

LETTER OF AGREEMENT



Academy for Assessment of Student Learning

Institution: South Dakota State University

Next Reaffirmation: 2019-2020

Status: Accredited

Academy for Assessment of Student Learning

This document is an agreement that **South Dakota State University** elects to participate fully in the activities and functions of the Academy for Assessment of Student Learning. Participating in the Academy offers HLC member institutions a multi-year sequence of events and interactions that are focused on student learning. All Academy activities are targeted at accelerating and advancing efforts to assess and improve student learning, and are designed to help build institution-wide commitment to and engagement in assessing and improving student learning. An institution may choose to participate in the Academy as fulfillment of the Open Pathway Quality Initiative, as fulfillment of an AQIP Pathway Action Project, or for its own purposes. However, institutions should be aware that participation in the Academy does not substitute for, or serve in lieu of, fulfillment of a monitoring requirement imposed by HLC. (See Section IV of this Agreement.)

Agreement between HLC and South Dakota State University

I. South Dakota State University agrees to participate in the Academy for the following purpose:

- Fulfillment of the Open Pathway Quality Initiative (Institutions must begin participation no later than June of Year 5 and complete in June of Year 9 of the Open Pathway accreditation cycle)
- Fulfillment of an AQIP Pathway Action Project
- Fulfillment of other institutional purposes not related to Quality Initiatives or Action Projects

II. South Dakota State University agrees to participate in the following Academy activities:

- **Information and Planning Meeting** - All institutions accepted into the Academy must attend this meeting, held three months before the Academy Roundtable (launch). Institutions send a team of two or three attendees who should include a senior administrator and a person responsible for assessment from their institution.

Institutional Commitment - In joining the Academy, **South Dakota State University** agrees to send two or three representatives to an Information and Planning Meeting.

- Roundtable – The Academy experience begins with a Roundtable, where academy teams receive coaching from mentors and have the opportunity to discuss and comment on their own and other institutions' planned work. This initial planned work forms the basis for the institution's first posting in the Collaboration Network and ultimately becomes the institution's Academy Project related to assessment. During the multi-year Academy experience, institutions have the option of attending an Academy Second Roundtable.

Institutional Commitment – In joining the Academy, **South Dakota State University** agrees to send a team of five to eight representatives to a Roundtable, construct an Academy Project, and post initial planned work on the Academy Collaboration Network (see below) within two months of the Roundtable.

- Academy Project Updates – Academy teams provide regular updates on their Academy work to share strategies and results from their Academy Projects and related initiatives. Each institution receives commentary on its work from academy mentors and other academy teams.

Institutional Commitment – In joining the Academy, **South Dakota State University** agrees to post Academy Project Updates twice a year in the Academy Collaboration Network.

- Academy Collaboration Network – The Academy Collaboration Network is an electronic forum designed for institutions to share Academy Projects. The forum allows academy teams to post project updates and comments and inquiries about the strategies of other academy teams, and includes links to HLC and other Academy tools, ideas and materials. For the duration of the Academy cycle, academy teams are required to maintain on-going communication with their primary mentor, posting Academy Project Updates twice a year in the network for review and response. Institutions may also choose to comment on the Academy Projects of other participating academy teams and in the network, taking advantage of a shared learning experience and best practices. Participation in the Academy Collaboration Network may also include topical conference calls with facilitators/mentors, other institutions, and HLC staff.

- Academy Results Forum – The Results Forum is a multi-day event that concludes the Academy experience. Academy teams evaluate the impact of their Academy Projects, showcase accomplishments, share best practices and design strategies to maintain their efforts to assess and improve student learning. The final product is a written sustainability plan.

Institutional Commitment – **South Dakota State University** agrees to attend an Academy Results Forum at the conclusion of its Academy experience, share learning and results from the Project Evaluation, and write a plan for sustaining work to assess and improve student learning.

III. In facilitating the Academy, HLC agrees to:

- Collaborate with **South Dakota State University** to help it accomplish its Academy Project goals.
- Respond promptly and courteously to requests for assistance or information in areas of Academy participation.
- Share information on assessment of student learning by identifying, evaluating and validating best practices through the Academy Collaboration Network and Academy events.
- Extend the institution's participation in the Academy an additional year* at the institution's request and on the same fee schedule the institution was following.

** Note: Institutions participating in the Academy as a Quality Initiative may not extend participation beyond Year 9 of the Open Pathway cycle. After completing the Quality Initiative in Year 9, an institution may re-apply to the Academy if it deems continued participation beneficial.*

- Maintain South Dakota State University's Academy participation provided the institution continues to take part in Academy activities as defined in Section II and is able to provide HLC with credible evidence of doing so.
- Honor the institution's request, subject to approval by HLC, for participation in the Academy to serve as the institution's Open Pathway Quality Initiative or as one or more AQIP Pathway's Action Projects.

IV. In accordance with HLC's policy, South Dakota State University understands that:

- Acceptance to or participation in the Academy, or feedback received from Academy mentors or scholars does not serve as evidence of compliance with HLC's Criteria, nor in any way predict, or otherwise substitute for, any related finding in a subsequent evaluation by HLC, whether through its peer reviewers, the IAC, or the Board.
- If the institution has an assurance review, comprehensive evaluation, systems appraisal, or reaffirmation while participating in the Academy, reviewers evaluate the institution's efforts to assess and improve student learning in accordance with HLC expectations and practices applied to all affiliated institutions; and
- If the institution has interim monitoring on assessment of student learning while participating in the Academy, the institution is responsible for fulfilling that monitoring requirement; participation in the academy does not substitute for, or serve in lieu of, fulfillment of a monitoring requirement imposed by HLC.
- While the Academy provides mentoring and assistance related to the assessment of student learning, its processes are not designed with regard to maintaining compliance with HLC's Criteria for Accreditation.

V. South Dakota State University will participate in the Academy for:


3 years

4 years

5 years

Acknowledgement

In joining the Academy, the institution agrees to the expectations defined in this agreement. The institution also acknowledges that as HLC continues to improve offerings, changes may occur to the expectations. If changes do occur, HLC will provide prior notice as well as flexibility related to participation and cost for the institution.



Signature of Institution CEO

David L. Chicoine

Printed Name of Institution CEO



Signature of HLC President

Barbara Gellman-Danley

Printed Name of HLC President

4-16-2015

Date

Return completed letter to Kim Davis by email at academy@hlcommission.org or by fax at 312.263.7462.