands and can act on the mission, reinforcing alignment in day-to-day operations.

Institutional example: Parkland College ensures that its mission statement is readily accessible to the public through its website and college catalog. The mission itself is developed through a collaborative process and undergoes regular review, highlighting an ongoing commitment to its relevance and deep integration into institutional practices.[7]

Reflective Prompts: (Questions for institutional teams to consider for 1.A)

• Stakeholder Involvement: How was our mission statement originally developed or last revised? Did we involve faculty, staff, students, and governing board members in a meaningful way that suits our institutional context? (Consider whether the process was inclusive and if documentation of that process exists.)
• Communication and Awareness: In what ways do we publicly articulate our mission? Check if the mission and related statements are easy to find on our website, in campus buildings, and in key publications. How do we ensure new students, employees, and stakeholders learn about the mission and values (e.g. orientation sessions, handbooks)?
• Alignment with Offerings: Do our academic offerings and student services reflect the mission's focus? List examples of programs or services that clearly support our mission. Conversely, identify anything we do that might seem misaligned with the mission – how are we addressing those gaps? Can the institution provide specific and compelling examples illustrating how the mission statement directly influences the development and formal approval processes for new academic programs? In what specific ways does the institution ensure that its array of student support services actively contribute to the achievement of the overarching goals articulated within the mission statement?
• Resource Allocation: Can we demonstrate that our budgeting and planning decisions are guided by the mission? Consider whether strategic plan goals tie to mission elements and if resources (financial, human, physical) are prioritized accordingly.

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[6] Gateway Technical College - Criterion 1 Evidence
[7] Parkland College - HLC Criteria

What evidence (like budget documents or project plans) shows mission-driven decision-making?

Constituents Served: Who are the intended constituents in our mission, and are we serving them? Review our enrollment data and outreach efforts in light of the mission. For example, if the mission says we serve the region or a specific demographic, do our recruitment and admission practices support that? How do our student demographics and support programs align with what we promise in the mission? How do the institution's faculty and staff members understand and, more importantly, operationalize the core tenets of the institution's mission in their daily professional responsibilities and interactions?

1.2 Core Component 1.B − Mission and Public Good

The institution's operation of the academic enterprise demonstrates its commitment to serving the public good.

This core component mandates that the institution demonstrates through its academic activities a genuine commitment to serving the public good. This emphasis highlights the institution's broader societal responsibility, extending beyond the immediate interests of its students and employees to encompass the well-being of the wider community.

The concept of "public good" is intentionally broad and can manifest in a multitude of ways, reflecting the diverse missions and unique contexts of individual higher education institutions. Institutions should carefully identify the specific ways in which they contribute to the well-being of their surrounding communities and strive to clearly demonstrate the positive impact of these contributions.

Evidence Suggestions: (Types of evidence that show commitment to the public good) [see[8], p. 4]

• Mission's Public Emphasis: Excerpts from mission, vision, or values statements that explicitly state the institution's role in or commitment to the community or public good (if such language exists in foundational documents).
• Community-Focused Programs and Partnerships: Descriptions of major institutional initiatives that address community or broader societal needs. This might include public service programs, extension services, clinics, outreach centers, workforce development initiatives, partnerships with local schools or businesses, and consulting or advisory services offered to the community.
• Collaborative Regional Involvement: Evidence of the institution's involvement in local or regional coalitions and initiatives (for example, participating in a regional economic development board, environmental sustainability task forces, P-20 edu-

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[8]Providing Evidence for the Criteria for Accreditation

cation councils, or city planning groups). Documentation might include MOUs, membership lists, or reports from joint initiatives focused on community improvement or environmental stewardship, etc.

- Public-Oriented Academic Activity: Records showing that academic programs are designed or leveraged to serve the public. For instance, advisory boards for academic programs that include community members, internship or practicum programs supplying expertise to local organizations, or training programs that address local workforce needs. Evidence could be outcomes of such programs (e.g. number of nurses or teachers trained for local employment, businesses started by graduates, etc.).
- Public Events and Cultural Offerings: Schedules and publicity for public events hosted by the institution that enrich the community (lectures, performances, art exhibits, speaker series, athletic events open to the public). Also, records of attendance or community participation can illustrate the impact.
- Use of Campus Facilities by Community: Documentation that campus spaces and facilities are used to benefit the public (such as community groups using the library, local conferences held on campus, K-12 school events in campus venues, etc.). Facility reservation logs or community user agreements can serve as evidence.
- Community Engagement by Students/Staff: Evidence of structured community engagement, like service-learning programs, volunteer hours, or student organizations devoted to service. This may include lists of community service projects, records from a campus volunteer center, or portfolios from courses with service components.

Example Practices: (Illustrative ways institutions enact a commitment to public good)

- Curriculum with a Civic Emphasis: The institution integrates civic engagement into the curriculum through service-learning and leadership development. For example, academic programs may incorporate philanthropy-focused projects or offer courses (and co-curricular experiences) in leadership and community service. These experiences give students hands-on opportunities to practice civic responsibility and contribute to the public good as part of their education.

  Institutional example: Parkland College's core mission, which is to "engage the community in learning," is presented as a direct and inherent demonstration of their commitment to the public good through the provision of valuable educational opportunities and resources to the broader community.[9]

- Student Work/Service Programs: A distinctive practice can be a student work program or volunteer corps that operates as part of the college's model. For instance, a work-college might employ students in roles that both run the campus and serve the community (e.g. maintaining a community garden, staffing a local food bank as

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[9] Parkland College - HLC Criteria

work study). Students gain leadership and job skills while providing valuable service externally. This kind of program demonstrates that the institution's operations (and students' educational experiences) directly contribute to the community at large.

- Community Partnerships and Centers: Many institutions create centers or institutes focused on community needs (like an Education Outreach Center for tutoring local youth, or a Small Business Development Center to advise local entrepreneurs). As an example, a college might partner with the city to allow education majors to student-teach in under-resourced schools, or collaborate with local hospitals to have nursing students staff free clinics. These practices show a proactive commitment to improving community welfare aligned with the institution's academic strengths.

  Institutional example: Iowa Lakes Community College's mission explicitly includes a commitment to promoting economic development within its communities, and their various partnerships, such as their collaboration with the Global Wind Organisation (GWO) to provide specialized training for wind technicians, serve as tangible examples of this commitment in action.[10]

  Institutional example: The University of New Mexico's (UNM) previous APR criteria specifically inquired about outreach and community activities offered by academic units, thereby highlighting the crucial connection between these activities and the institution's overarching mission of serving the public.[11]

- Public Events and Cultural Contributions: Institutions often leverage campus talent and facilities to enrich the public. A practical example is hosting an annual cultural festival or lecture series open to the community (with faculty and outside experts presenting on issues of public interest). Another example: a university's performing arts program might run a summer theater open to residents or a music department might offer free concerts to the public. Offering such events not only fulfills a public good mission but also builds good will and fulfills cultural needs in the region.

  Institutional example: Oakland University clearly states that its mission reflects a strong commitment to the public good, emphasizing that its fundamental educational responsibilities take precedence over any other institutional purposes.[12]

  Institutional example: Gateway Technical College (GTC) provides a range of examples illustrating its engagement with the broader community as evidence of its commitment to the public good. These examples include articulation agreements established with other educational institutions, collaborative partnerships forged

[10]Iowa Lakes Community College - HLC Assurance Argument
[11]University of New Mexico - APR Criteria Alignment to HLC Core Components
[12]Oakland University - Criteria for HLC Accreditation

with the business community through advisory committees, and various community-focused programs and services offered.[13]

• Access and Affordability Initiatives: Serving the public good can also mean ensuring the public has access to education. An example practice is deliberately keeping tuition affordable or providing extensive financial aid so that higher education serves a broader public, not only those who can easily afford it. Some institutions highlight that, as nonprofits or mission-driven entities, they reinvest resources into student support (scholarships, emergency grants, open educational resources) rather than focusing on profit. This approach underscores that the institution exists to benefit students and society, not private interests.

Institutional example: The University of Wyoming's mission and strategic plan explicitly establish the significant value of actively contributing to the public good, as evidenced by the university's establishment of dedicated centers for both global engagement and community involvement.[14]

Reflective Prompts: (Questions for institutional teams to consider for 1.B)

• Mission in Action: In what ways do our operations and decisions reflect that we serve the public, rather than just our own institutional interests? List concrete examples (e.g. outreach programs, community use of facilities, open lectures) where the institution is contributing to the public good. How do these align with our mission statement or values? How does the institution ensure that its stated commitment to the public good remains strategically aligned with its primary educational mission and its available institutional resources?

• Community Needs Assessment: What are the needs of the community or region that our college/university is positioned to address? Consider whether we have programs or partnerships targeting those needs (such as healthcare, education, economic development, cultural enrichment). Are we regularly consulting community stakeholders or using advisory boards to guide our contributions? In what specific ways does the institution actively collaborate with external organizations or key community stakeholders to effectively address pressing public needs?

• Student Engagement in Public Good: How do we engage students, faculty, and staff in serving the community? Reflect on whether service is encouraged or required as part of the student experience (through volunteer requirements, service-learning courses, work programs, or student clubs focused on service). Do we track or document this engagement to demonstrate impact? What specific programs or initiatives has the institution intentionally developed and implemented that are explicitly designed to serve the public good? How are students made aware of the various opportunities available to engage in activities that directly serve the public good?

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[13] Gateway Technical College - Criterion 1 Evidence
[14] University of Wyoming - Overview of Assurance Argument
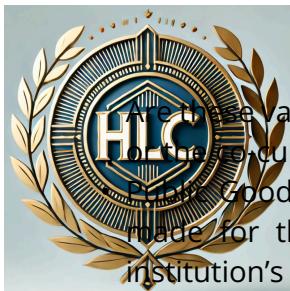
Are these valuable opportunities thoughtfully integrated into the formal curriculum or the co-curricular programs offered by the institution?

Public Good vs. Institutional Benefit: Can we provide evidence that decisions are made for the public good even when they may not immediately benefit the institution's bottom line? For example, do we continue offering programs that are low in revenue but high in community importance? Do we invest in initiatives like adult education, community classes, or outreach knowing they fulfill our public mission? How does the institution specifically define the concept of "public good" within the unique context of its established mission and the diverse communities it serves?

• Transparency and Accountability: How do we communicate our public good efforts to stakeholders and hold ourselves accountable? Think about public reports, websites or brochures highlighting community engagement, and whether we assess outcomes of our public-oriented programs. This can help ensure we remain focused on serving the public and can give reviewers a clear picture of our commitment. How does the institution systematically measure or rigorously assess the overall impact of its various efforts aimed at serving the public good? Are there specific outcomes or key metrics that are regularly tracked and evaluated? Does the institution have clearly defined policies or established procedures that guide its engagement with the broader community and ensure that these interactions are consistently ethical and mutually beneficial for all parties involved?

1.3 Core Component 1.C – Mission and Diversity of Society

The institution provides opportunities for civic engagement in a diverse, multicultural society and globally connected world, as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

This core component requires the institution to provide appropriate and relevant opportunities for civic engagement within a diverse, multicultural society and a globally interconnected world, as these opportunities align with its specific mission and the distinct populations it serves. This emphasis underscores the institution's critical role in preparing students to become informed and actively engaged citizens in an increasingly complex and diverse global landscape.

This component places a significant emphasis on the institution's crucial role in fostering not only a deep understanding of diversity but also active and meaningful engagement with diverse communities and pressing global issues. Institutions are expected to cultivate graduates who are well-prepared to be responsible and effective citizens in an increasingly complex and interconnected world.

Evidence Suggestions: (Types of evidence that show engagement with diversity and

global society) [see[15], p. 4]

- Curricular Civic Engagement Opportunities: Documentation of course-based activities or requirements that promote civic engagement and learning in diverse contexts. For example, evidence of capstone projects, service-learning courses, study abroad or international service projects, internships or practicums in diverse communities, faith-based service trips, alternative spring break programs, ROTC or military service options, or student entrepreneurship projects focused on social impact. Syllabi or catalogs highlighting these opportunities can serve as evidence.
- Co-Curricular Service and Leadership: Records of student life programs that foster engagement and diversity. This includes lists of service clubs (e.g. Habitat for Humanity chapter, culturally-focused student associations), fraternity/sorority philanthropy projects, athletic team community service events, resident assistant training in inclusivity, or institution-led volunteer days. Such evidence might be reports from a student affairs office or annual summaries of co-curricular involvement.
- Volunteerism and Outreach Data: Documentation of student, faculty, or staff involvement in external community service not tied to courses – for instance, participation in local arts and culture initiatives, youth mentoring programs, human rights advocacy, public health campaigns, environmental clean-ups, food security drives, religious community service, or political engagement like voter registration drives. Logs of volunteer hours, reflections, or community partner testimonials could be included as evidence of this broad engagement.
- Definitions and Policy on Diversity & Inclusion, if applicable: Official campus definitions or policy statements regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). This might be a published diversity statement, nondiscrimination policy, or inclusion philosophy that explains what diversity means to the institution. It shows that the institution has an intentional stance on diversity aligned with its mission.
- Student Demographics and Access Strategy: Data demonstrating the diversity of the student body and strategies in place to recruit and support a diverse student population. This could include enrollment breakdowns by race/ethnicity, international vs. domestic, etc., along with recruitment plans or scholarship programs aimed at underrepresented groups, showing a commitment to access and inclusion as part of the mission.
- Campus Organizations and Activities: Evidence of committees, offices, or student organizations dedicated to diversity, global engagement, and inclusion. Examples include a Diversity Office or Council, multicultural student centers, international student services, or campus committees on civic engagement. Documentation of their activities (workshops, cultural festivals, global awareness events, community dialogues) would show how the institution provides structured opportunities in these areas.

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[15]Providing Evidence for the Criteria for Accreditation

Events Promoting Diverse Perspectives: Documentation of events and initiatives that the institution hosts or participates in that promote diverse perspectives or global perspectives. This could be speaker series, panel discussions on social issues, international education week events, celebrations of cultural heritage months, partnerships with global organizations, or exchange programs. Such evidence highlights the institution's active role in preparing students for a multicultural and global environment.

Example Practices: (Illustrative ways institutions foster diversity and civic engagement consistent with mission)

- Diversity in General Education: Many institutions ensure that all graduates gain exposure to diverse cultures and perspectives. For example, a university might include a Diversity and Global Learning requirement in its core curriculum. Instead of a single class, students choose from many courses across departments (history, literature, social sciences, etc.) that address multicultural or international topics. This practice ensures that learning about diversity isn't isolated – it's woven throughout the educational experience, preparing students for global citizenship.

  Institutional example: Oakland University explicitly states that its various processes and activities are intentionally designed to reflect a strong attention to human diversity, as appropriate within its established mission and for the diverse constituencies it serves.[16]

- Community Values and Inclusion Statements: Institutions often formalize their commitment to diversity through campus-wide value statements or charters. One college, for instance, developed a Community Values Statement affirming respect for diverse peoples and perspectives, after campus-wide dialogues. Such a statement might pledge ongoing training and a promise to create an inclusive environment. The process of creating this involved students, faculty, and staff, signaling institutional dedication to an inclusive mission. It's accompanied by tangible actions – e.g. annual diversity workshops and a plan to improve campus climate – turning words into practice.

  Institutional example: Iowa Lakes Community College includes "respecting culture, collaboration, and inclusion" as a fundamental element within its strategic plan, clearly demonstrating an institutional commitment to these core values.[17]

- Inclusive Hiring and Representation: The institution implements equitable hiring practices within student programs to improve diversity and inclusion. For instance, student employment or work-study hiring policies are reviewed and revised to ensure underrepresented groups have fair access to all roles. Such changes promote

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[16]Oakland University - Criteria for HLC Accreditation
[17]Iowa Lakes Community College - HLC Assurance Argument

broader representation and inclusivity in valuable campus positions and leadership opportunities.

Institutional example: Gateway Technical College (GTC) provides several concrete examples of how it addresses the critical issue of diversity. These include clearly articulated board policies on human relationships, affirmative action and recruitment policies, curriculum policies specifically related to diversity, and various initiatives focused on international education. Additionally, GTC actively supports a range of student clubs that cater to diverse interests and backgrounds and offers comprehensive diversity training programs for its faculty and staff.[18]

• Training and Development in DEI: The institution provides ongoing diversity, equity, and inclusion training for its community. This can include mandatory anti-racism workshops and unconscious-bias training sessions for faculty and staff, as well as periodic intensive retreats or multi-day seminars on understanding systemic racism. These development opportunities help cultivate an informed, inclusive campus culture and demonstrate a commitment to continuous improvement in DEI.

Institutional example: The University of Wyoming's mission and strategic plan explicitly acknowledge the inherent value of diversity, and the university has taken tangible steps to further this commitment through the establishment of dedicated centers for diversity, equity, and inclusion.[19]

• Civic Engagement Opportunities: Aligned with mission, providing hands-on civic engagement is a common practice. For instance, a college might have a robust service-learning program or civic engagement office that connects students with local volunteer opportunities. One example is offering a structured program where students can work in local schools, non-profits, or government agencies for academic credit or stipend, thus learning about community issues and diversity firsthand. Another example is facilitating alternative break trips where students travel to different communities (domestic or international) to work on service projects, broadening their global awareness.

Institutional example: Illinois State University's approach to HLC Criterion 1.C involves a clear commitment to providing opportunities for civic engagement within a diverse, multicultural society and a globally connected world, aligning these efforts with their core institutional mission.[20]

• Assessment and Continuous Improvement: An often overlooked but valuable practice is assessing the campus climate and the effectiveness of diversity initiatives. For example, every couple of years an institution might administer a campus climate

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[18]Gateway Technical College - Criterion 1 Evidence
[19]University of Wyoming - Overview of Assurance Argument
[20]Illinois State University - HLC Criterion 1 – Mission - Taking a closer look

…tive focusing on diversity and equity, or use student and staff satisfaction surveys with items on inclusivity. The results guide action plans – perhaps leading to new training, new support services, or changes in policy. By measuring and responding to feedback on the multicultural climate, the institution shows a commitment to continuously living its mission in this realm.

Institutional example: The University of New Mexico's (UNM) previous APR criteria specifically inquired about the academic unit's role and engagement within a multi-cultural society, indicating a prior institutional emphasis on this important aspect of the mission.[21]

Reflective Prompts: (Questions for institutional teams to consider for 1.C)

- Educational Experience: How do our academic programs and courses encourage students to engage with diverse cultures, beliefs, and global issues? Inventory the courses or requirements that include cultural diversity, global learning, or civic engagement components. Are these opportunities optional or built into every student's experience? How does the institution specifically define the terms "diversity," "multiculturalism," and "civic engagement" within the unique context of its established mission and the diverse populations it serves? What specific opportunities are intentionally provided for students to actively interact with and learn from individuals and groups representing diverse backgrounds and perspectives, both within and outside the traditional classroom setting?
- Campus Climate and Support: What are we doing to ensure an inclusive and respectful campus environment for all students, faculty, and staff? Consider whether there are active student organizations, offices (like a Diversity or Multicultural Affairs office), or committees devoted to diversity and civic engagement. Do we offer training or dialogue series on diversity/inclusion? What do recent climate surveys or feedback say about the sense of belonging on campus? In what specific ways does the curriculum thoughtfully incorporate diverse perspectives and effectively prepare students to meaningfully engage with a multicultural society and a globally interconnected world?
- Diversity in Practice: In what ways do our institutional practices (hiring, admissions, financial aid, student employment, etc.) reflect our commitment to diversity and equity? Reflect on hiring policies for faculty/staff – do we intentionally seek diverse candidates and avoid bias? For student recruitment – do our strategies reach a wide array of communities, including underrepresented groups? Are there policies in place (and evidence of their results) that show we strive for equity (for example, in student worker positions or leadership opportunities)? How does the institution actively support and encourage the full participation of students from diverse backgrounds in all aspects of campus life, including valuable leadership opportunities?

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[21] University of New Mexico - APR Criteria Alignment to HLC Core Components

Are there any specific partnerships or collaborative initiatives established with community organizations or other institutions that primarily serve diverse populations or actively promote global awareness?

- Civic Engagement and Service: What structured opportunities do we provide for students and the campus community to engage in civic activities and service? List out how students can get involved (volunteer programs, service-learning classes, community-based research, clubs focused on service or advocacy). Do we track participation in these activities? How do these experiences tie back to our mission statements or values? What co-curricular activities or programs are offered by the institution that are specifically designed to promote civic engagement and foster intercultural understanding among students? How does the institution systematically assess the overall effectiveness of its various efforts aimed at promoting civic engagement and enhancing intercultural competence among its student body?

- Global Connection: Given our mission and constituents, how do we connect our campus to the wider world? If "global" or "multicultural society" is part of this component, consider study abroad programs, international student enrollment and support, partnerships with institutions in other countries, or globally-focused events on campus. Even if we are a small or local institution, are we preparing students to be effective in a diverse world? Identify evidence such as international partnerships or globally-themed curricula that support this.

Institutions should select evidence and examples most relevant to their own mission. The lists are not exhaustive checklists, but starting points for brainstorming how to demonstrate that Criterion 1: Mission is met under HLC's 2025 Criteria. Each institution's mission is unique, so aligning evidence with that distinct mission will strengthen the accreditation argument.

Other Examples:

- Illinois State University - Sample Accreditation Visit Questions[22]
- Oakland Community College - Criterion Cards[23]

Bibliography

[22] Illinois State University - Sample Accreditation Visit Questions
[23] Oakland Community College - Criterion Cards