What is Accreditation?

- Voluntary quality assurance process developed by American colleges and universities
- Accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) since 1915
- Required for
  - Graduates futures plans (licensure exams, graduate school admission, etc.)
  - Institutional participation in federally funded programs (student financial aid, etc.)
Michigan State’s tenth year in the accreditation cycle is 2015-16

Now institution’s have accreditation pathway options

Michigan State has selected the new “Open Pathway”

The Open Pathway has two components:

- Quality Assurance (QA)
- Quality Initiative (QI)
Quality Assurance (QA)

Changes have been made to:

- Criteria for accreditation
- Document we produce
- Site-visit team
Criteria for Accreditation

- Five Criteria
  - Mission
  - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct
  - Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support
  - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement
  - Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness

- Core Components

- Sub-Components
Documentation

- No institutional self study
- No special emphasis
- Different expectation of campus engagement

Campus engagement is a critical part of the process, but it is much more focused and specific.
Evidence File

- On line portal developed by and housed at HLC

- Core components of each criterion are addressed
  - Short and focused narrative addressing each core component including sub-components
  - Evidence embedded in the text (tags, links, etc.)
  - 70-80 page document
  - Limited to 35,000 words
Visiting Team

- Access to portal 4 weeks prior to visit
- Smaller visiting team
- Fewer meetings
- Shortened time frame
Quality Initiative (QI)

- The HLC now allows an institution to design and propose its own Quality Initiative to suit its present concerns or aspirations.

- Our QI is focused on the Neighborhoods and their impact on student academic success, i.e., retention, persistence and graduation.
This is our 7th year, in our ten-year accreditation cycle, when our QI Proposal is due; it will be submitted in May.

QI Proposal is reviewed by both HLC staff and peers for:
- The sufficiency of the scope & significance
- The clarity of purpose
- Evidence of commitment & capacity
- Appropriateness of the timeline
QI Process - continued

- They provide feedback in a collegial conversation and then approve the proposal.

- Following approval, there is no formal contact with HLC regarding the QI until Year 9 (2014-15).
QI Report

- In Year 9 (2014-15) we prepare and submit a QI Report
- It is screened by the HLC staff for completeness and then forwarded for peer review
The peer review conclusion is simply a yes/no check that the institution has met the expectation of a genuine effort in its QI.

The peer review conclusion does not receive further review, e.g., the site visit team does not see this report.

The QI conclusion will be joined with the recommendations on the Assurance Review and the team visit in the Commission’s decision-making process.
HLC has stated in both literature and at the Annual Meeting that the QI is something that should stretch the institution in a significant “cutting edge” manner with the aim of major advancement in the area of the QI.

They want institutions to take risks and pursue initiatives that can truly make a positive difference.
Neighborhood Leadership

- Teams that are currently involved with Michigan State’s Quality Initiative are:
  - The Neighborhood Policy Leadership Team
  - The Neighborhood Core Teams
  - The Neighborhood Pillar Committees
  - A Neighborhood Assessment Leadership Team
  - A Faculty Team on Academic Interventions
Timeline

- **QI Proposal Due May 2013**
- **Steering Comm. Formed Summer 2013**
- **QI Proposal Review by HLC Staff & Peers Fall 2013**
- **Work Groups Formed Fall 2013**
- **QI Rpt. Due 9th Year (2014-15)**
- **Work Grs. Input to QA Doc. 2014-15**
- **QI Report Review 2014-15**
- **QA Doc. Final Fall 2015; Site Visit Sp. 2016**