

# Reaccreditation



Volume 1, Issue 1

Dr. Johnny M. Moore, President

October 2013

## Why are we doing this Accreditation thing? What's in it for us?

*A message from Associate Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness and Planning Dr. Annie Williams*

I'm pleased to report that Philander Smith College (PSC) is preparing for a re-accreditation site visit on November 3-4, 2014 by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association (NCA). This NCA Newsletter strives to provide useful information to the College community regarding the PSC Self-Study.

My thanks to the students, faculty, staff, administrators, Board of Trustees and community we serve for their time and participation in the reaccreditation process. Please contact Dr. Annie Williams for more information at [amwilliams@philander.edu](mailto:amwilliams@philander.edu)

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## Why HLC of NCA?

The North Central Association (NCA) is the accrediting body for most schools in the north and central portion of the United States. This is a 19 state region stretching from West Virginia to Arizona including Arkansas. There are two major groups in the association: those folks that accredit pk-12 schools and those who focus on colleges and universities. Needless to say, we are in the college and university group which is named appropriately, the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). Hence, HLC of NCA.

### What is NCA Accreditation?

NCA Accreditation is a process whereby a higher education institution engages in a comprehensive self-study. The self-study process involves applying quality indicators developed specifically for higher education institutions to help them evaluate their strengths and challenges. Philander Smith College (PSC) is proud of its long and rich history with NCA Accreditation dating back to 1945. Yet, this history does not mean that we can take our accreditation status for granted. Beginning in January 2013,

a set of new NCA criteria was introduced providing a new challenge for our campus.



## Why is accreditation important?

Accreditation has two fundamental purposes: a commitment to quality assurance and ongoing institutional and program improvement. The status of accreditation also means:

- EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION
- HIGH QUALITY
- COMMITMENT TO STANDARDS
- ACCOUNTABILITY

**THEREFORE, WE ARE DOING THIS ACCREDITATION THING BECAUSE PHILANDER SMITH COLLEGE (PSC) IS UP FOR REACCREDITATION NOV. 3-4, 2014; AND WE ARE COMMITTED TO REACCREDITATION BECAUSE IT PROVIDES BOTH PUBLIC CERTIFICATION OF ACCEPTABLE INSTITUTIONAL QUALITY AND AN OPPORTUNITY FOR PSC TO DO A CRITICAL SELF-ANALYSIS LEADING TO IMPROVEMENT IN EDUCATIONAL QUALITY FOR THE STUDENTS AND OTHER CONSTITUENTS WE SERVE.**

## REACCREDITATION

**What is the self-study process?**

The self-study process typically takes two years to complete. It requires a strong self-evaluation by Philander Smith College that results in a report submitted to the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) of the NCA. At the end of the process, a team of peer reviewers from different institutions across the nation will conduct a three-day visit on our campus. They will evaluate and affirm the quality of our institution, using the NCA criteria as the foundation for their evaluation. The peer reviewers will provide information intended to help improve the quality of our education and services.

**What approach is PSC taking to complete our self-study?**

To ensure that our self-study is comprehensive and includes all voices on campus, a committee structure was developed beginning in 2011, and continues in 2013-2014, to address different core components of the five NCA Criteria for Accreditation. Committee members include faculty, students, staff, and administrators from all units on campus. Community members and alumni were also invited to participate

Committees are conducting in-depth research and data collection on specific core components in their area. A draft report from each committee will be submitted to the NCA Accreditation Director (Dr. Annie Williams) who will then draft our self-study report. The Self – Study draft will be available to the campus community for input prior to final revisions at [www.philander.edu](http://www.philander.edu). The final report will be submitted to the HLC 60 days before the campus visit on Nov. 3-4, 2014.

**What is our timeline?**

Spring 2011	Organization and planning
Summer 2011	Planning and data organization
Fall 2012- fall 2013	Committee research and data collection
Spring 2014	Committee draft reports disseminated for comment
Summer 2014	Draft of self-study report
Summer 2014	Self-study report disseminated for comment
	Self-study report submitted to HLC
Fall 2014	Campus visit

**What are the goals for our self-study?**

The NCA Self-Study will:

- Reflect Philander Smith College's mission and planning process and provide a clear direction for the future of the college (for example, Strategic Planning, Technology Master Plan, Facilities Master Plan).
- Improve the collection, analysis, and use of data in Philander Smith College decision-making.
- Strengthen assessment as a part of the PSC culture.
- Define and articulate the ways in which PSC is a leading liberal arts institution in our community and throughout the country.

**What are the five NCA criteria?**

**Criterion 1:** Mission

**Criterion 2:** Integrity:  
Ethical and Responsible  
Conduct

**Criterion 3:** Teaching  
and Learning: Quality,  
Resources, and Support

**Criterion 4:** Teaching  
and Learning: Evaluation  
and Improvement

**Criterion 5:** Resources,  
Planning and Institutional  
Effectiveness

**What is your role in this process?**

One of the goals in our accreditation process is to ensure that our self-study is comprehensive and includes all voices. Your involvement is important and appreciated in

helping us determine our future. You can be involved in a variety of ways:

- Attend Workshops
- Provide feedback on committee reports/ self study report
- Participate in campus surveys
- Attend focus group meetings
- Assist in data collection
- Stay informed about the process
- Visit [www.philander.edu/nca](http://www.philander.edu/nca)