



**DINÉ COLLEGE**  
**Higher Learning Commission**  
**Comprehensive Visit 2015 Initiative**  
**General Overview**



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### 1. Diné College Accreditation

The College is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

- HLC Contact Information: 230 South LaSalle Street, Suite 7-500, Chicago, Illinois 60604-1411, (800) 621-7440, E-mail: [www.ncahlc.org](http://www.ncahlc.org).

### 2. Higher Learning Commission Standard Pathways - Executive Summary

In September 2012, HLC transitioned from a total of two to three accreditation programs including (1) Academic Quality Improvement Programs (AQIP), (2) Open Pathways, and (3) Standard Pathways. Diné College is currently accredited within HLC's 'Standard Pathway' program. Regional accreditation assures quality by verifying on a ten-year cycle that institutions (1) meet threshold standards and (2) are engaged in continuous improvement. The new Pathways introduced in 2012 for maintaining accreditation seek to offer greater value to institutions and greater credibility to the public.

The Standard Pathway features:

- A ten-year cycle,
- A focus on both assurance and improvement,
- Assurance Reviews in Years 4 and 10; and
- The use of the HLC electronic Assurance System.

The HLC Assurance System consists of:

- The Assurance System. The Commission's Assurance System is a web-based technology that institutions use in the Standard and Open Pathways to provide the Assurance Argument and evidentiary materials. The Assurance System is available to institutions throughout the 10-year Standard Pathway timeline for uploading and maintaining their information.

- The Assurance Argument. The Assurance Argument is organized by the Criteria and their Core Components. (Institutions address the Assumed Practices only when seeking candidacy or initial accreditation, or under special circumstances such as removal from sanction.)
- The Evidence File. Within the Assurance System, an institution's Evidence File comprises two sections.
  - In section one, the Commission contributes recent comprehensive evaluation and interim reports, a trend summary from the institution's most recent Institutional Update submissions, copies of official actions and correspondence, public comments, and any other information the Commission deems necessary.
  - In section two of the Evidence File, the institution uploads its own evidentiary materials that, together with its Assurance Argument, demonstrate that it meets the Criteria for Accreditation and has made sufficient progress on areas identified for improvement.
- Interim Monitoring Between CVs. In Years 1-3 and Years 5-9, the institution addresses required improvements through any interim reports and focused visits required as a result of previous evaluations. Interim reports are submitted to the Commission and reviewed by staff or a panel of peer reviewers, who then write an analysis. The Commission forwards the analysis and informs the institution of the results and whether additional interim monitoring is required.
- Moving Between Pathways. Institutions placed on the Standard Pathway will remain on the Standard Pathway until the Year 10 reaffirmation of accreditation. At that time, the Commission will determine whether the institution remains on the Standard Pathway or may choose its preferred pathway—Standard, Open, or AQIP. An institution that is eligible to choose among pathways will be given 90 days to make that election for its next reaffirmation cycle. After that, the institution must complete the cycle on the pathway it has elected.
- Additional Information about HLC Standard Pathways: For more information about Standard Pathways please visit: <https://www.ncahlc.org/Pathways/standard-pathway.html>

### 3. Diné College - Recent Accreditation-related History

HLC conducted a Focused Visit (FV) from April 16-17, 2012. At the conclusion of the FV12, the Commission identified which 10-year cycle Diné College would be assigned to, and the Commission issued an official report summarizing their findings.

Identification of next CV date for Diné College:

- Summary of Commission Review: Review to be held during 2014-2015 Academic Year, and the official next comprehensive visit date remains 2018-2019. (Report of a Commission-Mandated Focused Visit - Assurance Section, April 16-17, 2012 (pg. 16))

Key areas requiring improvement from April 16-17, 2012 HLC Commission-Mandated Focused Visit:

- Improvements Needed - Elementary Education Program
  - The department needs to continue the discussions with general education faculty and design a plan where general education courses can become a greater part of the solution in the appropriate areas. (pg. 6)
- Improvements Needed - Internal Communications and Governance
  - The filling of key positions with full-time professionals is critical to adequately addressing institutional challenges in an expedient manner, to provide stability, and to ensure that recent positive changes are strengthened and supported. (pg. 8)

- Expanding board development opportunities is important to the long-term success of the Board. (pg. 8)
- The Board needs to continue to educate the Tribal Council on its role in supporting the College and respecting its charter. (pg. 8)
- The practice of College personnel taking internal employee issues directly to the Commission needs to cease in which there is a circumvention of College policies and procedures, College administration, and the BOR. (pg. 9)
- The Staff Association needs to play an active role within the College in representing the views of the staff. (pg. 9)
- The College needs to communicate to the internal and external constituencies the many positive changes that are happening at the College under the current administration. (pg. 9)
- Training for the WEAVE Online software needs to continue to ensure that the software is used throughout the College to assist with planning, assessment, and resource allocation. (pg. 9)
- Work must continue on the systematic updating and revising of all of the College's policy documents and handbooks in a consistent manner using the agreed upon formats and rubrics. (pg. 9)
- The budgeting process needs to be strengthened. (pg. 10)
- Standing Committees, Leadership Council, and Administrative Team minutes should be made available in a consistent and timely manner and posted to a single location that is easily accessible for the College community. (pg. 10)
- Improvements Needed - Assessment of Student Learning
  - The 2007 Assessment Plan is outdated and needs revision. (pg. 11)
  - There is a lack of evidence demonstrating that evaluation of adjunct faculty is consistent across divisions. (pg. 12)
  - Use survey data to establish a baseline concerning faculty and staff satisfaction with the College. (pg. 12)
  - Assessment of the general education program and how it connects with and contributes to learning across all college programs is not evident. (pg. 12)
- Commission Follow-up Recommendation
  - A Progress Report due on June 15<sup>th</sup> each year until the next CV on the continued progress of the assessment of student learning and on the development and implementation of the assessment of the general education program. (pg. 14)

#### Statement of Affiliation Status

- Diné College Accreditation Date: July 21, 1976
- Last Reaffirmation of Accreditation: 2008 - 2009
- Next Comprehensive Visit: Spring 2015, TBA
- Next Reaffirmation of Accreditation: 2018 - 2019
- A complete statement regarding Diné College's accreditation status and institutional profile may be found on HLC's website at the following location:
  - [https://www.ncahlc.org/component/com\\_directory/Action.ShowBasic/Itemid./instid.1729/](https://www.ncahlc.org/component/com_directory/Action.ShowBasic/Itemid./instid.1729/)

#### 4. Diné College's Planning and Accreditation Committee (PAC)

In harmony with the College's mission and philosophy, the Planning and Accreditation Committee (PAC) is responsible for facilitating planning and accreditation related functions and activities. The

PAC is a representative standing committee that was established in fall 2012 following Diné College's focused accreditation visit and the Board of Regents' efforts to refocus on the college's mission, vision, principles and goals.

- Purpose. In harmony with the College's mission and philosophy, the Planning and Accreditation Committee (PAC) is a standing committee that is responsible for facilitating planning, evaluation, budgeting, and accreditation related functions and activities.
- Goals:
  - Improve the College's planning, evaluation, and budgeting processes.
- Activities:
  1. Meet bi-monthly during the regular academic year for up to one hour per meeting or longer and more often as needed.
  2. Work with the College's administrative and academic units to implement and assess the College's Planning Framework, including development of annual plans; provide timely feedback to faculty, staff, and students as appropriate; and recommend ways to improve that framework.
  3. Report to the College's A-Team, BOR, and College community periodically on progress and challenges in implementing the Planning Framework.
  4. Align the Framework to accreditation requirements.
  5. Coordinate the development of written reports and supporting documents related to accreditation requirements.
  6. Serve as a resource to the College's departments and entities on planning, evaluation, budgeting, and accreditation matters.
- Relationship to the rest of the College. Meeting minutes will be developed and disseminated in timely fashion to the College community, and posted and archived on the College's intranet.
- Membership. Members are appointed by the College's President. They represent the College's students, faculty, administration, campuses, and community centers. The PAC Chair and Vice-Chair are selected on an annual basis by the PAC membership.
- Current PAC Membership:
  - Phyllis Begay
  - Ron Belloli
  - Thomas Bennett
  - Abe Bitok
  - Preston Brown (Co-Chair)
  - Cameron Daines (Co-Chair)
  - Henry Fowler
  - Glennita Haskey
  - James McKenzie
  - Dan McLaughlin
  - Don Robinson

## **5. Comprehensive Visit 2015 Steering Committee and Initiative Oversight**

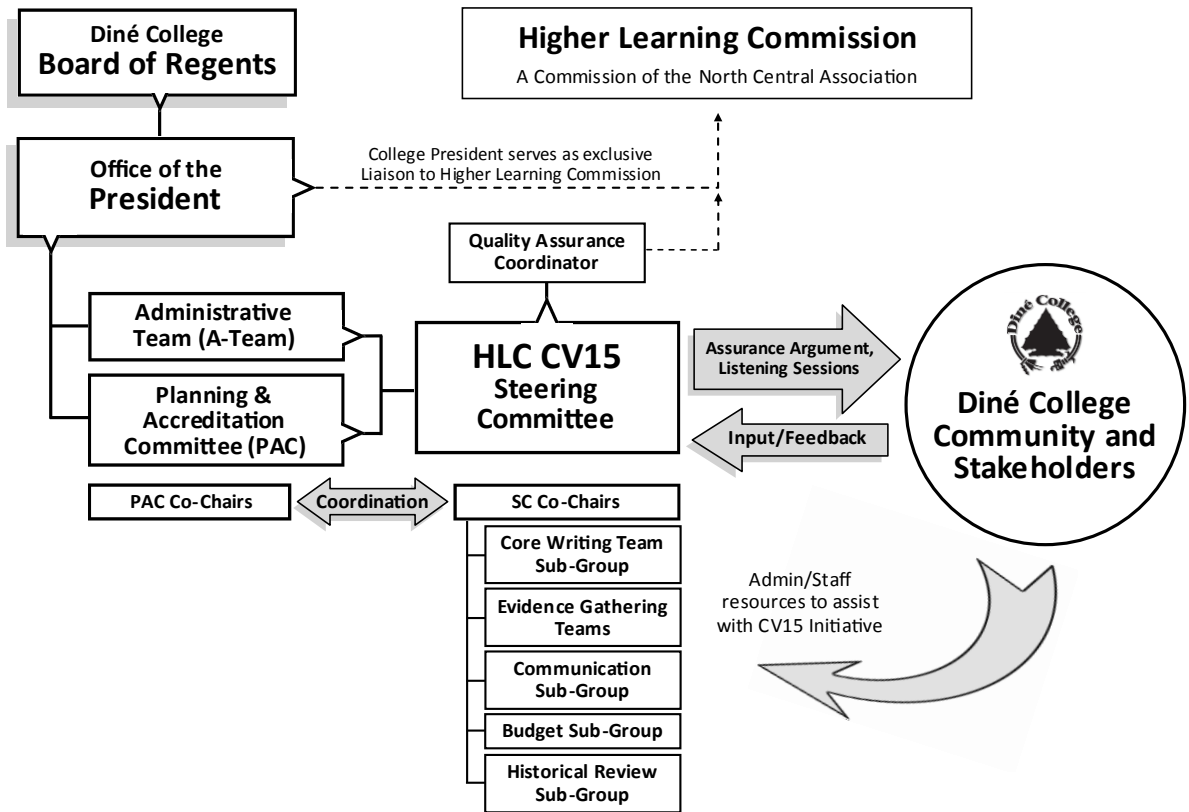
On 3/20/14, PAC formulated a recommendation to the President and A-Team that the Steering Committee (SC) for the HLC CV15 initiative should consist of members of PAC and A-Team. This recommendation was agreed to by the President and A-Team members.

- A-Team members (who are not members of PAC) participating in the HLC CV15 Steering Committee include:
  - Maggie George
  - Akpabio Akpabio
  - Delbert Paquin
  - Amber Crotty
  - Perphelia Fowler
- Following the HLC FY14 Conference which was held in April 2014, the PAC met on a regular basis to discuss a way forward to prepare for HLC's upcoming Spring 2015 visit. At the June 25, 2014 PAC meeting, the SC recommended an oversight structure for the CV15 initiative,

which was agreed to by President George, in which two SC Co-Chairs are to work with the PAC Co-Chairs to ensure the successful implementation of the CV15 initiative. SC Co-Chairs include:

- James McKenzie
- Dr. Herman Peterson

- The CV15 initiative requires a data upload of the final Assurance Argument and supporting evidentiary documentation. The President has assigned the role of Quality Assurance Coordinator to Velveena Davis, Director of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness.



- SC Members. The SC comprises the President of Diné College, members of the President's Administrative Team (A-Team) and members of the Planning and Accreditation Committee (PAC). Each member of the College's SC is charged with the collection, analysis, and evaluation of data and evidence focusing upon aspects of the accreditation criteria, as well as composition of short summaries about the evidence. The SC is composed of a cross section of faculty members, administrators and staff including:

Dr. Maggie L. George, Diné College President  
[mlgeorge@dinecollege.edu](mailto:mlgeorge@dinecollege.edu), Ph: (928) 724-6670  
 Dr. Akpabio Akpabio, Chief Technology Officer  
[aakpabio@dinecollege.edu](mailto:aakpabio@dinecollege.edu), Ph: (928) 724-6646  
 Phyllis Begay, Director of the Tuba City Center  
[ptbegay@dinecollege.edu](mailto:ptbegay@dinecollege.edu), Ph: (928) 283-7501  
 Ron Belloli, Vice President of Administration and Finance  
[rbelloli@dinecollege.edu](mailto:rbelloli@dinecollege.edu), Ph: (928) 724-6677

Thomas Bennett, Director of the Shiprock Learning Center  
[tbennett@dinecollege.edu](mailto:tbennett@dinecollege.edu), Ph: (505) 368-3629

Abraham Bitok, Academic Dean  
[akbitok@dinecollege.edu](mailto:akbitok@dinecollege.edu), Ph: (928) 724-6611

Preston Brown, Senior Research Analyst/Planner  
[pbrown@dinecollege.edu](mailto:pbrown@dinecollege.edu), Ph: (928) 724-6828

Amber Crotty, Director of the Diné Policy Institute (DPI)  
[acrotty@dinecollege.edu](mailto:acrotty@dinecollege.edu), Ph: (928) 724-6942

Cameron Daines, Vice President of Institutional Advancement  
[ckdaines@dinecollege.edu](mailto:ckdaines@dinecollege.edu), (928) 724-6698

Dr. Henry Fowler, Faculty Member  
[hffowler@dinecollege.edu](mailto:hffowler@dinecollege.edu), (928) 724-6818

Perphelia Fowler, Director of the Department of Human Resources  
[pfowler@dinecollege.edu](mailto:pfowler@dinecollege.edu), (928) 724-6950

Glennita Haskey, Vice President of Student Success  
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James McKenzie, Senior Policy Analyst for DPI  
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Dr. Dan McLaughlin, Faculty Member, Chair - Center for Diné Teacher Education  
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Delbert Paquin, Superintendent of Facilities  
[dpaquin@dinecollege.edu](mailto:dpaquin@dinecollege.edu), (928) 724-3538

Dr. Herman Peterson, Director of Library Services  
[hpeterson@dinecollege.edu](mailto:hpeterson@dinecollege.edu), (928) 724-6758

Dr. Don Robinson, Faculty Member, Chair - Science and Physical Education Division  
[dkrobinson@dinecollege.edu](mailto:dkrobinson@dinecollege.edu), (928) 724-6719

## 6. Steering Committee Purpose and Responsibilities

### A. Steering Committee Purpose

- Purpose. The primary purpose of Diné College's HLC CV15 SC is to guide the institution through a ten-year Standard Pathway accreditation cycle which includes two comprehensive evaluations. The role of the SC is to manage and document a process that culminates in the development of the institution's Assurance Argument, supported by evidentiary materials. Members of the SC serve as liaisons, leaders, and resources for all HLC sub-groups.
  - Operating Statement. To guide the institution through a ten-year Standard Pathway reaffirmation of accreditation cycle by engaging the College Community and applying the College's principles of Nitsáhákees, Nahat'á, liná, and Siihasin.

### B. Steering Committee Responsibilities

- College President. The President oversees the implementation of the CV15 initiative, and serves as the direct liaison to the Higher Learning Commission.
  - HLC Inquiries. All inquiries to HLC are conducted by the President.
  - Approval of Assurance Argument. The President will be responsible for reviewing the A-A and providing input to the Core Writing Team; and ultimately, the President will approve the final draft of the Assurance Argument before it is uploaded into the HLC Assurance System.
  - Leadership Support of SC Co-Chairs. The President provides leadership support of the SC Co-Chairs and may hold meetings with Co-Chairs to receive briefings/updates regarding the status of the CV15 initiative.

- SC Co-Chairs. The role of two (2) SC Co-Chairs is to facilitate the CV15 process as a whole.
  - o SC Meeting Schedule. Co-Chairs facilitate SC meetings and track progress according to the Project Schedule. Establish Meeting Schedule for CV15.
  - o A-Team Updates. Deliver updates to the A-Team regarding the CV15 initiative (e.g. progress made, challenges experienced)
  - o Addresses Concerns. Work with College offices and divisions to resolve concerns/conflicts as they occur.
  - o HLC Inquiries. Field HLC inquiries from SC members and provide the College President a summary of inquiries for her consideration.
  - o Quality Assurance Coordination. The SC Co-Chairs will work directly with V. Davis, the QAC for the CV15 initiative, to ensure a successful upload of evidentiary documentation per the Project Schedule.
  - o Documentation of Evidence. Maintain hard copies of evidence collected. Support evidence collection within the College's Accreditation e-Library.
  - o Warrior Web - SC Page. Update approved SC minutes, and other documents to ensure transparency throughout the CV15 process.
  - o SC Meetings. Be accountable for all Meeting Minutes, and track follow-up action items. Coordinate with SC Administrative Support as needed.
- SC Administrative Support. The SC Co-Chairs will utilize administrative support as needed throughout the CV15 process, based on the flow of work product and events.
  - o Barbara J. Harvey, Title III Receptionist, is currently assisting the SC Co-Chairs in the day-to-day management of information (Contact: bjharvey@dinecollege.edu)
- SC Members. SC Members serve as Evidence-gatherers, as well as Sub-Group participants.
  - o Evidence-Gathering. Three main subject areas require evidence: Assumed Practices, HLC Criteria, and Federal Compliance.
  - o Sub-Groups. SC Members will serve on sub-groups that report directly to SC Co-Chairs. Sub-Groups include the Core Writing Team, Communications, Historical Review, and Budget.
  - o Review of Assurance Argument (A-A). SC Members will be responsible for reviewing the A-A and providing input to the Core Writing Team.
  - o Participation in CV15 Events. SC Members are expected to participate in major CV15 events, in order to support the initiative as a whole.
- PAC Co-Chairs. The PAC provides broad oversight of the HLC CV15 SC.
  - o Updates SC Co-Chairs. PAC Co-Chairs will provide updates to the SC Co-Chairs regarding the maintenance of the Accreditation e-Library.
  - o Coordination with PAC. Issues related to the CV 2015 initiative may impact other planning initiatives that the College is involved in or may be involved in. (e.g. College's desire to become a Baccalaureate- and Master-degree granting institution). PAC Co-Chairs will track these issues and facilitate discussions with the President and PAC members, separate from the CV 2015 SC. If cross-coordination is required, PAC Co-Chairs will seek to be on the SC Meeting agenda to address the issues.
  - o Review of Assurance Argument. PAC Co-Chairs will be responsible for reviewing the A-A and providing input to the Core Writing Team.
- SC Sub-Groups. Sub-Groups will remain intact up to the planned March 9-10, 2015 HLC visit, and will provide support to SC Co-Chairs.

- Core Writing Team Sub-Group. The Core Writing Team is responsible for generating the Assurance Argument. The team includes a cross-section of Academics, Budget, Student Success, and College Leadership. A single writer, Dr. Herman Peterson, has been identified who will edit the final narrative so that that it resonates with a “single voice”. *Members include SC Co-Chairs James McKenzie and Dr. Herman Peterson, Dr. Dan McLaughlin, VP Glennita Haskey, and VP Cameron Daines.*
- Communication Sub-Group. The Communications Sub-Group (CSG) makes sure that the College community - as well as external stakeholders - are informed of the CV15 process and that they receive regular updates regarding the status of the initiative. The CSG will manage the implementation of the CV15 Communications Plan and report to the SC. Members include: *Amber Crotty (CSG Lead), Thomas Bennett, Dr. Akpabio Akpabio, Ilene Naegle, Ed McCombs, Cuyler Frank, and Velveena Davis.*
- Historical Review Sub-Group. The Historical Review Sub-Group reviews HLC-related visits and documents associated with Diné College’s re-affirmation of accreditation initiative, and pays close attention to follow-up items that have been identified in past visits that are or may be of concern to the HLC. The Historical Review Sub-Group advises the Core Writing Team and will report to the Steering Committee. Members include: *President Maggie L. George (Sub-Group Lead), Abe Bitok, Cathy Bahe, Glennita Haskey, and Preston Brown.*
- Budget Sub-Group. The Budget Sub-Group will specifically address HLC’s concerns expressed in the April 16-17, 2012 HLC Commission-Mandated Focused Visit regarding connections between budgeting and planning. Dr. George has tasked the Budget Sub-Group to review the extent to which planning informs budgeting across offices and divisions of the College. The Budget Sub-Group will also make recommendations to the SC Co-Chairs regarding a budget for the implementation of the CV15 initiative, as well as provide analysis related to the College’s Financial Ratio as defined by the HLC. Members include: *Cheryl Thompson (Sub-Group Lead), VP Ron Belloli, VP Cameron Daines, Phyllis Begay, Dr. Dan McLaughlin, Perphelia Fowler, and Delbert Paquin.*

## 7. Evidence Gathering

Team members assigned to analyze and collect evidentiary documentation for major CV15 subject areas include:

### I. ASSUMED PRACTICES

- |   |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
| A. Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct           | M. George, P. Fowler     |
| B. Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, & Support | A. Bitok, G. Haskey      |
| C. Teaching and Learning: Evaluation & Improvement      | D. McLaughlin, H. Fowler |
| D. Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness | R. Belloli, C. Daines    |

### II. HLC CRITERIA

- |   |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
| A. Criterion One. Mission   | M. George, T. Bennett    |
| B. Criterion Two. Integrity: Ethical & Responsible                      | A. Crotty, G. Haskey     |
| C. Criterion Three. Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources & Support | D. Robinson, J. McKenzie |
| D. Criterion Four. Teaching and Learning: Evaluation & Improvement      | D. McLaughlin, H. Fowler |
| E. Criterion Five. Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness | R. Belloli, C. Daines    |

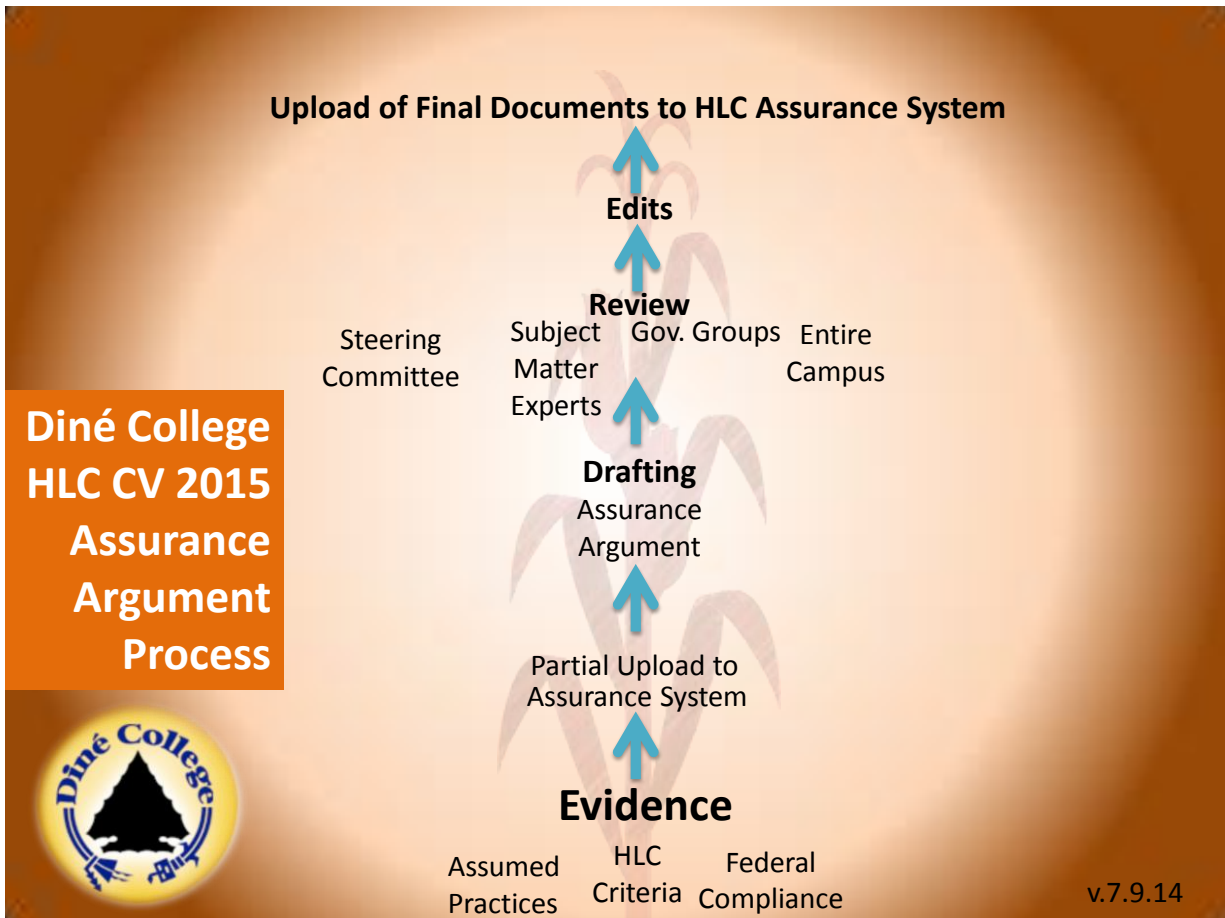
### III. FEDERAL COMPLIANCE

- |   |           |
|---|-----------|
| A. Assignment of Credits, Program Length, and Tuition | A. Bitok  |
| B. Institutional Records of Student Complaints        | G. Haskey |

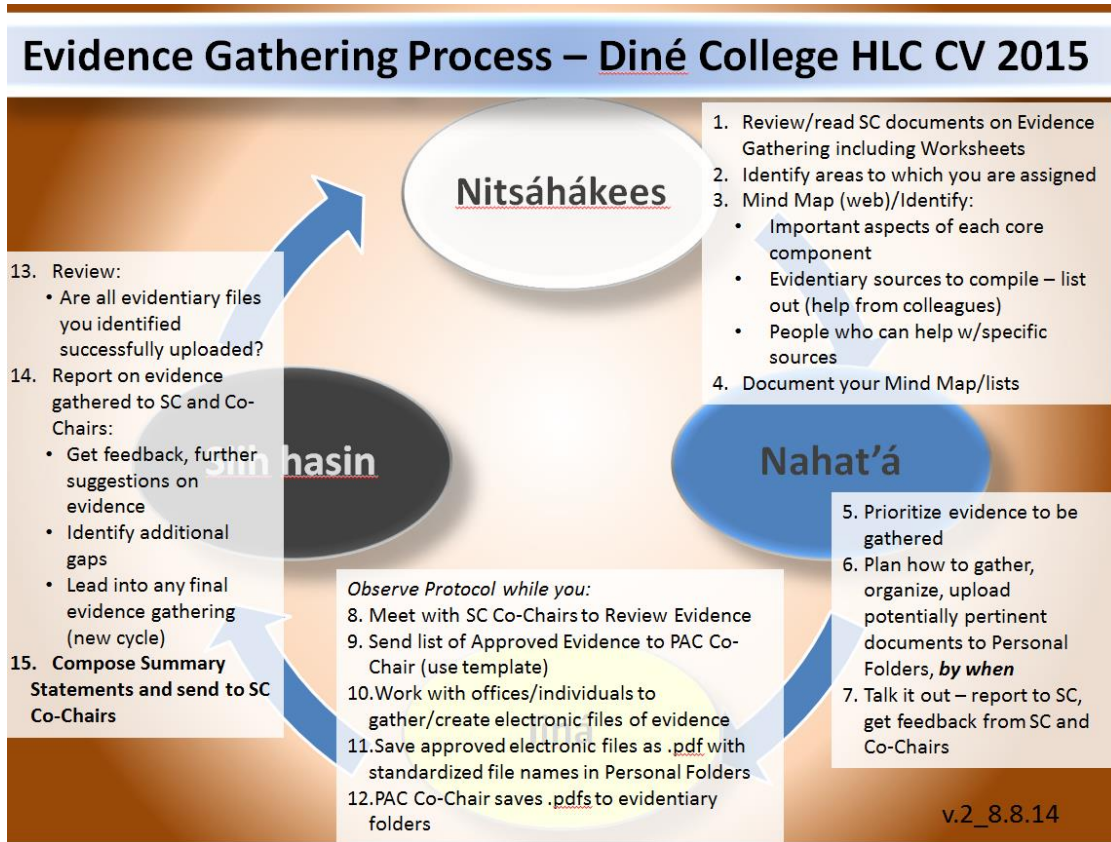


- |   |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
| C. Publication of Transfer Policies                                   | P. Begay, L. Litzin      |
| D. Practices for Verification of Student Identity                     | A. Bitok                 |
| E. Title IV Program Responsibilities                                  | G. Haskey                |
| F. Required Information for Students and the Public                   | A. Crotty, T. Bennett    |
| G. Advertising and Recruitment Materials and Other Public Information | C. Daines                |
| H. Review of Student Outcome Data                                     | D. McLaughlin, H. Fowler |
| I. Standing with State and Other Accrediting Agencies                 | M. George                |
| J. Public Notification of Opportunity to Comment                      | M. George                |

Evidence Gathering Methodology. The SC Co-Chairs have developed a diagram (below) that compares evidence gathering to the foundation or “roots” of the CV15 initiative. As evidentiary documentation is identified, analyzed and collected, it provides a basis for the drafting of the Assurance Argument. College constituents and stakeholders review the Assurance Argument, and the SC Core Writing Team Sub-Group tracks all input and feedback.



The following evidence gathering steps are reflected in the cyclical paradigm of the College's four principles - Nitsáhákees (Thinking), Nahat'á (Planning), Iná (Acting/Performing), and Siihasin (Reflection):



As evidence gathering teams move through the process outlined above, they track their work using a SC template that includes the following data fields:

Core Components/ Issues	List Core Aspect(s) of Component or Issue	Potential Source(s) of Evidence	Potential Contacts for Sources	Evidentiary Documents Approved by SC Co-Chairs	Identifiable Gaps	Corrective Plan? (Y, N, or N/A)
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**Data Storage and Retrieval.** The College's IT Department has dedicated a portion of one of its servers to house an Accreditation e-Library. This online resource will house electronic copies of all evidentiary documentation, as well as SC-related documentation. This resource is co-managed by the PAC Co-Chairs and SC Co-Chairs. Diné College will continue to update the e-Library following the planned HLC Comprehensive Visit, to support a process of continual improvement.

**Evidence Gathering Protocol.** In order to promote efficiencies in evidence gathering, the SC has developed protocol governing data collection/analysis/management, as well as the process of contacting offices, divisions, and departments that may have copies of potential evidentiary documents. Protocol includes:

- Examine Potential Sources. The HLC CV 2015 Steering Committee (SC) will serve as a resource for Evidence-gathering POCs, to help identify possible sources of evidence and potential contacts who might have copies of the material in question.
  - SC Meetings. The SC Chairperson should regularly include on the agenda of SC meetings, an opportunity for Evidence-gathering POCs to seek advice about potential sources of evidence. This feedback will leverage the institutional knowledge of SC members.
  - Source List. Before reaching out to potential contacts for evidentiary files and documents, Evidence-gathering POCs should first check the following e-Library folders to see if the resource has already been acquired and saved. (SC members will want to avoid asking the same contacts within the College community for the same information.)
- Source List Updates. E-Library Source Lists need to be updated and kept current. The SC Chairperson will review the Source List regularly to make sure that it is current, and will reach out to SC members if information gaps occur.
- Observe DC Organizational Chain-of-Command. Before reaching out to possible contacts within the College for information, SC members should check with the supervisor of any individual that is to be contacted, to make sure that work-disruption may be kept to a minimum. Once the supervisor understands the overall evidence-gathering process, the supervisor may be cc'd regarding requests for information.
  - Example of Chain-of-Command. The Data Team (Office of Institutional Effectiveness) is supervised by Velveena Davis, and will be able to provide information that supports the CV 2015 initiative; however, this team is focused on generating required data reports on a regular basis. Mrs. Davis' supervisor, C. Daines, VPIA, should be cc'd when any request for information is sought.
  - Monitoring Requests for Information. The SC Chairperson will monitor if requests for information begin to interfere with the workflow of the College, and address these instances in SC meetings so that they may be expeditiously resolved.
- Create Electronic Files for Accreditation e-Library. Scan all evidentiary files so that the e-Library may be populated with a comprehensive record of accreditation-supporting documents. Hard copies of documents will be filed by the SC Secretary and available for review when Peer Evaluators are on site.
- Observe Data Management Protocol. Applying file names correctly within the e-Library and saving evidentiary files in the correct folder(s), will alleviate confusion regarding version control.
  - Note: The international date that should be applied to a file name should be the date the document was generated, not the date it was saved to the e-Library. The same applies to e-mail correspondences. The date for the file name should be when the e-mail was created, not when it was saved to the e-Library.
  - Data Management. The Co-Chairs of the PAC (C. Daines, P. Brown) will review files stored in the e-Library on a regular basis to ensure proper data management.

## 8. Assurance Argument

The following guidelines for HLC evaluation teams provide insight regarding Assurance Arguments that are to be supported by Evidence Statements:

- Findings in Evidence Statements. Evidence statements are typically 2-4 sentences in length and include the context, the evidence, and the finding of team. Some evidence statements may need further support with bulleted evidence sentences that address the Core

Component and include the subcomponents as appropriate to the institution. Each evidence statement should address only one topic.

- Positive and Negative Findings. The evidence statements should present an accurate assessment of the institution in relation to the Core Component, including both positive and negative findings. However, the balance of the statements should support the overall determination of the team for that Core Component and for the Criterion.
- Room for Improvement. The Commission assumes that institutions that meet the Criteria and Core Components can always improve and that evaluation teams will routinely identify issues and comment on ways an institution might or even should improve in relationship to the Criteria. These are not accreditation concerns. Concerns, as defined in relationship to the Criteria, are accreditation issues that require the Commission to intervene and monitor the institution to ensure that issues have been resolved. When a team determines that a Core Component is Met, improvements may be indicated, but no monitoring should be recommended.
- Pervasive or Chronic Issues. When a team determines that a Core Component is met, but identifies an issue that must be improved and requires Commission monitoring at the level of a monitoring report or focused visit, the team should indicate that the Core Component is “Met with Concerns” and recommend the appropriate monitoring. Often such issues are more pervasive or chronic; they may have been cited in previous evaluations and improvements have not been made or the improvements made are not sufficient.
- Failure to Demonstrate Core Component or Systemic Problems. If there are multiple issues that indicate deep, systemic problems at the institution or the evidence is so lacking that it fails to demonstrate that the institution fulfills the Core Component, the team will indicate that the Core Component is “Not Met.”
- Criterion Is Met. If all of the Core Components are met, the Criterion is met.
- Criterion Is Met with Concerns. If any Core Component is met with concerns, the team must find that the Criterion is met with concerns. If the team identifies serious concerns with one or more Core Components or finds that multiple Core Components are met with concerns, the team chair should consult with the Commission staff liaison to determine whether the team should recommend that the institution be on Notice.

#### Practical Aspects of writing the Assurance Argument.

- Differences between the “Self-Study” and the Assurance Argument:
  - 25,000 to 35,000 words
  - Each criterion/core component is addressed explicitly
  - All arguments need to be supported by evidence referenced within the body of the document
  - Very structured and focused
  - Need to be very selective with both evidence and narrative
  - Heavy reliance on existing data and processes
- Writing the Argument:
  - Narrative is used to make the case regarding the institution’s ability to meet a core component
  - Outcomes should be addressed, rather than just a description of processes
  - Avoid giving a laundry list of evidence files, leaving the reviewers to wade through evidence to draw their own conclusions
  - Link directly to the text rather than provide a list of evidence after the core component narrative
  - Highlight words that are linked to evidence

- Only upload documents that will be needed (unreferenced documents will be permanently deleted from HLC’s Assurance System when the System is locked)

Public Review of the Assurance Argument.

- The draft Assurance Argument will be disseminated to the College community, and feedback will be used to improve the draft. Input will be tracked and a final report will accompany the Assurance Argument that summarizes how the input was integrated into the document.

**9. Comprehensive Visit 2015 Schedule**

Key dates applicable to the HLC CV15 initiative include:

**2014**

- |   |                    |
|---|--------------------|
| ➤ Evidence gathering period:                                  | July 1 - Aug. 25   |
| ➤ Partial uploading of evidence files to HLC system:          | Aug. 26 - Aug. 31  |
| ➤ Core Writing Team (CWT) drafts Assurance Argument (A-A):    | Sept. 1 - Sept. 30 |
| ➤ Public review period to comment on A-A (College community): | Oct. 1 - Nov. 8    |
| ➤ CWT revisions of A-A based on public review:                | Nov. 9 - Nov. 15   |
| ➤ Leadership review of A-A:                                   | Nov. 16 - Nov. 22  |
| ➤ CWT revisions of A-A based on leadership review:            | Nov. 23 - Nov. 30  |
| ➤ Final uploading of data into HLC system:                    | Dec. 1 - Dec.13    |
| ➤ Final verification and validation of evidence and A-A:      | Dec. 14 - Dec. 20  |
| ➤ Holiday Season/New Year interlude:                          | Dec. 20 - Jan. 4   |

**2015**

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| ➤ HLC locks their Assurance System:                           | Jan. 5           |
| ➤ HLC reviews A-A and evidentiary documentation:              | Jan. 5 - Mar. 7  |
| ➤ Steering Committee conducts outreach:                       | Jan. 5 - Mar. 7  |
| ➤ HLC Peer Evaluators on-site to conduct Comprehensive Visit: | Spring 2015, TBA |

(Schedule continued on next page)

