

Why does Regional Institutional Accreditation Matter to Me?

Accreditation Talking Points Institutional Effectiveness Office

Tammie Stark, starkt@lanecc.edu

This information is being provided to the LCC Cabinet, per President Hamilton's request, 7/2/2020.

Introduction Below are summaries that describe how accreditation impacts stakeholder groups and Lane as an institution. This information can be used to develop talking points/elevator pitches to convey the importance of accreditation.

Why does Lane need to be an accredited college?

Regional accreditors provide the stamp of approval necessary for a college or university to access funding from the federal government. With over 62% of Lane students relying on some form of federal financial aid, accreditation is essential to the financial viability of Lane Community College. Beyond providing access to funds, The Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities' accreditation Standards place student success at the heart of the process and incentivize the College to strive toward continual improvement of our ability to equitably serve students, staff, faculty, administrators, and the community.

Who is helped by accreditation?

If you are a current or past student, accreditation helped create access to financial aid, appropriate advising, and quality programs and services. If you are a current Lane employee, accreditation requires the College to provide you with a safe, supportive workplace with opportunities for professional development and a platform to provide input on your work conditions. If you are a member of the Lane Board of Education, accreditation not only requires that the College provide stakeholders like you a voice in governance and decision making but also requires the College to provide evidence of mission fulfillment and strategic resource management. If you are an employer in Lane County, accreditation ensures that you will continue to have a supply of well-trained employees who have completed relevant programs of study and been awarded field-appropriate credentials. If you are a member of Lane's faculty, accreditation guarantees your access to academic freedom and enshrines your right to participate meaningfully in curriculum and program design, development, and assessment.

Accreditation is essential to the College's ability to:

- gain access to critical sources of federal funds to support students directly and to fund services and programs
- provide an accessible, high-quality education for all members of the community
- close achievement gaps through sustained focus on access, equity, and inclusion
- provide a safe and sustainable workplace
- engage in continuous improvement of programs, services, and systems based on evaluations of evidence from systematic assessment

What does accreditation do for students?

Accreditation ensures that students are receiving a quality education that culminates in a meaningful credential and that the credits they earn will be transferable to other accredited colleges and universities. Accreditation provides access to federal

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funds for higher education, including Pell Grants, government guaranteed student loans, federal work study funds, and many other forms of financial support that go directly to students. Federally funded support services for tutoring, childcare, veterans, and a variety of other support services are all available thanks to our status as an accredited college.

Accreditation ensures that students:

- receive a quality education
- have access to federal student financial aid programs
- receive transferable credits
- receive appropriate licensure, certificates, and degrees appropriate to their field
- have access to the programs and services that meet their individual needs as learners

Why does accreditation matter to the Board of Education and administration?

The accreditation process requires the College to provide evidence of mission fulfillment and balancing short-term needs with long-term stability and sustainability. Accreditation mandates transparency and accountability to students, the community, and taxpayers by requiring publication of accurate information about programs, services, and employment statistics as well as requirements that planning and resource allocation be based on sound evidence and made transparent to stakeholders.

Accreditation helps create:

- contextual understanding of strengths and deficits based on comparison with regional peers
- institutional stability and functionality for students and employees
- accountability to taxpayers, students, and the community
- national reputation as a quality institution
- an accessible, sustainable institution

What does accreditation do for faculty?

The Northwest Consortium of Colleges and Universities' accreditation Standards place student success at the heart of the accreditation process and emphasize the essential role of faculty in student success. Accreditation ensures faculty maintain their rights to academic freedom, mandates faculty have a role in curriculum design, governance, assessment, planning, and other essential functions. It provides opportunities for faculty to help drive changes as part of a continuous improvement cycle and ensures that students have access to the resources and services they need to succeed in and beyond the classroom.

Accreditation supports faculty by:

- providing a national reputation as a quality institution
- providing opportunities for faculty to contribute to institutional improvement efforts
- requiring transparency and stakeholder involvement in governance and decision making
- adding value to courses by enabling students to transfer their credits to other institutions
- enabling the College to continue to recruit highly-qualified faculty

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Why does accreditation matter to staff?

Accreditation makes Lane a more inclusive, sustainable, and safe place workplace in several ways. First, by enabling students to have access to federal financial aid, accreditation allows the College to sustain important financial resources that provide local jobs. Second, accreditation creates a safer work environment by requiring the College to provide evidence of its ability to meet safety standards and maintain up-to-date emergency plans. Finally, accreditation provides employees a voice in shaping their work environment with a mandate that the College include employee input in planning and requiring procedures for reporting and resolving workplace disputes, complaints or safety issues in a timely and appropriate manner.

Accreditation ensures College employees have:

- a supportive workplace with opportunity to develop professionally
- a quality workplace
- access to information about planning and resource allocation
- opportunities to participate in planning and governance
- procedures for solving workplace problems

Why does accreditation matter to the community?

Lane is the community's college, and our mission is to "provide comprehensive, accessible, quality, learning-centered educational opportunities that promote student success." Accreditation ensures that employers in the community can rely on Lane's graduates to have the appropriate credentials, skills, and abilities to be valuable employees. The process requires that the community be provided access to up-to-date and accurate information about the College's programs, services, and resource management. It creates space for stakeholders within the community to provide input on planning and decision-making. Finally, accreditation makes Lane a better employer and allows the College to create and sustain stable, secure jobs.

Accreditation provides the community assurance that the College will:

- be a stable and responsible employer
- be a responsible steward of community resources
- support development of a highly-skilled and diverse workforce
- create opportunities for cultural enrichment and lifelong learning